

# NINJAS IN NATURE GUARDIAN'S GUIDE



CHI PATHWAY  
BY  
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## Welcome Ninja!

We are unreasonably stoked that you have decided to continue training with our Ninjas in Nature Program! If you are reading this, hopefully you already completed the four introductory skills of our Level 1 NiN Rank. If you haven't, you can begin your training for that level by visiting our website [www.ninjasinnature.com](http://www.ninjasinnature.com). With the Chi Path, the training really gets fun as we expand on the skills, the themes, and lots of Pathways. In this level of training, we venture into the Elemental Pathways. These skills will change your relation to the natural world, to yourself, and to others.

We are grateful that you have chosen this Pathway.

Keep training!

Dai Shihan Mark Roemke (15th Dan)  
Pathways Dojo Founder

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Kenneth Clarkson  
NiN Program Director

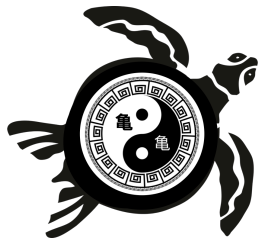
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## The NiN Ranks

As students complete curricular Pathways with our training, they can progress in the NiN Ranks. Below are the Ranks and Requirements.



**NiN Rank.** Level 1. This is where it all starts.  
**Requirements** = complete the 4 skills of the NiN Pathway. **Total Pathways = 1**



**Kame, 亀, (Turtle).** Level 2. The North Guardian. A turtle is a creature of Earth and Water.  
**Requirements** = complete Knife Path + 2 additional pathways. Recommended: Chi (Earth) and Sui (water) pathways.  
**Total Pathways = 4 (Nin, Knife, Chi, Sui)**



**Ootori, 鳳凰, (Phoenix/Firebird).** Level 3. The South Guardian. The phoenix connects with fire, wind, and disappears/reappears from the void. **Requirements** = complete 3 additional pathways. Recommended: Ka (Fire), Fu (Wind), + Ku (Void). **Total Pathways = 7**



**Tora, 虎 (Tiger).** Level 4. The West Guardian. The tiger knows the arts of invisibility, survival, and self defense.  
**Requirements** = 2 ANT Paths (choice) + 2 Nature Paths (choice).



**Ryū 龍 (Dragon).** Level 5. The East Guardian. The dragon knows all pathways. **Requirements** = 3 Remaining ANT Paths complete. + 2 New Nature Paths  
**Total Pathways = 16**



## What is Chi?

Chi means “Earth.” The term chi is also used to describe the energy that moves within us. Think about this...

Wiggle your fingers.

What moves your fingers? Muscles, bones, tendons, and ligaments!

What causes these things to move in your body? Your brain sends signals to your muscles telling them to move.

What are these signals made of? Small nerve cells.

What moves through these nerve cells that tells your muscles to move? Electrical impulses.

What are these impulses made of? Energy.

Like our bodies, if you look beneath your feet in nature, you will discover that it is alive with energy. The Earth is alive with large to small creatures, but also levels of electric energy. When lightning strikes the Earth, it shoots lots of electrical impulses through the ground.

In this training we will connect to Chi— the Earth, the life that is all around us, and within us!





## The Elemental Pathways

### How the training works

If you are a parent, guardian, or instructor reading this, you have an important role in guiding a young ninja through this course. Your role is to:

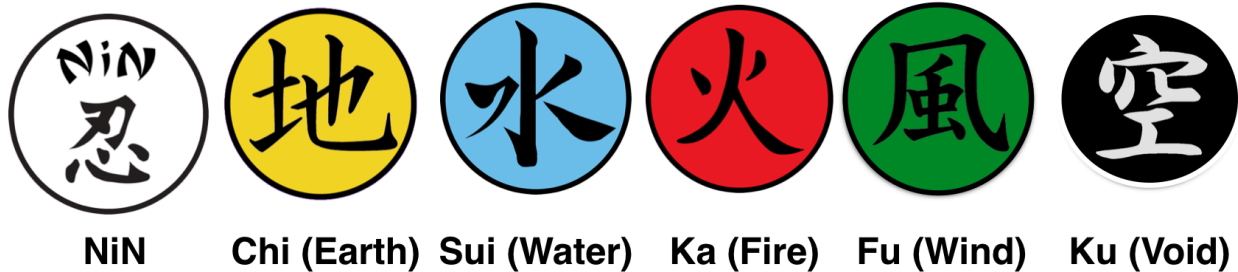
- Watch the training videos and read the materials first.
- Show your student(s) the skills videos (optional).
- Help with logistics and materials needed to practice the skills.
- Oversee safety.
- Help your student(s) practice the skills.
- Play the games associated with the skills (optional).
- Lead the final challenge at the end of the course.
- Present certificates and optional patches and shirts (optional).

