

## The 22-Step Jo Form, Kata No Nijuni, Instructions and Notes

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### NOTES:

1. As with all our Jo forms, unless otherwise stated, all actions are in a “back” stance: the front foot points towards the attacker while the back foot (unlike in Taekwondo) points to the side at  $45^\circ$ . Your knees are bent but your weight may shift from the front to back foot by varying the bend of the knees: the back foot remains firmly anchored for power, as the Jo is pulled back to strike the front knee may straighten to move your weight towards the back foot, as the Jo moves forward to strike the front knee may bend to move weight forward into the strike, but you should always remain balanced with your ‘center’ of weight between your feet.
2. “Line of attack”, “LOA” = the line directly between you and the attacker when the attack begins. This is often shown in pictures as a line on the floor going in front of the demonstrator. When avoiding an attacker’s strike we are usually off the LOA (moving our body out of the line of the strike) but with certain strikes (chin or face thrusts) we may need to be on the LOA for the strongest strike.
3. “Starting point”, “SP” = the point on the line of attack where the form begins. This is often shown in pictures as a small line crossing the LOA.
4. For tradition, function, and beauty of the form, actions usually flow as circles. However, you may see those ‘circles’ executed in both large and sweeping motions and as tight, quick, compact motions.
5. The grip: As with any weapon, the thumb and index finger touch to fully encircle the Jo while the other three fingers grip firmly.
6. When learning and improving your forms, I suggest:
  - a. Breaking down each move. Perform the foot movement first and then the hand technique. Saying the moves as you do them helps improve memory.
  - b. Slow down the movements to assure you are doing them and learning them correctly.
  - c. In the beginning, check each movement to assure proper body placement and learn what the correct position ‘feels’ like.
  - d. Assure “focus” in your performance by concentrating on the imaginary opponent. With a new attacker, “look” to see the new attacker before you move.
7. Foot movements:
  - a. “Slide” as per master Trento: The same foot stays in the front and back but the body moves by moving the front foot forward while pushing off of the back foot (when sliding forward) and then the back foot slides forward to resume a balanced position. Sliding backwards, the action is reversed with the back foot moving first and then the front foot sliding back. But you are always in balance and quick on your feet. Movement is from the ball of the foot.
  - b. “Step”: Moving forward, the back foot moves forward to become the new front foot. Moving backward, the front foot moves back to become the new back foot.
8. Hand Movements:
  - a. “Thrust”: The front hand guides the direction of the thrust as the Jo is pushed through the hand by the back hand. One hand guides, one hand provides the power.
  - b. “Jab”: Both hands maintain grip and move together towards the target. Both hands guide and both hands provide the power.
  - c. “Yokomen” strike: the Jo is gripped similar to the *Bokken* with the right hand forward and the left hand at the back tip of the Jo. Strike comes down at a  $30^\circ$  to  $45^\circ$  angle (from the vertical) to target the temple, neck, or shoulder. May be done either on the right or left side. This strike ends in *chudan* position.
  - d. “Strike” position: As with the *Bokken*, the left hand is in front of your forehead gripping the back tip of the Jo, the right hand is above your head, and the Jo is angled up and to the back.

- e. “*Chudan*” position: As with the basic *Bokken* start/end position: left hand grips the Jo at the back tip and held about belt level, the right hand grips the Jo 6-12 inches above the left hand and held about belly button level, with the front tip angled upwards at about shoulder height.
9. Parts of the Jo:
  - a. “Front Tip”: the end facing the attacker.
  - b. “Back Tip”: the end away from the attacker.
10. Safety: The Jo is always carried vertically at your side. The Jo is stored flat on the floor next to a wall.
11. There is a strong tendency to lean or hunch over during this form. Keep your back straight, shoulders back, and head up.
12. When first learning this form, you may find it helpful to put LOA and BP lines on your floor with painters tape.

**THE FORM:** Numbering and naming the steps matches the pictures in the prior handout.

Bow In:

- a. Enter the ring with your Jo held in about the middle with your right hand and carried vertically behind the right shoulder.
- b. Stop with your feet shoulder width apart, bring your feet together, and bow.
- c. Bring the bottom tip of the Jo forward and up, the left hand grips the Jo about 6-12 inches from the top. The right foot is simultaneously moving backward into a ‘back’ stance.
- d. You move into *sankakutai*.

Beginning:

- a. In *sankakutai*, as with the 13-step form, in a right back stance at SP the Jo is held vertically with the left hand (thumb up) about 6-12 inches from the top. The bottom tip of the Jo is resting on the floor several inches directly in front of the left foot (at natural distance with your left elbow bent and relaxed). The body is relaxed and balanced with the right hand relaxed at your side.
- b. Begin by lifting the Jo straight up several inches, then the left hand rotates the top of the Jo forward, this brings the bottom of the Jo to the right hand. Grip the back tip of the Jo with the right hand, thumb forward.
- c. [The attacker thrust towards your chest.] Pushing off your right foot, slide your left foot forward about 6 inches on the LOA and then your right foot moves forward and *to the left of the LOA* (this moves your body left to avoid the thrust) into a balanced ‘back’ stance.
- d. Thrust by slightly loosening the grip of your left hand to allow the right hand to thrust the Jo forward striking the attacker’s chest, an “underhand thrust”. The left hand controls the direction of the thrust while the right hand supplies the power. Target could be the area just below the breast bone (‘solar plexus’), the breast bone, or even the throat.

