



Free-form sparring against single and multiple attackers

7 Key Free-form Sparring Principles:

- 1. STRICT INSTRUCTOR SUPERVISION:** Under no circumstances can sparring of any kind be performed except under the strict and direct supervision of a qualified instructor. All health and safety principles outlined in the organisations formal Code of Conduct and Health and Safety guidelines must be strictly adhered to at all times.
- 2. NO FALSE EGO:** Remember, these drills only attempt to simulate real-life physical confrontation. It is not real fighting. Real fighting is over much faster – with potentially serious physical (not to mention legal and physiological) ramifications for all parties concerned. There are many more considerations in real-life situations that require specific strategic and tactical knowledge, skills and action outside the scope of this drill/exercise. All Aikido-Yoga drills and sub-exercises should be performed quite unemotionally, in a detached manner, without any desire to succeed, or any apprehension of failing. All of your attention is therefore free to concentrated solely on the exercise being performed.
- 3. RESPECTFUL / CORRECT ATTITUDE:** Please approach this exercise with the correct attitude and respect for all concerned because these dynamic drills / exercises are designed to enhance the confidence, skill level and spontaneous creativity of both the attackers as well as the defenders. Everyone is learning to let go of fear and their fight/flight responses in order to perceive more opportunities and to be able to appropriately act in spontaneous, innovative and creative ways - and improvise depending on the situation.
- 4. ETIQUETTE IN PREPARATION FOR THE PURSUIT OF HIGHER TRUTH:** As there is no choreography or pre-determined outcome, either party in the engagement can be “victorious” – however victory is not the aim. Gaining skills in the pursuit of “Higher Truth” based on correct principles is the aim of this exercise. Specific etiquette is therefore observed as follows: Before and after each drill, all participants formally bow to each other, stand, then bend down to touch each others feet with both hands before placing their hands together and performing another standing bow to signify their sincere attempt to allow the spontaneous actions evoked under pressure to highlight where correct principles are being performed and where they are not. Each participant sincerely plays their part in order to highlight each others strengths and weaknesses. The sincere pursuit of a higher purpose is placed before ego or victory. All participants also perform a formal bow to each other on completion.
- 5. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOCUS:** The focus is on correct breathing, mental focus, technical execution, creativity / improvisation, spontaneity, and appropriate, realistic engagement strategies, distance / timing / rhythm etc. within the constraints of the pre-determined drill speed.
- 6. HEALTHY CONTACT:** The exercise is performed without any protective gear. Contact is ‘healthy’ if given and received appropriately, so do not be afraid of contact (ie. Strikes, kicks or grappling.) First aid, massage, nidra yoga and/or reiki may be administered by the participants to each other after the exercise as appropriate.
- 7. THERE ARE NO RULES:** Within this context, all creative forms of defence and offence are permissible, with no rules apart from those pertaining to the prescribed drill speed based on the skill level of all participants.



Free-form sparring

Attacker (uke) dos and don'ts

Uke Don'ts:

1. We are trying to simulate the pressure of reality in order to facilitate the creation of appropriate creative, spontaneous responses from the nage(s) – with complete safety. So although all movements and reactions must be authentic – and made as if at full speed / real time – absolutely no sudden accelerated movements or suddenly going faster than the instructor's pre-defined CONSTANT and CONSISTENT drill speed based on skill level of nages/ukes.
2. No choreography or premature falling. No over-extension or off-balance attacks. No deliberate missing (ie. Healthy contact). No stopping of intent to follow through on the delivery of an authentic attack. However remember to "Drill safe":– although all attacks must be 'authentic' - no excessive contact on strikes, kicks. Grappling can disable the uke's movement – however not injure.
3. Although feigning attacks and no contact strategies in order to gain advantage are permissible, there is to be no sudden speeding up or slowing down in order to gain unfair advantage or disrupt the natural rhythm or timing of the predefined drill speed.
4. All forms of attack and grappling, including feigning of attacks and/or changing the direction of an attack to elicit a response from the nage in order to gain advantage are all permissible so long as it remains in the pre-described drill speed limit imposed by the instructor.
5. Do not stop until you receive clear instructions from the instructor to do so or an injury is sustained that requires immediate treatment.

