

# Training For Your Black Belt Student Guide

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## INTRODUCTION

Grading for your Black Belt (1st Degree) will no doubt be one of the most important events/occasions for you as a Taekwon-Do practitioner. It will be an opportunity for you to demonstrate and perform your skills and proficiency in Taekwon-Do to the level of Black Belt.

However, adequate preparation is a prerequisite when considering a Black Belt grading. If you are anticipating a Black Belt grading, you will need to consider the following:

1. Dedication
2. Commitment
3. Positive motivation
4. Hard physical training

In retrospect, the purpose of this thesis is to serve as an informative guide for students (1st Kup) training for Black Belt (1st Degree) in Taekwon-Do (ITF style). It should also be stressed that this guide is not intended to replace your instructors or an instructors method of training. Rather, this guide should be used in unison to complement your training programme.

## GOAL SETTING

As a starting point to your preparation for a Black Belt grading, it is strongly recommended that you set yourself a specific goal(s) in terms of what you want to achieve in your preparation for Black Belt.

Goal setting is an important motivational tool and usually serves as a starting point to your training programme.

A goal is essentially a direction in which you channel your energies and efforts in order to achieve a stated objective. Goals can be different for different reasons for different individuals.

When setting goals keep in mind the following:

1. Set realistic goals. Don't aim too high or you may be disappointed if you do not succeed.
2. Maintain your goal(s) in your psyche (mind).
3. Write down your goal(s). This helps to reinforce your stated objective.
4. Review your goal(s) on a regular basis.

## PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FITNESS

## Physical Fitness

In brief, ensure your level of fitness is sound and sustainable, that is, maintained throughout the duration of your training programme. Training in Taekwon-Do is usually quite demanding, both physically and mentally.

Therefore, it is recommended that the individual seek out information contained in various physical fitness literature and seek professional advice in order to embark on a fitness programme which best suits your body type and ability.

It is highly desirable that you begin your physical fitness programme as early as possible before concentrating on specific Taekwon-Do training.

When training for physical fitness, pay particular attention to the following

1. Stamina (for endurance).
2. Muscle strength (to enhance and increase power output).
3. Flexibility (to increase mobility or range of motion in joints).
4. Agility (for performance).

As a precautionary note, when training to improve your physical fitness, be very careful not to exceed the natural limits of your body. Over exertion beyond your natural tolerance to exercise can result in negative side effects (which is not advisable).

Your fitness training should be well thought out, and planned with the intent of increasing your fitness in a sensible and reasoned fashion.

## Mental Fitness

Mental fitness is essentially your ability to exercise the mind (and body) to focus and visualise (concentrate) your energy and efforts toward a specific end during a training session.

To enhance mental fitness, it is recommended that you perform some form (or an adapted form) of meditation or relaxation techniques (deep breathing) before training and after training.

## TRAINING

Training for your Black Belt is the main ingredient to your overall success in attaining your Black Belt. Training should be of quality, and performance-based, well planned and beneficial.

In addition, it is paramount that you have a qualified instructor(s) to oversee your performance and progress during your training.

An instructor should be an integral part of your training, giving you feedback, recommendations and advice, and assessing and monitoring your performance as seen necessary during your training.

### i. Warm Up and Cool Down

Before commencing any form of training (fitness/Taekwon-Do), make sure you warm up adequately before each training session with specific sets of exercises which will warm up the entire body equally.

A well thought out warm up will prevent unnecessary injury and gear you up for performance. For helpful ideas on warm ups, numerous literature is now available on this topic, and it is well advised that you carry out your own research in this area and apply it to your warm up sequence.

At the conclusion of each training session, you should also perform a set/sequence of cooling down exercises. The purpose behind this is to remove the build up of lactic acid which will prevent (or at most lessen) muscle soreness. In addition, when stretching, be very careful not to over stretch. This will result in undesirable muscle contractions, causing light tearing of muscle fibre.

### ii. When should you commence your training for Black Belt?

Ideally, you should begin your training four months prior to the Black Belt grading. This time frame will allow you to:

1. Become familiar with the grading requirements.
2. Improve your fitness.
3. Improve your techniques and skills in Taekwon-Do.
4. Correct any technique(s) you are having difficulty with in relation to the grading requirements.
5. Build up confidence through training.
6. Adequately practise and rehearse the grading requirements.

### iii. How often should you train?

The frequency of training is usually dependent on the individual. As a guide, however, you should train at least a minimum of four times per week, one and a half to two hours in duration, with adequate days for rest. If you insist on training every day of the week, you will find that your performance level will not improve and will most likely deteriorate, resulting in negative gains. This type of training is not recommended.

