

SHIZENRYU KARATE

GRADE STUDY GUIDES

Red Belt 9th Kyu to Sandan · Syllabus 2026

*One page per belt: what you will learn, the words you need, and the mind behind the movement.
Techniques train the body — these pages train the understanding.*

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Part 1 — Our normal class stretch
Mara	Mara 1 to 4 — Practice pulling back and also mae geri to change sides
Kihon	jun-zuki — Basic front punch
	gyaku-zuki — Basic reverse punch
	uchi-uke — Practice using front hand and back hand
	mae-geri — Basic front kick off rear leg (ayumi ashi)
	uchi-uke >> gyaku-zuki — Basic inside parry, reverse punch
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 1 (OS) — jun-zuki >>> uchi-uke >> gyaku-zuki
Sanchin	Opening & closing (adults over 16) — Gassho - dantian, as above, so below, split into a duality, return to one
Hansha Kumite	jun-zuki > reflex uchi-uke (adults over 16) — Trap hand, punch to cause a reflex parry from the non-trapped hand
Kakie	Walking - linear (adults over 16) — Connect, bed in, rotating palms. Willow leaf palm

KEY TERMS

Kihon — Foundation / basic	Mae-geri — Front kick
Kumite — Meeting of hands	Karate — Empty hand
Kihon Kumite — Basic partner work	Dojo — Training hall
Jun-zuki — Front punch	Sensei — Teacher — 'one who has gone before'
Gyaku-zuki — Reverse punch	Gedan-uke — Lower parry
Uchi-uke — Inside parry	Yori ashi — Front foot slides first

MIND

Welcome to the first step. In Shizenryu, karate is not fundamentally about fighting — it is a discipline of self-mastery. The ability to deal with conflict is a by-product of a deeper process: learning control, awareness, and appropriate response.

"Full mastery of one technique is better than the incomplete mastery of two."

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Part 1, 2 — Part 2 = neck, wrists, ankles, waist, shoulders
Mara	Mara 1 to 6 — Practice pulling back and also mae geri to change sides
Kihon	gedan-uke >> gyaku-zuki — Lower parry, reverse punch
	yori ashi - jun-zuki — Front foot moves forward - front punch
	tsugi ashi >> mae-geri — Slide back foot to front foot - front kick
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 2 (OS) — mae-geri >>> gedan-uke >> gyaku-zuki
Sanchin	Footwork - 3 steps forward & back (adults over 16) — Use body to open and close the gates (knees, ankles & feet)
Hansha Kumite	jun-zuki > reflex uchi-uke > uraken (adults over 16) — Trap and punch to cause reflex parry. Trap the parry and backfist
Kakie	Walking - circle stepping (adults over 16) — Add circle steps - cat, cross, cat. Inside and outside

KEY TERMS

Kihon — Foundation / basic
Kumite — Meeting of hands
Kihon Kumite — Basic partner work
Jun-zuki — Front punch
Gyaku-zuki — Reverse punch
Uchi-uke — Inside parry

Gedan-uke — Lower parry
Mae-geri — Front kick
Yori ashi — Front foot slides first
Tsugi ashi — Back foot slides first
Karate — Empty hand
Dojo — Training hall

MIND

Training meets two of our deepest needs at once: certainty — the safety of structure, etiquette and repetition — and variety, the challenge that makes us feel alive. Let the routine of basics become your foundation, and let each new technique stretch you.

“Everything moves from the hara.”

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Part 1, 2, 3 — 3 = standing one-leg balance stretch
Mara	Mara 1 to 8
Kihon	nagashi soto-uke >> gyaku-zuki — Basic training for Kumite 3
	ayumi ashi >> jun-zuki — Step-through front punch
	yori ashi - gyaku-zuki — Front foot moves first
	mawashi-geri — Roundhouse kick off the rear leg (ayumi ashi), slip to the side (nagashi)
	Sonaba mae-geri — Kick on the spot - simple lift and kick in range
	sekui-uke >> gyaku-zuki — Inside lower parry, reverse punch
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 3 (SS) — jun-zuki >>> nagashi soto-uke >> gyaku-zuki
	Kumite 4 (SS) — mae-geri >>> sekui-uke >> gyaku-zuki
Sanchin	Sanchin section 1 (adults over 16) — Single limb coordination - isometric & isotonic
Hansha Kumite	uraken > reflex soto-uke > gyaku-zuki (adults over 16) — Use backfist to cause reflex parry - reverse punch
Kakie	Walking - bamboo step (adults over 16) — Keep steady connection. Partner should feel the different intention