Uke Dos:

1. Remain aware, maintain a heightened sense of survival instinct and put increasingly appropriate pressure on the nage(s) based on instructions from the instructor.
2. Use of prescribed weapons and/or creative utilisation of any object are all permissible – while strictly observing all safety requirements of the drill.
3. Any object or weapon in the room or anything at all if the exercise is performed out doors (ie. Trees, stones, water etc.) can be utilised creatively for advantage without causing injury.
4. All participants must acknowledge when they have received a legitimate simulated strike or submission hold using whatever means / object / weapon available, and disengage from the attack to a safe distance before attempting to re-engage.
5. Attack intelligently – look for opportunities and weaknesses – especially when multiple ukes are engaging a single nage. If there is an opening – attack with intelligent contact or grapple with the intent to take your opponent down and make them submit or render them unable to continue.
6. Simulate strikes or grappling with proper intent to disable or take down nage. If the uke goes down – continue with authentic simulation of strikes and/or grappling with proper intent.



Free-form sparring

Defender (nage) dos and don'ts

Nage Don'ts:

1. We are trying to simulate the pressure of reality in order to facilitate the creation of appropriate creative, spontaneous responses from the nage(s) – with complete safety. So although all movements and reactions must be authentic – and made as if at full speed / real time – absolutely no sudden accelerated movements or suddenly going faster than the instructor's pre-defined CONSTANT and CONSISTENT drill speed based on skill level of nages/ukes.
2. No taking advantage of the prescribed slowed pace of the uke's attacks for unfair advantage. Although feigning attacks / no contact strategies in order to gain advantage is permissible, no speeding up or slowing in order to gain unfair advantage / disrupt the rhythm or timing outside the predefined speed pre-determined by the instructor.
3. Drill safe – although all attacks must be 'authentic' - no excessive contact on strikes, kicks. Grappling and submission holds can disable your uke's – however not injure.
4. Do not stop until the clear instructions from the instructor to do so or an injury is sustained that requires immediate treatment.

Nage Dos:

1. All participants must acknowledge when they have received a legitimate simulated strike or submission hold using whatever means / object / weapon available, and disengage from the attack to a safe distance before attempting to re-engage.
2. Be creative. Use your imagination. Any object or weapon in the room or anything at all if the exercise is performed out doors (ie. Trees, stones, water etc.) can be utilised creatively for advantage without causing injury.



Free-form Sparring Instructor Supervision

Instructor Supervision:

1. Drill speed is performed at an appropriate level based on the skill level of all participants in order to ensure the development of correct physical, mental and technical components that are targeted by the specific drill prescribed.
2. Drill speed must remain CONSTANT and CONSISTENT during the course of any attack or defence. Drill speed may start slowly and increase in speed and intensity during the course of the exercise based on the skill level of all participants.
3. Immediately correct anyone that consciously or sub-consciously increases the speed of their attack or defence above the prescribed limit (predetermined by the instructor based on the skill levels of the participants.) This is especially the case when vital points of the body are targeted or the creative use of objects / weapons is introduced into the equation by any of the participants.
4. Appropriate reactions are observed by any participant that receives a legitimate simulated strike, kick, tackle, pin or come in contact with ANY object / weapon that would cause serious injury or require an appropriate response.
5. NO contact – only simulated attacks - to the following body parts: Eyes, ears, groin, breasts and neck. Strictly only simulated distractions and attacks such as the use of body fluid (ie. Saliva/spitting or gas/burping etc.) to gain advantage. Also strictly only simulation of close quarters yelling into ears. If these actions are successfully simulated in the appropriate manner – the receiving participants must react accordingly, and disengage.
6. After the exercise, the instructor performs a formal bow - not to any individual - but to the collective group in acknowledgement of any spontaneous actions that demonstrated alignment with higher principles in the pursuit of "Truth", or any actions that correctly observed the proper attitude, respect and etiquette.