

FAQ's
By New STC students

Q: How often can I promote to the next belt rank?

A: Promotion examinations are held in February, June and October. White belts and yellow belts test on a selected Friday night, and all other ranks test on a selected Saturday. In order to be a promotion examination candidate, a student must pass the pre-test, which is given during regularly scheduled classes approximately four weeks prior to the exam.

Q: What if I have a conflict on the day of the exam? Can I take a make-up exam?

A: No make-up exams are provided. Students who miss their exam wait until the next scheduled promotion examination.

Q: What happens at a promotion examination?

A: Promotion examinations are held at Natomas Racquet Club, 2450 Natomas Park Drive, Sacramento, 95833.

At check-in, a promotion examination candidate shows a clean, pressed, creased uniform, USAT membership card, potluck food, and pays an exam fee.

During a promotion examination, the Sacramento Taekwondo Club Black Belt Board of Examiners is seated in the front of the room. Promotion candidates sit and stretch on the south side of the room, and spectators are seated on the north side. Master Brand facilitates the examination in English for white belts testing for yellow belt and in Korean for all other ranks.

Exams are accumulative; students are responsible for all of the curriculum requirements from white belt to the rank for which they are testing.

During an exam, students demonstrate the curriculum requirements; however, the exam is not a demonstration *per se*. At a traditional

demonstration, students focus on pleasing the audience. At an exam, the audience is not the focus; the examination process is. Students should inform their family members and friends of this when they extend to them an invitation to a promotional examination.

The Board of Examiners observes the examination, makes a written evaluation of each candidate, and determines which students demonstrate the curriculum requirements well enough to promote to the next belt rank. Promotions are awarded a few minutes after all of the examinations are complete. Students who do not pass their examinations are encouraged to fulfill the requirements and take the next examination.

During the week following the examination, Master Brand summarizes the Board of Examiners evaluations and gives written feedback and a practice log template to each candidate.

Q: What is a practice log?

A: During the week following an examination, all students who tested are given written feedback and a practice log template. The feedback includes comments on areas of strength and areas that need additional review and practice. Students are encouraged to focus their independent practice on the areas that need correction. They should use a practice log to record the date, duration, and focus of each session and show the log to Master Brand every few weeks or until the areas that need improvement have been corrected. Students who complete the practice log have a better chance of testing at the next promotional examination.

Q: How often should I practice?

A: During every class, students are introduced to new material and/or review key points of previously introduced techniques. Before each class is dismissed, the instructor tells the students which techniques they should focus on during home practice.

Students who desire to progress and become competent should practice a minimum of two times per week.

Q: How do I practice at home? Do I need special equipment?

A: **To practice the basic form of your techniques**, watch yourself in a mirror. Correct yourself as you kick, or do hand techniques stances, and forms. If you have a video camera, film yourself then watch the playback to find what you do well and what you need to improve. You'll be amazed at how much this will help you.

To practice speed and stamina, use a target bag or paddle. If you don't have either, fill a pillowcase with old rags and tie it at the top. Safely fasten the target to a support or ask someone strong and smart to safely hold it for you. See how many times you can kick with good form in 30 seconds or a minute. Then rest for 30 seconds to one minute and try again with the same kick or a different one. See how many rounds you can do before you tire out.

To practice power, use a target bag. Safely fasten the target to a support or ask someone strong and smart to safely hold it for you. Focus on the center of the target and kick it as hard as you can with proper technique. Lift and bend your kicking leg as quick as possible, use your support foot and hips to help you penetrate the target, and retract your kicking leg as quickly as possible. Kick as many powerful kicks as you can in one minute. Rest 30 seconds to one minute, and try again with the same kick or a different one.

Q: How can I purchase a target bag or paddle?

A: Go to the STC home page and click on Pro Shop to find targets bags and paddles.

Q: Is there a DVD, videotape, or book I can use while I practice at home?

A: Go to the STC home page and click on Pro Shop to find DVD and book practice aids.

Q: How long will it take me to become a Black Belt?

A: There is a chasm between possessing a black belt and being a Black Belt. Sacramento Taekwondo Club is not a Black Belt factory. We do not guarantee that students will reach the rank of Black Belt in 24 or 30 months, or in any other arbitrary period of time. How could we when every student is unique and develops according to his/her natural growth rate? That said, some of our STC adults and youths who began our program at age 10 or older have been able to move from white to Black Belt in 4-5 years. Students who began instruction at age 9 or under have typically taken longer to move through the belt ranks.

Q: What happens when I become a Black Belt. Will I be an expert?

When you pass your exam, you will be a first degree Black Belt. Your rank will be recorded in Korea at the Kukkiwon, the certification record house of the World Taekwondo Federation, the international governing body of Taekwondo. You will receive a Kukkiwon certificate and photo identification.

The term for first degree Black Belt is not “expert.” It is *Chodan* (first step). It is humbling to learn that after all your years of hard work and dedication, you have traveled one mere step! Be content that it is a very big step and that your Black Belt is a symbol of your deep education and dedication.

At this rank, you will be taught at an accelerated rate. You may choose to fulfill the curriculum requirements for 2nd degree Black Belt or specialize in one of many areas: competition, instructor skills, referee skills, weapons, etc. Your time in this grade and every one (there are 10 degrees of Black Belt) thereafter will be no less than the Kukkiwon guidelines.

Q: Why do we bow to each other?

