



The Canadian Isshinryu Way Everything Karate & Kobudo

Isshinryu Canada

The Canadian Isshinryu Way
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Give the honest answer

This newsletter has a very short, but insightful article from Ruberto Sensei on evolving. As I was thinking about this myself, it made me think about my own teaching (and my students questions).

I have always encouraged my students to ask lots of questions (I ask a great volume of them myself). And I hope I have maintained my integrity by giving quality answers.

So I have a request for all instructors and students. In Isshinryu, let's outlaw a common, but (in my opinion) unacceptable answer., "That's how my instructor did it", let's replace it with any of these great options.

- 1) A proper explanation of the technique
- 2) "I'm not sure, let me ask about that"
- 3) "I'm not sure, let me think about that"

- 4) "Let's focus on the drill, I can explain later" (and actually take time to explain)
- 5) "I don't know, let's work on that together"

So, if you are a student and you hear that, please ask "WHY?" We shouldn't blindly accept things.

Remember, Isshinryu is a great, systematically evolved system of fighting. If you don't know why, learn it. That's what keeps me excited!

Essential Isshinryu is available!

For more information on the first Canadian Isshinryu book, visit www.essentialissihinryu.com!

ATTENTION NEEDED!

Do you know of someone great in Isshinryu? If so, please e-mail

Upcoming Events

Events

Hanshi Mady in Thunder bay, April 8th

It's time to plan some events! The next Expo is going to be May Long weekend 2018!

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Fighting Combinations

By Wayne Smith

Creating combinations

Combinations are the middle ground between Basics and Kata. and are used to get the students conditioned to do more than one technique in sparring or self defense. A difficult part of training is coming up with new combinations for drills, sparring, and self-defense. Sparring combinations are for sport and uses flashier techniques. Drills or self defense combos are drawn from the 15 upper body basics and lower body basics.

This Article will focus on sparring, but the rules for making new combination work for self defense as well.

Sparring combos.

There are two sets of combinations

- Basic combinations, combinations that are the ones you usually score with.
- Transitional combinations, allows one to flow between the Basic combinations.

Making and using new combinations is important so the student does not get bored doing the old ones. Generally the rule of thumb for training is old combo, new combo, and finish with old combo. Also combinations should be trained; doing them forwards, backwards, and standing your ground.

How to make new combinations

Chose 6 techniques that you want to use for sparring.

Then assign a number to a technique.

So what you would do is role one six sided dice for the technique's, three times.

This gives you 6x6x6 combinations (216 combinations total)

For **example** use a six sided dice for the following table.

IE: 6 sided dice

1. Striaight punch

2. Reverse punch

3. Front snap kick

4. Round house kick

5. Side thrust kick

6. Hook kick

Roll your dice three times so you get your 3 techniques.

For example:

You roll three times giving you a 2, 5, 3.

using the chart you get:

reverse punch, side thrust kick, and front snap kick.

This same method can be used for combinations of basic technique's.

IE: Six sided dice

1: Gedan barai/seiken gyak tsuki

2: Chudan uke/seiken gyak tsuki

3: Jodan uke/seiken gyak tsuki

4: Mae geri

5: Yoko geri

6: Otoshi geri

role the dice three times to make a new combination.

IE you role a 2, a 5 , and a 4

so you would do Chudan uke/seiken gyak tsuki, then a Yoko geri, and then a Mae geri.

Make and try out the combination's well before class.

Use the ones that feel right, and experiment with the ones that don't. A combination that does

not feel right is not necessary wrong, just outside the persons comfort zone. Or combinations that do not work going forward may work going backward or standing your ground.

Basically this is just another tool to help development of combinations. By all means experiment with your own methods. Learn something new and have fun.



Why I Study Isshinryu Karate

By Nolan Maenpaa

I started studying Isshinryu Karate in 2005, I started my training with Shihan Susan Baldassi. When I first started Karate I had no idea how much it would mean to me and how much I would like it. Now, it is one of my favourite activities, and it is a great way for me to practice control and self defense. Karate has grown to impact all aspects of my life, from school to home. These are the main reasons why I study Isshinryu.