### Guiding the Ninja

While our training is designed for leading youth, we believe that the skills we teach are beneficial no matter your age. If you are a parent or guardian, we encourage you to do the skills along with the young ninja in your life. Infectious enthusiasm is one of the best teaching tools. At Pathways Dojo, we believe that the best teaching comes from direct experience and that everyone has the capacity to be a teacher. Learning and demonstrating the skills is how we do our instructor certification process. As a leader, you too can become certified as an instructor alongside the students you lead (and you get the shirt, patch, and certificate too!) It's optional for you of course, but consider this your invitation to train as a real ninja! **If you do all the skills alongside your ninja, include your name as a student with the confirmation process at the end of the course and you will be certified as an instructor for this level!**

## The Elemental Pathways

There are six Pathways in our elemental training system, grouped by themes.



In each of the Pathway training modules, we teach skills that relate to the element (water for example in the Sui Pathway). Beyond the NiN Basics training, we teach students how to make a specific wooden Ancient Ninja Tool for each Pathway. In the Sui Pathway for example, students make a hanbo (half staff) that we use to train for the ninjutsu skills. We teach four skills in the NiN Basics Pathway. For the other elemental Pathways we expand to 12-16 skills in each Pathway module.

### Ninja Notebook

For Chi through Ku levels of training, you will need a good sturdy notebook. Size and style is up to you. We recommend a notebook that is durable. Remember, your notebook might encounter a little mud, rain, and bouncing in a backpack.

***Students will need to make notes on each of the skills they learn for the curricular Pathway.***

Writing versus drawing doesn't matter to us. We love both. If you are more visually oriented, do more drawing. If you like to write more than draw, then write! We also like to do "mind's eye" journaling. Check out the video link below that explains this secret ninja note taking technique.



### Resources

To learn more the ninja notebook, watch the training video by visiting <https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/>

### Stripes

In the Elemental Paths, beginning with the Chi Pathway, we introduce colored tape (aka "stripes") as a way of tracking student progress. While this is optional for you to do on your own, one thing that we have learned is that

kids LOVE getting their stripes. As students complete the skills, they can earn a colored tape to put on their Ancient Ninja Tool (the wooden training tool that they make for each Pathway). For example, in the Chi Pathway, the training tool that they will make and put tape on is an escrima stick. You can also choose to mark their escrima stick with paint, pen, wood burning, carved notches, or any creative idea you have. Stripes are awarded based on the 8 activity themes of the training.

## Stripe Colors

Ancient Ninja Tools: **BROWN**, Ninjutsu: **BLACK**, Invisibility: **BLUE**, Survival: **RED**, Energy: **ORANGE**, Zanshin: **PURPLE**, Helper: **GREEN**  
Ninja Notebook: **YELLOW**

We use standard electrical tape which can be purchased at most hardware stores or online. **See the Resources section for a link where you can find tape online.**

## Documenting Skills

As an adult leading youth through these skills, you determine when skills are deemed “complete”. You can then award stripes and ultimately the certificate of completion when they have finished all skills. We love to see photos or videos of student progress through postings on our **private Facebook Group** (see the link in the resource section). Our instructors will respond to posts in this group. You can also ask instructors questions in this private group. We do not share photos unless written permission by parent/guardian is given.

At the end of your training, we have a short form to complete that helps us document student path completions, track progress, and is to be used for confirming rank promotion (and certificates) on our end. We also use this form to document instructor certification. See the Resources section at the end of training for this link.

## Resources

To learn more about giving stripes, watch the training video by visiting **<https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/>**



### **Hand-Made Ancient Ninja Tools (ANT)**

In each Elemental Pathway beginning with the Chi Pathway, students make a hand-made training tool such as escrima sticks, hanbo, rokushaku bo, or kyoketsu shoge. We refer to these as Ancient Ninja Tools. While these can easily be purchased online from a martial arts supply company, we have found that there are many valuable lessons to be learned by gathering and making your own training tools from nature. These lessons include learning the resources of the landscape around you, "tending the wild" techniques, wood working skills, and safety.

