



The Academy of European Swordsmanship

Dagger Initiate Study Sheet

Version 2.0

Initiate Responsibilities

Once initiate ranking is achieved, the responsibilities of the student expand beyond merely studying. An initiate is responsible for assisting non-ranked students in their studies **during classes** only (under instructor supervision). As an initiate, you are also a representative of the AES. Therefore, you are expected to wear your uniform to events with other organisations and at all AES events and practises. Other privileges and responsibilities include:

- can participate as a representative of Academy/school or chapter at symposiums, workshops and conferences
- participate in the challenges of students for the playing for the prize of a initiate and savant rank
- participate in the challenges of students for the playing for the prize of a rank in other schools (upon invitation by that school)
- assist in the general operational and administrative aspects of the Academy/school (workshop coordination and setup, equipment administration, etc.)
- can participate in the governing body of the Academy in an advisory capacity or as part of the executive under invitation
- can participate and contribute to research & development projects, under the direction of a senior scholar, savant or higher ranked member
- provide assistance in training classes when called upon by the senior or junior instructor.

For the **Initiate Exam** you may be asked to demonstrate any of the following:

1. Name and show proper stances/guards
 - a. High
 - b. High Cross
 - c. Low Cross
 - d. Front or Forward
 - e. Natural
 - f. Hidden or Rear
2. Proper Grips – pros and cons of each
 - a. Forward
 - b. Reverse
3. Basic attacks from each guard
4. Defences (explained below)
 - a. Wrist Break
 - b. Wrist Slice/Deflect
 - c. Dagger Flip
 - d. Windmill
 - e. Windmill Throw
 - f. Bent Arm Throw
 - g. Arm Lock
5. Counters listed below
6. Defences using dagger against sword
 - a. Blade Deflect
 - b. Arm Deflect
 - c. Kneecap pop throw
 - d. Binden catch
 - e. Half-knife
7. Difference between a dagger and a knife

8. Difference between a Roundel and a Poniard

Attacks

The attacks made with daggers are similar to the basic sword cuts. In addition, schnitt (slices) and any Ringen (hand-to-hand/wrestling) attacks are also acceptable.

Defences – Armed

These defences work only when both you and your opponent are armed with daggers.

1. Wrist Break – used against high attacks

- a. Hold dagger in reverse grip
- b. Block your opponent's attack with your dagger hand (connect at the wrists)
- c. Reach **under** your arm with your free hand and grab your dagger's blade
- d. Pass back and quickly drive your arms down towards your body – this action should break your opponent's wrist

Counters:

1. Throat cut – used when opponent already has wrist trapped
 - a. When your wrist is trapped, transfer your dagger to your free hand and cut opponent's throat – your wrist will probably be broken (unless you're very fast), but your opponent will most likely die
2. Break first – used before wrist is trapped
 - a. If you are quicker than your opponent, you can break his/her wrist first. Use the same steps as above.

2. Wrist Slice – used against thrusts made with forward grip

- a. Traverse (any direction). As you move, use a slice to simultaneously push your enemy's dagger away and cut his/her wrist.
- b. If the back of the wrist is exposed, the tendons will be severed. If the inside is exposed, the veins will be cut.

Counter: Don't leave your hand out in the open if you miss! Always return to a guard after an attack.

Defences – Armed and Unarmed

The following defences work whether you are armed or unarmed, but are usually used when without a weapon.

1. Dagger Flip – used against low thrusts made with forward grip

- a. As you traverse left, push the blade away from you with your left hand, and push your opponent's wrist in front of you with your right hand.
- b. Grab the blade and push it towards your attacker, and at the same time bring your enemy's wrist toward your torso.
- c. Pass forward and drive the blade into your opponent's stomach.
- d. If you also have a dagger follow the above steps, but use the blade instead of your right hand.

Alternate finish: a. If you cannot stab your opponent, then pass again bringing his/her arm behind him/her.

- b. Turn to keep your center in the fight, and drive your attacker's hand up his/her back towards the head. You should now be in control.

2. Deflect Dagger – used against thrusts made with forward grip

- a. Similar to the wrist slice described above.
- b. Instead of cutting the wrist, simply push the wrist/hand/knife away from you.
- c. It is best to follow with an attack of your own so that you cannot be stabbed at again.

