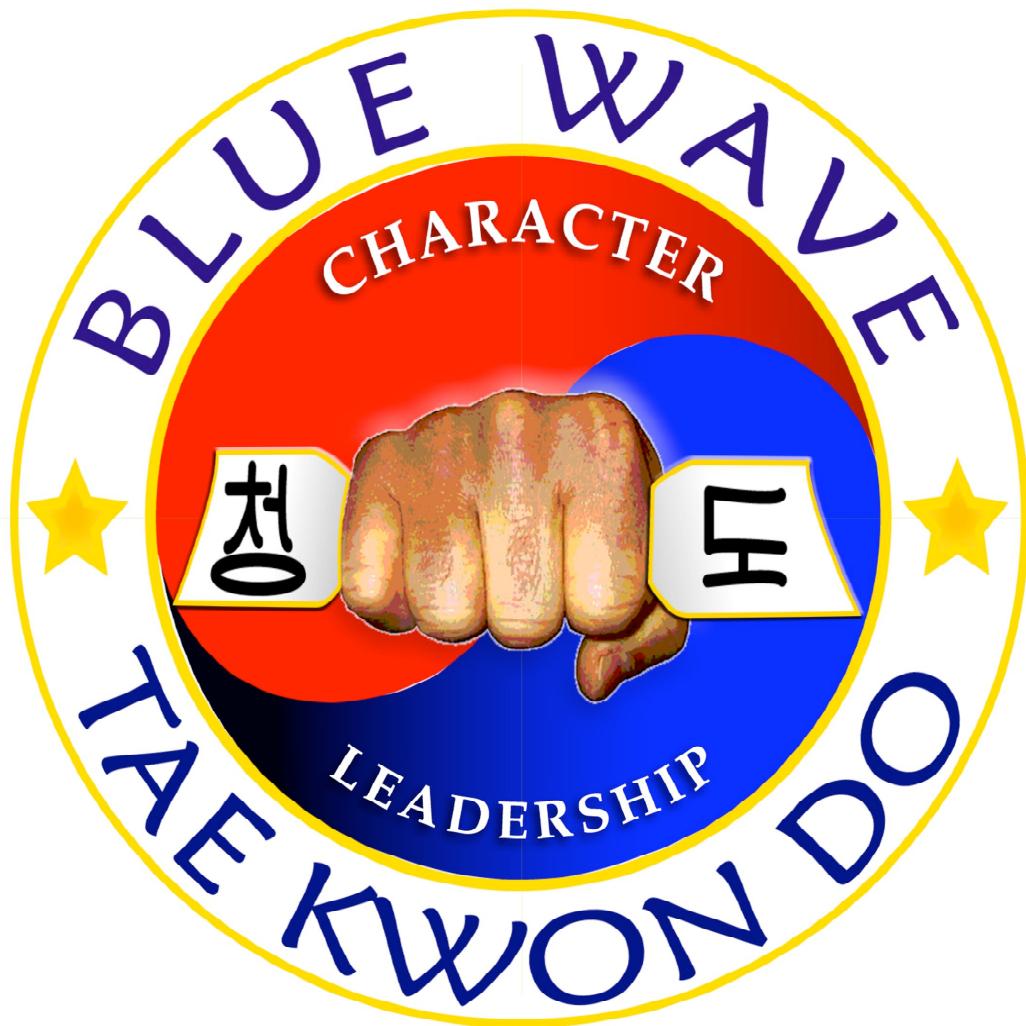


Blue Wave Taekwondo Association

Student Handbook



Second Edition

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Quick Start Guide

About This Handbook

Welcome to the Blue Wave Taekwondo Association! This guide is designed to help answer many of the questions you may have about the Blue Wave Association and about Taekwondo in general. It is by no means exhaustive, but there is enough detail in here to seem overwhelming to a new student. If you are new to class, this first section may help quickly answer some of the most pressing questions you may have.

Even when you become more familiar with Taekwondo, the remainder of this booklet may serve as a handy reference guide. For easy searching, important terms are underlined at the points in the handbook where they are defined. This booklet is *not* meant to dissuade you from asking questions of your instructors or fellow students – that is always the best way to learn.

Frequently Asked Questions

Numbers in [parentheses](#) after the brief answers below refer to the chapters in this handbook where you can find more detailed information.

Q: What can I expect from my first class?

A: You will probably begin learning some basic Taekwondo techniques right away. You may receive some individualized instruction to help you along until you are ready to join the rest of the class. It is important to go at your own pace and feel comfortable with your progress. [\(3.1, 3.8\)](#)

Q: What is expected of me as a new student?

A: You will be expected to work hard, but always within your own physical limits – there is no prerequisite physical condition for starting training in Taekwondo. Respect your fellow students, pay attention to your instructors, and above all, have fun. [\(4.1, 3.1, 3.7\)](#)

Q: I don't have a uniform—what should I wear to class?

A: Loose-fitting workout clothes are fine until you can purchase a uniform. In addition, remove shoes, socks, and jewelry before class, and keep fingernails and toenails neatly trimmed. [\(3.5, 3.7\)](#)

Q: How do I obtain a *dobak* (uniform) and other equipment?

A: It is best to see your instructor about purchasing these, since he or she can make sure that your equipment conforms to Blue Wave guidelines. [\(3.5, 4.3\)](#)

Q: I just purchased a *dobak*, but how do I tie the belt?

A: Ask your instructor to show you the proper way to do it. In addition, the section of this handbook called “Tying Your Belt” gives step-by-step instructions in case you forget. ([3.5, 3.6](#))

Q: Do I need to know any Korean?

A: Classes are taught in English. However, a number of specific Korean terms are used regularly in class, and you will learn these over time. A glossary of these terms can be found in this handbook. ([3.9](#))

Q: How do I address my instructors during class?

A: Class is somewhat formal in this respect, so give them your full attention and address them with “Yes, Sir” or “No, Sir” as appropriate. Bowing is also customary, and you may follow your classmates’ lead on this at first. ([3.2, 3.3](#))

Q: How do I advance in rank?

A: To be promoted, you must demonstrate the appropriate skill level by testing before a panel of black belts. Your instructor will let you know when you are ready to test, but if you are new to Taekwondo, your first test will probably be within 1 to 3 months and after you have attended at least 12 classes. ([4.7](#))

Q: What is the Blue Wave?

