



TAEKWON-DO

Student Guide

Instructor

Grand Master Ricky J. Todd
IX Degree Black Belt, USTF-9-20

Senior Black Belts

Master April Bowling
VII Degree Black Belt, USTF-7-119
Mrs. Deborah Ragone
VI Degree Black Belt, USTF-6-244
Mr. Sean Toppi
VI Degree Black Belt, USTF-6-245

Location

Offutt AFB Youth Center
(Bldg. 5085) (402) 294-5152

Class Schedule

Tuesday and Thursday

Beginners - White Belt thru Yellow Belt Green Stripe 5:30 – 6:30 pm
Intermediate & Advanced - Green Belt thru Black Belt 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Website: <http://www.axetkd.com>

Facebook at AXE Taekwon-Do or

<https://www.facebook.com/ricky.todd.9/>

Grand Master Todd: axetkd@gmail.com or 402-650-4399

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Welcome to the art of Taekwon-Do and Axe Taekwon-Do

Our school has proudly served the Bellevue and Offutt communities since 1988, making it one of the longest continuously operating Taekwon-Do schools in the region. As an authorized school under the United States Taekwon-Do Federation, our lineage traces directly back to the Founder of Taekwon-Do, General Choi Hong Hi.

This study guide is designed to provide essential information about the school, its instructors, and the expectations of traditional Taekwon-Do training. Through consistent practice and dedication, most students experience significant personal growth and transformation within their first year of training.

Initial Stages of Training (First 6 Months):

The initial stage of Taekwon-Do training represents a period of adjustment during which the student is introduced to the fundamental techniques, terminology, and discipline of the art. During this time, the student must cultivate patience and humility while developing both physical and mental foundations. The learning process is demanding, and progress is achieved through consistent effort and sincere practice. Emphasis is placed on correct posture, proper etiquette, and the development of concentration and self-control. Physical improvements commonly observed during this stage include increased flexibility, improved muscle tone, and greater coordination and balance.

Second Phase of Training (Second 6 Months):

The second stage of training signifies a deeper commitment to the principles of Taekwon-Do. At this level, the student is expected to demonstrate increased self-discipline, perseverance, and mental fortitude. Advancement may appear gradual, as techniques become more complex and require greater precision, power, and understanding. It is natural for the student to experience periods of difficulty or apparent stagnation during this phase. Such challenges are an essential part of the training process and serve to strengthen character and resolve. Through continued practice and unwavering determination, the student develops not only improved technical skill, but also the moral and spiritual qualities that form the true essence of Taekwon-Do.

Individual Development and Perseverance:

In Taekwon-Do, we understand that each student progresses according to their own ability and effort. The development of skill within traditional Taekwon-Do may at times proceed more slowly than a beginner anticipates; however, through perseverance and continued practice that true strength is attained. Each rank introduces new techniques, patterns, and self-defense instruction, ensuring that training remains progressive and purposeful.

Periods of diminished motivation or difficulty are not uncommon in training. Students are encouraged to communicate openly with their instructors should such challenges arise, so that proper guidance and encouragement may be provided. The instructor's duty is not only to teach technique, but also to guide students in maintaining correct attitude and direction in their training.

Taekwon-Do is a disciplined art that requires time, dedication, and sincere effort to master. Advancement is therefore not granted lightly. At Axe Taekwon-Do, each promotion is earned through demonstrated skill, understanding, and personal growth, reflecting the true spirit and integrity of Taekwon-Do.

Family Participation and Communication:

I strongly encourage family participation, and we are delighted to have families train together. Should you have any questions regarding Taekwon-Do or the classes, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at axetkd@gmail.com, or by phone or text at 402-650-4399.

Respectfully
Grand Master Ricky Todd



Senior Grand Master C.E. "Chuck" Sereff, IX Dan, A-9-1
Founder and Emeritus President of the United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF)
(1933-2022)

Sr. Grand Master Sereff was the President of the USTF from 1979 to 2012 and now is the President Emeritus. He has promoted over 11,900 students to 1st Degree Black Belt. He has taught in every state in the United States and abroad in Australia, Japan, Scotland, Canada, Mexico, Panama, Ireland, Papua New Guinea, and Vienna.