I enjoy the close-up nature of Isshinryu Karate. While other martial arts focus on flashy moves that are risky to use in a real fight, Isshinryu uses more practical and realistic moves that would be more effective for a street fight. While studying Karate I have learned some very important self defense practices; such as, staying aware of your surroundings, and not being distracted while alone in the streets or while walking to your car. These lessons could possibly save my life one day, but also, can help me protect myself or others. This type of training not only makes Karate a useful tool, but it also keeps the training interesting. While other martial arts focus on point sparring, Isshinryu stresses the importance of realistic fighting and the importance of reflex conditioning and muscle memory.

Although Isshinryu is a fairly recent style of Karate, it still has an interesting history which it shares with three different styles of Karate. Master Shimabuku taught the one heart method, which states that "all things begin as one". The creed of Isshinryu Karate; "I come to you with only Karate, empty hands. I have no weapons, but should I be forced to defend myself, my honour or my principles, should it be a matter of life and death, of right or wrong, then here are my weapons, my empty hands." This creed rings true to the basics of Isshinryu Karate, and it teaches us that we should only use it to defend ourselves and that we should practice and train towards not having to use it. This way of teaching is very fascinating to me, and allows us to talk about various situations one might find themselves in. While exploring different ways to get out of a situation or avoid it all together. I really like the creed of Isshinryu; the teaching of peace before violence. This type of training teaches us to be peaceful and calm. The second part of the creed states

that if one needs to, they can defend themselves, but it is a last resort. It is only to be used in the defense of life, country, or family. Karate is a last resort and should only be used when absolutely necessary. This way of thinking can not only help me with Karate, but also help me in my personal life as well. The creed tells us how to look at Karate, and how to use it, it tells us that we should use it as a weapon only when we need to.

To me, the Katas in Isshinryu are extremely thought-provoking, because there are various structures in the Katas, and they differ from each other so much. Seisan, to me, is the most basic of the Katas. To me, it is meant to teach us the basic structures of Karate and the proper hand and footwork of the basics, as well as, the fluidity needed. Seiuchin is meant to teach powerful stances and strikes, as well as a transition from slow to fast movements. Naihanchi, for me, is a very quick Kata and is meant to emphasize the quick shifts from side to side. Wansu is meant to emphasize short and fast strikes, the side to side fighting also teaches awareness. Chinto is used to teach students how to shift their weight around while remaining powerful. Kusanku is the Kata that I learned most recently and to me it is meant to teach quick and unexpected turns, while also being aware of your surroundings. I believe that the Kata Sanchin is almost completely about breathing, and I like how it adds an interesting aspect to Karate. Unlike other Katas, Sanchin focuses less on the complexity of the moves and more on the breathing aspect. It teaches the student how to breath and tense up their body. It also teaches us how to breath heavily and how to breath properly during the other Katas.

My instructor, Shihan Susan Baldassi, is an amazing role model. With her help and instruction, I am able to learn Karate in a fun and interesting way. She has been one of my most important role models and continues to be an influential person in my life. Her way of teaching incorporates both interesting and useful practices and helps us advance in Karate, while also keeping a certain level of fun. To me she is a patient, strong and powerful person, who has given me inspi-

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Why I Study Isshinryu Karate

By Nolan Maenpaa

ration to achieve more in my life. She has made Karate incredibly interesting, fun and extremely useful. Her do-jo, while high energy and sometimes chaotic, always has a certain level of smoothness to it. She deals with small children and she somehow gets them to listen to her, something I have found to be difficult to do. I enjoy learning and training with her and hope I continue far into the future.

