

Hello Everyone. We hope you are all keeping safe and well. This is now our third lockdown newsletter. Thank you for your comments and feedback. It is good to know that you are finding them helpful and enjoying the video links also. ....

With best wishes,

*Chris & Barbi*

15<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## KARARTY KLUB

Martial arts and creative arts are often closely associated. This is especially so in Japanese tradition – for example Samurai would learn the fighting arts like sword-fighting and archery and also creative arts such as the art of calligraphy. There are many reasons for this but one simple reason was to attain balance and completeness of character.

We are not suggesting you learn Japanese calligraphy!! But one particular Japanese emblem that we particularly like is called the enso.



It is a single-stroke brushed ink circle. It is possible to be very creative with an enso and here are a few examples. We think it would be interesting to see what ensos you might come up with. Some might consider a rainbow enso in tribute to the current coronavirus situation. By the way, this challenge is open to students of any age ....!



# BODY - MIND - SPIRIT

Karate aims to strengthen body, mind and spirit. Here are suggestions for each.

## BODY

### MOVEMENT IS MEDICINE.

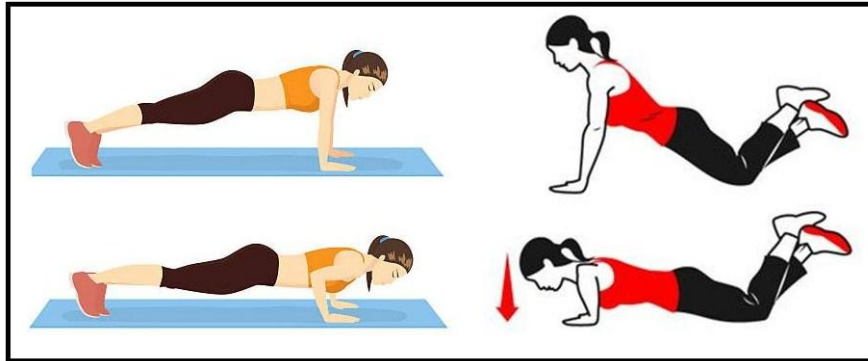
We hope you had a chance to try out some of the variations to the **exercise challenge** last week. Keep it up – doing the exercise challenge once a week will be a good way to keep up your fitness until we get back to regular training. Hopefully some of you also tried out the **footwork/agility ladder drills**. Some of them are quite challenging and a good workout for the brain as well as the body!

In our first newsletter we recommended **PLANK** as a daily strengthening exercise. Remember you can vary your plank (variety is the spice of life ....!). For example:

- **Front plank with straight arms.**
- **Front plank with flexed arms** – slightly bent elbows will increase the difficulty.
- **Front plank on forearms** (like in dynamic plank).
- **Dynamic plank** – maintain forearm plank while jumping your feet apart then together.
- Any front plank but keeping **one leg lifted** then the other – hold for 10 then swap.
- **Side plank** – remember to do both sides.
- **Shoulder taps** – while maintaining a straight arm plank, take the weight on your right arm as you tap your left hand to your right shoulder and then take the weight on your left arm as you tap your right arm to your left shoulder. Keep alternating.
- **Suicide plank – aka ‘tricep extensions’** – moving from straight arm plank to forearm plank and back (see video link below). You can do this with both arms at the same time or lead with one arm then the other.

**IMPORTANT:** keep your body in as straight an alignment as possible. Really engage your core muscles so you don't strain your back. Work towards holding each position or variation for at least 30 seconds.

We know many of you are using **PRESS UPS** as well. These are a great callisthenic exercise using rhythmical movement and body-weight resistance to improve core strength and strengthen the arms and shoulders.



**IMPORTANT:**

- ⇒ Keep your body as straight as possible. Head, neck and spine in alignment.
- ⇒ Ensure your hands are underneath your shoulders and as you bend your arms, keep your elbows close to your sides. A common mistake is to let your elbows bow away from your body. This is not the optimum position for joint stability as it does not engage the lats. You would not deliver a gyakuzuki punch with your elbow sticking out – well it is the same for press ups.
- ⇒ Aim to lower your chin to the ground for a full press up.

There are lots of **press up variations**. They add or reduce the difficulty of the press up and also work differently on the various muscles in the arm, shoulder, chest and upper back. For example:

- ⇒ If you are new to press ups or are struggling with a new variation, you can perform it **leaning against a wall**. Place your feet further away from the wall to increase the effort.
- ⇒ For intermediate difficulty, perform the press ups **on your knees**.

As well as regular press-ups there are:

- ⇒ **Wide arm press ups**.
- ⇒ **Staggered press ups** (one arm slightly in front of the other – remember to do both sides).
- ⇒ **Spiderman press ups** – aka commando press ups.
- ⇒ **Plyometric press ups** – push up dynamically so your hands jump off the floor.
- ⇒ **Mississippi press ups** – like a normal press up but stop half way down and hold for 3, 4 or 5 Mississippi then complete the press up and repeat.

Here is a link demonstrating press up variations. Do not expect to be able to perform all of these but it is *instructional* – use it to see how to do a good press up. Work to the edge of your comfort zone but don't over-do it or be over-ambitious and end up injuring yourself!

<https://safeshare.tv/x/eUBc5uKg1Ik#>

## MIND

For those of you who know it, TENSHO kata is an excellent moving meditation.