Sr. On December 8, 1987, Grand Master Sereff was awarded the 9th degree black belt by General Choi Hong Hi, the Founder of Taekwon-Do, with the designation A-9-1. He is the third highest rank in ITF Taekwon-Do in the world, after General Choi Hong Hi, the Founder of TKD, and Grand Master Rhee Ki Ha.

Along the way to becoming a Grand Master, his charisma and skill helped thousands of students from beginning white belts through to 9th Dan Grand Master. Sr. Grand Master Sereff was the first non-Asian to be classified as an International Instructor by the International Taekwon-Do Federation. Sr. Grand Master Sereff started martial arts in 1961. Two years later, he founded the first Korean-style school of self-defense in the Denver area.

Sr. Grand Master Sereff became associated with General Choi Hong Hi, the founder of Taekwon-Do and the ITF, in 1965 after bringing Moon Ku Baek from Korea to teach in the Denver area. In the meantime, Sr. Grand Master Sereff established Taekwon-Do clubs at the US Air Force Academy, the YMCA's in Denver, and at various recreation centers at the major colleges in Colorado and Wyoming. To date, his teachings spread throughout the world. The USTF was formed in 1974 at the request of General Choi. The Federation now consists of 5 regional and state directors from coast to coast, including Alaska and Hawaii. An Armed Forces Director and Ambassadors to Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Southern Africa, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Papua New Guinea, Ireland, and Canada.

Promotions:

9th Degree black belt, Taekwon-Do A-9-1, 1997	4th Degree black belt, Taekwon-Do, 1970
8th Degree black belt, Taekwon-Do, 1989	1st Degree black belt, HapkiDo, 1969
7th Degree black belt, Taekwon-Do, 1983	3rd Degree black belt, Taekwon-Do, 1967
6th Degree black belt, Taekwon-Do, 1978	2nd Degree black belt, Tang Soo Do, 1963
5th Degree black belt, Taekwon-Do, 1974	1st Degree black belt, Tang Soo Do, 1960



**Grand Master Renee' Sereff, IX Dan, UTF-9-3
Director of Testing and Administrator of the
United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF)**

Grand Master Sereff is in charge of the day-to-day operations of Sereff Taekwon-Do and the United States Taekwon-Do Federation. She has travelled extensively in the United States and throughout the world with Sr. Grand Master Sereff the founder of the UTF and General Choi Hong Hi, the founder of Taekwon-Do.

Grand Master Sereff was promoted to 9th degree black belt by the Founder of UTF, Grand Master Charles Sereff in 2011. As the first woman in the UTF to achieve the rank of Grand Master, 9th Degree Black Belt, She feels the Tenets of Taekwon-Do and her good instructor drove her to be the best she could be. Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-Control and Indomitable Spirit are the tenants of Taekwon-Do and a way of life that will always remain. She has represented the United States at world championships in countries such as Russia, Greece, Canada, Argentina, Italy, New Zealand, Ireland, Malaysia, and Scotland as an International Referee. She taught world camps in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States that helped her establish the fact that women really do have a place in this art throughout the world. General Choi appointed her Director of the ITF March 24, 1986 in Vienna, Austria at the 20th anniversary of the ITF, that paved the way for all women to reach their goals.

She started Taekwon-Do in a Recreation Center program with her children instructed by Mr. Ron Wootton was the beginning of a way of life. After joining United Taekwon-Do with Charles E. Sereff, now Sr. Grand Master Sereff, the journey of a lifetime of opportunity began. Sr. Grand Master Sereff has been her instructor for over 40 years. Her loyalty to him and his loyalty to his instructor, General Choi Hong Hi, has been a lifelong commitment to spread the teachings to all students. She has been teaching Broomfield, Colorado for over 40 years. As a Broomfield native, she feels that giving back to our community is one of the important goals all students of Taekwon-Do strive for.

She truly feels that Taekwon-Do is the perfect tool not only for young people but for us as instructors. It helps us define and mold emerging personality traits that instill a sense of order, discipline, generosity, courage, and humility. Taekwon-Do appears to be the perfect exercise not only for the body, but also to impart the qualities of inner strength, patriotism, sense of justice and leadership that are needed to be a leader of men and women. As the testing director of the national organization, United States Taekwon-Do Federation, She has the pleasure of helping establish some of the requirements and have worked toward maintaining our high standards within the organization.