#### **To make these tools you will need:**

- access to wood (usually branches or small trees) which can be found in a local forest, or by contacting a local tree pruning service if you don't have access to a forest. We give more details in the lessons about gathering and processing wood.
- a knife. We recommend a sheath or locking blade
- parent/guardian to supervise safe techniques
- a small portable saw

#### **Other optional items**

- sandpaper (but don't forget the original sandpaper is a rough stone)
- a wood file/rasp
- saw (for cutting wood to length)



# Chi Path Checklist



## Lesson #1: Ancient Ninja Tools

Brown Stripe

- ☐ Make an escrima stick
- ☐ Name Knife Safety Techniques
- ☐ Ninja Notes



## Lesson #2: Niniutsu

Black stripe

- ☐ Throwing techniques
- ☐ Blocking and Striking
- ☐ Ninja Notes



## Lesson #3: Invisibility

Blue stripe

- ☐ Camouflage Game
- ☐ Hour of silence
- ☐ Ninja Notes



## Lesson #4: Survival

Red stripe

- ☐ One match fire
- ☐ Ninja Notes



## Lesson #5: Energy

Orange stripe

- ☐ Sit spot Solo Sit
- ☐ Ninja Notes



## Lesson #6: Zanshin

Purple stripe

- ☐ Meet a tree
- ☐ Ninja Notes



## Lesson #7: Helper

Green stripe

- ☐ 5 local Hazards
- ☐ Ninja Notes 5 Local hazards



## Lesson #8: Ninja Notebook

Yellow stripe

- ☐ Draw the kanji for Chi





## Chi Pathway

Chi means "Earth". With this next level of training, we will introduce skills that connect with the ground beneath your feet, awareness of the landscape around you, and the energy of the Earth. Upon completion of the Chi Pathway you can earn the certificate, patch, and shirt associated with this Pathway.

**See the Resources section to order patches and shirts.**



### **Kame/Turtle Rank.**

If you have completed the Knife Safety Pathway, when you complete the Chi Pathway, you will only need one more pathway (Sui/Water Pathway for example) to earn the Level 2 NiN Rank of Kame/Turtle.

## The Chi Path Checklist

There are 8 themes of skills, each with a color stripe to earn for the Chi Pathway. The Chi Checklist below is to help you track your progress. You can do the skills in any order, however, you will need to make escrima sticks (see Ancient Ninja Tool stripe requirements below) in order to complete the Ninjutsu stripe, so we recommend starting with this skill. You will also need a notebook to record your skills for each stripe.



## Ancient Ninja Tools **BROWN STRIPE**



The Ancient Ninja Tool that we have chosen for the Chi level is the escrima/throwing stick. Escrima is the name we use when training with the wood for martial arts. In nature, you can use the stick for many things such as getting food (ex. knocking acorns or fruit down from a tree). We sometimes call them “throwing sticks” when using them this way. This could save your life in a survival situation.

We could simply request that you purchase a commercial escrima stick, however, there is much to be learned in making your own training tool. Your first task will be to gather wood from the landscape to make an escrima-throwing stick.

Safety is very important for our training program. We have created a list of knife safety techniques. Students need to be familiar with these techniques before using a knife. We have a **Knife Pathway** and patch. Some guardians or instructors prefer to have students complete these skills as a way to ensure their students are familiar with knife use (safety rules, carving techniques, and sharpening) before letting them use knives independently. The patches are helpful for identifying which students have completed these skills. See the Resource Section for links to the Knife Pathway.

Watch the video below to learn how to make an escrima stick, otherwise known as a throwing stick. You will want to make two sticks.

### **Materials You May Need**

1. portable hand saw
2. arms-length piece of wood (one for each escrima stick) approximately 3/4"-1" diameter. Preferably green/hard wood (easier to carve).
3. knife (we prefer a locking blade or sheath knife) See the Resources section for our preferred youth knife.
4. Files, clippers, oil, and sandpaper (optional)

## **Gathering Wood**

Know your forest. Some places have trees that are poisonous (ex. Poison Sumac) or cause irritation to the skin (ex. Mango tree sap). Do a little research if you are unsure of the wood you will select. Make sure it is okay to remove wood from your area. **Watch the saw safety video in the Resources Section.**

## **Recommendations**

- Select a hardwood such as maple or oak. There are many types. Do a little research for your area. Soft wood such as pine will break more easily. We are going to be striking, blocking, and throwing with your stick
- “green wood” which is wood that is still or recently growing. It will be easier to carve and remove bark. Dried wood is fine too, just a little harder to carve. Make sure the wood is not brittle or partially rotten. See if you can break it with your bare hands. If you can, it’s too soft. If it is really light, it might be partially decomposed and easily break as well.
- Don’t grab old wood off the ground. It likely will be starting to rot/decompose
- If you don’t have easy access to a forest, contact your local tree pruning service. They usually are happy to donate extra trimmed branches.
- Make more than one if you like. It’s fun to have multiple sticks on hand to throw at targets, and if you enjoy the escrima drills, we have an entire Escrima Pathway that you can do to learn more self defense drills. You’ll need two stick for the Escrima Pathway.