KEY TERMS

Ayumi ashi — Step through to opposite side
Sonaba — On the spot
Nagashi — Slipping offline
Mawashi-geri — Roundhouse kick
Soto-uke — Outside parry
Sekui-uke — Inside lower parry

Uraken — Backfist
Uke — To receive
Yoko-geri — Side kick
Morote-uke — Double-arm shield
Jodan — Upper level
Chudan — Middle level

MIND

When we stop growing, we die. Anything you want to keep — your skill, your health, your confidence — must be cultivated and expanded, or it degenerates. Every class is a chance to grow a little; consistency beats intensity.

“Footwork and position are a major part of the battle in unbalancing and controlling an opponent who is committed to attack.”

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Part 1, 2, 3, 4 — 4 = warrior and drop
Mara	Mara 1 to 10
Kihon	Nagashi mawashi-geri — Chudan, gedan Yoko-geri — Side kick off the rear leg (ayumi ashi), slip to the side (nagashi) Nagashi morote-uke — Slipping and using double arm (low & high) shield
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 5 (OS) — mawashi-geri >>> nagashi morote-uke >> uraken >> gyaku-zuki Kumite 6 (SS) — gedan mawashi-geri >>> shin block >> jun-zuki >> gyaku-zuki
Sanchin	Sanchin section 2 (adults over 16) — Add pelvic swivel. Can use floor to feel flat back and S back
Hansha Kumite	gyaku-zuki > reflex uke > kagi-zuki (adults over 16) — Reverse punch to cause reflex parry - hook punch
Kakie	Fixed push (adults over 16) — The core status quo. Get this right and the rest is much easier

KEY TERMS

Nagashi — Slipping offline
Mawashi-geri — Roundhouse kick
Yoko-geri — Side kick
Morote-uke — Double-arm shield
Uraken — Backfist
Uke — To receive

Chudan — Middle level
Gedan — Lower level
Sonaba — On the spot
Soto-uke — Outside parry
Sekui-uke — Inside lower parry
Jodan — Upper level

MIND

Significance, used well, raises your standards. Compare yourself to who you were last month, not to the person beside you. Hierarchies of better and worse disconnect us; shared practice connects us.

“Always deflect, parry, cover, and trap. These defences are superior to direct blocks.”

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Part 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Mara	Mara 1 to 12
Sanchin	Sanchin opening & closing
Kihon	Uke waza: uchi, soto, jodan, gedan, nagashi, sekui — A flow drill for parrying and deflecting
	Mae-geri - ayumi ashi, tsugi ashi, sonaba — Ma-ai (distance) to manage kicking range
	Uraken - tate > yoko > ushiro — Understanding waza at various angles
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 7 (SS) — kagi-zuki >>> mawashi-uke >> kagi-zuki
	Kumite 8 (SS) — kagi-zuki >>> jodan-uke >> lock arm >> teisho & takedown
Jiyu Kumite	Free flow exchange
Hansha Kumite	jun-zuki > reflex uchi-uke — Trap hand, punch to cause a reflex parry from the non-trapped hand
Kakie	Solo walking - linear
Sanchin	Sanchin section 3 (adults over 16) — Samsau - coordinate 3 limbs at the same time. Clearly defined movement
Hansha Kumite	kagi-zuki > age-empi (adults over 16) — Hook to create uke reaction > split arms to penetrate centre
Kakie	1st Change (adults over 16) — Challenge the wrist at the centreline
	2nd Change (adults over 16) — Challenge the elbow at the centreline

KEY TERMS

Kagi-zuki — Hook punch
Teisho — Palm heel
Age-empi — Rising elbow
Mawashi-uke — Circular parry
Ma-ai — Distance / range
Jiyu Kumite — Free play

Hansha Kumite — Contact reflex partner work
Kakie — Listening hands / push hands
Tobikomi-zuki — Snap punch from a relaxed state
Mawashi-empi — Circular elbow
Kaki-uke — Hook-hand parry
Sen no sen — Intercepting as the attack begins

MIND

You now begin to touch the listening skills of Shizenryu. Pushing hands bridges the gap between kata and spontaneous application: learning to detect, redirect and counter force through tactile sensitivity rather than strength. Yield to force and bend its angle.