Promotions:

9th Degree black belt, 2011, A-9-3
8th Degree black belt, 2005, A-8-2
7th Degree black belt, 1998, A-7-13
6th Degree black belt, 1992, A-6-19
5th Degree black belt, 1988, A-5-33

4th Degree black belt, A-4-54
3rd Degree black belt, 1980, A-3-91
2nd Degree black belt, 1978
1st Degree black belt, 1976



Grand Master Ricky J. Todd, IX Dan, USTF-9-20
402-650-4399 – axetkd@gmail.com

Grand Master Todd is an internationally certified instructor under the United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF) and is the Senior Instructor at Axe Taekwon-Do. He began his Taekwon-Do journey under the guidance of Senior Master Gary W. Meek, 8th degree black belt at Meek's Taekwon-Do Center, McConnell AFB, Wichita, Kansas. Grand Master Todd was the chief instructor at that school from 1985 to 1986 following SM Meek's departure.

Due to his military service, Grand Master Todd relocated to Whiteman AFB, Knob Noster, Missouri, where he founded Todd's Taekwon-Do Center on the base, serving there from 1986-1990. In 1990, he moved to Incirlik AS, Adana, Turkey, where he again founded Todd's Taekwon-Do Center, remaining there until 1992. He then moved to Onizuka AS, Sunnyvale, California, where he established USTF California Taekwon-Do in Mountain View, California, from 1993 to 1996.

In December 1996, he relocated to Offutt AFB, Bellevue, Nebraska where he initially served as an assistant instructor at Meek's International Taekwon-Do at the Offutt Youth Center until April 1998. Later that year Grand Master Todd founded and opened Bellevue Taekwon-Do, a commercial school that operated until 2001. He then returned to Whiteman AFB in 2000, where he founded Whiteman Taekwon-Do and Windsor Taekwon-Do, teaching there until 2002.

After retiring from the Air Force in 2002, Grand Master Todd assumed the instructor position at Offutt AFB in 2024. He currently holds the position of USTF Region 2 Director, overseeing Taekwon-Do operations in Nebraska, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Texas. Throughout his career, he has served in various leadership roles with the USTF, including State Director for Kansas and Nebraska and as the Armed Forces Director.

In addition to his Taekwon-Do accomplishments, Grand Master Todd is a retired Air Force paralegal and currently works as a law office manager for an Omaha law firm. In September 2021, he was promoted to the rank of IX Dan, Grand master Instructor, by Sr. Grand Master Sereff.

Promotions:

9 th Degree, USTF-9-20, Sep 2021, SGM Sereff, Broomfield, CO	4 th Degree, USTF-4-215, May 1994, Master Wheatley, Reno, NV
8 th Degree, USTF-8-23, Oct 2014, SGM Sereff, Broomfield, CO	3 rd Degree, A-3-252, Oct 1990, SGM Sereff, Bellevue, NE
7 th Degree, USTF-7-50 Apr 2008, SGM Sereff, Bellevue, NE	2 nd Degree, A-2-712, Aug 1987, SM Meek, Wichita, KS
6 th Degree, USTF-6-104, Dec 2002, SM Meek, Bellevue, NE	1 st Degree, A-1-3815, Mar 1986, SM Meek, Hahn Air Base, Germany
5 th Degree, A-5-121, Feb 1998, SGM Sereff, Bellevue, NE	

Certifications:

USTF Class A Instructor, #40 – Oct 2009	USTF Class A, B & C Referee
USTF Class B Instructor, #176 – Apr 2009	USTF Referee Instructor
USTF Class C Instructor, July 1989	USTF Breaking Seminar Instructor



Master April Bowling, VII Dan, USTF-7-119

arbowing11@hotmail.com

Master April Bowling is an Instructor under the United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF) at Axe Taekwon-Do. She began her Taekwon-Do training in 1996 under the guidance of Sr. Master Gary W. Meek, 8th degree black belt, at Meek's International Taekwon-Do, Offutt Air Force Base, Bellevue, Nebraska. After relocating in 1997, Master Bowling returned to her training in 1998 and has since continued her journey in Taekwon-Do.

Throughout her Taekwon-Do career, Master Bowling has participated in numerous tournaments, events, and promotion tests, further enhancing her skills and knowledge. Master Bowling is known throughout the USTF as being a fierce competitor in patterns and possessing tremendous breaking skill and knowledge. In 2013, she graduated from the University of Nebraska – Omaha.

