
The Medieval Dagger Course: Dagger Handling and Basic Strikes

[Audio Length: 0:05:47]

RECORDING COMMENCES:

Guy Windsor:

Hello and welcome to this section of the dagger course. This is a dagger. It is a triangular section steel spike. This is the sort of weapon that Fiore would've been using. It's usually about this long. Vadi says that the grip should be the size of a fist and the length should be to the elbow. Its function is really simple. It is not a whittling knife and it is not for cutting your sandwiches. It is for making triangular-shaped puncture wounds in people who are wearing resistant clothing or even armour. It is usually held in the fist like so or in the first like so. It's either this way round or

The grip of the dagger is either point up like so or point down like so and it's a good idea to get used to shifting the grip with just one hand. You would never do this in a fight but it's a useful dexterity drill. So finger comes over, thumb comes around, fingers come around, there it is. These three fingers come around, it's held between these two fingers, thumb comes round on top, and there it is so you've got point down, point up, point down, point up, point down, point up. I should point out this is a sharp dagger and I'm barefoot. Be sensible. Of course you should practice these on both hands and you'll probably find that one hand is a lot more dexterous than the other but this is a really useful drill just for getting the dagger to be properly connected to the hand.

At the beginning of the dagger section, Fiore gives us a page with five masters on it, each one with their hands in a particular position and those positions are **[text on screen: doubled middle iron door, doubled and crossed iron door, doubled full iron door, single full iron door and doubled iron door]**. For strikes with a dagger, Fiore gives us a lovely picture -- here it is -- and he shows these four lines of attack. Fendente comes straight down so you can grip the dagger in a reverse grip, put it in an imaginary scabbard or a real one if you have one, pull it out and stab straight down. Fendente.

Mandritto is fore hand and it strikes to the temple and it's technically a mezzano blow. Roverso strikes back hand if you like to the other ear and these mezzano blows strike from the temple as low as the elbow. So if I'm standing like this, they strike as low as that, no lower. So mandritto is here, roverso is there. The three blows done with the, if you like, ice pick grip are fendente, mandritto, roverso. The strike from below is done with the point forward grip or point up grip and it goes straight up the middle and we call it sottano which means from below. So you have fendente, mandritto, roverso, sottano. If you do this with me, I'll call them and do them follow the order, roverso, fendente, sottano, mandritto, mandritto, fendente, sottano. Change hands. An important point about the terminology, mandritto means fore hand, roverso means back hand. So if I was a tennis player, fore hand, back hand, fore hand, back hand. Fendente is the same, straight down, mandritto, roverso, sottano, mandritto, roverso, fendente, sottano.

END OF RECORDING