

## Warrior School Practice Systems

This sheet is about how to learn Warrior skills fast. It's mostly about avoiding the mistakes that beginners make when learning a Martial system. People who understand what is written below and employ this knowledge will learn much, *much* faster than those that don't.

There are three results of combat practice, they occur in the following order 1 = most common, 3 = least common.

1. It leads to no improvement and you get hurt
2. It leads to a worsening in your technique
3. It improves your technique

Practicing too little leads to 2. Practicing too fast leads to 1. Concentrating on the wrong priorities (See below) leads to 2 and 1.

**Your technique can only get worse if you are moving faster than your level of ability.**  
There is no exception to this rule!

Improvement comes from knowing what is good and bad practice, practicing as fast as you can go without getting it wrong, constantly checking for mistakes and always, immediately correcting them. We will teach you to monitor your performance, what is good and bad technique and improve your skills.

As you train, check the following in the following order (they are written in order of priority)

### Performance Priorities

#### Stance and Balance

It is crucial to understand that these are the most important factors in combat and should therefore be checked and corrected first and most often. If your feet are close together you have a high stance (Fast movements, weak techniques) If your feet are far apart you have a low stance (Slow movements, powerful techniques) Low stances are generally better, but beginners usually ignore them – this slows improvement drastically. Some students of Martial systems can spend years not improving their actual combat ability – though they can do fantastically impressive techniques. They have to suffer the indignity and further loss of time by going right back to the beginning of their training and starting again – this time putting stance and not fancy techniques first. I know I've seen dozens go through this – including me...

#### Relevance

Is your strike/ block the best, simplest, most powerful? Does it set you up well for the next technique? Note *simplest* here – don't waste time and energy, you only need to drop your opponent, this is not ballet or a film studio. Now comes a rule that most people really regret ignoring...

**A Master is someone who can effectively employ the basics.**

A Master is someone who understands how to win and that means employing simple, effective and appropriate moves.

Most beginners want to learn the fancy techniques because they look the most impressive. This path leads to becoming a *Performer* (And losing combat matches) not a Master.

## Accuracy

There's no point in having speed or power if you can't actually hit your opponent, though more people will attend to speed and power and therefore slow their improvement. There are fewer targets on a Human body than beginners realise.

## Power and Speed

Both are important but a technique that gets there first is not necessarily the winning one. Some techniques take longer to set up (Getting your body in the right position) but deliver 4-5 times as much energy. These are called Slow Strikes and an experienced Warrior may prefer to take one (Or even two) light taps that do no significant damage whilst preparing a devastating blow from which their combatant cannot recover.

Speed is also crucial when blocking, remember blocking too fast means you get hit.

## Part two

### Types of practice

#### Without an opponent.

You need to remember the techniques and forms you have developed with your instructor.

Instructors will find those moves that occur naturally to you, they will help you reject those moves that are less effective and leave you with a few that will cover all combat situations. What the instructors won't do is give you a series of techniques that you must learn – even though they are not appropriate for you.

You need to run through those movements very slowly at first trying to remember them and checking against the priorities. It is very hard to think of all of the priorities at once so start with balance and stance and when you are reasonably happy with them move on to the next *periodically checking balance and stance anyway!* As you move down the priorities check the others occasionally – higher priorities like stance tend to go to pieces whilst concentrating on something else.

After you have run through the form(s), you need to employ them against an imagined combatant (Or combatants) This **Spirit** or **Ghost**, as they are called, is going to be a superb trainer, the more realistic you make it, the better you will get. Your Spirit, will surprise you as you get good at imagining it: It is better than you, faster than you, and does moves you are not expecting. It is also forgiving and will let you kill it as often as you provide it with a reasonable technique. It only takes a nanosecond to recover though...

#### Learning to work with your Fighting Spirit, or Ghost is second only in importance to working with the priorities

Most people only work with their spirit in private at first, if you instructor asks you to demonstrate this and there are other people watching feel free to say no!

## Three systems of spirit/ghost practice

### Hard Practice

Imagine your Ghost using a specific attack on you very slowly. Block or dodge that attack, respond with a Stop attack (A quick strike to stun your opponent) Then apply a Drop attack to render your opponent incapable of further combat (In real combat) or to win the combat (In competitive bouts)

### Block-stop-drop, or occasionally, Block-drop

Do this six times from very slow (Perfect) technique to as fast/powerful as you can go and still maintain an acceptable stance and accuracy level.