A: The Blue Wave is an association of New England Taekwondo schools. We practice Kukkiwon and WTF-style Taekwondo, and historically, our heritage (from the early days of modern Korean martial arts) is Chung Do Kwan. ([2.2, 2.3, 2.4](#))

Q: Where can I obtain more information?

A: Outside of class, the Blue Wave website is a good place to start. See the last section of this handbook for the addresses of this and other useful websites. ([6](#))



Kukkiwon (World Taekwondo Headquarters), Seoul, Korea.

Blue Wave Taekwondo

What Is Taekwondo?

Taekwondo is a martial art that has its roots in Korea, where the science and philosophy of self-defense that define it were developed over the course of centuries. In recent decades, it has gained popularity all over the world as both a traditional martial art and an Olympic sport.

Taekwondo is a way of life requiring rigid training of both the mind and the body, the ultimate purpose of which is to enable people to realize their full potential—physically, mentally, and emotionally. It promotes confidence, courage, discipline, respect, and sportsmanship. It strives to develop the better features of the human character rather than merely to strengthen human beings against physical enemies.

Taekwondo comes from the Korean words *tae* (meaning “foot”), *kwon* (meaning “hand”), and *do* (meaning “the way” or “the philosophy”, akin to the Chinese word *tao*). Therefore, Taekwondo means “the way of the foot and the fist.”

Some History

Taekwondo

Modern Taekwondo was developed in Korea during and after the Second World War, but the martial arts have a 2000-year history on the Korean peninsula. Ancient Korean martial arts such as *taekyon* and *subak* were practiced by warrior classes such as the *hwarang* of Silla. During their occupation of Korea from 1910-1945, the Japanese attempted to stamp out much of Korean culture, including the martial arts. As a result, much knowledge of native Korean martial arts was lost.

In ancient times, there were three rival kingdoms on the Korean peninsula:

Silla (pronounced “*shilla*”) (57 B.C. – 935 A.D.)
Paechke (18 B.C. – 660 A.D.)
Koguryo (37 B.C. – 668 A.D.)

In 936 A.D. these kingdoms were united once and for all under the Koryo dynasty (935 – 1392 A.D.), from which the country of Korea gets its name.

However, some Koreans traveled abroad to Japan and China during the occupation to study martial arts, returning to Korea at the close of World War II to found new schools and teach what they had learned. The martial arts taught at these new schools (or *kwans* in Korean) were initially similar to Japanese Karate, but in an effort to regain their national identity, post-occupation Korean martial artists set out to evolve a new, uniquely Korean martial art that would be easily distinguishable from foreign styles. Physically, they emphasized powerful kicking techniques, and philosophically, they revived the martial spirit of ancient Korean warriors like the *hwarang*. This Korean martial art would eventually become Taekwondo, but its early years were fractious.

Five first-generation *kwans* were established between 1944 and 1946, and students of these schools founded numerous second-generation *kwans* in the ensuing years. In the mid-1950's, the Korean government ordered the various *kwans* to unify under a single banner to standardize techniques, to oversee testing for rank promotion, and to develop a national sport from the Korean martial arts. The name "Taekwondo" was chosen for the unified martial art in 1955, and the Korean Taekwondo Association (KTA) was formed in 1959 to oversee unification. Due to significant dissension between the schools, this was not finally accomplished until 1966, when nine of the most important remaining *kwans* agreed to merge. A world headquarters for Taekwondo, the Kukkiwon, was completed in Seoul, Korea in 1972.

The five original *kwans* (formed 1944-1946) and their founders and places of founding are:

Chung Do Kwan	Lee, Won Kuk	Seoul
Moo Duk Kwan	Hwang Ki	Seoul
Jidokwan (originally Choson Yon Moo Kwan)	Chun, Sang Sup	Seoul
Chang Moo Kwan (originally YMCA Kwon Bup Bu)	Yoon, Byung In	Seoul
Song Moo Kwan	Ro, Byung Jik	Kaesong

Of the second-generation *kwans*, the most important was the Oh Do Kwan, founded in 1953 at the army base at Yong Dae Ri (Kangwon province) by Nam, Tae Hi and General Choi, Hong Hi, both students of the Chung Do Kwan.

By this time, Taekwondo had gained popularity around the globe. To help oversee the development of Taekwondo outside of Korea, the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) was formed in 1973, and Dr. Kim, Un Yong was elected president. Although many other Taekwondo organizations exist, the WTF is the largest, and the only one recognized by the Korean government and the International Olympic Committee.

The terms “Kukkiwon” and “WTF” are often confused with each other. The [Kukkiwon](#) is the World Taekwondo Headquarters. It oversees Taekwondo black belt promotion and certification, conducts research and seminars, and specifies the curriculum for promotion (basic movements, forms, breaking requirements, etc.) The [WTF](#), a separate organization, oversees the sport aspect of Taekwondo, sponsors competitions, interfaces with the International Olympic Committee, and serves as an umbrella group for national Taekwondo organizations in each member country. (In the United States, the national organization is [USA Taekwondo \[USAT\]](#).) Nonetheless, the two organizations are closely linked, as the WTF recognizes only Kukkiwon-certified black belts and the Kukkiwon building initially housed the administrative offices of the WTF.

Chung Do Kwan

The first of the *kwans* to be established was the Chung Do Kwan, founded in Seoul in 1944 by Lee, Won Kuk, who had studied Shotokan Karate in Japan under its founder, Gichin Funakoshi. As the founder of the first *kwan*, Lee, Won Kuk is considered by many to be the founder of what came to be Taekwondo. Among the earliest to receive black belts in Chung Do Kwan were Son, Duk Sung (Lee, Won Kuk’s immediate successor as head of the Chung Do Kwan), Uhm, Woon Kyu (the current president of both Chung Do Kwan and Kukkiwon), and Rhee, Jhoon Goo (one of the first to teach Taekwondo in America.)

Two other students of Chung Do Kwan, Nam, Tae Hi and General Choi, Hong Hi (later founders of the Oh Do Kwan) began teaching the Chung Do Kwan style to the Korean Army. Despite their later split with Chung Do Kwan, this early association resulted in Chung Do Kwan being referred to as the “military style” of Taekwondo.



