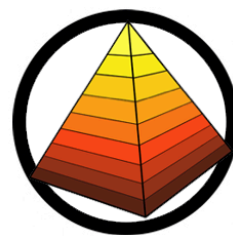




Understanding the Core Progressions



The goal of Satori Dojo has always been to provide our students with a well-rounded martial arts education that results in effective methods of self-defense.

Training can take many forms. There are a practically endless number of different training activities that you could spend your time doing. Some develop a rooted stance, or good balance. Others might help develop coordination, speed, or power. While these are all good activities, and we can learn from them all, unfortunately, our time is very limited and therefore very precious. We must spend it wisely practicing drills that will help us to accomplish our end goals.

Therefore, drills need to be more than just arbitrary training methods. When possible, drills should build on one another, following a systematic, logical progression in order to develop a particular skill set. Long lists of combinations that seem arbitrarily thrown together are not only difficult to remember, making them useless in a stressful situation; they do not serve the purpose of achieving our end goals. Meaningful, focused drills are designed specifically to convey a particular concept or skill that can then be applied effectively in a variety of situations.

In order to achieve any goal, it is best to first determine what it is you want to achieve, then figure out what steps you'll need to take, organizing them into a logical series of short term goals. This scientific approach to training will allow students to maximize their physical development while gaining a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of all martial arts.

Since one of the goals of Satori Dojo is to educate students about the techniques and theory of different styles of martial arts, logical **progressions** of techniques have been developed for karate, boxing, wing chun, judo, and aikido, etc. Some progressions have two tracks such as karate and wing chun. Traditional karate is kata-based while sport karate focuses on sparring. Traditional wing chun focuses on developing energy sensitivity compared to progressive wing chun which focuses on combat. There are no progressions for tai chi chuan or vovinam listed here, as those are skill sets that are concentrated on after black belt.

Following are short overviews of the twelve progressions that make up the core of the Satori Dojo curriculum. Each progression is also described in great detail, both in print as a separate document (available as a free PDF download from our website at www.Satori-Dojo.com) and as an instructional video (available on our YouTube channel).

Overview

Karate

The techniques and principles of karate form the foundation of our practice. This is apparent in many aspects of our style, from our warm-up exercises to our official uniform. Like all things, karate has evolved and changed over the years. Today, there are two very different aspects of karate training, traditional karate, and sport karate. Traditional karate is kata-based while sport karate focuses on kumite, or sparring.

Kata

Our traditional karate progression centers on kata and bunkai. Students are expected to perform each kata solo in such a way as to demonstrate coordination, balance, speed, power, and focus. Students must also be able to demonstrate effective applications each series of the kata. The specific techniques incorporated into applications can and will vary, but should always hold to the tenets of best practice.

Students start by learning the introductory kata, Taikyoku, before moving on to kata 2-5. These variations on the basic form introduce new techniques and employ the teaching strategy of “disguised repetition”, varying the practice just enough to keep interest high.

For promotion to second green stripe, students are taught Pinan 1, which does not vary much from the Taikyoku pattern, and Pinan 2, which provides the bulk of the new material for this rank. After that, one empty hand karate kata is introduced at each rank level, gradually moving from the hard, linear Pinan kata to softer, more circular kata such as Jutte, Empi, and Chinte.

Kumite

Sparring is a much different skill set than kata. Students must learn to apply karate concepts in an effective manner against a non-compliant opponent who is actively trying to do the same. This skill is an important one, therefore, sport karate warrants its own progression.

The progression begins with the karate blitz attack. The concept is to move forward quickly, crossing the gap to engage your opponent with an overwhelming barrage of kicks and punches. Beginners are taught the blitz attack at the same time that they are learning the Taikyoku kata because the concept can be seen throughout the form.

At two green the technique is the flying backfist strike, which parallels the backfist move that appears in the kata for that rank, Pinan 2. From there the progression moves on to more complex techniques such as the Rear Leg Charge and Alley of Opportunity. Students are also taught how to defend against these techniques. The end result should be an arsenal of techniques that can be effectively employed in competition.

Wing Chun

Wing Chun is known for its scientific approach to combat. It similar to karate in that the traditional practice has evolved to include a more combat-oriented approach. We refer to this style of wing chun as the progressive curriculum, since it evolved from the traditional teachings. We believe that it is important to understand both approaches to this unique art. Students will quickly come to understand the foundational drills and techniques of traditional wing chun training, and, perhaps most importantly, discover how they are used in actual combat.

Traditional Wing Chun

Students begin their wing chun training learning how to control the centerline using the basic techniques.

For green belt, students learn the first wing chun form, Siu Lim Tao. From there students move on to single and double arm chi sao exercises. By black belt the student will have a good understanding of wing chun theory and technique, and be able to apply them.