I really enjoy the weapons in Karate. The Bo and Sai are the ones in which I am most familiar with, although I have used the Tuifa. The Bo is my favourite because of it's versatility, many uses and many forms. It can be used for so many different forms of self-defense and can be used as many different things, such as a stick or umbrella. It can be extremely useful and is also very powerful. The Bo can also be used as a great sparring weapon. I really like the Sai as well and the way you can trap the opponents weapon. It can be used almost as if you had empty hands. You can trap and attack the opponent's hands while also retaining your mobility. These weapons help keep Karate interesting and add an extra layer of self-defense and utility.

Karate also helps me in my personal life, by helping me focus on a specific task and see it to completion. It has also helps me concentrate in school and strive for goals. Stress is evident in everyday life and Karate helps me deal with it. The stress is released during sparring or self-defense. With the help of Shihan Susan and her instruction, I have learned to truly meditate and relax. The social aspect of Karate has helped me make new friends and find a home at the dojo.

Even though Karate is not a team sport, it requires a large

amount of commitment to the people you are training with and you develop strong bonds with them. In order to improve in Karate, you must be willing to accept criticism and help each other out. You must listen to the advice of your instructors and your peers. The presenting aspect of Karate helps me to be more confident, it also helps with nerves while doing presentations outside of Karate. Another aspect of Karate that I like is the fact that there is no such thing as perfection, your Katas, basics and self-defense can all be improved on, and you are always learning something new. The way we learn is also important, learning the basics first then start moving into Katas. Then as the you get better at the basics, you also learn other aspects of Karate, like self-defense and Bunkai. This way of learning is enhanced by the fact that you have peers and friends to help you through and make the transitions from one belt to another.

These various and interesting aspects of Karate are why I study Isshinryu Karate; these aspects have become a part of me and make me who I am today. They have helped me through tough and stress filled points in my life, by helping me relieve stress and anger. It has helped me form new and meaningful relationships, learn new ways to take care of myself, but also help others grow and learn. The part that I enjoy most about Karate are the parts that make it unique from other Martial Arts. The serious take on fighting and the focus on self-defense, to me, makes it one of the best and most useful Martial Arts in Canada. I am proud to be studying it under the tutelage of the highest ranked female black belt in Canada

Evolving

By Richard Ruberto

A student of mine, a Shodan, from 1987 has started training under me again. I am amazed to see how I once taught certain aspects of kata. Over the years I have had the privilege of training under several experienced sensei. In addition to that I have worked hard practicing my art, learning and growing. I consider my knowledge far deeper now then in 1987.

What hasn't changed is this students great outlook on

life and karate. He is humble, open minded and works hard. He thinks and is eager to learn. I always instilled having a good attitude in my students. You cannot survive training under me without these qualities. I'll close this short story with a quote.

“The proactive approach to a mistake is to acknowledge it instantly, correct and learn from it.”



The Challenges!

This Newsletter the are about trying something new. Pick one or three of the challenges and add them to your training routine for a week or two. Devote five to fifteen minutes to them at a time, see what your students or classmates think. Are they hard, were they beneficial, do see anyway to improve them, let us know. Have any exercises you like to share, let us know about that as well, perhaps you'll see them in the next Newsletter.

Karate

The exercise for the Karate challenge will focus on the Isshinryu kicks (or any kicks you know), doing them in sets are than the typical 10 count. It will work the specific muscles you use for each technique and make you do a bunch of extra kicks, so win-win.

Do each kick 10 times on one leg and then the other, kick hard and fast, this is a work. After around a thirty second rest, do the same kick, do a set of eight kicks on one leg than the other. After another brief rest, do sets of six.

Do all the kicks or just a few, try adding in sport kicks or other non-Isshinryu kicks, whatever you get the most out of.

Kobudo

The weapons challenge focuses on dexterity with the bo, as well as a bit of muscular endurance for your arms. Holding the bo regularly, bring the front end forward and down reversing the grip of your front hand. Followingly through with the motion, bring forward and down, reversing your grip. Continue to rotate the bo forwards, reversing your grip every time and end comes forward and down. Try doing this for five or even ten minutes, starting slow as you get used to the drill and developed fluidity before speeding it up.