Lee, Won Kuk (front center) with his students circa 1947.

The Chung Do Kwan was one of the nine *kwans* to unite under the KTA. Although the unification of Taekwondo was intended to abolish the original *kwans*, several of the more influential schools, including Chung Do Kwan, survive to this day as independent organizations. (Nonetheless, they support the Kukkiwon and the WTF.) Chung Do Kwan maintains its headquarters in Seoul, and its current president is Grandmaster Uhm, Woon Kyu.

Chung Do Kwan means “School of the Blue Wave,” a name that evokes the spirit of youthfulness and vitality. It also symbolizes both the serenity of the blue ocean and the devastating power of a wave crashing upon the shore.

The Blue Wave Association

The **Blue Wave Taekwondo Association**, named for its Chung Do Kwan roots, is the oldest martial arts organization in Vermont. It was founded by the late Grandmaster Bruce V. Twing, who had studied Taekwondo at Osan Air Force Base in Korea under Grandmaster Lee, Tae Sung. He opened his first *dojang* (gym) in Hardwick, Vermont in 1969 and formed the Blue Wave Association in 1980. The Blue Wave currently has 11 member schools in four New England states.

The Blue Wave is affiliated with Chung Do Kwan and practices Kukkiwon Taekwondo and WTF (Olympic-style) sparring. Its Grandmaster is Lee, Tae Sung (Grandmaster Twing's instructor), and thus maintains a direct and ongoing link to Korea in which the Blue Wave takes great pride. Blue Wave black belts are certified by both Kukkiwon and Chung Do Kwan.



Grandmaster Bruce Twing with Great-Grandmaster Lee, Won Kuk in 1997.

Art and Sport

As hinted in the first section of this handbook, Taekwondo has two aspects to it. First, it is a traditional martial art, with physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. This art has a long history, summarized above, and grounds the physical techniques of unarmed combat in a philosophy stressing integrity, respect, restraint, and self-discipline.

Second, it is a sport, complete with rules, regulations, equipment, sanctioning organizations, etc. Furthermore, it is an extremely popular sport, elevated to the status of Olympic medal sport in 2000. Many Taekwondo schools focus almost exclusively on the sport aspect, and this has caused some concern among traditionalists that the underlying art may be lost.

The Blue Wave is fortunate in that it draws on strong resources in both aspects of Taekwondo. It is very active in the sport, hosting tournaments, seeking cutting edge training methods, and producing many talented, nationally ranked fighters. Through its lineage to Kukkiwon and Chung Do Kwan, it is also devoted to teaching and preserving the martial art.



Taekwondo as an Olympic-level sport.

Our Lineage

Great-Grandmaster **Lee, Won Kuk** (1907-2003). Founder of the Chung Do Kwan in 1944 and one of the founders of modern Taekwondo.



Grandmaster **Uhm, Woon Kyu**. 9th Dan. One of the first to receive a black belt under Great-Grandmaster Lee, Won Kuk. Became head of the Chung Do Kwan in 1957. Currently the President of Kukkiwon (since 2004).



Grandmaster **Park, Hae Man**. 9th Dan. Developed the *kibon* series, and one of the developers of the *tae geuk poomse*. Currently Vice President of the Chung Do Kwan.



Grandmaster **Lee, Tae Sung**. 9th Dan. Head Instructor of the Chung Do Kwan since 1968. Grandmaster of the Blue Wave Association.



Grandmaster **Bruce V. Twing** (1939-1999). 8th Dan. Introduced Taekwondo in Vermont in 1969 after studying under Grandmaster Lee, Tae Sung in Korea. Founded the Blue Wave Association in 1980.



Blue Wave masters and instructors.



Blue Wave students.

The Blue Wave Association

The Blue Wave Association is a non-profit corporation devoted to providing training and educational programs in the art and sport of Taekwondo through its chartered *dojangs* (gyms). It is governed by a board of directors consisting of all Blue Wave black belts. The board oversees the Association's business affairs, makes policies, and elects an executive board that is empowered to make certain final decisions.

The Blue Wave executive board currently consists of the following officers:

President	Master Gordon White, 6th Dan
1st Vice President	Master Michael Anthony, 6th Dan
2nd Vice President	Master Linda Smith-Blais, 6th Dan
3rd Vice President	Master Tom Chase, 5th Dan
Secretary	Master Peter Chase, 5th Dan
Treasurer	Master Tom Robinson, 5th Dan
Events Coordinator	Master Heidi Shangraw, 5th Dan

The board of directors meets at quarterly black belt meetings (roughly in January, March, August, and November of each year). The Association also holds two weekend-long training sessions per year for Blue Wave students: a Winter Camp generally held the first weekend of March, and a Summer Camp generally held the first weekend of August.



Blue Wave Summer Camp, 2005.

The Taekwondo Gym

The *Dojang*

The gym or place in which we practice Taekwondo is called in Korean the *dojang*. In the Blue Wave Association, we symbolically define the *dojang* by displaying the American and South Korean flags: the American flag honors the country in which the art of Taekwondo is being studied, and the Korean flag honors the country where the art originated.

Taekwondo students observe a high standard of conduct and a particular etiquette while in the *dojang*. There are several reasons for this. First, it promotes our physical, mental, and spiritual development. Second, it shows respect for our instructors, our fellow students, and the art of Taekwondo itself. Third, and more practically, it helps reduce the risk of injury by making us acutely aware of what we are doing at all times.

Addressing the Instructors

We address instructors, and black belts in general, with the terms of respect, “Sir” and “Ma’am;” these are appropriate in any circumstance. When they are referred to by name, it is always as “Mr./Ms./Mrs./Miss __” for black belts of 4th Dan and below, “Master __” for those of 5th to 7th Dan, or “Grandmaster __” for those of 8th and 9th Dan.

Alternatively, we may use the Korean terms *sabum* (“instructor,” referring to a black belt in general) or *sabum nim* (“master instructor,” generally referring to the highest ranking instructor in the *dojang*). In the Blue Wave, we typically reserve the term *kwan jang nim* (“director of the academy”) for our Grandmaster Lee, Tae Sung.