"Openings are felt with contact, not seen with the eye."

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Complete
Mara	Mara complete
Sanchin	Footwork - 3 steps forward & back — Use body to open and close the gates (knees, ankles & feet)
Kihon	kaki-uke >> mae-geri >> gyaku-zuki — Hook hand to catch at the wrist
	Tobikomi-zuki — Snap punch from a relaxed state
	Mawashi-geri - ayumi ashi, tsugi ashi, sonaba — Ma-ai (distance) to manage kicking range
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 9 (SS) — jun-zuki >>> kaki-uke >> mae-geri >> gyaku-zuki
	Kumite 10 (OS) — jun-zuki >>> sen no sen - nagashi-uke (rear hand) >> tobikomi-zuki
Jiyu Kumite	Free flow exchange
Hansha Kumite	jun-zuki > reflex uchi-uke > uraken — Trap and punch to cause reflex parry. Trap the parry and backfist
Kakie	Solo walking - circle stepping — Add circle steps - cat, cross, cat. Inside and outside
Sanchin	Sanchin complete with 3 ratios of breathing (adults over 16) — Clear timing to match the breath ratios
Hansha Kumite	age-empi > mawashi-empi (adults over 16) — Split guard to rising elbow to create uke reaction > trap and round elbow
Kakie	3rd Change (adults over 16) — Challenge the outside wrist at the centreline

KEY TERMS

Age-empi — Rising elbow**Mawashi-empi** — Circular elbow**Kaki-uke** — Hook-hand parry**Ma-ai** — Distance / range**Sen no sen** — Intercepting as the attack begins**Jiyu Kumite** — Free play**Hansha Kumite** — Contact reflex partner work**Kakie** — Listening hands / push hands**Kagi-zuki** — Hook punch**Teisho** — Palm heel**Mawashi-uke** — Circular parry**Tenti** — Moving

MIND

The martial arts, in their highest form, reconcile apparent opposites: stillness and movement, softness and hardness, yielding and force, mind and body. These are not conflicting forces but complementary aspects of a unified whole.

“Combinations occur as a response to an opponent's actions, not because they are a favourite set of techniques.”

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Complete
Mara	Mara complete
Sanchin	Sanchin section 1
Kihon	Safe rolling
	Take down into guard
	Jiu Jitsu (JJ) - escape the mount
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 11 (SS) — Crossed hand low grip (sword) >>> underhand grip & takedown
	Kumite 12 (SS) — Crossed hand grip (scabbard) >>> overhand grip & takedown
Jiyu Kumite	Free flow exchange
Hansha Kumite	uraken > reflex soto-uke > gyaku-zuki
Kakie (Child)	Fixed push (juniors)
Sanchin	Sanchin complete with 3 ratios of breathing (adults over 16)
Hansha Kumite	mawashi-empi (reflex uke) > jun-zuki (adults over 16)
Kakie	Intrusion (adults over 16)
	Circle step (adults over 16)

KEY TERMS

Uraken — Backfist	JJ — Jiu Jitsu — the grappling modules
Uke — To receive	Sanchin — Core kata — Sanchin boxing
Mawashi-empi — Circular elbow	Rokushu — Kata — grip releasing
Jiyu Kumite — Free play	Naifuanchin — Kata — grappling
Hansha Kumite — Contact reflex partner work	Ohyo Kumite — Variations on the kumite
Kakie — Listening hands / push hands	Tui Shou / Chi Sau — Pushing hands / sticking hands

MIND

Partner work at this level — takedowns, rolling, ground work — is built on trust and connection. You cannot learn to receive force from someone you don't trust, and they cannot learn from you unless you give them honest, controlled attacks.