Promotions:

7 th Degree, USTF-7-119, Mar 2024, GM Sereff, Broomfield, CO	3 rd Degree, USTF-3-111, Nov 2006, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE
6 th Degree, USTF-6-198, Nov 2018, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	2nd Degree, USTF-2-2716, Aug 2004, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE
5 th Degree, USTF-5-303, Nov 2013, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	1 st Degree, USTF-1-9477, Aug 2002, SM Meek, Bellevue, NE
4 th Degree, USTF-4-629, Oct 2009, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	

Certifications:

USTF Class B Instructor, Apr 2009, #176	USTF Basic Ho-Sin-Sul (multiple times)
USTF Class C Instructor, Feb 2008	USTF Breaking Seminar (multiple times)
USTF Class A Referee, Mar 2014	USTF Step Sparring Seminar, Jun 2019
USTF Class B Referee, Mar 2009	USTF Ground Tactics Seminar, Jul 2021
USTF Class C Referee, Oct 2006	



Mrs. Deborah Ragone, VI Dan, USTF-6-244

Mrs. Deborah Ragone is an Instructor under the United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF) at Axe Taekwon-Do. She began her Taekwon-Do training in 2006 under the guidance of Grand Master Ricky Todd at Axe Taekwon-Do, Offutt Air Force Base, Bellevue, Nebraska. Throughout her training, Mrs. Ragone has participated in numerous tournaments, events, and promotion tests, continuously advancing her skills and knowledge in Taekwon-Do.

Mrs. Ragone is an avid competitor and has earned the title of Grand Champion four times. In addition to her Taekwon-Do involvement, Mrs. Ragone is a dedicated middle school teacher within the Bellevue Public School system.

Promotions:

6 th Degree, USTF-5-244, Dec 2025, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	3 rd Degree, USTF-3-1243, Mar 2013, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE
5 th Degree, USTF-5-364, Aug 2020, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	2 nd Degree, USTF-2-3010, Jan 2011, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE
4 th Degree, USTF-4-703, June 2016, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	1 st Degree, USTF-1-10717, Apr 2009, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE

Certifications:

USTF Class B Instructor, Nov 2014, #246	USTF Breaking Seminar (multiple times)
USTF Class C Instructor, Feb 2009, #873	USTF Step Sparring Seminar, Jun 2019
USTF Class A Referee, Mar 2013	USTF Ground Tactics, May 2019
USTF Class B Referee, Jan 2001	USTF Basic Ho-Sin-Sul (multiple times)
USTF Class C Referee, Mar 2009	USTF Knife & Weapons Defense Course, Feb 2018



Mr. Sean Toppi, V Dan, USTF-6-245

Mr. Sean Toppi is an Instructor under the United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF) at Axe Taekwon-Do. He began his Taekwon-Do training in 1995 under Sr. Master Gary Meek at Meek's International Taekwon-Do, Offutt Air Force Base, Bellevue, Nebraska. After earning his black belt while in high school, Mr. Toppi temporarily stepped away from martial arts. In 2010, he returned to training and has since participated in numerous tournaments, events, and promotion tests. In 2025, Mr. Toppi was designated as an instructor authorized to teach the USTF Basic Self Defense course throughout the United States.

Promotions:

6th Degree, USTF-6-245, Dec 2025, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	3 rd Degree, USTF-3-1247, May 2013, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE
5th Degree, USTF-5-367, Nov 2020, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	2 nd Degree, USTF-2-3018, Apr 2011, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE
4 th Degree, USTF-4-706, Nov 2016, GM Todd, Bellevue, NE	1 st Degree, A-1-893, SM Meek, Bellevue, NE

Certifications:

USTF Class B Instructor, Nov 2014, #247	USTF Class C Referee, Jan 2011
USTF Class C Instructor, May 2011, #921	USTF Knife & Weapons Defense Course, Jul 2010
USTF Class A Referee, Feb 2017	USTF Breaking Seminar (multiple times)
USTF Class B Referee, Mar 2013	

Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to enroll, or to consider enrolling, yourself, or your child in the study of Taekwon-Do. Often called the “Korean art of self-defense,” Taekwon-Do is far more than a method of physical protection; it is a comprehensive way of life. It represents the scientific and disciplined application of the body’s movements to defend oneself effectively, while cultivating both the mind and spirit. Through rigorous physical and mental training, students develop strength, skill, humility, and determination, learning the value of discipline, perseverance, and respect.