If you begin to lose concentration or balance, or experience fatigue, you are training too much.

During a training session you should be productive. Do not train in order to clock in time, you only do yourself injustice.

In addition to the above, be careful not to fall into the situation where boredom sets in during your training programme. One way to avoid or overcome this is to introduce variety into your training without losing the cause of why you are training.

### iv . Peak level

As your training progresses, your level of performance should improve with time. However, be careful not to peak (performing to your best) too early in your build up to the grading. This has been known to happen, with negative effects.

Essentially, if you peak too early during your training, you will find that your overall level of performance begins to diminish or become worse after you have reached your peak level.

Ideally, you should train so that you are steadily progressing towards your peak level. Usually you should aim to peak about two weeks prior to the grading.

#### v. What type of training should you do?

As a recommendation, the type of training you should do is as follows:

1. Fitness Training (discussed above).
2. Patterns, One Step Sparring, Free Sparring, Self Defence and Destruction Training.
3. Jumping Technique Training.
4. Technique Development Training (improve and develop weak or inadequate training).
5. Basic Fundamental Training.
6. Linework Training (to develop coordination of technique(s)).
7. The use of punching/kick bag, focus paid to develop technique, power and focus.
8. The use of a mirror to determine the correctness of technique.

#### vi. What should you be aiming for in your training?

You should be aiming for the following:

1. Maximum effort (to the best of your ability in whatever aspect of Taekwon-Do training you do).
2. Quality performance (set yourself a standard and maintain it or improve upon it).
3. Look to improve with time in terms of personal ability, technique and skills in Taekwon-Do.
4. Practise the training secrets of Taekwon-Do (referred to later).
5. Develop correct technique and accuracy of technique.
6. Develop power in your technique, that is, apply the theory of power to your technique (refer to the condensed Taekwon-Do encyclopedia).
7. Develop self confidence through training.
8. Self motivation.
9. Accept constructive criticism and learn from it.
10. Visualise your specified goal(s).

## INJURY

Prevention of an injury is better than to receive or incur an injury. However, during your training the chances of you getting an injury are possible. Most injuries are self healing. However, should an injury(s) persist or progressively become worse, you should seek medical advice immediately.

A neglected injury may cause (if we take the worst scenario) irreversible damage and may affect your future as a Taekwon-Do practitioner.

Common sense is the essence to prevent or treat an injury(s).

## TRAINING SECRETS OF TAEKWON-DO

In the condensed Taekwon-Do encyclopedia, General Choi Hong Hi points out the training secrets of Taekwon-Do (ITF). These points should be known and practised by each student of Taekwon-Do and especially if you are training for Black Belt.

The purpose of the training secrets of Taekwon-Do is to help you develop the true (and standard) techniques of Taekwon-Do as purported by General Choi Hong Hi. They are as follows:

1. To study the theory of power thoroughly.
2. To understand the purpose and method of each movement clearly.
3. To bring the movement of eyes, hands, feet and breath into a single coordinated action.
4. To choose the appropriate attacking tool for each vital spot.
5. To become familiar with the correct angle and distance for attack and defence.
6. Keep both the arms and legs bent slightly while the movement is in motion.
7. All movements must begin with a backward motion with very few exceptions.
8. To create sine wave during the movement by utilising the knee spring properly.
9. To exhale briefly at the moment of each blow except when performing a connecting motion.

## PATTERNS

"Patterns are various fundamental movements, most of which represent either attack or defence technique set to a fixed or logical sequence. The student systematically deals with several imaginary opponents under various assumptions using available attacking and blocking tools from different directions". (TKD encyclopedia, p 524)

Patterns are an essential part of Taekwon-Do. Therefore, it is suggested that adequate time be devoted to performing patterns correctly.

### Pattern Requirement

You are required to know and perform:

1. i. Pattern Chonji through to and including Pattern Choong-Moo
2. ii. Saju Makgi and Saju Jirugi.

You are also required to know the pattern meanings, pattern diagram and the number of movements for each pattern.

When training for Patterns keep in mind and practise the following

1. Patterns should begin and end at the same spot you started (this will indicate the accuracy of the performer).
2. Maintain correct posture and facing (ie half/full facing).
3. Muscles of the body should either be relaxed or tensed at the proper critical moment in the pattern performed.
4. Patterns should be performed in a rhythmic movement with an absence of stiffness.
5. Each pattern should be perfected before moving to the next.
6. You should know the purpose and application of each movement.
7. You should perform each movement with adequate realism.

