

Getting Started with Die Schlachtschule: The School of Battle!



Hello, and thank you for your interest in our school. I get a lot of questions from prospective students about who we are and what we do, so I thought I'd put together a short introduction for anyone who wants to know how to get started in the exciting world of Medieval Martial Arts.

Who are you, and how did you get involved?

My name is Hugh Knight—and yes, that's my real name! I've been an active martial artist for more than 30 years, first with very traditional Japanese martial arts, then free-form reenactment combat in armor, and now this. I've been studying medieval fighting manuals for more than ten years, and I started teaching formally in 2002 when I opened *Die Schlachtschule*. I started my school on the East Coast, but when my job brought me to California the school came along with me.

What is the art you teach?

I teach medieval martial arts based on German manuals written in the 14th and 15th centuries. These manuals encompass a complete system of combat for all the types of fighting a medieval knight might expect to be do. Just as a Dojo in Japan would teach a samurai a complete system of combat from grappling to dagger to swords to spear to naginata, both in and out of armor, our school teaches grappling, dagger, sword, spear, and pollaxe both in and out of armor.

What does it cost to join?

We have no contracts, no start-up fees, no special deals. I charge \$10.00 per each class you attend to help defray my expenses and to buy more training equipment for the school. This isn't a way for me to make money, it's a passion that I'm eager to share.

Why don't you have a fancy studio?

Medieval combat was usually done outdoors and I prefer to use that natural setting as well. Besides, it means I don't have to charge huge monthly fees to pay for rent.

Where and when do you practice?

We practice at a park in North Hollywood on Sundays at 1:00 PM and at my home in Moreno Valley on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 PM. Please write for directions.

What do I need to get started?

A positive attitude and a willingness to learn. There's lots of gear you'll need eventually, but we have loaner gear for newcomers. If you're really eager and just can't wait to start equipping yourself then you can get yourself some practice weapons. You should get a longsword and a dagger "waster" (the medieval term for wooden practice weapons because they got used up or wasted in practice) and a rubber pollaxe head from Purpleheart, a highly reputable company (with whom I have no relation, by the way).

- Here is a link to their longsword waster:
<http://www.woodenswords.com/WMA/longsword.htm>
Make sure you get the standard model, L1 with the Standard Pommel.
- And here's their dagger waster:
<http://www.woodenswords.com/WMA/daggerroundel.htm>
You can get any one you'd like, but the standard model is just fine.
- You can also get the rubber head for pollaxe practice here:
<http://www.woodenswords.com/WMA/index.htm>
Note: You do *not* need to get the assembled pollaxe they sell; just get the rubber head for \$33.00 and we'll help you assemble it here. And yes, I know it doesn't look an axe, but it is, trust me!
- If you want a book to start looking at, you can start with my book, Introduction to Liechtenauer's Longsword which can be found here:
<http://stores.lulu.com/hughknight>

Again, however, I want to emphasize that you don't need any of this to get started: Just show up and start practicing.

What about armor?

Whatever you do, don't buy *any* armor until you discuss it with me. There's an incredible amount of absolute garbage out there, and I'd hate to see you drop a lot of money for something that will be completely unsuitable for what we do.

Where can I learn more?

You can visit our school's web page at: www.schlachtschule.org where you will find a lot more information about who we are and what we do along with instructions for sample techniques and links to web pages with even more information. You can also sign onto our Yahoo discussion list at:

<http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/dieschlachtschule/> to post questions and read discussions on a wide variety of topics related to medieval combat.

I hope I've answered all of your immediate questions, but if not please feel free to contact me at hughk1066@juno.com and I'll be happy to try to answer any others you may have. I look forward to having you join us at class!