

Kata Drills

1. Four Points

Aim: To practice weight transfer forward, backwards and sideways. It also serves as an effective leg warm up exercise.

Zenkutsu Forward

1. Standing feet together, knees bent in the halfway stepping forward position.
2. Extend right leg forward but ensure big toe remains in contact with the floor at all times.
3. When your leg reaches full extension allow your supporting rear leg to begin pushing your torso forward so that the front toe skims forward to your 'normal' stance length (between 15-25cm further).
4. Place sole of front foot down and continue thrusting/pushing your torso forward and transfer your weight from the rear leg into the front leg.
5. Continue transferring the weight forward so that the front leg holds the weight.
6. Pull the rear (left) leg forward so that you finish with both feet together and knees bent.

Zenkutsu Backward

7. Extend left leg backwards to full extension, all the time keeping the big toe in contact with the floor.
8. At full extension transfer weight backwards so left leg skims backwards a further 15-20cms. Place sole (ball) of foot down and it now becomes the anchor.
9. Use adductor (groin) muscles of left leg and pull hips backwards to the left knee/thigh.
10. Once majority of weight has transferred into rear (left) leg pull right foot back to left foot and finish with feet together and knees bent (original starting position)

Repeat this with other left leg extending forward – BOTH LEGS MUST BE DONE.

Kiba dachi Sideward (right)

1. Standing feet together, knees bent in the halfway stepping forward position.
2. Extend right leg to the right and ensure big toe remains in contact with the floor at all times.
3. At full leg extension allow body weight to move to the right and skim to big toe across the floor a further 4-8cm and place foot down on floor.
4. Continue weight transfer so weight is settled at kiba dachi position (50/50) and then transfer weight into right leg.
5. As weight transfers out of left leg, pull left leg to right leg and finish feet together, knees bent.

Kiba dachi Sideward (left)

Repeat above but using left leg to begin.

Kiba dachi Sideways (left) 2nd tim
Repeat above – move to left a second time

Kiba dachi Sideway (right) 2nd time
Repeat the original instructions for sideways right.

Kokutsu dachi Backward

1. Standing feet together, knees bent in the halfway stepping forward position.
2. Extend right leg backward and ensure big toe remains in contact with the floor at all times.
3. When your leg reaches full extension allow your left leg to begin pushing your torso backward so that the right big toe skims backward to your 'normal' stance length (between 15-25cm further).
4. Place sole of right foot down and continue thrusting/pushing your torso back and transfer your weight from the left leg into the right leg so that you are sitting on your rear leg in kokutsu dachi.
5. Continue transferring the weight back so that the rear leg holds the weight.
6. Pull the front (left) leg back so that you finish with both feet together and knees bent.

Kokutsu dachi forward

6. Extend right leg forward but ensure big toe remains in contact with the floor at all times.
3. When your leg reaches full extension allow your supporting rear leg to begin pushing your torso forward so that the front toe skims forward to your 'normal' stance length (between 15-25cm further).
4. Place sole of right foot down and twist you left leg/thigh outwards to the left so that the ball of the left foot pivots and allows the heel to rotate forward to the right (anti clockwise) - you should now be in kokutsu dachi.
5. Now continue transferring the weight forward so that the front knee collapses/bends forward so that the right leg holds your weight.
6. Pull the rear (left) leg forward so that you finish with both feet together and knees bent.

Repeat using the left leg extending.

Further information.

It is called four points as you start at the middle point and extend to the 4 points of the compass (forward, backward, right and left). It is an exercise to gain strength in the legs, to understand the importance of weight transfer and also serves to warm the legs up. It is important that the big toe remain in contact with the floor as this allows for total control of weight transfer without 'dumping' or throwing weight onto the floor.

One complete set is 3 stances performed 2 times each leg (2), so a total of 12 stances (4 of each stance). Perform approximately 5 sets which gives 20 each stance.

2. Zenkutsu squat

Aim: To retain stable upright upper body posture when moving forward.

1. Begin in correct zenkutsu posture
2. The first movement must be to allow front knee to push/collapse forward. This allows the transition of weight onto/into front leg.
3. As front knee begins to collapse forward use groin muscles of rear leg and pull back leg forward.
4. Bring back leg/knee to front leg in a squatting position and hold for 1 second. Ensure the rear leg does not put weight onto floor, this IS NOT a rest position. Weight should remain in the supporting thigh.
5. Keeping the weight in the front supporting leg, use the quadriceps (thigh) muscles to thrust the original rear leg back to its starting position.
6. Repeat 10 times and change leg.

Further information.

This drill is to gain the strength to keep the upper body completely vertical – no shoulder or chin tilting forward as a movement to assist the rear leg. Don't try and remove the weight from the rear leg by tilting the upper body forward. The rear leg is pulled forward so do not use the foot to push off the ground.