## **Length and Diameter**

- Approximately 16 inches/40.5 cm is a good length. If you don’t have a tape measure in the woods you can use armpit to palm as a general length.
- 1-1.5 inches/2.5-3.8 cm is a good diameter

## **Tending the Wild**

When selecting your wood, if you are gathering live/green wood, think of yourself as a farmer of the forest. Are there damaged or recently fallen branches that might help the plants/animals if you remove them? Are there trees or shrubs that are crowded and competing for sunlight? Tip— some of these types of wood are really good because they have small growth rights. If you remove a competing small tree/branch you might help the other plants grow bigger and faster. Sit with the tree/bush before you cut it. Take a quiet moment to see if it feels okay in your gut to take this wood. We like to share gratitude for the tree before we cut it. 100 years from now, think



about how you will have an effect on the forest by removing this wood. Have fun too. It's a great opportunity to go on a fun hike with a ninja mission!

### **Knife Safety Practices**

- 1) Ask an adult/guardian/instructor first if it is ok to use your knife
- 2) Blood bubble (arms length safety zone around you). No one should enter your bubble.
- 3) Be stationary (don't walk around with the knife).
- 4) Carve away from yourself with no body parts under or in the way of the blade
- 5) Keep your knife sharp (a dull knife is a dangerous knife)
- 6) Put your knife away (in its sheath) when you are done.

### **Woodworking Tips**

- **Practice your safe knife carving techniques**
- **Remove some or parts of the bark.** You can carve bark rings or stripes. Personalize your stick so you will recognize it when you throw it in the forest.
- **Round the ends-** since you will be holding this wood in your hand a lot, it is nice to round off the sharp on either edge/end of your stick.
- **Removing knots/bumps—** garden clippers, your saw, a wood file, or your knife are helpful for removing bumps where side branches grow
- **Sanding—** youth LOVE to sand wood. It's not required, but can make it feel good in your hand. The original sand was sandstone, so you can find a rock and use it to make your wood smooth.
- **Burnishing—** this is a fun trick. You can use the back of a metal spoon or a smooth shiny rock. When you are "done" you can rub the wood with these fast and hard to heat up the outer layers of wood and compress the cells. It will make the wood look shiny.
- **Wood burning or paint—** Optional. make your stick a work of art!
- **Oil—** Optional. It can be helpful to oil your wood daily for the first week if you remove the bark. This will help prevent the wood from cracking. We recommend food grade mineral oil, fractionated coconut oil, beeswax or beeswax mixed with one of the aforementioned oils.

## See the woodworking video in the Resources Section

### Timing

It can take time to fully complete your stick(s). The more energy you put into it, the more you will appreciate your efforts. Once you do the initial cutting of your wood, you can continue if you like with the other skills for Chi. But it's fine to take your time, finish your sticks, and then move on.

### Resources

To learn more about making your escrima sticks, watch the training videos by visiting [\*\*https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/\*\*](https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/)

### Videos

- Escrima Intro
- Knife Safety Video
- Saw safety
- Gathering Wood
- Woodworking

**Ninja Notebook:** Write/draw the kind of wood you gathered, draw a picture of your sticks showing length and diameter. Add any additional notes such as something you learned.

**Stripe:** When you finish making your escrima sticks, you have earned a **BROWN STRIPE** Wrap this tape anywhere you prefer on your stick. If you prefer, instead of tape, you can give a unique mark/color on the end with paint, pen, wood burn, or other to signify completion of this skill.



## Ninjutsu **BLACK STRIPE**

Now the fun begins! For the ninjutsu stripe, we would like you to learn blocking, striking, and throwing techniques. These include:

### **Safety**

With the ninjutsu skills, it is very important to focus and train safely with your partner. For the self defense skills you will be doing strikes and blocks with your escrima stick. Make sure you have enough space to do this. We recommend training outside (like real ninjas!) where you have plenty of room. For the throwing stick exercises make sure you have a safe place to throw your stick where no-one, object (like a house), or animal (like your pets) will be in the way of getting hit.

### **Materials**

For the throwing stick exercises you will need a target. We love tying old pie pans, cans, or plastic jugs to a rope and hanging them. You can also place objects on the ground. Old cardboard boxes work great. It's fun to have several targets placed high, low, near, and far.

### **Ninjutsu Skills**

Watch the training videos through the link below where Sensei Roemke teaches striking and blocking drills. These include striking drills #1 thru #4.

### **Throwing Stick Skills**

Demonstrate overhand, sidearm, and stealth (fox walking) throwing techniques.