The American, Chung Do Kwan, and Korean flags as they hang in the *dojang*.

Bowing

One *dojang* custom that may seem particularly unfamiliar to new students is bowing. In many east Asian cultures, the bow serves a similar purpose to the handshake in the West, namely a gesture of respect and greeting. The use of bowing in the *dojang* honors Taekwondo's Korean heritage and maintains the formality of a Blue Wave class.

In a Blue Wave *dojang*, the bow may represent a show of respect to an instructor or higher ranking student, a request for a fellow classmate to work with you, or an acceptance to work with a fellow classmate. It is also customary to bow to the instructors and flags before entering and before leaving the *dojang*. This indicates respect for the place where Taekwondo is studied.

As with handshaking, there are subtleties to bowing. Just as a consoling handshake offered to a grieving person differs from a handshake used to seal a business deal, bows for different purposes may be slightly different. You will learn these differences for yourself as you become more familiar with the culture of the *dojang* and observe higher ranking students.

The *Kiyap*

Another aspect of Taekwondo that new students may find striking is the yelling they hear as students progress through a series of movements. The yell (or *kiyap* in Korean) serves several purposes. First, it heightens one's focus and helps to concentrate one's energy. Second, it encourages exhaling while executing a Taekwondo technique; as you will learn, this increases its power. Third, it empties the air from one's lungs to avoid loss of wind in the event of being struck by a kick or punch. Finally, it serves as a distraction to one's opponent and may make the opponent drop his or her guard.

The *Dobak*

The traditional Taekwondo uniform is called in Korean, the *dobak*. The *dobak* is standard attire for Blue Wave Taekwondo classes (unless specifically told otherwise by your instructor), and is also the regulation uniform for WTF competition sparring. Although as a new student you may wear loose-fitting workout clothes to class, you should see your instructor about purchasing a *dobak* if you decide you wish to pursue Taekwondo in the longer term.

In the Blue Wave Association we wear the all white, WTF-approved v-neck style of *dobak*. *Gup* rank *dobaks* have white collars, junior black belt (*poom*) *dobaks* have red and black collars, and black belt *dobaks* have black collars. You should have the following patches only (available from your instructor) sewn onto your *dobak*:

1. Blue Wave Association patch (over the left breast).
2. American flag patch (on the right sleeve, horizontally, approximately 1 inch below the horizontal shoulder seam).
3. South Korean flag patch (on the left sleeve, horizontally [red over blue], approximately 1 inch below the horizontal shoulder seam).



Blue Wave black belt *dobak* showing proper placement of patches.

The *dobak* is tied with a cloth belt, the color of which signifies the rank of the student. When tied properly, the belt should be wrapped so that it appears as a single layer around the back, and the two loose ends should hang at even lengths on either side of the knot. If your belt has a stripe, the stripe should be on the end hanging on your right as you look down at it.

Your instructor will show you how to properly tie your belt. There are several methods of doing it, one of which is presented on the following page.

Your *dobak* is a symbol of your Taekwondo training as well as your attire, so treat it with respect. Keep it clean and neatly folded, and do not wear it for any purpose other than Taekwondo training. Do not wash your belt, and never throw it on the ground.

Tying Your Belt



1



2



3



4



5



6

1. Begin by finding the center of your belt and holding it against you at the height at which the belt is to be tied, i.e. just below your navel. (If your belt has a stripe on one end, that end should be on your left at this point.)
2. Wrap the two ends of the belt around your waist. One part should lie directly over the other, so it appears as a single layer around the back.
3. In front, one end should pass behind the original center of the belt and the other in front at this point.
4. Fold the end in front back up behind the belt's center. Pull the two ends (one upward and one downward) until it fits snugly, but not too tight.
5. Fold the top end down, cross it over the bottom end and pull it towards you through the loop, making a "square knot."
6. Pull the two ends again to tighten. The two ends of the belt should hang evenly (it may take some practice and slight adjustment to achieve this).

Rules of Conduct

The *dojang* is not meant to be a restrictive place, but rather a place to learn, to feel free to ask questions, and to have fun. That said, Taekwondo students observe a number of rules while in the *dojang*. These rules help to maintain respect for the art, our instructors, and our fellow students, and to make the *dojang* conducive to learning Taekwondo. In addition, as Taekwondo is inherently dangerous, these rules help reduce distractions and help us focus on what we are doing.

You will learn the culture of Taekwondo with time by observing senior students and instructors, but the following are some of the basic rules of the *dojang*.

1. Bow to the flags and/or instructors before entering or leaving the *dojang*.
2. If you work with a partner on any series of exercises, bow to your partner before and after working with him or her.
3. Respect for your instructor and your fellow students should be maintained at all times, and black belts and instructors should be addressed as described earlier.
4. Request permission from your instructor if you need to leave class or the *dojang*. In addition, if you are late to class, wait for the permission of the instructor to join the class.
5. Do not practice free sparring without permission of your instructor. In addition, as a matter of respect, students should not ask higher ranking students to free spar.
6. No unnecessary talking or movements during class; the best way to learn is to listen and observe.
7. Personal appearance is of great importance: keep yourself and your *dobak* neat and clean; long hair should be tied back so as not to interfere with vision; toenails and fingernails should be neatly trimmed.
8. Keep the *dojang* itself neat and clean.
9. Do not eat, drink, chew gum, or smoke inside the *dojang*.
10. Remove all watches, rings (wedding rings excepted) and other jewelry before class. Do not wear shoes in class (except Taekwondo kicking shoes, if your instructor permits it).

The *dojang* is a place of mental and spiritual, as well as physical, training. Over time you will learn the importance of the etiquette maintained there and take pride in the way you conduct yourself.

Class Structure

You will find that no two Taekwondo classes are exactly alike: exactly what is done depends on who is teaching it, the number and ranks of students in attendance, and what the instructor decides to cover. However, all Blue Wave classes have the same formal structure, as described in this section, and you will quickly become familiar with what to expect from class, and what is expected of you.

Prior to Class

Before class can start, the *dojang* must be prepared: flags should be displayed, the space should be made clean, and any necessary equipment should be made easily accessible to the instructor. *Gup* rank students are expected to initiate this process.

