

武神館 切磋琢磨 道場

Bujinkan Sessa Takuma Dojo Frequently Asked Questions

When and where is training?

We train in Margate in Kent every Sunday morning and on Wednesday evenings in Surrey.

Occasionally throughout the year we also arrange all day extended training sessions.

Thanet Martial Arts Centre
Zion Place
(opposite Aldi)
Margate
Kent
CT9 1RP

Sundays, 8-10am
Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/N3rcq>

*** Surrey time and venue to be advised ***

Wednesdays, 7:30/8-10pm

Visitors to the dojo are welcome though it is customary to ask to watch or join a training session in advance.

What is a typical practise session like?

A typical session lasts for 2 hours and might include:

- Warm up and stretching exercises
- Opening bow (marks the start of the class)
- Ukemi (how to fall safely)
- Kihon (fundamentals)
- Main practice (usually in pairs)
- Closing bow (marks the end of the class)

How much does it cost?

We do not post fees on the internet. Class costs are relatively modest and there are small annual fees to contribute towards insurance and for Japanese membership.

How do I go about joining or finding out more?

After expressing an interest in training you will be invited to watch a class, if you would like to take up training you can then usually start on a trial basis. During this period you may be given a few things to work on in your own time and can decide whether you wish to continue.

Anyone wanting to start training should also read and agree to Hatsumi Sensei's 'Guidelines for Participation in the Bujinkan'.

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What should I wear / do I need any special equipment?

It is not necessary to get any special clothing or equipment until you decide you want to continue training. Initially participants should wear loose clothing such as track suit bottoms and a t-shirt or sweatshirt. Rather than bare feet, it is preferable to wear socks.

Do not use or purchase any training equipment without first checking its suitability with the instructor.

Are there any books, videos or websites I can use?

Hatsumi Sensei has produced a number of books, videos and dvds which give an overview of his martial art. For anyone interested this is the best place to start. Books about Japanese culture and other old Japanese martial arts may also be of use.

The internet contains a huge amount of information though distinguishing the correct from the incorrect is not always easy without some experience. The Links section of this website may be a useful starting point.

Must/can I come to all the classes (I can't always make it)?

Most regular students usually come to every class, family, work, etc. permitting. We greatly encourage students to practise in their time away from the dojo so there is always plenty to work on if missing a class is unavoidable.

What is the grading system like?

The Bujinkan grading system follows the modern Kyu and Dan system. There are only three belt colours: white for beginners, green for kyu grades and black for dan grades. Different kyu and dan levels are then distinguished by the patch worn on the jacket and the stars above it.

Grading in the Bujinkan can sometimes be confusing since there is no official syllabus for the whole organisation. A basic familiarisation with the system is useful but students are encouraged to emphasise practise of the art itself rather than grades.

Though perhaps understandable, questions such as "how long does it take to reach black belt?" or "at what grade do I learn xxxx" are usually seen as quite naive. After even a short period of practise these kinds of questions often answer themselves.

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I am interested in training but work, family or travel make it difficult - any advice?

This and "do you have any plans to start a class in xxxx?" are two especially common questions. To answer the simplest first: other than the Surrey class already mentioned, there are no plans to start additional classes elsewhere.

If you are interested in training the most important thing is to try to get to a class, then at least you can see what training is actually like and if it's something you wish to pursue. Once there, you can talk to the instructor about how to best proceed given your particular circumstances.

I come from another Bujinkan dojo, can I attend your class as well?

Yes, though of course it's polite and proper to first check with both instructors.

I practice another martial art, can I attend your class as well?

Yes, though as above you should first check with both instructors.

Do you have competitions?

No, like most Japanese bujutsu there are no competitions. There is also no sparring in the commonly accepted use of the term. In fact the opposite is true: trust and cooperation between partners are essential for safe and productive practise.

What is the minimum age / are there children's classes?

There are no children's classes at the moment and the usual minimum age for participation is 16 though exceptions are sometimes made for mature young people nearing that age. Permission from a parent or guardian is required for anyone under 18.

Why don't you have more history, articles and training info on the website?

The website is not really a training resource itself – it's aim is to give basic details and information as a starting place for anyone interested in training to actually get started.