“Seek control of your opponent's posture as a prerequisite to a counterattack.”

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Complete
Mara	Mara complete — Mastery over subtle body torsion
Sanchin	Sanchin section 2
Kihon	Jiu Jitsu (JJ) - Module 1
	Jiu Jitsu (JJ) - Module 2
	Jiu Jitsu (JJ) - Module 3
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 1 to 12 — Show variations (Ohyo Kumite)
Jiyu Kumite	Free flow exchange
Hansha Kumite	Complete Mara reflex flow drill
Kakie (Child)	1st Change (juniors)
Rokushu	Complete kata (adults over 16)
Kakie	Double hand push (adults over 16)
	Double hand push with footwork (adults over 16)

KEY TERMS

Kihon Kumite — Basic partner work
Jiyu Kumite — Free play
Hansha Kumite — Contact reflex partner work
Kakie — Listening hands / push hands
JJ — Jiu Jitsu — the grappling modules
Sanchin — Core kata — Sanchin boxing

Rokushu — Kata — grip releasing
Ohyo Kumite — Variations on the kumite
Naifuanchin — Kata — grappling
Tui Shou / Chi Sau — Pushing hands / sticking hands
Hara — The centre — 'everything moves from the hara'
Gassho — Palms together — salutation

MIND

Contribution completes training. A life — and a dojo — is incomplete without giving back. Help the junior grades; teaching a technique is the fastest way to discover what you don't yet understand about it.

"Control and strike the opponent at the same time."

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Complete
Kata	Mara complete
	Sanchin section 3
Kihon	Jiu Jitsu (JJ) - Module 4
	Jiu Jitsu (JJ) - Module 5
	Jiu Jitsu (JJ) - Module 6
Kihon Kumite	Kumite 1 to 12 — Show variations (Ohyo Kumite)
Jiyu Kumite	Free flow exchange
Hansha Kumite	Complete Mara reflex flow drill
Kakie (Child)	2nd Change (juniors)
Rokushu	Complete kata (adults over 16)
Kakie	Double hand push with footwork (adults over 16)
	Sanchin grip releases (adults over 16)
	Crane spreads its wings (adults over 16)

KEY TERMS

Kihon Kumite — Basic partner work
Jiyu Kumite — Free play
Hansha Kumite — Contact reflex partner work
Kakie — Listening hands / push hands
JJ — Jiu Jitsu — the grappling modules
Sanchin — Core kata — Sanchin boxing

Rokushu — Kata — grip releasing
Ohyo Kumite — Variations on the kumite
Naifuanchin — Kata — grappling
Tui Shou / Chi Sau — Pushing hands / sticking hands
Hara — The centre — 'everything moves from the hara'
Gassho — Palms together — salutation

MIND

Our greatest opponent is rarely another person, but our own loss of equilibrium. Aggression, fear and the need to dominate are expressions of internal imbalance. True training is the cultivation of clear action free from unnecessary disturbance.

"Once the kicking distance is closed, keep it closed."

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Complete (juniors) — Junior Shodan (Mon grades) leading to Nidan
Mara	Mara complete (juniors)
Sanchin	Sanchin complete with 3 breath ratios (juniors)
Kumite	Jiyu Kumite (juniors)
	Jiu Jitsu (JJ) rolling (free play) (juniors)
Kihon Kumite	All 12 Kumite (juniors) — Showing variations of all the way in and all the way out
Hansha Kumite	Complete Mara reflex flow drill (juniors)
Kakie (Child)	Walking drills, fixed push and 3 changes (juniors)
Shodan A - Sanchin	Sanchin complete with 3 ratios of breathing (juniors) — Mon tag stage A - catching up to adult syllabus
Shodan A - Rokushu	Complete kata (juniors)
Shodan A - Naifuanchin	Section 1 (juniors)
Shodan A - Kakie	Crane spreads its wings (juniors)
	Snake vs Tiger (juniors)
	Snake vs Standing Dragon (juniors)
Mara	Improved movement and transitions (adults over 16)
Sanchin	Improved movement and transitions (adults over 16)
Rokushu	Complete kata (adults over 16)
Hansha Kumite	mawashi-empi (reflex uke) > jun-zuki (adults over 16)
	Complete Mara reflex flow drill (adults over 16)
Kakie	Intrusion (adults over 16)
	Circle step (adults over 16)
	Double hand push (adults over 16)
	Double hand push with footwork (adults over 16)
	Sanchin grip releases (adults over 16)
	Crane spreads its wings (adults over 16)
	Crane circles its wings (adults over 16)
	Snake vs Tiger (adults over 16)
	Snake vs Standing Dragon (adults over 16)
Theory	Submit a defined essay