3. Zenkutsu screw

Aim: To retain stable upright body posture and weight transfer when twisting to the right

1. Place right leg forward in zenkutsu dachi.
2. The first movement must be to allow front knee to push/collapse forward. This allows the transition of weight onto/into front leg.
3. As front knee begins to collapse forward use groin muscles of (left) rear leg and pull the left leg forward.
4. As the rear leg comes in, twist your hips anti clockwise and continue the twisting/turning motion and 'screw' your hips so they feel as they screw downwards.
5. As you feel your hips screwing downwards extend your left leg outwards to the right side.
6. As your left leg extends 'search' with your big toe for the floor and step down using your toes first.
7. As your foot touches down thrust your right leg so that your weight is then transferred forward into your left leg.

Further information

The feeling is to screw your body downwards as you step, similar to the way a drill twists downwards. The feeling of downwards stops the inherent feeling to push upwards when

moving forward and twisting direction. It is not necessary to actually finish deeper than when you began, it is simply providing the focus for you to concentrate on twisting downwards that keeps the same height. This drill can be done on both legs, however twisting of this nature in kata only occurs with right leg forward.

4. Zenkutsu alone

Aim: To be able to efficiently and precisely step forward and backward in zenkutsu dachi.

Zenkutsu Forward

1. Begin by standing in zenkutsu – left leg forward
2. The first movement must be to allow left (front) knee to push/collapse forward. This allows the transition of weight onto/into front leg.
3. As left knee begins to collapse/push forward use groin muscles of right leg and left leg to pull right leg forward.
4. Bring right leg/knee to left leg in the half way position so that both knees are in close proximity to each other.
5. Extend right leg forward but ensure big toe remains in contact with the floor at all times.
6. When your leg reaches full extension allow your supporting rear leg to begin pushing your torso forward so that the front toe skims forward to your 'normal' stance length (between 15-25cm further).
7. Place sole of front foot down and continue thrusting/pushing your torso forward and transfer your weight from the rear leg into the front leg.

Repeat for other leg forward.

Zenkutsu Backward

1. Begin by standing in zenkutsu – left leg forward.
2. Transfer weight backwards and 'break' (bend) right knee and squat down - it now becomes the anchor.
3. Use adductor (groin) muscles of right and left leg to pull the hips backwards to the left knee/thigh.
4. Once majority of weight has transferred into right leg pull left foot back to right foot and twist hips square ensuring now that hips are facing front and toes are pointing forward – this is the half way position.
5. Thrust left leg backwards to full extension, all the time keeping the sole of the foot in contact with the floor.
6. Finish in zenkutsu with 80/20 split of weight forward. Do not take upper weight backwards – remember majority of weight stays forward, only the leg goes backwards.

Repeat this with other left leg

Further information.

The forward extending foot needs to be searching forward, finding the 'safe' place to land. When moving backwards you need to 'break and sit' on your supporting rear leg and pull your hips to the back knee – not pull your back knee forward to your hip then try and take your body backwards. Remember we don't want to be moving weight forward when we should be stepping backwards. Always check to make sure your hips have snapped back square (facing front) and that your toes are pointing forward.

5. Kokutsu alone

Aim: To be able to efficiently and precisely step forward and backward in kokutsu dachi.

Kokutsu dachi forward

1. Begin in kokutsu dachi – left leg forward.
2. Bend your left (front) knee forward and transfer your weight from the right (back) leg to the front leg so that the left knee collapses/bends forward and it holds your weight.
3. Pull the right (rear) leg forward so that the right knee passes by the supporting left knee in the half way stage.
4. Extend right leg forward and ensure big toe remains in contact with the floor at all times.
5. When your right leg reaches full extension allow your supporting left leg to begin pushing your torso forward so that the front toe skims forward to your 'normal' stance length (between 15-25cm further).
6. Place sole of right foot down and twist your hips and left leg/thigh outwards to the left so that the ball of the left foot pivots and allows the heel to rotate forward to the right (anti clockwise) - you should now be in kokutsu dachi.

Repeat for other leg forward

Kokutsu dachi backward

1. Begin in kokutsu dachi – left leg forward
2. Transfer the weight back so that the right (rear) leg holds the weight.
3. Pull the left (front) leg back so that your left knee passes by the right knee and twist your hips square ensuring now that hips are facing front and toes are pointing forward – this is the half way position.
4. Extend right leg backward and ensure big toe remains in contact with the floor at all times.
5. When your leg reaches full extension allow your right leg begins pushing your torso backward so that the left big toe skims backward to your 'normal' stance length (between 15-25cm further).
6. Place sole of left foot down and continue pushing your torso back and twist/snap your hips back to the left to complete your weight transfer from the right leg into the left leg – you should now be sitting on your left leg in kokutsu dachi.

Repeat for other leg forward.

Further information

Never allow the rear leg to straighten as this means you have gone further than the 30% front - 70% back split and you have carried too much weight forward. At the time your rear knee wishes to straighten and push your body forward that is the signal to snap your hips off square (hamni). This is when weight goes from the 10% front - 90% back or the 15% front - 85% back to the 30/70 split. Always remember hips need to stay square as long as possible and only are released at the very end. This late release is like letting a spring go or trying to rush everything out at the last minute, it gives it the urgency of speed and energy. Early twist is like slowly tipping water out of a bucket, late twist is like tipping the bucket up side down all at once.