### **Resources**

Watch the training videos for the above skills by visiting [\*\*https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/\*\*](https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/)

**Ninja Notebook:** Write the list of skills you learned (or draw yourself doing them) in your notebook

**Stripe:** After you have demonstrated your ninjutsu skills, you have earned a **BLACK STRIPE**. Wrap this tape anywhere you prefer on your stick. If you

prefer, instead of tape, you can give a unique mark/color on the end with paint, pen, wood burn, or other to signify completion of this skill.





## Invisibility **BLUE STRIPE**

### **Camouflage Game and 1 Hour of Silence**

One of the most well known skills of the ninja is the art of disappearing or becoming invisible. The first invisibility challenge is a game which teaches how to become invisible while maintaining awareness. The second challenge involves becoming silent, something that is easier said than done!

### **The Camouflage Game**

The camouflage game is the classic game of hide and seek with a few ninja twists thrown in.

#### **Setup**

You will need a natural landscape with objects to hide behind (rocks, trees, vegetation etc.). Make sure to scout the area before playing for hazards such as plants (ex. Poison ivy/oak, stinging nettle), wasp nests, or manmade hazards (barbed wire, broken glass etc.). This game works best with an adult leader plus 2 or more players, but can be played with just one additional player.

#### **Game Rules**

- One person is "it" in the middle. They are the spotter. They close their eyes and count out loud to 30 while the other "ninjas" hide on the landscape.
- The ninjas must be able to watch the spotter at all times, especially when the spotter holds up a number of fingers (see below).
- After the spotter finishes counting they open their eyes and slowly turn in a circle while looking for the hiding ninjas. The spotter cannot move from their central spot. If they see someone hiding, they point to them and call them out. If they don't know the hiding ninja's name, they can describe them. For example, "I see someone behind the oak tree wearing a red shirt!"
- When a ninja is spotted they must come forward and sit near the spotter for the remainder of the round. This could be a designated log or large rock nearby. It's important for the spotted ninjas to sit so the spotter can have a clear view of the landscape.
- After the spotter has turned a full circle or looked for a couple of minutes, they announce, "I'm holding up a number." At this point, they hold up a certain number of fingers and turn a slow circle while looking for the

remaining hiding ninjas. The hiding ninjas try to see what number the spotter is holding up on their fingers.

- The spotter then closes their eyes and says, "I'm closing my eyes and counting to 15! All hiding ninjas must move closer." The hiding ninjas then move to a new spot. Option— the ninjas that were previously spotted can go hide again.
- The spotter repeats the above search for the hiding ninjas and then holds up a second number.
- After holding up the second number and searching for the remaining ninjas, the spotter announces, "Everyone stand up and show yourself."
- The ninjas that were not spotted then come to the center and whisper the two numbers in the ear of the spotter.
- The closest ninja that correctly saw the two numbers wins and then gets to be the new spotter for the next round.

### **Discussion**

Discuss strategies used by the ninjas in the game. What worked and didn't work? Did they have clothing that made the game challenging? Where were the best hiding places?

### **The Hour of Silence**

The next part of learning invisibility on a landscape is to reduce what we call our concentric rings. Think of the ripples that a stone creates when you toss it into a calm pool of water. Most people travel about the natural world sending out ripples of disturbance across the landscape. This causes bird alarms which generally alerts the majority of the forest to one's presence. Most people do not realize they are creating this disturbance...but not ninjas. A real ninja knows secrets for avoiding this. When you reduce your concentric rings, you become highly aware of your surroundings. One way of reducing your concentric rings is to go into silence for an extended period of time.

### **The Challenge**

On the surface this sounds like it could be an easy challenge, but for many, this is one of the hardest skills. The challenge is to remain silent for an hour while being outside in nature. This can be done in a public park or at home. We want you to be around people also. By silence we mean no talking or making noise with your vocal cords or mouth (ex. no whistling). You can move about and do your normal activities and routines. Have someone keep time for you if you don't have a watch or clock to check. If you talk, simply reset, check the time and start over. Pay attention to how the world around you moves and behaves.

**Ninja Notebook:** Draw a map showing the location where you played the camouflage game that includes hiding places. For the hour of silence, answer these questions— When you were quiet, what do you notice? What were you aware of outside and inside of yourself? How many tries did it take you to complete the hour of silence?

**Stripe:** After you have played the game and the hour of silence, you have earned a **BLUE STRIPE**. Wrap this tape anywhere you prefer on your escrima stick. If you prefer, instead of tape, you can give a unique mark/ color on the end with paint, pen, wood burn, or other to signify completion of this skill.