All students should try to arrive early for class if possible to allow enough time to change into their *dobaks*, prepare the *dojang*, and stretch and warm up their muscles. Stretching ahead of time helps reduce the risk of injury and maximize the benefits of class.

Bowing In

To start the class, the instructor or instructors will come to the front of the *dojang* (by the flags) and call for the students to line up. Students line up by rank, as quickly and quietly as possible, with the highest ranking student at the front right. Lines are formed in descending order of rank, from right to left and front to back. In other words, higher ranking students than yourself will be in the lines in front of you, and to your right within your own line. For students of the same rank, line order is determined by the length of time at that rank (most to least), and then by age (oldest to youngest).

Once the class has lined up, the highest ranking student calls the class to attention (“*charyuf*”) and directs everyone to face and bow to the flags and recite the following [Chung Do Kwan pledge](#):

- We as members train our spirits and bodies according to the strict code.
- We as members are united in mutual friendship.
- We as members will comply with the regulations and obey instructors.

The highest ranking student then directs the class to face and bow to the instructor(s), after which the instructor(s) take over and training begins.

Training

Between the formalities of bowing in and bowing out, the specific training regimen is at the discretion of the instructor. However, most classes will begin with some vigorous warmup activity to help you stretch, raise your core body temperature, promote cardiovascular health, and get the class in the proper mindset for learning Taekwondo. As Taekwondo involves explosive movements that extend the muscles, particularly the groin and hamstring muscles, warming up and stretching at the beginning of class are particularly important.

Training itself may involve practicing traditional Taekwondo (in the form of basic blocks, strikes, and kicks, *poomse* (forms), or one-step sparring), sport training (free sparring, footwork and kicking drills), and/or practical self-defense.

Repetitive practice of all these skills is important to the development of a well-rounded Taekwondo student.

Bowing Out

At the conclusion of class, the instructor will again call for students to line up, in the same manner as at the start of class. The instructor will make any concluding remarks, and the highest ranking student will again direct the class to face and bow to the instructor(s). The class will then bow to the highest ranking student, and training is officially concluded.

As before class, *gup* ranks are then expected to help put away the equipment and take down and fold the flags if necessary.

Korean Glossary

Classes are conducted in English in Blue Wave *dojangs*, but certain formal commands and words describing things specific to Taekwondo are often given in Korean, and you should familiarize yourself with them. Below are the Korean terms you are most likely to encounter on a regular basis. There is no standardized English spelling for Korean words, so they are rendered phonetically, and the spellings below may differ from other sources. In particular, the sounds “k” and “g” are often interchanged, as are “j” and “ch” and various vowel combinations.

Numbers

Koreans have two numbering systems. The “pure Korean” numbers are used for counting; we use them primarily for counting off exercises. The “Sino-Korean” numbers, adapted from the Chinese, are used for expressing years, days, money, and other specific things; we use them to number the *poomse* and *kibons*.

	Pure Korean	Sino-Korean
1	<i>hana</i>	<i>il</i>
2	<i>dul</i>	<i>ee</i>
3	<i>set</i>	<i>sam</i>
4	<i>net</i>	<i>sa</i>
5	<i>dasot</i>	<i>oh</i>
6	<i>yasot</i>	<i>yuk</i>
7	<i>ilgup</i>	<i>chil</i>
8	<i>yodul</i>	<i>pal</i>
9	<i>ahop</i>	<i>gu</i>
10	<i>yeol</i>	<i>sip</i>

General commands (class formalities, basics, forms)

<i>charyut</i>	attention stance
<i>kyung neh</i>	bow
<i>joon bi</i>	ready stance (or, if preceded by a stance, come to that stance)
<i>shijak</i>	begin
<i>baro</i>	return to previous position (usually, back to ready stance)
<i>sheo</i>	rest, at ease
<i>aye</i>	face [verb]; ex.: <i>kuki aye kyung yet</i> (bow to the flags)

Common nouns

<i>dojang</i>	gym; Taekwondo training place
<i>kwan</i>	school or association
<i>kuki</i>	flags
<i>dobak</i>	Taekwondo uniform
<i>gup</i>	grade (color belt rank)
<i>dan</i>	degree (black belt rank)
<i>poom</i>	degree (junior black belt rank)
<i>sabum</i>	instructor
<i>sabum nim</i>	head instructor
<i>kwan jang nim</i>	grandmaster instructor (lit., “honorable director of the <i>kwan</i> ”)

Taekwondo disciplines and techniques

<i>joon bi undong</i>	warm-ups
<i>kibon dongjak</i>	basic practice
<i>kibon(s)</i>	basic forms
<i>poomse</i>	forms
<i>hoshin sul</i>	self-defense
<i>kyorugi</i>	sparring
<i>han bun kyorugi</i>	one-step sparring
<i>chagi</i>	kick
<i>chigi</i>	hand attack
<i>chirugi</i>	punch
<i>maki</i>	block
<i>kiyap</i>	yell

Free-sparring terms

<i>kyorugi</i>	sparring
<i>shijak</i>	begin
<i>kallyo</i>	pause
<i>kyesok</i>	continue
<i>kuman</i>	end
<i>hogu</i>	chest protector
<i>chung</i>	blue
<i>hong</i>	red

Courtesy

<i>kam sa ham ni da</i>	thank you
<i>chon ma ne yo</i>	you're welcome

태권도

“Taekwondo” written in *hangul* (modern Korean), read left to right.

跆拳道

“Taekwondo” written in *hanja* (traditional Korean), read top to bottom. These are the same as Chinese characters and Japanese *kanji*.

Training

Physical Fitness and Training Philosophy

Particularly as students first learn it, Taekwondo is primarily a physical endeavor, so physical fitness is an essential part of training. With consistent training, you will see improvement in your physical fitness as well as your Taekwondo skills. Equally importantly, you should see improvement in your confidence and focus. These improvements will occur over the course of months, not days, so patience and persistence are very important. Again, **consistent** training is required to achieve the maximum benefit from Taekwondo.