In addition to the above you should be able to demonstrate

1. Accuracy of the pattern diagram.
2. Correctness of the pattern performed.
3. Balance.
4. Breath control.
5. Timing of the movements in the pattern(s).
6. Power.
7. Smoothness of the movements.
8. Characteristic beauty of the pattern performed.

### Method Of Training For Patterns

You should initially begin your pattern training by breaking down each movement of the pattern you are performing so that you have:

1. Correct technique (and know the appropriate name of the movement performed).
2. Correct stance and body weight distribution and equilibrium.
3. Correct attacking or defending tool executed at the point of impact.
4. Correct height and placement of individual movements.
5. Correct interpretation of the application/purpose of each individual movement.

When performing patterns you should pay particular attention to, and develop the following:

1. Hip twist to increase total power output utilising body weight.
2. Total body weight (mass) usage when performing each individual movement.
3. Sine wave and knee spring.
4. Focus.
5. Coordination of eyes, hand, feet and breath.
6. Relax and tense at appropriate intervals.
7. Develop a personal speed when performing patterns.
8. Correct power application - to get maximum power in your movements (especially hand techniques), you should relax before and during the movement up to about three quarters through the movement. Then begin to accelerate (increase speed of the movement) using total body weight (mass) for the last quarter of the movement. At the end of the movement, you should become rigid or fixed momentarily before you begin the next movement.

Patterns can be performed (whilst training) as follows:

1. Call by Call (command by command throughout the entirety of the pattern being performed).
2. Half pace.
3. Slow motion followed by normal speed for each movement.
4. In your own time.

However, the most effective method of training for patterns (after taking into consideration and putting into practice the above) is to repeat patterns on a regular basis with the intent of improving each time.

## ONE STEP SPARRING

One step sparring is a prearranged sequence consisting of prearranged defensive and counter attack techniques chosen from Taekwon-Do to defend against a simulated attack. The technique/movement used should be of the type that could be used in a real life situation (actual combat).

### One step sparring requirements

1. You are required to know all one step sparring up to 2nd Kup.
2. Your own choice of one step sparring.

When training and developing your one step sparring sequence, keep in mind and practise the following:

1. Use appropriate/correct technique to vital spot.
2. Use techniques with which you are confident.
3. Do not use techniques/movements which are "slack" or do injustice to your performance. However, do try a variety of techniques and choose the one that best suits you.
4. Do not clutter your one step sparring sequence with too many techniques/movements, otherwise you have a classic situation of "overkill". As a guide you should have a maximum of four movements per sequence.
5. Do not use or include slow motion techniques (this defeats the purpose of one step sparring).
6. Ensure you have variation in each sequence, for example, Jumping technique, Takedowns, Combination and Consecutive kicking technique, and Hand and Foot combinations.
7. You should have at least 10-15 one step sparring sequences prearranged and well rehearsed.

### Method of training for one step sparring

1. Work out a set of one step sparring techniques/movements and practice with a partner to determine how effective each sequence is.
2. Once you have worked out and adequately practised your one step sparring sequences, record them.

3. Thereafter the most effective method of training for one step sparring is to practice with a partner of similar grade or above on a regular basis.

Once you have become familiar and confident with your choice of one step sparring sequences you should begin to develop the following:

1. Power.
2. Focus (to vital spot) and accuracy.
3. Correct distance.
4. Correct timing. The aim in one step sparring is to react and defend against an attack as quickly and effectively as possible before the attacker fully executes an attack.
5. Make your one step sparring sequence realistic.
6. Display good all round technique.

## FREE SPARRING

Free sparring is actual (real) combat between two players which is not prearranged and where the players are free to exchange attack or defensive techniques found in Taekwon-Do in a controlled and non injurious fashion.

### Free Sparring Requirements

You are required to free spar:

1. Someone of your own grade (1st Kup).
2. A 1st Degree Black Belt.

### When training for free sparring keep in mind and practise the following

1. Execute sound/correct technique.
2. Select appropriate attacking tool and target area (vital spot).
3. Experiment with different hand and foot techniques and choose techniques that you are confident with and suited to.
4. Develop personal tactics to deal with different possible situations that may arise during free sparring.
5. Use, where appropriate, deceptive manoeuvres to draw out or confuse your opponent.
6. Develop reflexive and counter attacking skills.
7. Use dodging, side stepping and direction changing techniques to avoid back stepping.
8. Use flying or jumping hand and foot techniques at appropriate times.
9. Avoid staging a boxing match.
10. Use combination hand and foot technique and double kicking techniques.
11. Ensure you use a variety of techniques during free sparring.
12. Avoid using the same techniques too often.
13. Develop your personal speciality techniques, and draw upon these to surprise the opponent.
14. Have good control of the techniques you use.
15. Do not waste time and energy executing techniques that have no specific purpose.