Step 1: Left deflection and underhand thrust.

- a. Slide the feet backward to the SP, the right foot sliding to the *right* of the LOA to avoid the thrust and then...
- b. Deflect the attacker’s counter underhand thrust:
  - Open your left hand, palm toward you, thumb up, with your thumb and index forming a “V”, and 4 fingers held together. The Jo rests in the “V”. This lessens risk of the hand being hit by the attacker.
  - The tip of the Jo pushes the attackers thrust to your left and then circles upward (pushing the attacker’s Jo to the left and up) as the left hand move to about forehead height.
  - The right moves straight upward to above head height.

- The front of the Jo will be lower than the back, protecting the head from an overhead strike.
  - c. Re-grip the Jo with your left hand and lower it back to your right side as in the “Beginning, b.” position.
  - d. Repeat “Beginning” steps “c. and d.” with an underhand thrust to the chest.
- Step 2: Left deflection and left hand change.
- a. Slide the feet backward to the SP, the right foot sliding to the *right* of the LOA to avoid the thrust and then...
  - b. Deflect the attacker’s counter underhand strike:
    - Open your left hand, palm toward you, thumb up, with your thumb and index forming a “V”, and 4 fingers held together. The Jo rests in the “V”. This lessens risk of the hand being hit by the attacker.
    - The tip of the Jo pushes the attacker’s thrust to your left and then circles upward (pushing the attacker’s Jo to the left and up) as the left hand move to about forehead height.
  - c. Move into a “left hand change”:
    - Re-grip the Jo with your left hand while still holding the Jo in the deflect position.
    - Slide your right hand forward to grip the Jo about one foot from the back tip.
    - Release your left hand grip.
    - Move the front tip of the Jo to the left in a flat half circle above your head.
    - The left hand re-grips the end of the new front tip.
- Step 3: Right *yokomen* strike.
- a. As your left hand re-grips the Jo, step forward with your right foot to the right of the LOA (both your right and left feet will now be to the right of the LOA providing for a good target on the right side of your attacker).
  - b. Continuing the circular motion from the hand change, the tip of the Jo is guided by the right hand down at a 45° angle towards the attacker’s right shoulder (YOUR right).
  - c. As with the *Bokken*, the right hand moves down and the left hand pulls up to add power to the strike. The hand position is the same as with the *Bokken*: left hand about at the waist, the right hand higher so the Jo tip is up at shoulder level (your strike point).
- Step 4: Left *yokomen* strike.
- a. The front tip of the Jo rotates in a circle down, to your right, backwards, and up overhead into a ‘strike’ position.
  - b. Step forward with your left foot to the left of the LOA. Your right foot follows by sliding to the left of the LOA into a good back stance.
  - c. As you step forward, the right hand continues the circular movement to guide the Jo down at 45° towards the attacker’s left shoulder.
  - d. As with the *Bokken*, the right hand moves down and the left hand pulls up to add power to the strike. The hand position is the same as with the *Bokken*: left hand about at the waist, the right hand higher so the Jo tip is up at shoulder level (your strike point).
- Step 5: New attacker from behind, back thrust to 2nd attacker’s knee, and down deflection.
- a. Look over your right shoulder to see the new attacker coming from behind (along the same LOA). Your feet stay in the same position as you...
  - b. Release your left hand grip, the right hand pulls the Jo straight back (downward at about 45°), the left hand reaches forward and grabs the tip of the Jo (the tip that struck the 1st attacker), as the right hand reaches your right hip it loosens the grip and stays in place to guide the path of the Jo to the 2nd attacker’s knee, and the left hand thrusts the Jo backwards into the knee.
  - c. Turn in place to the right a half turn (180°).
  - d. As you turn the Jo remains on your right side. The left hand pulls the Jo forward and up through the right hand and the right hand re-grips the Jo at the back end. [The Jo is in a position to protect the right side of your body from a strike.] Your right foot is now forward and you are on the ‘left’ side of the LOA after turning in place.