Swap weapons to the other hands and do the same mirrored (same attack, opposite side)

(If you don't have to swap weapons as in quarter-staff or unarmed, swap from side to side with each technique and just let the speed build up – but do 12 moves)

Start really slow (Get it perfect) and get faster through the 6/12 moves.

Always check stance and balance. Don't worry that this is something only beginners do – people who have been doing it for 50 years still check their stance and balance!

When you get good at it you will find hard practice exhausting (it's the full-power bit at the end), one three-movement form (Block>stop>drop) done 12 times = 36 techniques. 3000 techniques will cause any but the very fittest people to find moving limbs very painful the following day. Build up from 36 ~ 100 techniques a day. Most experts stick to 100 techniques hard practice to develop technique and use soft practice to develop random movement (Flow) and stamina.

### Soft, or Flow practice

Don't let the 'soft' bit fool you here... The only reason this is not crippling is that it's done at about 60-80% power, but still at full speed.

Full speed means as fast as you can go without losing quality of stance/balance/relevance etc.

An expert will achieve 2 to 2.3 techniques per second unarmed – slower with some weapons. This is great fun, superb exercise – like gymnastics or ballet it's your whole body working at optimum and, like them, or any Martial practice, takes a lot of concentration.

Occasionally throw in some full power techniques, never go so fast that your practice is compromised, always put mistakes right.

Your Ghost is there all the time constantly attacking. When 'dropped' it appears again randomly (Including behind you) using random weapons, sometimes it brings its friends too.

If you want to do this as a fitness/aerobic activity just pace yourself for 30 minutes. You don't need a sports hall or garden, a largish room will do. Learning to avoid damaging ceilings, furniture, elderly relatives, cats etc. is all part of the fun.

**Learning and using these practice systems is the third most important aspect of combat**

## Practicing *with* someone (Without an Instructor present)



Should never be done until your instructor says you are ready, and then only with the form(s) and techniques in which you are competent.

The reasons for this are:

1. If you have not learned **Slow Practice** someone will get hurt
2. If you have not learned '**Detachment**' your technique cannot get better and can get worse
3. If you practice outwith your area of competence your practice will suffer and you risk injury.

### 1. Slow Practice

Includes two elements, the first is that your movements must never go faster than your ability to produce good technique. The second is that you are able to match your technique to the speed of the person with whom you are practicing.

**The more skilled person never exceeds the competent speed of the less skilled.**

In this way both of you are roughly at the same level of competence and *both of you* can learn. Any deviation and skill levels suffer. It is also the best environment to learn to match your opponents speed when blocking (Too fast or slow and you get hit!)

### 2. Detached

No ego, no competition and absolutely no testosterone! Learn to ignore your desire to be the fastest, get the most hits – forget that your practice partner is *human*, treat them like your ghost.

The core of this practice is to build up a subtle play of moves and counter-moves in your brain from which unconsciously fast moves (Expertise) can develop. The faster you learn to immerse yourself in absorbing movement information and forget that you are with a human, the faster you become an expert. Someone who fails to learn this is wasting their own time and will inevitably lose to their practice partner in actual combat. Check your stance and balance!

**Detached Slow Practice is the fourth most important aspect of combat training**

3. There comes a time when you know that you have become competent to develop new techniques and forms for yourself, but it happens slowly, even experts will still, occasionally, develop bad techniques. Don't be in a hurry to be an expert and it will come faster.

### Let's summarise that lot...

You will learn skills the fastest if you remember...

1. Your technique can only get worse if you are moving faster than your level of ability.
2. Apply your priorities in the right order
3. Never exceed your competent speed – but do push that limit up using hard practice
4. Learn the difference between good and bad practice
5. Always rectify mistakes immediately
6. Remember, A Master is someone who can effectively employ the basics.
7. Practice from slow to fast
8. Learn to work with your ghost: the more realistic the ghost – the better the Warrior
9. Block – stop – drop
10. Learn the solo practice systems
11. Learn slow practice and detachment
12. Become your own teacher
13. Check your stance and balance!