



Lakewood Budo Kai

Fujitsu, Karate, and Women's Self Defense

I Forgot

“What is the name of that technique?” Perhaps one of the most commonly asked questions of martial arts students. Also one of the most troublesome for students at all levels struggling to remember all the details of each art, working through the physical challenges, and at the same time trying to perfect the technique. It often seems like associating the Japanese name of the technique with the English or equivalent meaning gets lost on the student until a rank advancement test approaches.

Let me be the first to admit it is not easy to learn the Japanese names of all of the arts on the Danzan Ryu boards. I still forget some of the names occasionally. To the student, the terms could almost be random letters arranged to make words. Then there is the pronunciation of the terms and to which board do they belong? Then there are the confusing similarities (Ryote Hazushi, Ryoeri Hazushi, Ryote Tori, Ryoeri Tori, etc.).

I learned a long time ago in my musical training – you cannot truly know a piece of music if you have to read the notes to play it because you're playing from your head, not your heart. The techniques have names for a reason and you need to know them.

Here are some tips of memorizing that have helped me learn the terms.

- Don't rely on learning the names by just coming to class. There are too many things going on in class to focus on memorizing. To me, memorizing is a study exercise best done in a quiet moment at home.
- Learn the techniques in the same order as the board. In fact, the goal would be to memorize the entire board so you can recite it.
- Use flash cards (take 3x5 cards and put the Japanese name on one side, English on the other). After learning in order, shuffle the deck and keep practicing.
- Imagine the actual technique as you say the Japanese name.
- Associate specific names and their English at certain points in the list (number 5 is Yubi Tori Hazushi, number 10 is Katate Tori). That way as you recite the list you'll know you are on track by position in the list. You can also mentally “look up” a technique from a known position in the list.
- Memorizing the first letter of a series of techniques can help sort them out. The first 5 on the Shime list could be EKJSS for Eri Gatame, Kata Gatame, etc.
- Review you recall of the terms periodically to keep them fresh.

If you know these terms perfectly it will absolutely help your confidence during rank testing. I often see students so nervous about whether they know the terms that the test becomes focused on familiarity with the name and not execution of the proper technique. This lack of confidence is compounded if the student performs the wrong technique for the requested art.



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Remember, the techniques and the many hours of practice are the hard part.
Memorizing a list of names is the easy part!