- e. The left hand slides back on the Jo and pulls your Jo downward to deflect the attacker's Jo downward
- Step 6: Chest thrust, left deflection, and hand change.
- a. Step forward with your left foot.
  - b. As you step forward, your right hand pulls the Jo back through your left hand and repeats an underhand thrust to the chest.
  - c. Slide back onto the LOA.
  - d. Deflect the attacker's thrust as in Step 1.b.
  - e. Hand change as in Step 2.c.
- Step 7: Right *yokomen* strike as in Step 3.
- Step 8: Left *yokomen* strike as in Step 4. You end in *chudan* position (as always after *yokomen*).
- Step 9: *Harai* or beating strike.
- a. Turn in place to the right a half turn (180°). You are on the LOA with your right foot forward facing the direction of your first attacker.
  - b. As you turn, stay in *chudan* position and hit your attacker's Jo to the right
- Step 10: Jab to chest.
- a. Your feet remain in the same position.
  - b. Jab the Jo forward with both hands into the attacker's chest.
- Step 11: Left *yokomen* as in Step 4.
- Step 12: Left deflection and right hand change.
- a. Slide back into a left deflection as in Step 1 a. and b.
  - b. Look over your left shoulder to see the attack from behind.
  - c. Right hand change:
    - Re-grip the Jo with your LEFT hand.
    - Release the grip of your right hand but keep it overhead.
    - The left hand rotates the front tip half circle (180°) to the left above your head and the right hand re-grips what was the front tip of the Jo.
    - As the Jo is rotating, the left hand moves down to the left hip so the Jo is on your left side, angled down at 45°, and the right hand is in front of you (the move is as if you were paddling a canoe).
- Step 13: Thrust to the rear.
- a. Step back with your left foot on the LOA.
  - b. With your left hand at your left hip guiding the Jo, thrust the Jo backwards into the attacker's knee.
- Step 14: Thrust to the front and turnover of Jo.
- a. Look to your front at the new attacker.
  - b. Step forward with your left foot on the LOA.
  - c. As your step forward, the back tip of the Jo travels in a circle downward, forward, and then up to strike the chin of the front attacker. The Jo will now be horizontal at head height.
  - d. Thrust to the attacker's face.
  - e. Turnover:
    - Release the grip of your right hand. The right hand moves to the right hip.
    - The left hand rotates the Jo vertically: the front tip moves downward and back to be re-gripped by the right hand at the hip. [This could be another strike to the attacker's Jo.]
    - The Jo is now in position for your to slide forward and...
- Step 15: Chest thrust and left deflection.
- a. Thrust to the attacker's chest.
  - b. Slide back into a left deflection as in Step 1 a. and b.
- Step 16: Kneeling rear thrust.
- a. Perform a right hand change as in Step 12 c.
  - b. Step back with your left foot into a left leg kneel.

- c. Perform the rear thrust (straight backwards) to the back attacker's leg.

Step 17: Sweep to the front attacker's ankle

- a. Rise up from the left kneeling and step forward with the left foot.
- b. As you step forward, sweep the Jo in a circle from back to front and strike the front attacker's ankle.

Step 18: Jab the top of the foot.

Step 19: Thrust to the knee.

- a. Release your right grip.
- b. The left hand rotates the front tip down and back. The right hand re-grips the Jo.
- c. Underhand thrust to the knee.

Step 20: Retreating sweep strike to the head.

- a. Slide back along the LOA.
- b. The right hand pulls the Jo back through the left hand. The left hand re-grips the Jo at the front tip.
- c. Step back with the left foot.
- d. Sweep strike:
  - As you step backwards, the right hand moves forward to within 6-12 inches of the left hand. The Jo is still positioned on your right side with the left hand forward.
  - Swing the Jo in a circle so the back tip strikes the attacker's head and the hands now are on the left side of the body.

Step 21: Underhand thrust to chest.

- a. Slide backwards. [Your right foot is still forward.]
- b. Release the left hand grip.
- c. Right hand rotates the Jo vertically by dropping the front tip and rotating it backwards until the left hand can re-grip the Jo just in front of the back tip.
- d. Slide forward and thrust to the chest. [The right hand guides and the left hand pushes forward.]

Step 22: Left foot steps forward and perform a left *yokomen* strike. This completes the form.

Ending The Form:

- First option: Slide back into *sankakutai*, step the left foot back to ready stance with feet shoulder width apart, the left hand lifts and twists the Jo backwards so the right hand can grip the Jo in the middle (either on the top as the Jo comes upward OR by raising the Jo higher you can grip on the bottom-this gives extra spin), bring the Jo in back of the right shoulder (*joon-bi*), right foot moves in (*charyot*), and bow.
- Second option: (Easier) After the left *yokomen*, release your left grip, step the left foot back to shoulder width, bring there Jo in back of the right shoulder and complete eat bow out as above.

After Step 22 you may repeat the form from the beginning:

- Slide back to BP with the left foot still forward.
- Release your left grip and slide the left hand forward as you pull the Jo back with your right hand.
- The left hand opens as you move into a left deflection-you are at Step 1 b.
- Continue the form.

### Good References for the Jo Student:

1. "JO: Art of the Japanese Short Staff" by Dave Lowry, Black Belt Books
2. "JO, The Japanese Short Staff" by Don Zier and Tom Lang, Unique Publications