

How To Train Forms - NECKF Teachers Camp 1/ 27/ 07

" A person who has mastered an art reveals it in their every action " - samurai maxim

Who does them?

- Any martial artist who is worth their salt!

What are they?

- The nucleus of our system
- They define, describe, and preserve the information of our system, in short, they contain all the motion we need to know What is a good form?
- When a student can demonstrate the coordination of their upper and lower body at the proper speed to generate tremendous power

When should we practice them?

- Daily! Morning , noon, or night, find the time that suits your schedule, and when you can perform them best. I always preferred the morning, because it helped me to clear my head and ready for the day. Midday practice may provide a "re-charge" and gear you up for me afternoon's tasks. Night practice may provide a great " wrap up " for me day, always ending it on a positive note!

Where should we practice them?

- Everywhere! No, but seriously, don't go and get yourself arrested for disturbing the peace because you felt like doing Long Form 1 in the middle of Wal-Mart. You should, however, try to practice on different terrain, not just the dojo's nice, even, padded floor. Go out in the yard, on the grass, or in the driveway on the tar. Nothing can humble you more than trying to adapt to an uneven or rough terrain.

Why should we practice them?

- Because your teacher told you to!!
- The benefits are incredible!

The body - mind, mind - body connection

Physical benefits	Mental benefits
Enhance coordination/ balance	Increased focus/ awareness
Increase/maintain flexibility & strength	Increased confidence and (indomitable)spirit
Improve cardio vascular health	Develop perseverance
Lose weight	They keep us humble- remind us that we're human
Categorize methods of motion	They provide the ultimate " me - time! " = reduces stress
Increase stamina/ endurance	Develop courage - by making us assess our weaknesses and diligently work to overcome them

How do we practice them?

- First, start at the top (your mental approach!)
- Have the right attitude! - accept the fact it's going to require a lot of work. Move the mountain one stone at a time. Remember that the price of success is paid in advance.
- Train with all your heart - Training half- heartedly breeds boredom and stagnation. All martial artists go through difficult periods in their training, but the ones who go on to be great are ones who constantly renew their commitment to train with enthusiasm and interest.
- Next, work on the physical. Understand that there are three stages -1/ Memorization, 2/ Understanding, and 3/Application.

Memorization - Work from the ground up! Take a picture book approach and know what stance each move contains. **Remember rule #1 - Establish a base!** Have a partner check each block, etc. for proper body alignment, then, create muscle memory by holding each position for 5 seconds, and then use dynamic tension from the toes up to cement it in. Now, create a checklist so that you can start moving that mountain, one stone at a time.

Picture This : The Can / Can't list:

From the ground up	Things to consider:	Muscle memory achieved (x)
Stance	Toe/heel - knee/heel - knees bent weight distribution	
Hips/ waist	Hips level, tucked in - in line w/ heels. Let your center " drop "	
Back/ spine	Maintain an erect carriage, keep your back straight, not vertical	
Shoulders	Relaxed, pulled back for better breathing, in line w/ hips	
Arms	Proper reference points for blocks, punches, strikes, etc. " elbows in and you win " major/ minor approach	
Hands	Good fist/ weapon formation	
Head/ eyes	Keep in line w/ spine- eyes up for focus	

After you've worked on the picture, now work on the " movie " . Practice your forms' foot maneuvers . **Practice:** Short Form one with your feet only, then add the rest. For fun try your forms with your hands only in a horse stance. It's great for coordination and visualization.

Practice: Long Form One hands only

Keys: level travel, sliding the feet. **Rules:** When moving backwards : Distance first, then rotation; forward: rotation first, then distance. **Practice:** Short Form One 1st 2 moves, then Short Form Two 1st 2 moves.

Practice for power! Know what the power principles are for each move and how they work.

1. Torque - Spinning. Rotational and counter-rotational. Generally done w/ 2 point balance. Example: 1st 4 moves short one (*practice*)

2. Back up mass - Body alignment with the weapon on a horizontal plane. Generally done by stepping or shuffling forward. Example: Palm heel strike in short 2 (*practice*)

3. Marriage of Gravity - Body alignment w/ the weapon on a vertical plane. **ALWAYS** Involves dropping. Example: Middle knuckle rake in short 2 (*practice*)

Combinations come next. For fun, try to find movement in your forms that contain:

Torque	Back up Mass	Marriage of gravity
w/ back up mass	w/ torque	w/ torque
w/ marriage of gravity	w/ marriage of gravity	w/ back up mass
w/ back up mass & marriage of gravity	w/ torque & marriage of gravity	w/ torque & back up mass
w/ marriage of gravity & back up mass	w/ marriage of gravity & torque	w/ back up mass & torque

Example: Thundering Hammers (torque, back up mass, marriage of gravity)

Start slow for proper body alignment. As confidence grows, so should speed and intensity!

Watch for signposts! The problems we encounter with forms may take away from the fun of learning them. But they are showing us where we need work. Don't be afraid to exclusively work on a small piece of motion. Just as an oyster responds to the irritation of sand to create a pearl, you can become a great martial artist by focusing on your defects, piling effort upon effort to eliminate them, and overcoming all the problems you face with determination and hard work.

Remember: " It's not how fast you go, it's how you go fast" & " You can only go as fast as you can do it correctly." Speed will come with time, but you also have to train it once in a while.

Practice: Short Form one as slow and perfect, then as hard and fast as you can. 3x

For fun, try it slow with dynamic tension, and add " bursts " of power and speed

Somewhere in the middle of slow - perfect training and hard fast training lies the perfect form.

Remember: " Practice doesn't make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect. "

I wish you all the best in your search for the perfect form. I'd also like to thank my teacher and through him, his teacher, Mr. Wedlake, for providing me the skills to share what I know with you today. This seminar was also heavily referenced by the following books:

Recommended reading:

Kenpo Karate 101,201, and 301 by Mr. Wedlake

Budo Mind and Body by Nicklaus Suino

Get them and read them as soon as you can, and then re-read them!

Thank you- Jim Peacock

" The real secret to becoming an expert in martial arts is realizing that training is a process of self-discovery. Further, it is a means of modifying your personality to make yourself healthier, more well-balanced, and more efficient"

- From Budo Mind and Body