

A few of the first techniques you will learn

Stances

Think of a stance as your foundation. You would not build a house on a weak foundation and you cannot execute a strong karate technique from a weak stance (foundation).

Without a strong stance

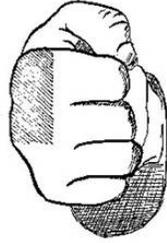
You will never fully develop your potential power in other techniques. Your legs will always be a potential target to an opponent. You cannot move quickly with power. The stances of Isshinryu are similar to the stances of other styles of karate but there are few exceptions. There is no stance in Isshinryu that has a locked leg. The knees are always slightly bent, and whenever possible the knees are flexed inward to protect the groin. The heels are kept flat on the ground, except in Cat Stance and Hook stance. The upper body is always erect. The head is held in a position so you can easily see your opponent. Remember there is no stance that fits all situations. You must be able to change from stance to stance in a swift and smooth manner using the proper stance that fits a given situation.

The first stance you will learn is Seisan Stance (Dachi) Seisan Dachi



Seisan is the basic stance of Isshinryu and its techniques are stressed in the first kata. From this stance one can easily move into any other stance. You can also move in any direction. This stance provides a strong base for defensive as well as offensive techniques. As in most stances the upper body is erect with shoulders level. Both knees are flexed inward, the lower abdomen is tensed in the toes of both feet are straight forward. The toes of the rear foot touch an imaginary line that would touch the heel of the front foot. The center of gravity is in the exact center of the line separating the feet. When executing a technique in Seisan stance tense the ankles and press the knees inward. Tense the muscles of the inner part of the thighs and tense the buttocks. Do not lean forward allowing the heels to leave the ground. Do not straighten the knees. When stepping forward in Seisan Dachi. As the rear foot moves forward it will arc inward to about the center line and then out to shoulder width, as it plants and then becomes the forward foot.

The first Punch you will learn is a Seiken



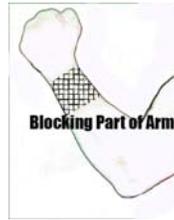
This punch is different than the punch in most karate styles, because it does not rotate. The fist contacts the center chest of the opponent in a vertical position (Thumb on top) and it always returns to a guard position. It is never left locked out. The fist always starts from a position on the hip. Just at or above the belt. The opposite hand always returns to the other hip. To make a proper Isshinryu fist, first curl fingers tightly from the second joint to the base of the fingers. The tips of the fingers should just touch the callous pads of the palm. Bend and clinch fingers from the knuckles and squeeze the palm of the hand with the fingertips. The back of the hand and the first joints of the fingers should be in a 90-degree bend. The top of the thumb should be placed in the crease made in the first finger joint and then flattened down as much as possible on the top of the hand. When the fist is properly and firmly made it will feel as if a row of pennies is held tightly in the hand. The fist, when viewed from the back, has a very definite wedge shape. Contact is made with the first two knuckles only. If any other knuckle strikes, the punch is improperly executed. In order to maintain maximum power for this thrust, an imaginary line is drawn from the center of the forearm down the wrist and out between the first two knuckles. This line must not be bent. If the wrist is moved up or down, left or right, the punch will be weakened and the wrist possibly injured. When the fist is properly and firmly made, you will be able to see an indentation in the top of the wrist just at the base of the thumb. Pretend that there is only one bone in your arm from the elbow to the knuckles. If there is one solid bone, it cannot be bent. If it does not bend, you will not lose power. This thought must be in your mind at all times when learning the proper use of Seiken.

Your first kick will be a Mae Keage Geri (front snap kick)



Beginners learn to kick with the foot that is to the rear. As the foot leaves the ground turn the toes up and tighten the ankle. Lift the knee at least waist high, As the knee is pointed at the target. Your knee will be bent fully back so you can get more speed and power from your kicks. (A snap kick is not like a football kick) Keep the supporting leg slightly bent, the entire foot firmly on the ground. Then in a snapping action extend the kick towards the target. At contact the ball of the foot does the striking. The hips are moved slightly forward for extra power and reach. The foot and leg are then returned in an exact but reverse manner. It is important to return the foot quickly.

The first 3 basic block's



The first 3 basic blocks Basic Blocking Techniques (Uke Waza) Blocking techniques are a highly developed part of karate. The blocks should be so powerful that they discourage further attack. The blocks, although defensive in nature, are so strong that they can almost be called an attack. Many students spend most of their time practicing on attacking techniques. These are certainly of great importance, but it should never be forgotten that continual practice in the basics and most especially the basics of blocking, is by far the more important. After all, if your blocks are perfect you really don't need to know anything else. The blocks should stop, turn, or deflect an attack. We use not only our hands and arms, but elbows, knees, legs and feet. The block should be followed instantly with a strong and decisive counter attack. A strong block should unbalance your opponent as well as cause a shock in pain to his arm or a leg. The goal of a defensive block is to stop your opponents attack. In this you will fail if your blocks are weak, miss directed or poorly made. With all of the basic blocks in Isshinryu. The arm will be turned in a position so the backside of the arm. Both bones of the arm will make contact on the block. With about a 4 inch area of the wrist. This is different then many karate styles which block with the outside or inside edge of the arm. (A question we are often ask about basic blocks is. If I am in a ready position with my hands chest high and someone struck at my face. Why would I start my head block at groin level.) You would not !! You would block from the position your hand is in at the time of he defensive action. Remember these are the 3 basic blocks. Basic blocking drills we go through the entire blocking motion

Gedan Uke or leg block



Begin the leg block high on the opposite side of the chest. Tight fist and little finger side of the hand towards the chest. The block sweeps downward to the down position. Since the leg block must stop or deflect a powerful kick, it must be made with corresponding power. The downward block should end at approximately six inches away from the thigh. Do not block out to the side past your body or leg.

Chudan Uke (chest block)



Chudan Uke is a forearm block against a body attack, beginning with the fist tight and downward in front of the groin area. Thumb side of the fist toward the body. The block begins upward in an arcing motion and scoops across the body. Stopping in a position with the arm in a 45 degree angle, fist shoulder high. As in all the techniques, the fist and wrist must be held firmly for maximum effect. If the wrist is to lose, the block will lose much of its effect in power. Do not reach too far out to make contact with this block. The elbow should be fairly close to the waist. Do not over block. That is, do not attempt to push the deflected thrust too far to the side. If the blow misses ½", that is as good as if it missed two feet.

Jodan Uke (head block)



A Head block this is the 3rd basic block. It begins at the same low position as a chest block. Tight fist hand in front of the groin thumb side of the hand towards the body, as the block begins to travel upward. It levels out and sweeps the entire body and head area, ending just above the head with the arm at a slight angle. Remember you are blocking with the backside of the arm. This means if you look up you can see the inside of your wrist. The blocking arm travels upward and outward until it strikes the opponent's arm and then stays or returns to position in front of your forehead above eye level.