IRON & BREATH

Week 1 Starter

The complete first week of Iron & Breath. Free. No signup.

Breath, two stances, and the triangle. Seven days, fifteen minutes a day.
If Week 1 feels good, the full 4-week Foundations pack is where Weeks 2 to 4 live.

Important: This program is general fitness education, not medical advice. It does not diagnose, treat, or cure any condition. Talk with your clinician before starting a new exercise program, especially if you have joint, heart, balance, or nerve concerns, or if you take medication that affects balance or blood pressure. Stop any movement that causes sharp pain, numbness, dizziness, or chest discomfort, and seek medical care if symptoms persist. Start shallow, start slow, and progress only when the current level feels easy.

Start here: the three promises

- No jumping, no sparring, no contact, no gym.
- Start high and shallow. Easy is the point in Week 1.
- Sharp pain, numbness, or dizziness means stop. Every time.

Breath: the engine

Everything in this program runs on breath. Breath steadies you between efforts, keeps tension useful instead of panicky, and turns stance work into conditioning. Learn these four before you worry about speed or depth.

1. Belly reset (2 minutes, anywhere)

Inhale through the nose for 4 counts and let the belly expand while the chest stays quiet. Exhale through the mouth for 6 counts and let the belly fall. Repeat. Use it while waiting, between sets, or any time you feel wound up.

2. Box breathing (waiting windows)

In for 4 counts, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4. Repeat 4 to 6 rounds. If holding your breath feels uncomfortable, skip the holds and just breathe evenly.

3. Breath behind the brace (for lifts and carries)

Before you pick something up, brace your core as if someone were about to poke your stomach. Take short sips of air into the belly behind that brace, without fully releasing tension until the load is down. Exhale on the lift itself.

4. Ibuki: the Sanchin breath (home sessions, Week 4)

A quick, sharp inhale through the nose, then a forceful exhale through the mouth with a short “tss” while tensing the whole body on the technique. Inhale relaxed, exhale with tension. Keep tension at about 60% while you are learning it. Never hold your breath to the point of dizziness or seeing spots.

Stances: the foundation

Horse stance (ma bu)

Feet about twice shoulder-width, toes forward or slightly out. Sink until the thighs are roughly parallel to the floor, but start higher: a high horse stance is the correct Week 1 version. Knees track over the toes and never cave inward. Back straight, pelvis tucked slightly under, fists chambered at the hips or hands resting on the thighs. Hold 30 seconds, rest, repeat 3 times to start. Add 15 seconds per week. The long-term goal is a 2-minute hold. Dull burn in the thighs is normal. Sharp pain in a joint is a stop signal.

Bai jong: the on-guard stance (your home base)

Strong side forward. Feet a natural step apart, like a short fencing stance. Lead foot flat, rear heel lightly raised, weight roughly even and slightly favoring the rear leg. Lead hand extended toward the

target with a loose fist or open fingers, rear hand up guarding the chin. Elbows tucked, chin slightly down, slight crouch: coiled, not tense. From here everything fires. Practice simply living in this stance for a few minutes at a time.

Sanchin-dachi: the iron stance (Week 4)

Feet shoulder-width, front foot turned slightly inward, rear foot angled out. Knees bent and drawn slightly inward, gripping the floor with the toes. Back straight, weight about 60/40 forward. Hold 1 minute per side as its own drill.

Footwork: the triangle

Imagine a triangle on the floor. The male triangle steps offline and re-enters: start at the apex, step back-left to corner 2, shuffle across to corner 3, then drive forward back to the apex. That drive is the re-entry. Run it mirrored, back-right first. The female triangle starts at the base and steps forward to the apex: the entering version. Stay in bai jong, hands up. Add a straight lead every time you reach the apex. Two minutes at a time is a real drill. Short, balanced steps beat long lunges. If a step hurts a knee, shorten it.

Your Week 1, day by day

Week 1 plan

Day	Micro-session (through the day)	Home session (30-40 min, 2-3x/week)
Mon	Horse hold 30s x 3 + belly reset x 4	—
Tue	Bai jong stance checks 2 min x 3	Warmup, horse + bai jong, triangle 10 min, stretch
Wed	Triangle walk 2 min x 3	—
Thu	Belly reset + box breathing	Warmup, stances, triangle, belly breathing, stretch
Fri	Horse hold 30s x 3 + triangle	—
Sat	—	Footwork 10 min, stance holds, stretch
Sun	Rest	Belly breathing + standing meditation only

The daily 15-minute template

2 minutes belly reset, 3 minutes stance holds, 5 minutes triangle walking, 3 minutes of slow stance checks or extra breath work, 2 minutes standing still and breathing. That is a complete Week 1 day.

What comes next

Week 2 adds flow: the straight lead, the heaven six-count sinawali, and the roof block. Week 3 adds carries and strength under load. Week 4 adds Sanchin kata and standing meditation, and puts the whole template together. The full Foundations pack also includes the printable 4-week training log.

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