The five tenets of Taekwon-Do—**courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit**—form the foundation of the art. These principles guide not only the practice of Taekwon-Do but also the conduct of students in daily life. For children, training promotes confidence, reduces fear, and teaches the responsible use of physical skills in self-defense.

Recognized as one of the fastest-growing martial arts in the world, Taekwon-Do unites mental discipline with precise physical techniques. Students learn to execute punches, kicks, blocks, and evasions with accuracy and control, enabling them to neutralize a single opponent or multiple attackers effectively. Above all, Taekwon-Do fosters a harmony of body, mind, and character that extends far beyond the dojang.



General Choi Hong-Hi, 9th Degree Black Belt and Grand Master (November 9, 1918 – June 15, 2002), is the founder of Taekwon-Do. He developed the art during his imprisonment by the Japanese during World War II. Taekwon-Do has since gained worldwide popularity, primarily due to its accessibility and adaptability. It is an art that can be practiced by individuals of all ages, from the young to the elderly, and can be tailored to accommodate a variety of lifestyles and personal abilities. It is a skill that, once learned, can never be taken away.

Taekwon-Do is a martial art whose name is derived from three Korean words. Literally translated, "**Tae**" means to jump or fly, to kick or strike with the foot. "**Kwon**" refers to the fist, signifying the use of the hand or fist to punch or destroy. Finally, "**Do**" means an art or way, representing the righteous path laid out by saints and sages in the past. Collectively, **Taekwon-Do** represents a system of mental training and techniques for unarmed combat, focusing on self-defense and health. It

involves the skilled application of punches, kicks, blocks, and evasions, using bare hands and feet to swiftly neutralize a moving opponent or multiple opponents.

Taekwon-Do empowers the weak by providing them with a powerful tool for self-defense, instilling both the confidence and ability to defend themselves and defeat an opponent. However, when misapplied, Taekwon-Do can be a deadly weapon. For this reason, mental training is heavily emphasized to ensure students do not misuse the art.

The Taekwon-Do taught at this school is the original martial art developed and named in 1955 by **General Choi Hong Hi**, the founder of Taekwon-Do. The **United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF)** serves as the national governing body.

Taekwon-Do is a martial art that is tailored to meet the individual needs and limitations of each student. It is often referred to as a "family art" because practitioners of all ages train together, fostering a sense of community and shared learning. In Taekwon-Do, equal emphasis is placed on the Tenets of the art and its philosophical principles, alongside the development of technical skills. Taekwon-Do is a positive discipline that encourages everyone to realize their full potential, both physically and mentally. The lessons learned through Taekwon-Do are not only applicable within the training environment but are also meant to be integrated into everyday life, enhancing personal growth and character.

Tuition

Tuition for Taekwon-Do is set at a reasonable rate, considering the high quality and extensive training provided in comparison to other martial arts schools. The current tuition is seventy dollars (\$70) per student, per month. The Youth Center handles payment arrangements, which must be established as direct payments.

Questions & Answers

Who will be instructing the classes?

All classes are taught by certified instructors and assistant instructors who hold black belts. Grand Master Todd oversees the quality of instruction, ensuring that all students receive training of the highest standard. All black belts are required to attend regularly scheduled classes, participate in seminars, and compete in tournaments as part of their rank requirements to maintain proficiency. Classes feature small student-to-instructor ratios, allowing each student to receive individualized guidance and attention for effective progress.

How old does a student need to be to join classes?

Students are generally required to be at least six years of age. This ensures they have the attention span necessary to benefit from structured Taekwon-Do instruction. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What will my child gain from the class?

Our program is designed to help students reach their full potential by providing challenging instruction, clear goals, and guidance to achieve them. Training emphasizes physical conditioning, flexibility, balance, and coordination, while also fostering the development of integrity, confidence, self-esteem, and respect. Students will experience positive effects beyond the dojang, including improved focus, behavior, and academic performance.

How often should my child attend classes?