A: When you bow to your master instructor, it is a formal greeting. You are, in effect, respectfully saying, “I am here to learn.” When you bow in this manner, your master is reminded of her great commitment and responsibility to your education.

When you bow to Black Belts, this too is a formal greeting. You are, in effect, respectfully saying, “I respect your achievement and see you as a role

model.” When you bow in this manner, the Black Belts are reminded that their every action should be worthy of their rank.

When you bow to your peers as you spar or exchange targets, you maintain an environment of good sportsmanship. You are, in effect saying, “ I will be a safe and focused partner.” When you bow in this manner, your classmates and training partners will embrace training side by side by with you.

When you bow to enter the *dojang* (classroom), you demonstrate that you understand that it is a special place where many have trained before you. Also, bowing helps you enter the *dojang* in a positive manner.

At the *dojang*’s threshold, you bow. As you stand up straight, all of your cares and worries fall off your back. This allows you to enter the *dojang* and train without any distraction. Later, as you bow to exit the *dojang*, your cares and worries return; however, you are so invigorated from your training that you are ready to easily tackle them.

Q: What is Taegeuk Il Jung, and why do I have to do it?

A: Taegeuk Il Jung is a pattern of blocks, punches, and kicks that simulate a defense against imaginary attackers. There are 8 Taegeuk patterns, one for nearly each belt rank from white belt to Black Belt. The 8 Taegeuk patterns come under the heading of *Poomsae*, which means “Forms.” *Poomsae* is one of the three main parts of our curriculum. The other two parts are self-defense and sparring. To learn more about *poomsae* in general, **please refer to The Meaning of Poomsae.**

Taegeuk Il Jung is taught to white belts once they understand lower block, middle block, upper block, punching, walking stance, front stance, and front kick.

Taegeuk Il Jung has 16 steps, which is a challenge for some white belts to remember. Typically, white belts learn no more than 2 new steps of Taegeuk Il Jung in any given class. Instructors encourage students to practice often at home so that the pattern will stay in their memories. Once students have memorized the pattern, they are taught to add, power, speed, and grace to their techniques.

If you have difficulty remembering the steps, or would like to review specific steps, you can ask Master Brand or other Black Belt instructors for extra help

To view Master Brand demonstrating Taegeuk Il Jung, **please go to the Media Gallery and view the video clip.**

Q: What is the difference between an Olympic Style club and a point style club?

A: Taekwondo became an Olympic demonstration sport in Korea in 1988 and an official Olympic medal sport in Sydney, Australia in 2000. Sacramento Taekwondo Club is an Olympic style club. We are members of USA Taekwondo, the Olympic style's national governing body, which organizes the events that produce the national sparring and *poomsae* teams that compete at the international level. USA Taekwondo is a member of the World Taekwondo Federation, the international governing body of Olympic style Taekwondo. Sacramento Taekwondo Club's sparring and *poomsae* competitors are encouraged to participate in local, regional, national, and international Olympic style events.

Point style clubs belong to various national and international governing bodies. Point style event rules differ from Olympic Style events. Sacramento Taekwondo Club does not participate in point style tournaments.

Q: Where can I get information about our national sparring and poomsae teams?

A: The USA Taekwondo website contains current and historical information on our national senior and junior teams. To access this site, go to the Links section of the site.

Q: What is *The Taekwondo Companion*, and why do I have to get one?

A: *The Taekwondo Companion* is a book written by Master Brand for Sacramento Taekwondo Club students. The book will give you an

opportunity to review the concepts behind the most essential sparring components and assess your skills in each one. If your assessment points to areas that need attention, you will be offered skill building exercises and a means of tracking your progress over the course of weeks, month, or years. Each chapter includes the advice of an expert, an accomplished tournament competitor who excels in using the chapter's highlighted component. In addition, each chapter includes suggestions for observation, reflection, and launch point for discussion.

Sacramento Taekwondo Club students are required to complete one chapter per belt rank beginning with advanced green belt. **Young students will need parent support as they use the book.** Two sections of each chapter require that students work with partners. Partner exercises may be done every Friday night following sparring class at Natomas Racquet Club (7:30-8 pm) and Laguna Creek Racquet Club (7:45-8:15 pm).

Q: What is a resume and what should it look like?

A: A Taekwondo resume is a requirement for students testing for blue belt and every rank thereafter. It is a record of your Taekwondo experience. In order to promote to blue belt, you must create a Taekwondo resume. The resume should include the following:

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| Heading: | Name/Address/Phone, etc. |
| Promotion Experience: | Dates/Ranks you received |
| Tournament Experience: | Dates/Tournament events you participated in/Results |
| Demonstration Experience:
Locations/Roles | Dates/Demo |
| Promotion Organization Experience: | Dates/ Roles |
| Friday Fighter of the Night Recognition: | Dates |

If you would like to see a sample resume, ask Master Brand. You must bring your resume to the pre-test and promotion examination.

Q: Can I earn high school P.E. credit as a member of Sacramento Taekwondo Club?

A: Some of our high school age students have earned P.E. credit by attending Taekwondo classes. Ask your school administrators if they will allow you to receive credit for taking Taekwondo classes at our club. If so, Master Brand will provide you with a signed record of your attendance.

Q: Can I earn high school community service hours as a Sacramento Taekwondo Club assistant instructor?

A: Some of our high school age students have earned community service hours as assistant instructors. Ask your school administrators if they will allow you to receive credit for being an assistant instructor. If so, Master Brand will sign a copy of your assistant teaching log for your school administrator.