



Games - additional exercises in *kata* training

Introduction

The games proposed here can serve as additional or supplementary exercises from phase 0 to phase 3. Included are simple games for phases 0 and 1 and more complex for phases 2 and 3. They are easy to understand and help to integrate aspects of *kata* that will be practiced and used in regular judo exercises.

The games are grouped in three categories. Each game can be adapted to students of different ages and levels. Playing includes acting as Tori and Uke. All games can also be used with other technical content – they are not exclusively meant for *kata*-training.

Recommendations of games and phases

Game	Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Distance game				
Walking games:				
Human or Zombie				
Mirror game				
Technique games:				
Judo statue 1				
Judo statue 2				
Uke's choice				
Synchronized technique				
Rotating partners				

Teaching notes

- Distance game: very useful to learn and repeat proper positions and distances for *kata*-demonstrations.
- Statue game: can help to memorize the order of techniques in each group (if teacher only calls out “next technique”)
- Mirror games: these games develop coordination and interaction between partners
- Walking games: they are helpful to learn how to switch from *ayumi-ashi* to *tsugi-ashi* and vice versa.



By combining different games, more demanding situations can be created, for example:

- Distance + walking game: performing the type of displacement as Tori or Uke for a given technique or following the order of the techniques;
- Distance + mirror game: similar to above, but working in couples and integrating roles of Tori and Uke and performing the displacement of the techniques;
- Distance + mirror + statue game: coming from the previous combination, in this case there can be a finishing with the corresponding technique.

Distance game: “Find the correct distance and position”

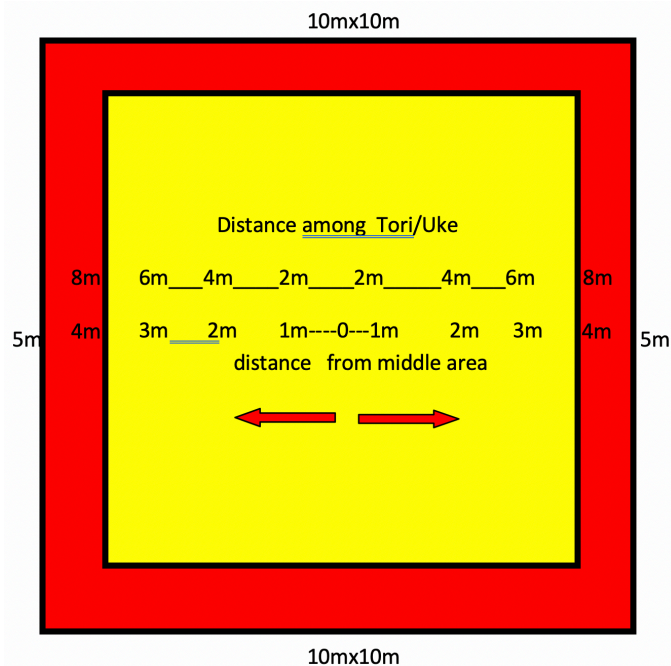


Figure 1. Official 10 x 10 metres mat and defined distances. Distances can be marked with tape, if tatami with official dimensions are not available

Idea and Rules

- Set the pairs first,
- everybody starts to run, jump or does other exercises “somewhere” on the tatami;
- when the teacher calls out a distance (for example 10, 8, 6, 4, 2) the pairs must stop their activity and position themselves symmetrical to the middle at the respective distance facing each other.

Variations to adapt game difficulty to the group

- 1st level: only distance is called out, while the role of Uke and Tori is not decided
- 2nd level: like above, but Tori and Uke role is decided or called out by the teacher (for example “the younger of you is Tori”, “who’s birthday comes next is Uke” etc)
- 3rd level: like above, but the teacher can change *shomen* side to each of the four walls and make the game more difficult and funny



- 4th level: correct way of walking and changing position as done in *Nage-no-Kata* (starting foot number of steps):
 - from 10 (or 8) to 6 meters
 - from 6 to 4 meters
 - backwards from 4 to 6 and from 6 to 8 or 10)
- 5th level: integration of 3rd and 4th level.
- 5th level: integration of techniques. Instead of calling out a distance by number, the teacher calls out the name of the technique and the students have to position themselves accordingly on the tatami.

Note: Tatami outline can be difficult depending on the dojo. If students are crowded, markings on the tatami can make it easier.

Teaching note:

This game should not be regarded only as a game related to *kata* demonstrations. Especially for younger children it is important to develop a basic understanding of numbers, calculation and measurements. It seems to be a matter of course that calculating distances is no problem for Judo-students, but teachers must be aware that these skills have to be acquired. Especially if tatami other than 1x1 meters are used, it can be confusing for insecure students.