Classes are offered on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The first class lasts one hour, and the second is ninety minutes in duration. To progress effectively, students are expected to attend at least two classes per week. With four classes offered weekly, this schedule typically accommodates family commitments. As students advance, some choose to attend additional classes. The monthly tuition remains the same regardless of the number of classes attended. Some students attend up to five hours of training per week to further their development.

Will classes leave my child bruised or will they become a bully?

Classes are designed to be both safe and challenging. Students are taught that Taekwon-Do skills must be exercised responsibly and with self-control. Safety gear is required, and instructors enforce strict rules regarding respect and conduct. We do not tolerate bullying in any form and provide students with the knowledge and confidence to handle such situations appropriately. While minor bumps or bruises may occasionally occur due to the physical nature of training, all activities are carefully supervised, and safety guidelines are rigorously followed.

Can I or should I join Taekwon-Do with my child?

Absolutely. Each student progresses at their own pace, according to their individual level and ability. Taekwon-Do is suitable for anyone, regardless of age or physical condition, and training together as a family can be both rewarding and motivating. Families who practice together often find that students advance more quickly while enjoying a positive and supportive shared activity.

Are classes ever cancelled?

Classes are cancelled on official holidays. In the event of severe weather, classes will be cancelled if the base closes. Students and families will be notified via email, or you may call the Youth Center at **402-294-5152** to confirm the status of classes.

How do parents and/or students stay informed?

Parents can stay informed about Taekwon-Do activities through multiple channels. Our website, www.axetkd.com, provides up-to-date information, and we are active on Facebook under the name *Axe Taekwon-Do* (no membership is required to view the page). A monthly email newsletter is also sent to all families, and our national organization publishes a separate newsletter which will be shared as it becomes available. Important announcements may also be distributed via flyers. Contact information for all instructors is available on our website for any additional questions or guidance.

Tenets of Taekwon-Do

Courtesy: Students should practice courtesy to build their character and conduct training in an orderly manner.

Integrity: The word assumes a different definition than the one usually presented in a dictionary. One must be able to define right and wrong and have the conscience, if wrong, to feel guilt.

Perseverance: There is an old saying that “Patience leads to virtue or merit.”

Self-Control: This tenet is extremely important inside and outside the classes, whether conducting yourself in sparring or any aspect of life.

Indomitable Spirit: A serious student of Taekwon-Do will be modest and honest at all times. If confronted with injustice, he or she will deal with the situation without hesitation or fear.

Student Oath

I shall observe the Tenets of Taekwon-Do

I shall respect the instructor and seniors

I shall never misuse Taekwon-Do

I shall be a champion of freedom and justice

I shall build a more peaceful world

Class Protocol

Students are expected to arrive at least **15 minutes before the scheduled start of class**. Upon arrival, students should quietly warm up and stretch in the designated area along the side of the training space. For safety reasons, gum is not permitted, and all jewelry and watches must be removed prior to training. Students who arrive late should **wait by the door** until instructed by the instructor to join the class.

If a student is unable to attend a scheduled class, prior notification must be provided to Grand Master Todd via email or another form of communication. An essential aspect of Taekwon-Do etiquette is the bow. The bow serves both as a **greeting** and a **sign of respect**. This principle extends to how students address instructors and fellow students, using titles such as **Mr., Mrs., Ms., Sir, or Ma’am**, to uphold the tradition, discipline, and mutual respect that are central to Taekwon-Do training.

Students are expected to bow when addressing instructors, as well as upon entering or exiting the training area. It is important to understand that the bow **does not signify inferiority or subordination**; rather, it is a mutual gesture of respect shared by all practitioners. In Taekwon-Do, every student bows, regardless of rank. The bow reflects **humility, courtesy, and pride** in the art, serving as a reminder of the discipline and respect that form the foundation of Taekwon-Do practice.

Uniforms

The Taekwon-Do uniform, or **Do Bok**, must be worn and maintained with the highest degree of care and respect. Uniforms should be **clean and properly pressed** prior to each training session. Students are not permitted to train in partial or incomplete uniforms. Instruction will be provided on the correct method for tying the belt, and students are expected to tie their belts **independently** once they have learned the proper technique. Proper care and presentation of the Do Bok reflect both **discipline and pride** in the practice of Taekwon-Do.