Every student is different: there are Taekwondo students who are male and female, old and young, and of all heights and weights. Much will be expected of you, but not more than you as an individual can handle. Although your instructor will become familiar with your abilities and limitations over time, you are responsible to ensure you do not overexert yourself. This involves exercising responsibly: make sure to warm up and stretch properly before exerting yourself, train within your “target heart rate” zone (roughly 80% of your maximum heart rate), make sure you are properly hydrated, and if you feel unwell at any time, bow out and stop exertion. In addition, please bring any prior injuries or other concerns to the attention of your instructor before class.

Poomse

The foundation of traditional Taekwondo training and advancement is the mastery of predefined sets of movements called forms or patterns, or in Korean, ***poomse***. Each *poomse* is a choreographed series of Taekwondo basic movements designed to mimic an actual confrontation, yet without an opponent present. In mastering *poomse*, students learn not only to perfect the individual techniques that comprise the form, but also to gain self-awareness as they learn their own physical capabilities and limitations.

Students learn a new *poomse* with every rank beginning at 8th Gup. One of the most important elements in a rank promotion test is demonstration of proficiency in the *poomse* associated with that rank. The study of *poomse* is cumulative and ongoing, as advanced students continue to strive to perfect all forms they have ever learned, from the most basic to the most advanced.

There are many sets of forms, but in the Blue Wave Association we study the *tae geuk poomse* as *gup* rank forms. In the *tae geuk* series, there are eight forms, numbered *i* through *pa*; in addition, there are nine black belt forms. Prior to

learning *poomse*, students learn shorter drills called *kibons*, developed by Grandmaster Park, Hae Man. There are six *kibons*, numbered *il* through *yuk*.

Tae geuk means literally “big eternity” and refers to the unity of opposing forces in the universe, called *um* and *yang* in Korean. This relationship is represented by the central circle in the Korean flag in which the two halves, *um* (blue) and *yang* (red) merge into one another.

In addition to the physical movements, each *tae geuk poomse* has an intellectual and spiritual component as well. Each form has a concept and meaning associated with it that derive from the philosophy of the *I Ching* (the Chinese “book of changes”) that underlies *tae geuk*. These in turn are symbolic of qualities that Taekwondo practitioners should strive for in life and in their practice of the art.

Sparring

The sport of Taekwondo revolves around *free-sparring*, a controlled fighting match between two opponents. As the object is to win the match, not incapacitate an attacker, only a limited set of Taekwondo strikes are permitted, as the full range of martial arts techniques includes some that may be seriously injurious or even lethal. The ground rules of a free-sparring match vary with the purpose of the match, ranging from “no contact” simulations (intended to teach footwork, timing and positioning skills) to non-judged “contact” matches between classmates to officiated, full-contact competitions.

An officiated free-sparring match is judged on a point-scoring and penalty system, and is controlled by a referee and scored by corner judges. Points are awarded when permitted techniques are delivered accurately and powerfully to legal target areas of the opponent’s body. Penalty points are deducted for various infractions such as stepping out of the competition area, illegal attacks, unsportsmanlike conduct, etc. Tournaments at the local and regional levels typically use modified rules of the WTF. (WTF-style sparring is also sometimes called “Olympic style” sparring because its rules also govern Olympic Taekwondo competition.) For more complete information about sparring rules you can visit the web pages of the WTF and USAT, which can be found in the last section of this handbook.

Below are the rules we adhere to when practicing in the *dojang*. A typical match round lasts two minutes, and anyone engaged in sparring must wear proper protective gear, described below. See your instructor to purchase this equipment.

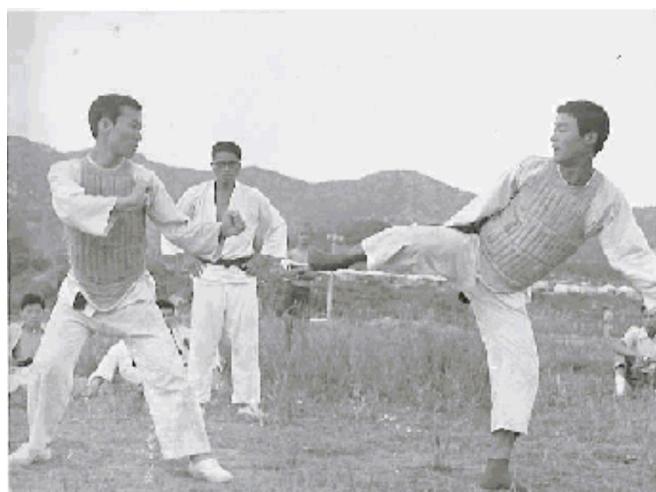
Basic rules:

- Legal techniques are kicks using any part of the foot below the ankle and straight punches (to the chest pad only).
- Punching to the head or anywhere other than the chest pad is not allowed, and all other techniques including leg sweeps, grappling, throws and take-downs are not allowed.
- Kicking to any part of the chest pad is allowed.
- Kicking to the head is allowed in the following circumstances: it must be light, controlled contact, and it must be to a portion of the head covered by the headgear not including the back of the head.
- Striking with any technique below the belt, or to any part of the face, is not allowed.

Protective gear:

- A padded chest protector that wraps around the sides and part of the body, called in Korean a *hogu*.
- Padded headgear.
- Shin and forearm pads.
- Cup to protect the groin (optional for women, but recommended).
- Mouth guard.

Sparring can be one of the most rewarding aspects of Taekwondo because it allows students to integrate much of what they have learned into an individual style. It promotes development of footwork, timing, and fighting strategy. You will see that sparring is not typically about overpowering an opponent, but rather is akin to a chess match in that each opponent uses positioning, footwork, and feints to draw the other into a vulnerable position for a point-scoring attack.



Grandmaster Lee, Tae Sung (center) overseeing sparring training in the 1960's. Protective gear has evolved considerably since that time.

Free-sparring, often referred to simply as “sparring,” should not be confused with one-step sparring, often referred to as “[one-steps](#).” One-step sparring is not a competition, but a choreographed series of Taekwondo techniques designed as a response to a defined attack by an opponent. In contrast to *poomse*, one-steps require working with a partner, and in this way help develop skills of timing, positioning and distancing yourself relative to an attacker. One-steps are non-contact exercises, so the full range of Taekwondo techniques can be employed.



A modern Taekwondo free-sparring match. Note the use of head protectors and *hogus*.