## Method of training for free sparring

1. Make sure you are adequately warmed up.
2. To prevent injury, you may wish to wear protective gear, however, remember that you are not permitted to wear protective gear during grading free sparring.
3. Use a focus pad and/or a punching/kick bag to develop and practise desired, preferred or newly acquired techniques.
4. When practising actual free sparring, you should be concentrating on developing the above mentioned points. Do not stage a vigorous, no-holds-barred match each time you free spar.
5. In hindsight, the most effective method of training for free sparring is to free spar on a regular basis with as many different opponents (senior colour belts and Black Belts) as possible. The purpose behind this is:
  1. To build your confidence in free sparring.
  2. Allow you to experiment with different techniques and determine effectiveness of your techniques.
  3. Give you exposure and experience to different styles of fighters (opponents).

The aim of free sparring in a grading situation is that with the limited time you have for free sparring you should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a variety of techniques including attack and defensive techniques.
2. Show control of techniques used, alertness, reflexive reaction and sharpness of techniques used.
3. Systematically adapt to and deal with a given style of fighter (opponent).
4. Show your fighting (free sparring) skills.
5. Demonstrate positive attitude.

## SELF DEFENCE

Self defence (actual combat) is the ultimate attainment for any student training in Taekwon-Do. Self defence is the ability to react and defend oneself in a predictable or unpredictable (sudden) situation (which may be injurious) in a manner to disable, disarm and control an attacker(s). As a 1st Kup grading for Black Belt (1st Degree) you are expected to adequately defend yourself should such a situation arise.

### Self Defence Requirement

Practical self defence which can be adapted and enhanced to suit the individual, keeping in mind the underlying theme of the self defence syllabus.

### When training for self defence, keep in mind and practise the following

1. You should be confident with the self defence technique and sequences you develop.
2. When performing self defence, ensure you have correct timing in the application of the self defence technique/movement. Avoid mismatch of attack and defence.

3. Ensure that your self defence sequence is as realistic as possible (without injury to your partner). There is nothing worse than a self defence sequence which lack realism. Also, when developing your self defences sequence, maintain the theme of realism, that is, try to develop a sequence which may be true to life (real situation).
4. As in one step sparring, do not "clutter" your self defence sequence with too many techniques/movements .
5. Exercise control of self defence techniques/movements where appropriate. This shows your command of the defensive application.
6. Ensure your self defence is flowing, that is, follows a logical path.

### Method of training for self defence

The best method of training for self defence is to rehearse your chosen (or given) set/sequence of self defence on a regular basis with a partner of similar grade. It is also recommended that you practise with different partners to determine the effectiveness of your self defence sequence.

### DESTRUCTION

The destruction component of the grading requirement serves as a useful and necessary barometer to test and determine how effective a designated technique is in terms of the power and technique of the performer when required to break a board(s) and tiles while stationary (hand and foot technique), jumping and flying (foot technique only).

### Destruction requirement

You are required to perform the following techniques for destruction:

1. Jumping Back Kick (head height one board).
2. Jumping Turning Kick (head height one board).
3. Flying Side Kick (over as many people as possible one board).
4. Power Break Forefist Downward Punch (women three or more tiles, men six or more tiles).
5. Power Break own choice of leg/foot technique stationary (the number of boards is a minimum of two).
6. Jumping High Front Kick (one board).

### When training for destructions, keep in mind and practise the following

1. Each technique should be correct and well rehearsed.
2. Pay particular attention to appropriate attacking tool.
3. Utilise total body weight when performing destructions.
4. Use appropriate stance and positioning.
5. When rehearsing actual breaks, be very careful not to injure the attacking tool(s). Use common sense.
6. Develop power in each of the required techniques.

### Method of training for destructions

1. Before you begin any form of training for destructions, you should analyse/break down each of the required techniques so that you appreciate and understand the correct execution of the technique(s) in question (refer to your instructor).
2. Ensure that you are adequately warmed up.
3. When training for destruction, use either a focus pad or a punching/kick bag. This method of training allows you to feel the impact of the technique(s) performed. For a forefist punch, use an elevated focus pad to practice.
4. Toughen appropriate attacking tool(s) in a controlled and sensible fashion.
5. As you become familiar with each technique, you should begin to concentrate on developing:
  1. Focus (know where your target is, explained later).
  2. Correct distance.
  3. Power in your technique (using total body weight in the direction of the force).
  4. Visualising and relaxing before you execute the technique.
6. Assuming you have followed the above mentioned points, you should then perform actual breaks using the techniques you have practised and developed. This is so that you can determine how effective your techniques are and also to help you gain confidence in the area of destruction.