### **Resources**

Watch the training video explaining the game and the hour of silence by visiting <https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/>



## Survival **RED STRIPE**

### **One Match Fire**

Fire is one of the essential skills needed for survival. We cook with fire. We use fire for warmth, purifying water, making tools, light, protection, and much more. There are several skills involved with this challenge: gathering a tinder bundle and kindling, lighting the fire, and tending down the fire.

#### **Safety**

Before you attempt this skill, make sure to take proper safety precautions including:

- Make sure you have a safe place to make a small “stealth” fire (see below for details). This may include clearing out dry leaves and debris, or using an above ground fire pit or barbecue grill.
- Have a container full of water or a hose nearby for pouring on the hot coals at the end or for immersing your fingers if you feel you get a burn from a match.
- Have a first aid kit nearby.
- Make sure an adult supervisor is present.
- Pull all hair back and tuck in loose clothing.

#### **Materials**

- Matches
- A tinder bundle (about the size of a grapefruit)
- Small kindling (small handful of sticks no larger in diameter than a pencil)
- Container of water

#### **Gathering materials**

For this challenge you will be making a small “stealth” teepee fire. This means that you will only use a tinder bundle and small sticks. We aren’t making a giant fire. The goal is to have enough material for a fire that burns for at least 3-5 minutes. You want to gather dry/dead material. Green/living tinder bundle and kindling will not easily burn and will create a lot of smoke.

#### **Tinder Bundle**

Having a good tinder bundle is essential for success. This is the grassy/fluffy material that lights first from the match. The tinder bundle is at the core of



your fire structure. The kindling or sticks go on the outside of the tinder bundle. For a tinder bundle, imagine you are making a small bird nest. For the outer part of your tinder bundle, look for:

- Dried grasses
- Dried leaves (deciduous or conifer)
- Inner bark of trees and shrubs
- Old bird nests (from the previous year)

For the inner part of your tinder bundle look for:

- Fluffy seed heads (like cattail fluff)
- Thin fibers (shredded leaves or bark)
- Dried leaves with volatile oils (like sage)
- Crumbled, dried polypore mushrooms

## **Kindling**

The outer layer of your small fire will be made with a handful of thin dried sticks. Gather small sticks the diameter of a pencil or smaller. Avoid getting sticks off the ground (they often will be wet or rotted). Look for dead branches in trees or bushes above the ground. Test the sticks to see if they are dried/dead by snapping them in half with your fingers. If they bend and don't easily snap, they are probably green/living and won't burn easily.

## **The Structure**

Place your tinder bundle on the ground. **Remember- fire burns up!** So, make a small hole or cavity in the bottom of your tinder bundle where you will insert your burning match. After you have your tinder bundle in place, carefully lay your sticks on top of your tinder bundle creating a small teepee with the stick ends pointing up. A teepee structure is one of the most efficient fire designs. Make sure to leave a space in between your sticks where you will insert your match into the tinder bundle. Make sure there aren't a lot of gaps between your tinder bundle and the sticks. Don't worry- your fire will have plenty of oxygen available to get it burning. One cause of failure is often having too many gaps between the tinder bundle and the kindling.

## **Burning Your Structure**

When you are ready, try to light your fire with a single match. If you don't succeed with your first match, adjust your fire as needed and try additional matches until you get your fire lit. Use your breath or an object to help fan the fire.

## **Tending Down Your Fire**

Once your fire has burned for several minutes, your final challenge is to try to burn up all remaining sticks and materials from your fire. This can be done by carefully moving all remaining stick pieces to the center of your fire. Use an additional pair of sticks, known as tending sticks, to move your hot kindling. Blowing on the fire and coals can help burn up the remainder of your fire material. When the firewood has finished burning, douse the fire by pouring water on the ashes and coals. Stir the water into the ashes until you can safely touch the cold ashes and coals with your bare hands.

**Ninja Notebook:** Draw a picture of your fire set-up with arrows indicating what kind of material you used for your tinder bundle and kindling. Record how many matches you used to light your fire.

**Stripe:** After you have made your fire, you have earned a **RED STRIPE**. Wrap this tape anywhere you prefer on your escrima stick. If you prefer, instead of tape, you can give a unique mark/color on the end with paint, pen, wood burn, or other to signify completion of this skill.

## **Resources**

Watch the training video explaining the one match fire by visiting [\*\*https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/\*\*](https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/)



## Energy **ORANGE STRIPE**

### Sit Spot

An important skill for ninjas is to be able to sit still in nature and calm your internal energy. One way to begin this training is to claim a sit spot.

