

Somerset Stav Martial Arts School Handbook

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Contents

• Introduction	Page 1
• What is Stav?	Page 2
• Requirements for training	Page 2
• Foundation syllabus	Page 4
• Advanced Weapons	Page 5
• Close Quarter Combat	Page 5
• Women's and Seniors'	Page 6
• Cost and payment options	Page 7
• Programme of Classes	Page 8

The historic market town of Crewkerne is home to the world's first dedicated school of Stav Martial Arts. Stav has been taught in the UK since 1992 by Ivar Hafskjold. Graham Butcher, founder of the Somerset Stav Martial Arts School, was one of Ivar's original students and he has been teaching Stav for nearly 20 years.

If you are reading this booklet you are probably interested in training in Stav as a martial art. I will try to answer the most frequently asked questions with this handbook. The answers should make it easier for you to decide whether or not Stav is likely to be a suitable activity for you. You will also have a clearer idea what to expect from training and you will hopefully understand the process you will need to pass through to successfully learn Stav.

Somerset Stav Martial Arts School Handbook

What is Stav?

Stav is a Scandinavian tradition of body, mind and spirit training. Stav was brought to the UK by Ivar Hafskjold who learned Stav as a young man when growing up in Norway after WW2. Ivar also studied traditional Japanese Martial Arts over a period of 14 years during which he was living in Japan. Stav as a Martial Art uses the traditional practices and concepts of the original Norwegian family system. Ivar's experience in Japan enables us to teach and practice Stav as a highly effective, contemporary Martial Art.

Requirements for Training in Stav

Martial arts training is a serious business. If you study seriously you will learn how to harm another human being. Of course we all hope that we will never have to use force to protect ourselves or our loved ones, but should it happen, you need to know how to defend yourself effectively. There are many benefits that will come from martial arts training including fitness, well-being, self-confidence and greater awareness of yourself and the world you live in. However we cannot escape the fact that martial arts training is potentially dangerous. It is a fact that students are learning skills which make them a menace should their knowledge be inappropriately applied.

For these reasons there is an element of selection in terms of how you can begin training. Also the instructor reserves the right to decide who should, and who should not, receive the more advanced training, especially in the Close Quarter Combat aspect of Stav Martial training.

So the main requirements are as follows:

Somerset Stav Martial Arts School Handbook

- Minimum age, sixteen years, or fourteen if accompanying a parent or other responsible adult. Stav is simply not a suitable system for teaching to children.
- You will need to complete at least twelve foundation classes within a reasonable period of time before you can be considered eligible for joining either of the advanced classes. This is partly to ensure that you have the necessary skill level. It is also so that the instructor can be satisfied that you have the right attitude to etiquette and safety.
- It is the responsibility of the potential student to ensure that they are in good health and have no pre-existing conditions which would lead to danger either to the student themselves or those they are training with.
- Training clothing should be loose and comfortable. It will be expected that students will purchase a tee shirt and wear it during training once they are committed to regular attendance. Students committing themselves to the full membership subscription will receive a complimentary tee shirt.

Please do not get the impression that Stav classes are excessively serious. You are expected to make an effort and train hard, However you will find yourself in a very friendly atmosphere. You will also find that everyone you train with, including the instructor, will be patient, encouraging and supportive. If you haven't already done so have a look at the video testimonials on www.somersetstav.co.uk .

Somerset Stav Martial Arts School Handbook

Foundation Syllabus

All students of Stav will need to begin with the foundation Syllabus. It is intended that eventually there will be two classes per week when the teaching and practice will be geared to this level. Classes will run for ninety minutes and will follow the following programme:

- Staff exercises which provide a warm-up, flexibility and strengthening exercises and develop co-ordination and skill in handling a staff.
- Opening stances
- Two person training using staff including the five principles drills.
- Basic self-defence training working from a simple grapple.
- Closing Stances

During foundation training emphasis is on the following priorities:

- Building up knowledge of basic Stav practice
- Developing basic skills in using the body, with and without a weapon.
- Learning how to train safely and effectively with a partner.