The motion should quickly become "mindless" or "easy," something you can do while chatting (probably about karate). Once you are ready for a change, reverse the rotation, bring the front end of the bo up and back, reversing the grip of your front hand as you do so.

Training

Once again, we're doing push-up for our last challenge. This time, instead of slowing down, we're going to vary it up. Instead of just doing knuckle or regular push-ups (say however many you need for you next grading), the challenge is to do set of 10, changing push-up types for each set. This will work muscles that are usually missed by your typical push-ups, as different muscles are engaged.

Try:

- Wide grip, with your hands placed outside of your shoulders.
- Close grip, with you hands together, forming a triangle.
- Staggered grip, with one hand above the shoulder and the other by ribs.
- Military push-ups, put your feet up on something elevated.

Did we miss your favourite, let us know.

Contributors



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Mike Fenton—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Mike lives with his wife Kyla and has been training in Isshinryu karate for over 30 years, and has been an instructor for over 25 years. He is currently head instructor of Chitora Dojo in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

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Trevor lives in Thunder Bay with his wife Maria. He has dedicated a great deal of his time to teaching and his own training with the realization that hard work is the key to success.



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Author

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Wayne Smith started in Isshinryu karate from 1992 to 1995 under Sensei Brian Smout. Came back to Isshinryu karate under Sensei (now Shihan) Richard Wharf and Sensei Buzz Cox in 2001, and continues to this day. Wayne also trained in Jujitsu from 1997 to 1998. And Aikido from 2000 to 2001.



Author—Wanted

Authors are always wanted, why not contribute your opinions or insights? Anyone can offer something of value, regardless of rank or experience.

Karate Terms in this Newsletter

Ashi foot

Atemi vital points of the body

Bunkai take to pieces/analyze

Empi, hiji elbow

Hajime Begin

haishu back hand

Haito ridge hand

Hiza knee

Kansetsu joint

Ken fist

Keri Kick

Kin-geri Groin Kick

Kinteki groin

Kokan heel

Kosomi ball of foot

Kote wrist

Men head

Mo Ichi Do One more Time

Rei Bow

Sanchin Three Battles

Seisan Thirteen

Seiuchin Control, Pull, Fight /
Calm within the Storm

Seretsu line up

Shotei palm heel

Shuto/Shoto knife hand

Sokuto blade of foot

Taisuko sole of foot

Tsuisaki toes

Tsuki direct strike

Uchi indirect strike

Ude forearm

Ushiro back

Yoko side

Yubi finger

It is important to familiarize yourself with commonly used Japanese words. Try to memorize all the words each time and you will soon have a large "karate" vocabulary.



Submissions

Article Submission

Articles are welcome from anyone and everyone. They can be about anything related to the Martial Arts, a technique you think is just great; A better way to do a technique; History of a Karate Master; a tournament trick that works well; ANYTHING!

All articles are appreciated as e-mail. You can send it to your instructor to proof read and send in, or directly to me. (Mike (at) Isshinryu.ca) or (sensei@issheinryu.ca)

You can even include pictures if it helps your article!

Dojo Directory:

Any student is welcome at anytime to visit any dojo. Before class, always introduce yourself to the Sensei of the dojo and tell them who your current Sensei is.

For a full dojo list visit Isshinryu.ca We are getting too many to list here.

Affiliate Cities!

Abbotsford, BC

Contact: Mike O'Leary

Brandon, MB

Contact: Richard Wharf

Contact: Buzz Cox

Calgary, AB

Contact: Charles Boyd

Chilliwack, BC

Contact: Ryan Bird

Cookstown, ON

Contact: Harri T. Makivirta

Dryden, ON

Contact: Rick McGogy

Hope, BC

Contact: Norm Losier

Kenora, ON

Contact: Steve Davis

Contact: David White

Ottawa, ON

Contact: Tim Leonard

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Berlin, Germany

Contact: Ryan Boesche

Stow, Ohio

Contact Albert Pecoraro

Karate Ni Sente Nashi

A Favourite quote of mine. All Karateka should understand it's meaning