Counter: Same as for the wrist slice don't leave your hand exposed after an attack.

3. **Windmill** – used against overhead, reversed grip attacks

– can be done on either left or right

- a. When your enemy is at the top of his/her attack, pass forward and block the attack on the inside. If the attacker is using his/her right hand, use your left to block, making contact at the wrists. Keep your right hand up to guard yourself.
- b. As you block, make sure to keep your head well out of the way of the weapon.
- c. Sweep your arm down and to your left in a large circle (like a windmill). End when your palm is facing up and is between your waist and shoulder.
- d. At the end of the circle, your opponent's grip on the dagger should be very weak. You may be able to take the dagger.

Counter: As your arm is being brought down, angle your dagger so that it stabs your opponent in the side.

Counter to counter: Step forward so that the knife ends up behind you. Attack quickly before your opponent does.

4. **Windmill Throw** – used against overhead, reversed grip attacks

- a. The throw begins the same way as the windmill.
- b. Sweep your opponent's arm down and beside you. Push his/her free shoulder, and pass forward to throw.
- c. If done properly, you should be able to take the knife away as you throw, and stab your opponent once he/she is down. If you do not take the weapon away, at least retain control of it.
- d. NOTE: When you push his/her shoulder, it is important to press between the muscles where the arm connects to the body. This is a weak spot that makes the throw possible.

5. **Bent Arm Throw** – used against overhead, reversed grip attacks

- a. Block attack with your left hand. (Connect at wrists, keep your head out of the way.)
- b. Reach your right hand beside and behind your opponent, bring it up on the inside of his/her arm, and grab your left hand.
- c. As you are doing this, pass forward so that you are beside your opponent.
- d. Bring your opponent's hand down to his/her shoulder to bend the arm.
- e. Walk forward as you drive the arm down. This should throw your opponent.
- f. Be sure to keep control of the weapon after your opponent is down.

6. **Arm Lock** – used against high attacks

- a. Block attack on the outside.
- b. If you have a dagger, use it to hook and rotate your opponent's wrist away from you. If unarmed, simply grab and rotate the wrist.
- c. Pull your attacker's wrist in to your hip and use your forearm to turn his/her elbow forward. Push down on the elbow.
- d. Be sure to keep your back straight. Do not bend over to force your opponent down.

Counter: As your wrist is being turned and pulled, bend your arm strike your opponent with your elbow.

Types of Daggers

Dagger: Daggers are symmetrical and are usually sharpened on both edges, but may be only partially sharpened. They are larger than knives and most often have a cross-guard.

Knife: Knives are generally smaller than daggers and are asymmetrical. They are usually sharpened only on the front edge, but may have some of the back edge sharp as well.

The main distinction between the two is symmetry.

Roundel: Roundels were daggers designed to puncture heavy armour. Their name is taken from the circular guards placed above and below the handle (roundels). Early roundels were nothing more than spikes, but as technology developed they became triangular and had sharp edges.

Poniard: Poniards were long daggers used mainly with a rapier to deflect attacks. Their slim blades were also useful for piercing leather armour. The first poniards were not sharp, but as they evolved they became longer and had cutting edges.

Initiate Oath

1. You shall uphold, maintain and keep to your power all such articles as shall be declared unto you by your Provost or Meister.
2. You shall be true student from this day unto the last day of your life, to love the true and hate falsehood, never to rebel and go against any Provost or Master of this science, always to be ruled by your master and the founding masters of this science.
3. You shall not teach this art to anyone until you have attained the ranking which allows for instruction, except under supervision of your Provost or Meister.
4. You shall not compare any other master to disparage his doings, and especially you shall not compare your Meister, under whom you now proceed and of whom you have had your Cunning, neither with Challenge nor with opprobrious words as touching our science in any way.
5. You shall not allow yourself to be abused in any way, but shall defend yourself from injury to the best of your abilities. This being said, you shall not provoke fights or cause fights to be made on your behalf.
6. You shall swear to keep this Initiate's oath in all points now given and declared unto you by me, your Provost or Meister, in the presence of our brethren of this science, by all you hold true and dear.