The Blue Wave has hosted and organized a number of WTF sparring tournaments in New England. In addition, Blue Wave students have competed and excelled in local, national, and international tournaments.

Because travel to distant tournaments and other Taekwondo events is not financially feasible for all, Blue Wave students needing financial assistance can turn to the [Bruce V. Twing Scholarship Fund](#) for help. This fund was set up in 1999 by Mr. Shawn Twing in honor of his father, the late Grandmaster Bruce V. Twing, founder of the Blue Wave Association. Grandmaster Twing made it his goal never to turn away a potential student nor prevent a student from participating in Taekwondo events because of financial obstacles. The Blue Wave is justly proud of this fund and organizes various activities each year to raise funds for it.

Self Defense

Taekwondo is a *martial* art, and therefore provides an excellent foundation for learning practical self-defense. However, technical proficiency in Taekwondo blocks and strikes does not always mean proficiency in self-defense. Similarly, success in free-sparring, a highly controlled situation, does not always mean success in a street fight, where there are no rules whatsoever. Blue Wave schools as a result help students apply the physical and mental Taekwondo skills they learn to practical self-defense situations.

First and foremost, we stress avoidance of conflict. This involves learning awareness of your surroundings and your vulnerabilities so you can avoid dangerous situations in the first place, and skills for de-escalating or escaping potential conflicts should they arise. Recognizing and dealing with the physiological, psychological and emotional aspects of conflict are very important.

Should physical conflict be unavoidable, we teach practical defenses against common street-fighting attacks; many of these defenses and counterattacks draw directly from Taekwondo techniques. In addition, as fights are unpredictable yet have many common features, we teach ways of defending and counterattacking in various stages of a fight, even if you find yourself in an undesirable position.



Examples of challenging Taekwondo board-breaking techniques.

Board Breaking

One of the most exciting aspects of Taekwondo to watch is board breaking, in which students execute various strikes and kicks to break wooden boards or other solid objects. As Bruce Lee said, “Boards don’t hit back,” but the purpose of breaking is not to mimic a fight; rather, it is to demonstrate that the breaking technique is executed properly and with power and focus. Proper technique is much easier to discern when kicks and strikes are done against solid objects than when done in the air or against soft targets.

Proper and successful board breaking, in which the boards are broken and the breaker is not injured, requires and enforces the Taekwondo fundamentals of speed, balance, focus, breath control, and reaction force, all of which must be applied to maximize power. Many people who have never studied the martial arts, particularly larger people, can break a board by powering through it. As more boards are added, or as the techniques used become more advanced, however, this becomes much more difficult to do without proper technique.

In physics terms, a board will break when enough force is transmitted to it in a short enough period of time to cause sufficient shearing stress in the wood. The likelihood of inducing a break increases when the area of the striking object (e.g., part of the hand or foot) is smaller, its mass and velocity are greater, the time it contacts the board is smaller, and the angle and point of contact are closer to perpendicular to the center of the board.

Because so many physical factors are involved with successful board breaking, it requires a great deal of concentration and focus on the part of the breaker. Board breaking, therefore, may be considered a mental exercise as well as a physical one. It is done primarily for the purposes of rank testing and demonstration, and rarely otherwise.

In the Blue Wave Association, we typically break a stack of one or more 10" x 12" pine boards (8" x 12" for children). We recommend using a plank of 1 x 12 common pine (also called “no. 2 pine”) cut into 10 or 8” pieces as appropriate. Despite the name, such planks are 3/4” thick. Wood of this type can be used to approximate the hardness of various bones in the human body, depending on how many boards are stacked together; hence, there is a relationship between the martial art application and the inanimate wood.

The Belt System

Like many martial arts, Taekwondo has a rank system marked by colored belts. Advancement in the art is marked by periodic promotion tests, the successful completion of which results in attainment of the next rank and belt. New students begin at the rank of white belt, also called 10th Gup. The *gup* ranks, also called "color belts," mark the initial period of study when the learning curve is steepest.

The highest *gup* rank is red belt (1st Gup), after which students test for their black belt. (Black belt degrees are called in Korean, *dan* ranks.) Passing the initial black belt test results in a provisional advancement, to the rank of 1st Dan "recommended." To become an official black belt (1st Dan "decided"), the student must demonstrate continued commitment to training and pass a second examination after six months or more. Ideally, attainment of a black belt is not an end in itself, but rather a new beginning, as there are nine degrees of black belt.

Students under the age of 14 years who advance beyond the *gup* ranks receive *poom* ranks, marked by belts that are both red and black. Upon reaching age 14, *poom* rank students are automatically converted to the equivalent *dan* rank.

The Blue Wave Association uses the following rank system:

Rank	Belt Color
10th Gup	white
9th Gup	white with yellow stripe
8th Gup	yellow
7th Gup	yellow with green stripe
6th Gup	green
5th Gup	green with blue stripe
4th Gup	blue
3rd Gup	blue with red stripe
2nd Gup	red
1st Gup	red with black stripe
1st Dan*	black
2nd Dan*	black
...	

* *poom* if under age 14.

Promotion Requirements

Advancement from one rank to the next higher rank occurs after passing a promotion test. Your instructor will determine your readiness to test based on several criteria including your skill level, your attitude, and your training history. Testing is a formal process, and it becomes larger, more formal, and more infrequent with higher rank, as follows.

Rank Tested For	Testing Location	Minimum Between Tests*	
		No. of Classes	Time
9th through 8th Gup	Local	12 classes	6 weeks
7th through 5th Gup	Local	25 classes	3 months
4th through 3rd Gup	Local	35 classes	4 months
2nd Gup	Regional	35 classes	4 months
1st Gup	Regional	50 classes	6 months
1st Dan recommended	Blue Wave	50 classes	6 months
1st Dan decided	Blue Wave	n/a	6 months
2nd Dan and above	Blue Wave	n/a	2 years and more

* These are minimum values; actual times vary for each student. For *gup* ranks, it is helpful to count classes between tests rather than time, and the times assume an average attendance of 2 classes per week. At higher ranks, the absolute length of time between tests takes on more importance.

Local testing is given within each *dojang* for the students of that *dojang*.