Distance game is recommended for all phases from 0 to phase 3



Human or zombie: improving *ayumi-ashi* and *tsugi-ashi* (Walking game)

Pre-condition: the students have already learned the correct way of walking in *ayumi-ashi* and *tsugi-ashi*.

How to play

Students move freely on the tatami. When teacher calls “human” or “zombie”, the students change their way of walking: “human” = *ayumi-ashi*, “zombie” = *tsugi-ashi*.

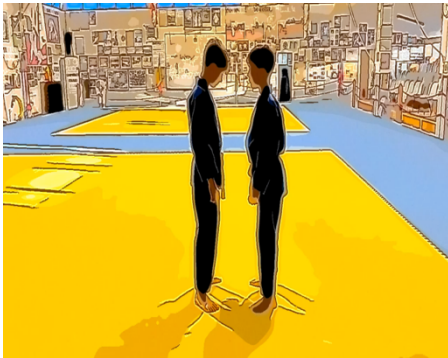
Variations:

- individual exercises without partner
- with partner gripping each other
- with partner, but without gripping

“Human or zombie” is recommended from phase 0 to phase 1



Mirror game: improving *tsugi-ashi* in lateral direction (Walking game)



Mirror game is directed to improve moving sideward in *tsugi-ashi* with a partner in order to prepare *Okuri-ashi-harai*.

How to play

- **1st level:** two students face each other and move in lateral *tsugi-ashi* with one student being the “mirror” of the other
- **2nd level:** move as above, but the guiding student changes speed and direction;
- **3rd level:** additionally to the motion above, both try to be the first to touch the foot of the partner in form of “*ashi-harai*” (exercise preparing *Okuri-ashi-harai*)

“Mirror game” is recommended from phase 0 to phase 2



Judo statue 1 (Technique game)

Pre-condition: Students already know some techniques of *Nage-no-Kata*

Students run around the tatami or practice anything else (*ukemi*, *uchi-komi* etc). After a signal by the teacher (or anybody else), they assume a position from *Nage-no-Kata* and remain in this position.

Variations:

- using numbers, colours, names or anything else to indicate techniques:
 - 1 or green or *Uki-otoshi* → *Uki-otoshi* position
 - 2 or white or *Seoi-nage* → *Seoi-nage* position
 - 3 or red or *Kata-guruma* → *Kata-guruma* position
- role of Tori and Uke is called out by teacher (the younger, the taller, etc.)
- use of music instead of oral commands (assume statute when music stops)
- the game can be played individually or by couples.

Judo statue 1 is recommended from phase 0 to phase 1



Judo statue 2 (Technique game)

The students practice techniques with or without partner (*tandoku-renshu*).

After a signal (call from teacher, music stops, etc.) the students immediately stop. After another signal (for example when music restarts) they have to continue and finish the technique.

High frequency of stop and restart and knowledge of a significant number of techniques can make this game very dynamic!

Variations:

- the teacher decides the technique depending on age, level of students, etc.
- the technique can be chosen by students
- Non-valid commands can be used (for example if the command “continue” is given, everybody has to remain in position)

Judo statue 2 is recommended from phase 1 to phase 2



Uke's choice (Technique game)

Uke chooses a technique, says the name and Tori has to execute it. This game can be played with any technique using different levels, for example:

- Tori and Uke start from a predefined engagement distance and have to execute the technique first right side and then left side;
- Uke decides the side (and/or the technique), Tori has to react accordingly.

Note: in conjunction with the distance game, it is possible to learn and improve the proper distance for techniques.

Uke's Choice is recommended from phase 2 to phase 3



Synchro game (Technique game)

Two or more pairs execute techniques synchronized with the other pairs. This game can be played with every technique (or any other exercise) and is not limited to *kata*.

Variations:

- as a challenge between the pairs (2 pairs vs 2 pairs – 3 pairs vs 3 pairs): which pairs are synchronized more accurate
- as a “show” of a big group.
- The order of techniques can be changed and mixed depending on the age and level (for example the first technique of each group: *Uki-otoshi* / *Uki-goshi* / *Okuri-ashi-harai*)

Synchro game is recommended from phase 2 to phase 3



Rotating partners (Technique game)

The students are divided in small groups (e.g. 4 students) and one or more techniques are chosen (e.g. three techniques from one group or mixed).

One student starts as Tori and executes a technique on the other three students. When he/she has finished, the second student starts throwing and so on.

Techniques should be executed to both sides from the proper distance.

Variations:

- all students practice the same technique
- the students practice different techniques according to their individual level and experience

Rotating partners is recommended from phase 2 to phase 3