Progressive Wing Chun

Bruce Lee popularized wing chun when he chose it as one of the core influences of Jeet Kune do. Bruce Lee added his own ideas to wing chun, altering it so that it would be more effective in combat. Cuong Nhu's progressive wing chun curriculum finds its roots in this approach.

Starting from a common physical reference point (in this case with the partners' right hands crossed) we learn how to manipulate the opponent's guard to open a line of attack, and control the situation using strategies such as programming.

Judo

It is common knowledge that many fights end up going to the ground, therefore, an understanding of basic judo can save your life. In Cuong Nhu we begin by teaching students how to take a throw and fall safely. Then we teach how to throw the opponent forward or backward depending on what kind of energy the opponent is giving you. Finally, we teach students how to control a fight on the ground using a simple but effective flow of techniques.

Boxing

Boxing is well known for its superior hand techniques. Students learn early on how the jab-cross of western boxing relates to the lunge and reverse punch we learn in our karate training. From there students learn the hook, uppercut, and basic defensive maneuvers, including ducking and parrying. By the time students have finished the boxing progression, they will have a good boxing foundation in place and feel comfortable using boxing techniques in sparring and self-defense.

Aikido

Students begin their throwing and falling curriculum early with the judo progression mentioned previously. After green belt, however, students begin learning the joint locking common to aikido. Students actually begin their aikido training by learning the soft style blocks. These are designed to teach them how to harmonize with their opponent's energy. Combined with other soft style principles such as "opening the door", these skills will form the foundation for future soft style training.

After developing some proficiency in soft style blocking, students are introduced to the art of joint locking through the staple locks, bent wrist (kote gaeshi) and pressing arm (ude osae). From there, students learn more advanced aikido throws: the crossed arm throw (juji nage), the four-direction throw (shiho nage) and two variations on the over-the-neck throw (irimi nage and kokyo nage).

Blocks and Punches

The blocks and punches drill teaches timing, coordination, and proper technique. It starts with hard style blocking before progresses to the soft style blocks, but within that basic framework are more subtle concepts and principles waiting to be discovered.

Students start first by using their blocking arm to simply intercept and redirect an incoming technique. Then they learn how to add effective counter attacks. Next, students learn to deliver the counter attack *with* the block, resulting in a simultaneous attack and defense. Finally, students learn to use their reaction hand to double block incoming attacks, essentially doubling their speed, while still delivering effective counterattacks.

Furthermore, to facilitate learning, students start their blocks and punches training stationary, standing in a strong stance across from their partner. Once students become proficient with the static versions of the drill, training incorporate specific footwork, moving with the techniques to further increase their functionality.

Self Defense

Self-defense is one of the main reasons that people train in the martial arts. However, there are very real differences between practicing kata applications, sparring, and learning practical, functional self-defense. Self-defense needs to be proven effective in high stress scenarios, especially against larger, stronger opponents. Each of Satori's five self-defense sets focus on the application of a different principle or technique: tiger claw, stamping kick, elbow, defense against the short stick, and defense against a knife. In the end, you should have the skills to defend yourself in a wide variety of real-world situations.

Weapons

Weapons are power multipliers that can be found in everyday objects that are all around us. In order to be proficient in the use of weapons, students learn how to use both short weapons (tambo, short stick) and long weapons (bo, staff). Training begins with the tambo because the shorter, single-handed weapon is more akin to our empty hands. Next, students learn the longer, two-handed bo. These weapons lay the foundation for later sword and spear training.

Tambo

During a self-defense situation, it usually helps to possess more power than your opponent. Greater power can be achieved with greater physical size, muscular strength, and fighting experience. Weapons, such as short sticks, can act as power multipliers. They increase your speed, force, and range, giving one person the ability to fight off much larger, even multiple, opponents.

Training begins with basics strikes and how to effectively apply them, both offensively and defensively. Learn how to block an opponent's attack and finish the job with a series of simple disarms that will leave your opponent wondering where his stick went.

Bo

Along with your knowledge of short, single-handed weapons like the tambo, you should know how to use long weapons that require two hands to wield. Training begins with basic strikes, targeting, developing combinations, and feinting, as well as some important blocking concepts. From there we move on to advanced double striking and hooking disarms before moving on to long range fighting using the extended grip. Add to this some very effective entry methods, and you will have all the skills necessary to become a formidable fighter at both middle and long range.

Stamina

Fighting requires good cardio, light footwork, and sharp pivoting for fast, explosive striking. This requires good leg strength and endurance. However, not just any leg workout will help you accomplish your goals.

To mimic the constant quick bursts of speed and develop the cardiovascular endurance required for fighting, we do burpees. Burpees entail dropping yourself to the ground, performing a push up, then quickly returning to your feet. You can modify this basic exercise to develop other areas of strength or skill.

Besides the developing your physical fitness, burpees contain a practical application as well. The action is very similar to sprawling, a critical defense used to counter low grappling attacks, keeping you on your feet and off of your back.