### The Sit Spot

A sit spot is a place in nature that you can visit to sit quietly and observe the world around you. It is also a place where you can “disappear.” The more you visit this spot, and the longer you observe, the more the local animals will start to appear and view you as a part of the landscape, as opposed to a threat. Here are some important things to consider when choosing a sit spot:

- **Convenience**— Is this a place where you can visit easily and regularly? If you have to travel a long ways to get to your sit spot, odds are you won’t visit it very often.
- **Comfort**— Do you have a comfortable place to sit and observe? Having a tree to lean against or even a favorite chair can help you relax and enjoy your observations. If you have pokey briars or lots of buzzing bugs, odds are you won’t stay long.
- **A view**— Can you see a lot of your surroundings from your sit spot? Being totally hidden in the bushes is great, but if you can’t see much other than a bunch of leaves in front of your face, you probably are going to miss a lot of cool hawks flying by, or a deer in the distance. Having a good view of the land around you is a good idea.
- **Safety**— Do you know what some of the poisonous plants that cause itchy rashes in your region look like? It’s probably a good idea to learn the main ones in your area before you sit on unknown plants. Sitting on a tree branch is great, but if you are new to tree climbing, we don’t recommend high climbs for sit spots. Do you know what a wasp nest in the ground looks like? You definitely don’t want to sit on one of those.
- **Explore first**— We recommend you wander around your landscape a little before choosing a spot. Try out some different locations and see which one feels the best.

### The Sit Spot Challenge

Once you choose a sit spot, your challenge is to go sit as still as possible and as quietly as possible for 15 minutes (without talking if you can!). Make

mental notes of what you see. After 15 minutes, grab your **ninja notebook** and record the following:

- Draw a **map** of your sit spot showing the major landmarks around you
- **Draw or write what you noticed.** As ninjas, we like to practice “mind’s eye notebooks.” This means that you draw or write from memory. When you are at your sit spot, we want you to be fully aware and present, and not staring at a notebook. When you are done at your sit spot, go grab your ninja notebook and try to draw or write everything you remembered. It’s ok if you forget stuff. The important thing is to flex your memory muscle, and have fun. It’s not about making perfect drawings. We love seeing student’s personality show in their drawings, no matter how squiggly. Some of the things you observed at your sit spot could be **animals**—small (insects) to big (people, cars, deer, etc.), **signs of animals**— tracks, feathers, holes, scat, bones, **movement**— wind blowing leaves, clouds, water, or **Sound**— birds, cars, people, wind. Be creative and have fun. See if you can fill a page in your notebook with drawings or words.

**Stripe:** After you have finished your notebook, you have earned an **ORANGE STRIPE**. Wrap this tape anywhere you prefer on your escrima stick. If you prefer, instead of tape, you can put a unique mark/color on the end with paint, pen, wood burn, or other to signify completion of this skill.

## Resources

Watch the training video explaining the sit spot by visiting [\*\*https://ninjasinnature.com/chi-pathway/\*\*](https://ninjasinnature.com/chi-pathway/)



## **Zanshin** **PURPLE STRIPE**

### **Meet a Tree**

Zanshin is a Japanese word that means “awareness.” For this challenge we have a fun blindfolded skill involving finding trees.

### **Setup**

You will need a blindfold, a tree, and a stopwatch.

### **The One-Minute Fox Walk**

As preparation for this activity review fox walking, also known as silent ninja walking (shinobi aruki). See if you can do a very slow fox walk step that takes one minute from the time you begin moving one foot until the time you place it down at the end of a step. For a fun challenge you can have one person watch a stopwatch or clock and have the person fox walking raise their hand when they think one minute has passed. When they are done, you can tell them how close they came to one minute. Practice multiple times using each foot and see how close you can get to one minute. We like to do this one barefoot in nature if the terrain is safe.

### **Meet a Tree**

Start with a blindfold on next to a tree. Feel the tree with your hands to learn how to recognize your tree. When you are ready, do 10 slow fox walk steps away from the tree. Without taking the blindfold off, turn around and walk 10 steps back to your tree. Stop when you think you are within arms reach of your tree. Take your blindfold off and check.

### **Bonus Challenge #2**

If you are successful with 10 paces away from your tree. Try 20 paces!

### **Bonus Challenge #3**

Have a friend lead you slowly to three different trees (or you can make it really hard by having them lead you to a stone, stick, or small rock!). The leader should introduce you to each tree/object by letting you feel it for a moment, then they lead you to the next tree/object. After meeting all three, the leader leads you somewhere nearby away from your objects. Take your blindfold off and see if you can find your three trees/objects.

**Ninja Notebook:** Draw a picture of one of your trees and record how you did with the one minute fox walk step and meet a tree.

**Stripe:** After you have finished meet a tree, you have earned a **PURPLE STRIPE**. Wrap this tape anywhere you prefer on your escrima stick. If you prefer, instead of tape, you can put a unique mark/color on the end with paint, pen, wood burn, or other to signify completion of this skill.