The foundation training will prepare the student for both advanced weapons training and the Close Quarter Combat classes. As stated before, students will need to attend at least twelve foundation classes before they can be considered for training in either of the advanced classes. Of course any student who prefers to make the foundation classes their regular practice on an ongoing basis is welcome to do so.

Somerset Stav Martial Arts School Handbook

Advanced Weapons and Close Quarter Combat

Classes are open to students who have satisfactorily completed a course of foundation training.

Advanced Weapons classes will build on the staff exercises and two person drills taught in the Foundation Classes. Syllabus will cover:

- Axe cuts and two person drills
- Staff and Spear nine guards training
- Cudgel defence against Axe
- Sax defence against Axe
- Karl Galdre stances

Close Quarter Combat classes will focus on self-defence skills, both unarmed and using close range weapons. Please note that a good deal of what is taught in these classes goes well beyond anything that is likely to be needed for day to day self-defence. However the training is interesting, challenging and will build up confidence and an awareness of the realities of combat. Syllabus will cover:

- Nine foundation exercises
- Two person dagger training
- Five principles knife defence
- Cudgel against cudgel, sax, knife or unarmed
- Sax against Sax
- Control and restraint techniques
- Herse Galdre Stances

Somerset Stav Martial Arts School Handbook

Special Classes, Ladies and Seniors

Although I have been teaching Stav for about two decades these classes will be something of an experiment.

The ladies class will follow the Foundation Syllabus but with more emphasis on a woman's requirements related to self-defence. The Ladies classes will be taught by a female instructor who has over five years of experience in Stav training.

The seniors class will be for those of fifty five years and older. I know that in this country martial arts are often thought of as children's activities, but there is really no reason why that should be the case. In China for example martial arts learning and practice is a life long activity and older people can greatly benefit from daily Tai Chi practice for example. I am nearly fifty five years old and Ivar Hafskjold is in his late sixties, apparently Ivar's older relatives practised Stav until the ends of their lives. So I see no reason why older people should not benefit from Stav training too. However rather than mix everyone in together we will hold a class which is directed at the needs of the older person. There will be more emphasis on the stances, particularly focusing on balance, breath and maintaining flexibility and energy levels. Weapon training will concentrate on the cudgel/walking stick with both individual exercises and two person drills.

If there is sufficient demand these classes will commence in February 2014. If you would be interested in either of these classes please contact Graham using the details on page 8.

Somerset Stav Martial Arts School Handbook

Costs and Payment Options

Classes at the Somerset Stav Martial Arts School cost £6 per session on a pay as you go basis. (your first Foundation Class is free). Day courses, 10 am to 5 pm are £40

Private classes are £35 per hour

Monthly Standing order for one class per week £20. This is suitable for those attending the Foundation Classes. When you are ready to begin more frequent training the same payment can be converted to the Basic membership below.

Basic membership costs £20 per month and includes the following benefits: Members' Manual and DVD, monthly newsletter, access to online video training videos and membership of an exclusive egroup.

For members on this scheme:

Classes will be £3 per session

Day courses £20

Private classes are £20 per hour

Full membership costs £50 per month and includes the same benefits as the basic membership. For training full membership entitles the member to:

Up to three classes per week

One day course per month

Private classes are £10 per hour

Payment can be by Standing order, Paypal or monthly invoice.

Which ever scheme you are on it will be possible to change to a different one at any time. You will just need to give reasonable notice.

Somerset Stav Martial Arts School Handbook

Programme of Classes and Courses

Regular programme continuing from Monday the 13th of January will be as follows:

Mondays	1930 to 2100 hrs	Advanced Weapons
Tuesdays	1930 to 2100 hrs	Foundation Training
Wednesday	1930 to 2100 hrs	Close Quarter Combat

It is intended that Saturday day courses will be held once a month. The first course scheduled for Crewkerne will be on the 15th of February from 1000 to 1700hrs

If there is enough interest then an extra Foundation class and the ladies and Seniors class will begin in February.

Private introductory classes will be arranged a the mutual convenience of the potential Student and the instructor.

To book introductory classes and for further information please:

Email Graham on contact@somersetstav.co.uk

Or Telephone 0771 358 5954