Tensho is often translated as “rotating palms” and the kata focuses on continuous, flowing movement. It combines soft breathing (as opposed to Sanchin kata) and uses all the rotational mobility of the arms and especially the wrist.

For those who need a reminder of the movements, here is a link to the kata performed by Thomas Geiger (7<sup>th</sup> dan and Chief Instructor for Germany). It is very similar to the way we perform the kata and the minor differences are not important. If you remember our way, do it our way. Unfortunately this video does not explain the breathing – remember to keep it soft and continuous, inhaling on the preparations/deflections, exhaling on the strikes.

<https://safeshare.tv/x/FerIep7tLE#>

## SPIRIT

Last week focused on *ippon kumite*. This week we will return the focus to *bunkai*, the practical applications of katas. It can be difficult to practice techniques alone. Of course, it is a necessary part of our training and one of the reasons kata developed. Performing *bunkai* alone is harder because this is traditionally practised with a partner. But karate teaches us that when something is difficult we PERSEVERE & FIND A WAY TO DO IT!

Here is a link to a great video by a very well-known karateka, Jesse Enkamp – also known as ‘The Karate Nerd’. His website ([www.karatebyjesse.com](http://www.karatebyjesse.com)) and his YouTube channel are massive reservoirs of interesting and informative information and videos. If you have not looked at them before, we recommend you do. In this video, Jesse explains about *bunkai* and demonstrates how you can practice even on your own. If you don’t have a suitable punchbag, you can adapt but remember to take it easy if you do end up using a tree instead .....

<https://safeshare.tv/x/QF SPtsy8LE#>



# KATA – BASSAI DAI

Bassai Dai is usually translated as “Storming the Fortress”. Here is a link to a video of Bassai Dai performed by Masataka Ohshita Sensei (technical director of the SSWU, the worldwide Shukokai association of which our club is a member).

<https://safeshare.tv/x/oOsmLcREEYk#>



# HEIAN KATA BUNKAI



In our first newsletter we included a link to videos of the five Heian katas (also called Pinan katas). Here is a link to a video tutorial by Jesse Enkamp (again!) giving an example of a bunkai for each of the Heian/Pinan katas.

<https://safeshare.tv/x/wHZMzjvFYhc#>

## MERIT AWARDS for Karate Kids and Cadets

The first two merit awards we have looked at are **RESPECT** and **SPIRIT**. This week we are introducing the **PATIENCE** merit award. Remember to let us know once you think your child has earned their MERIT AWARD and we will send you their certificate.

### PATIENCE MERIT AWARD

**PATIENCE = how you act while you are waiting**

**Patience is not just the ability to wait. Waiting is a fact of life.**  
**Patience is the ability to keep a GOOD ATTITUDE while you are waiting.**

Some things are out of our control. We cannot make time pass more quickly so the weekend arrives sooner; or make the rain stop just so we can go out and play. And we can't skip practising and still become brilliant at something. Some things just take time and waiting is an inevitable part of life. Unless we always want to be cross and frustrated we have to develop patience.

Patience is not just about waiting – it is about **how** you wait. How you wait will have an effect on you and those around you. If you are impatient and become frustrated or angry this is a very negative mindset. You will feel bad and probably make those around you feel bad too. Waiting calmly is a much more **positive mental attitude**. It is a better way to pass the time and, when your wait is over, you will be in a more upbeat and productive frame of mind to begin your task or activity.

Every day there are lots of opportunities to practise and develop patience. You might have to be **patient with someone else** e.g. a younger brother or sister or an elderly relative. You might have to be **patient in a situation** e.g. waiting in a queue. Often it helps to see things from the other person's point of view. You also have to be **patient with yourself**. It is all very well to want to be an amazing rock guitarist, fantastic football player, brilliant artist or to get your black belt. But you have to remember that it takes time to build up the right skills – and a lot of patience and practice .....

Have *patience*.

All things are *difficult* before they *become easy*.

- ★ **ACCEPT** that you cannot make time pass more quickly, no matter how cross you get: so why get cross when it won't help and will probably make things worse?
- ★ **FIND A WAY** to pass the time. As the saying goes, 'Time flies when you are having fun'. If it is appropriate in the circumstances, find an activity or game to pass the time.
- ★ **DEVELOP INNER CALM.** Sometimes it is not appropriate to play a game to pass the time. Sometimes you just have to wait calmly and quietly. For many this is the hardest. Remember, you won't have to wait forever. The waiting will end and it will be worthwhile – eg waiting your turn on a game or waiting for your parent to finish their jobs so they have time to play.
- ★ **BE UNDERSTANDING.** Imagine how you would feel if someone was impatient with you.
- ★ **SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE.** Worthwhile achievements (like your black belt) take hard work and effort to achieve. Patience, perseverance and practice will bring rewards and enable you to achieve your goals.

Challenge: you have to earn your PATIENCE award – so what can you do to earn yours?

## And finally .....

for our adult and more senior students we suggest reading the *Bubishi*. The *Bubishi* itself concerns Monk Fist and White crane kung fu and is a classic work on philosophy, strategy, medicine and technique as they relate to the martial arts. It was a secret text, passed down from masters to students for generations in China and later in Okinawa, (the birthplace of karate) and it was called 'The Bible of Karate' by Chojun Miyagi. There is a well-known translation and analysis by Patrick McCarthy which looks at history and philosophy, Chinese Medicine, Vital Points of the body and fighting techniques.