### **Resources**

Watch the training video explaining the sit spot by visiting <https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/>



## Helper **GREEN STRIPE**

### 5 Local Hazards

To be a true ninja means being of service or help to others. Learning hazards in nature and helping others be aware of these hazards is one of the most important ways to be truly of service.

#### **Learning Hazards**

For this challenge you may need to do a little research. What are the local natural hazards of your area? What plants are poisonous to eat? What plants should you avoid touching? What is a local poisonous mushroom? What kind of venomous spider lives near you? Are there poisonous or hazardous reptiles or amphibians in your area? Are there mammals in your area that are dangerous? There's a lot to choose from. Pick 5 local hazards and **make a list in your Ninja Notebook. Choose one of these and make a drawing in your notebook.** Important— be specific (ninja pun intended). We all know that bees or wasps can be a hazard. But the world is full of many different species of bee. What is the name of a bee that lives near you? How do you identify it?

**Bonus Challenge:** Go on a hike and see if you can find one of these hazards or signs of the animal (tracks, scat, etc.). If you find one, take a picture!

**Ninja Notebook:** Write the name or draw 5 local hazards. Pick one and draw a detailed picture of it. Notes are encouraged.

**Stripe:** After you have finished documenting 5 hazards, you have earned a **GREEN STRIPE**. Wrap this tape anywhere you prefer on your escrima stick. If you prefer, instead of tape, you can put a unique mark/color on the end with paint, pen, wood burn, or other to signify completion of this skill.

#### **Resources**

Watch the training video explaining 5 hazards by visiting [\*\*https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/\*\*](https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/)



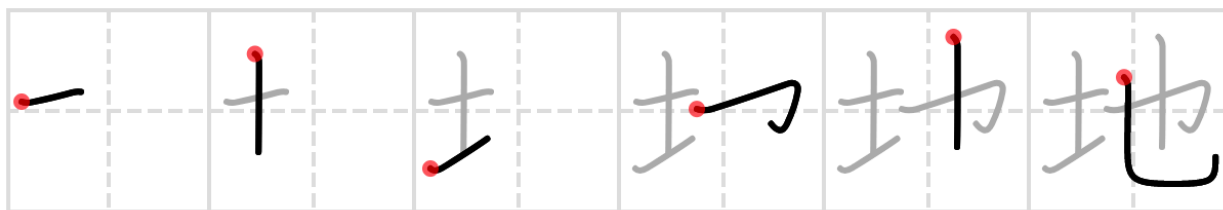


## Ninja Notebook **YELLOW STRIPE**

For the final stripe we have a special kanji for you. Kanji is a system of Japanese writing that uses characters. Many martial artists practice calligraphy to help focus their mind and develop eye-hand coordination. Your ninja notebook challenge is to draw the kanji Chi, which means “Earth.”

### Drawing the kanji for Chi

Kanji are drawn or painted with each line done in a specific order, or brush stroke. Below is a diagram showing the order of the brush strokes for this kanji.



Practice drawing this kanji several times with a pen, pencil, or paint brush. Have fun. Fill a page full of practice kanji in your notebook. When you feel ready, turn to a new page. Take a deep breath. Exhale and relax. Then, do your “best” chi kanji. Don’t worry if you feel you made a mistake. That’s part of the learning process.

**Be sure to check out the Chi kanji training video through the link below.**

**Bonus:** Fill the page around your Chi kanji with drawings or paintings of things that represent the Earth to you, or draw images of the skills and games you did for the Chi training.

**Stripe:** After you have finished your Chi kanji, you have earned the final **YELLOW STRIPE!** Wrap this tape anywhere you prefer on your escrima stick. If you prefer, instead of tape, you can put a unique mark/color on the end with paint, pen, wood burn, or other to signify completion of this skill.

### Resources

Watch the training video explaining 5 hazards by visiting <https://nijasinnature.com/chi-pathway/>

## Congratulations Ninja!

You have completed the Chi Pathway Training and are one step closer to earning your next NiN Rank!

**You can download your Chi Certificate and order shirts, patches and more through the resource link below.**



**<https://ninjasinnature.com/chi-pathway/>**

## What happens next?!

The fun continues...choose your next NiN Training Pathway! We recommend Sui/Water.

If you have completed the Knife Safety Path and NiN Rank Path, you only have one Pathway to go to earn the NiN Rank of Kame/Turtle!



We will look for you sneaking down the next NiN Pathway!

Domo arigato gozaimashita! (Thank you very much!)

*Dai Shihan Mark Roemke (15th Dan) & Ken Clarkson (NiN Program Director)*