Regional testing is offered in conjunction with one or more nearby *dojangs*. Blue Wave testing, before the entire association, is offered semi-annually, at Winter and Summer Camp. All promotion testings are judged by a panel of black belts.

At a promotion test, you will be asked to demonstrate the appropriate skill level in most or all of the following areas.

1. Verbal knowledge. This may involve memorization of Taekwondo history or a brief discussion of aspects of your own training.
2. Basic techniques. Demonstration of Taekwondo strikes, blocks, kicks, stances, etc.
3. *Kibons* and *poomse*. Most important is your “testing *poomse*,” the one required for your current rank.
4. One step sparring.
5. Self-defense (4th Gup and above aged 14 and older). Demonstration of defense and/or counter-attack against common assaults.
6. Free sparring.
7. Board breaking. This demonstrates both technique and focus.

Tests are cumulative, i.e. you are expected to know and improve in all the basics, *kibons*, *poomse* and other techniques from all your previous tests in addition to what is required for the current test. In addition to the above criteria, personal presentation and attitude are of high importance.

To help you prepare for each test, the Blue Wave has developed [goal sheets](#) for each rank. Each goal sheet outlines the requirements (both physical and verbal) for the promotion test to the next higher rank. The goal sheets are downloadable from the Blue Wave Association website, and unlike this handbook, they describe techniques and required knowledge specifically. They were originally developed and written by Grandmaster Twing himself and have evolved over the years as the Blue Wave curriculum has changed.

The Meaning of a Black Belt

Martial arts have been part of American culture for several decades, and in this time the idea of a “black belt” has taken on a certain mystique that is often misleading. A black belt has nothing to do with one’s ability to “beat up” the average person in the street, but rather it symbolizes the mastery of a certain amount of martial arts knowledge. This section will discuss the meaning and value of a Taekwondo black belt, particularly as we see it in the Blue Wave Association.

A student who graduates from 1st Gup to 1st Dan (black belt) has successfully completed the initial phase of Taekwondo study. During this time, he or she has been exposed to and attained a certain level of proficiency in most of the physical components of Taekwondo. It can be thought of as a graduation from childhood to young adulthood in the art. As more is expected of adults than children, black belts are expected to take on additional responsibilities: black belts become part of the Blue Wave governing body (the board of directors), and they are expected to pass on what they have learned by teaching and assisting instructors in the *dojang*.

A black belt by no means indicates a completion of study altogether, but rather it marks a new beginning. At the black belt level, it is less a matter of learning new techniques, but rather of mastering the techniques to which the student has already been exposed. The foundational basics and *kibons* that he or she learned the first day as a white belt, and everything learned since, must continually be practiced and perfected. Black belt students also begin to focus on the non-physical aspects of Taekwondo such as more advanced levels of meditation and philosophy. As there is always more to learn and perfect, there are nine degrees of black belt representing a potential lifetime of study.

As every student is different, every student has his or her own motivation for training and achieving a black belt, and every student has his or her own path to getting there. Students are judged on their own merits, so each person will have developed some of the aspects of Taekwondo more highly than others. One need not necessarily be the best fighter in the class to become a black belt.

Above all, the black belt should not be a symbol of physical power, but rather a mark of character. Black belts should have enough mastery of their own conduct to set a good example to others, both inside and outside the *dojang*. This involves being able to set aside their own desires in order to help others; having firm control over their own emotions and temper, even in difficult situations; conducting themselves wisely and conscientiously by their own moral precepts; and weighing the effects of their actions on themselves and others. They should embody the tenets of Taekwondo: courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit. A black belt should be someone to look up to, not because of their fighting ability, but because of the good character they display.

Taekwondo and the Legal Aspects of Self-Defense

People who begin study of the martial arts often ask, “If I am attacked and forced to defend myself, what are the legal consequences if I had to employ my knowledge of Taekwondo in resisting the attack?” The question is natural, but the answer may be much more complicated than one might expect.

Most people believe that acting in self-defense is perfectly legal. But is it always? As is the case with most legal matters, the answer is that it depends on the circumstances. To state it briefly, the extent of the response (the defense) must be appropriate to the nature of the attack.

For example, if you encounter someone who insults you or your family verbally, and you responded to him physically, you would be in the wrong. Typically, profane remarks, words and conduct—unaccompanied by a hostile act—do not justify physical retribution on your part.

If on the other hand you are physically threatened or assaulted, you would generally be justified in resisting the attack with such force as is minimally necessary under the circumstances present to prevent the continuance of harm. Note the use of the word “generally” in the preceding statement.

It is hoped that the value system promoted by Blue Wave Taekwondo will give you the confidence and self-control required to avoid physical conflict in tense and difficult situations. Should a physical response become absolutely necessary, your first thoughts should be the protection of yourself and those you care about. Beyond this, again, you should act with minimally required force in order to maintain the most legally defensible position possible should the law later come into play.

The law is complex and highly dependent on the individual circumstances of each case. Furthermore, even an action that is morally justifiable is not always legally defensible, so this discussion should in no way be construed as legal advice. The law was not necessarily made with martial arts students in mind, so it is wise and strongly encouraged that Taekwondo students familiarize themselves, at least in a general way, with the laws of their home state that pertain to self-defense.

For Further Information

A wealth of additional information can be found on the World Wide Web. Below are listed the official websites of relevant organizations. The Blue Wave website contains information about the Blue Wave organization, locations of member schools, upcoming events, newsletters, forums, testing requirements, and lots of other useful information. The WTF and USAT websites contain detailed sparring rules and regulations, and the Kukkiwon website contains detailed information about *poomse*, history, and promotion testing.

Blue Wave Taekwondo Association	www.bluewavetkd.com
World Taekwondo Federation (WTF)	www.wtf.org
USA Taekwondo (USAT)	www.usa-taekwondo.us
Kukkiwon (World Taekwondo Headquarters)	www.kukkiwon.or.kr/english/index.jsp

In addition, the following Wikipedia entries may be useful (note: the URL for Chung Do Kwan is case-sensitive). Please be aware, however, that these entries can be edited by anyone, and while generally trustworthy, their accuracy is not guaranteed.

Taekwondo	en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo
Chung Do Kwan	en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chung_Do_Kwan