#### Hints for destructions

1. When breaking either boards or tiles, give yourself one "dummy" run through the technique prior to the actual break. This allows you to assess your distance from the target.
2. Adjust height and ensure the board holders are holding the boards correctly or boards are placed correctly in the board holder.
3. Think through the target, not up to it (explained later).
4. Ensure correct position prior to the actual break.
5. Remember to Ki hap. It has been documented that a Ki Hap (yell) does in fact increase the power output of an individual.

#### When breaking boards

1. When breaking a board(s), the attacking tool should reach the centre of the board at the point of impact.
2. Always think through the target not up to it. What this means is that if, for example, you are performing a power break with a side piercing kick. The kicking leg should be three quarters extended up to the point of the target. The remaining quarter should allow you to penetrate/break the board(s) (assuming you strike the centre line) so that when the kicking leg is fully extended it extends beyond and through the target.

#### When breaking tiles

1. You should position yourself so that the tile stack is within the centre of your right/left walking stance.
2. The forefist should be positioned in the centre of the tile stack in a vertical fashion (like a normal horizontal punch formation).

3. It is important that the forefist and wrist are rigid prior to and during the actual break. A poorly formed forefist and wrist may result in an unsuccessful break and injury.
4. It is crucial that the forefist and directional force be delivered in a downward vertical motion (refer to diagram below).
5. On impact, make sure the back leg bends sufficiently to enable you to lower your stance and shift your body weight downwards to penetrate the tiles with the forefist.
6. The aim is to drive your forefist through the tiles to the floor.

## WRITTEN THEORY AND ORAL TEST

The written theory test and oral test component of the grading requirement is considered to be as important as the physical component of the grading requirements. Therefore it is recommended that you give yourself adequate time to revise.

### Test Requirement

#### 1. Written Theory Test

For the written theory test you are tested on the technical, theoretical (up to 1st Kup) and general knowledge of Taekwon-Do. General knowledge is accumulated knowledge of Taekwon-Do obtained from newsletters, magazines, newspapers, television and other sources.

2. Oral Test For the oral test you may be asked questions on either technical theoretical, general, personal (individual-based questions) or broader knowledge of Taekwon-Do. In both the written theory test and oral test, the type of questions asked may vary depending on the examiner(s).

### Revision Material

When revising for the written theory and oral test, you will need or have access to the following study materials:

1. The condensed ITF Taekwon-Do encyclopedia by Gen Choi Hong Hi.
2. The ITFNZ Theory Handbook.
3. Documentation on the History of Taekwon-Do in New Zealand and ITFNZ structure.
4. Accumulated materials.

When revising for the written theory test and oral test, keep in mind that what you are learning (studying) should be learnt in order to enhance and broaden your knowledge of Taekwon-Do.

Do not learn for the sake of learning.

The process of accumulating knowledge in Taekwon-Do plays an important part for you as a Taekwon-Do practitioner in the following ways:

1. Increases your knowledge as a student of Taekwon-Do.

2. Increases your ability to explain aspects of Taekwon-Do.
3. As an instructor-to-be, your accumulated knowledge of Taekwon-Do can be imparted confidently to your students who will, in turn, reciprocate by appreciating you as an instructor and appreciate the art of Taekwon-Do.

## GRADING

The grading will take place in a formal setting where members of the public, and family and friends are invited to view the grading. A grading is a test of your physical abilities and skills in respect of the Black Belt (1st Degree) grading requirements and proficiency in Taekwon-Do.

On the day of the grading keep in mind the following

1. Try to relax. No doubt you will be nervous. If you can physically relax yourself (deep breathing), however, you will be able to think clearly and not get worked up.
2. Concentrate. To help your concentrate, put on your imaginary shutters and block out what's around you so you can focus on your performance.
3. Be confident. Months of training should have built up your confidence level.
4. Maintain a positive attitude.
5. Give it your best in all aspects of the grading requirements.

## CONCLUDING REMARK

In hindsight, it is envisaged that through hard (constructive) physical training and study, the candidate for 1st Degree Black Belt be well versed to perform in the technical and theoretical aspects of the grading requirements and demonstrate proficiency in Taekwon-Do to the best of his or her ability. Good luck!