KEY TERMS

JJ — Jiu Jitsu — the grappling modules
Sanchin — Core kata — Sanchin boxing
Rokushu — Kata — grip releasing
Naifuanchin — Kata — grappling
Dan — Black-belt degree
Mon — Junior tag grades

Shodan — First degree — 'first step'
Nidan — Second degree
Ohyo Kumite — Variations on the kumite
Tui Shou / Chi Sau — Pushing hands / sticking hands
Hara — The centre — 'everything moves from the hara'
Gassho — Palms together — salutation

MIND

Shodan means 'first step'. The black belt is not the end of the path — it marks the point where real study begins. To do exactly what needs to be done, when it needs to be done: this is the standard you now train towards.

"In defence, be like the dragonfly that perches on the stick raised to hit it."

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Complete
Kata	Sanchin, Mara, Rokushu, Naifuanchin
Kihon Kumite	Refined movements — Subtle footwork and distance management. Variations, takedowns and Jiu Jitsu (JJ)
Jiu Jitsu (JJ)	Understanding the progression of the modules
Jiyu Kumite	Fluid, free play
Kakie	Crane circles and thrusts its wings
	Contra grips - laying dragon, leopard, crane — Rokushu applications
	NFC 1, sword grip: single hand
	NFC 1, scabbard grip: single hand
Theory	Submit a defined essay

KEY TERMS

Kumite — Meeting of hands

Kihon Kumite — Basic partner work

Jiyu Kumite — Free play

Kakie — Listening hands / push hands

JJ — Jiu Jitsu — the grappling modules

Sanchin — Core kata — Sanchin boxing

Rokushu — Kata — grip releasing

Naifuanchin — Kata — grappling

Ohyo Kumite — Variations on the kumite

Tui Shou / Chi Sau — Pushing hands / sticking hands

Hara — The centre — 'everything moves from the hara'

Gassho — Palms together — salutation

MIND

Move beyond rigid models, habitual reactions and emotional compulsion. Respond with clarity and appropriateness. This applies equally to the smallest and largest acts in life — from a difficult decision to responding under pressure.

“Dodging, ducking, and weaving require a high degree of physical stamina and are unnecessary if the opponent's attacking limbs are being properly controlled.”

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

Stretch	Complete
Kata	Sanchin, Mara, Rokushu, Naifuanchin
Kihon Kumite	Refined movements — Subtle footwork and distance management. Variations, takedowns and Jiu Jitsu (JJ)
Jiyu Kumite	Fluid, free play
Kakie	Fluid spontaneous applications interplayed from all Kata
Theory	Submit a defined essay

KEY TERMS

Kumite — Meeting of hands

Kihon Kumite — Basic partner work

Jiyu Kumite — Free play

Kakie — Listening hands / push hands

JJ — Jiu Jitsu — the grappling modules

Sanchin — Core kata — Sanchin boxing

Rokushu — Kata — grip releasing

Naifuanchin — Kata — grappling

Ohyo Kumite — Variations on the kumite

Tui Shou / Chi Sau — Pushing hands / sticking hands

Hara — The centre — 'everything moves from the hara'

Gassho — Palms together — salutation

MIND

Zen and karate are not separate disciplines. They are two expressions of the same pursuit: the integration of the divided self into harmonious action. Individual — indivisible duality.

"Structure > Discipline > Measure / Accountability = Growth"