

## Chanbara Basic Program



Chanbara begins each and every class with Kihon, which utilizes five basic strikes. These take minutes to learn, but years to master. These simple and internationally known strikes can be taught to 1 or 100 students simultaneously. They are, called mein, kote, do, ashi and tsuki. Students will soon discover that they can have fun while enjoying the physicality of the sport.

As with all training tradition is a valuable part that must be learned.

Unfortunately many students do not understand the importance placed on stretching and warming up. Many just go through the motions halfheartedly. Chanbara pre-arranged blocking and striking patterns keep students interested while warming up all the muscle groups. These striking and blocking patterns incorporate offensive and defensive movements and techniques, which offer every student a complete warm up, while honing stance, balance, speed, timing, rhythm and breathing.

Striking sets teach the correct way to handle weaponry while ideally eliminating bad habits. This unique method also ensures that every student receives one-on-one instruction even in a class of 40. Students execute strikes while the instructor critiques each and every technique with short word commands. These critiques allow the students to correct themselves.

The next phase in this program is full contact sparring in 60-second intervals. Sixty-second sparring allows the instructor to oversee full-contact fighting in a very controlled manner without the student being aware. Given this information the student's reflexes improve providing for correct follow through and excellent recovery. Sixty-second sparring takes the testosterone edge off the student's energy levels, keeping them interested and ready to accept new techniques thus allowing the teacher to easily instruct.

Learning hundreds of martial art techniques can be overwhelming. Teaching technique is a very important factor when molding young and beginning students. Each lesson should provide technique training, but learning too much technique at a time usually proves overwhelming. Chanbara's technique training incorporates 20 Kihon waza (technique) into the lesson plan. Students can easily learn and hone these techniques that are used in all sword styles. From these 20 basic variations, the student will be able to mix and match their own arsenal of offensive and defensive techniques, which they will use and experiment with during free sparring.

Structure is great, but too much could have a negative effect. Free sparring frees up

the spirit and allows students to practice any way they want with their own choice of equipment. For instance, a short sword versus a long sword, two swords versus a staff or the red team opposes the blue team. Students are more apt to give it their best shot when having fun and practicing Chanbara.

Mention the word tournament and many students cringe. Many do not want to compete due to embarrassment and the possibility of pain or injury. Looking bad in front of others can deter the strongest. Chanbara has changed all that by safe applications of the weaponry through action games and mini-tournaments. Towards the end of each class the instructor merely splits up the group and pits one against another in single, double or team sparring matches.