The only markings allowed on the Do Bok are those patches authorized by the United States Taekwon-Do Federation. Colored shirts or garments should not be visible beneath the uniform. If additional coverage is

needed, a plain white shirt may be worn underneath. Female students are required to wear either a white shirt or sports bra. As Taekwon-Do is a contact martial art, it is possible that the shirt may occasionally become loose during training, and students should dress accordingly to maintain modesty and safety.

Do Boks are available for purchase from the instructors, with pricing dependent on size.

The Belt System

Students in Taekwon-Do advance through **10 color belt (gup) levels** and **9 black belt (dan) levels**, each with its own significance and specific requirements. Every promotion represents a milestone in a student's development, reflecting not only the acquisition of new techniques, forms, and knowledge, but also dedication, discipline, and consistent effort. In addition to mastering the required skills, students must complete a **minimum amount of training time** before becoming eligible to test for promotion. The 10 gup levels are as follows:

Gup	Belt Level	Gup	Belt Level
10 th Gup	White Belt	4 th Gup	Blue Belt
9 th Gup	White Belt Yellow Stripe	3 rd Gup	Blue Belt Red Stripe
8 th Gup	Yellow Belt	2 nd Gup	Red Belt
7 th Gup	Yellow Belt Green Stripe	1 st Gup	Red Belt Black Stripe
6 th Gup	Green Belt		
5 th Gup	Green Belt Blue Stripe		

Black belt levels range from 1st Degree or “Dan” to 9th Degree or “Dan”.

Testing for Promotion

Promotion testing is typically conducted **every three months**, though the interval may be slightly longer for younger students. The testing process consists of **both a physical and written assessment**, with elementary-aged students completing an **oral examination** in place of the written test.

During the physical portion, students are required to demonstrate all techniques for their current belt level and any techniques from preceding levels, as directed by the testing board. The written or oral portion evaluates knowledge of material associated with the student's current rank as well as all previous ranks.

To be eligible for testing, students must maintain a **minimum attendance of 85%**. Students will be informed when they are prepared to test and encouraged to continue consistent practice in the interim. Students who successfully complete the examination for a higher rank receive an **official United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF) rank certificate** along with their new belt or stripe. With diligent and consistent training, a student could earn the rank of **black belt in approximately three years**.

Our goal is to **develop quality students**, not to hasten their progression through the ranks. Emphasis is placed on providing each student with the **knowledge, skills, and discipline** necessary to effectively defend themselves, while achieving **technical proficiency** in Taekwon-Do. Advancement is earned through consistent practice, dedication, and a deep understanding of both the physical and mental aspects of the art.

Breaking during Testing

When a student tests for **yellow belt with a green stripe or higher**, breaking is included as a component of the physical examination. Breaking serves as a demonstration of **concentration, power, and proper technique**. Breaking is just one part of Taekwon-Do training; it is not more important than other skills. Breaking can be a source of anxiety for new students. To ensure confidence and readiness, students are provided with **ample opportunity to practice** prior to testing. As an additional benefit for students at Axe Taekwon-Do, Grand Master Todd is the **USTF-certified Breaking Seminar Instructor**, providing expert guidance in both preparation and execution.

Photography

Parents and family members are warmly encouraged to attend promotions, tournaments, and classes, which provide excellent opportunities to photograph or video students in action. For safety and to maintain the focus of the class, we ask that all spectators remain on the sidelines while recording. Instructors are happy to provide guidance and direct you to the most suitable location for capturing these moments.

Competition

The techniques and forms of Taekwon-Do are designed to develop a student's ability to perform effective self-defense. Consistent practice, both inside and outside the dojang, is essential for improving technique, as well as enhancing physical fitness, flexibility, concentration, and discipline. Natural athletic ability is not a prerequisite for success; progress is determined by **dedication, perseverance, and consistent effort**.

While Taekwon-Do is primarily a martial art rather than a sport, several tournaments are held throughout the year to provide opportunities for competition. Students are expected to participate in at least **one tournament annually**. Axe Taekwon-Do hosts a **mandatory internal tournament**, and students also travel to competitions in Colorado, Wyoming, and Missouri. Those who wish to compete frequently have many opportunities to do so.

Competition offers valuable benefits, including the chance to meet students from other states, increased confidence, and the opportunity to compare and refine techniques alongside peers. Safety is always a top priority, and all referees and judges are **certified by the United States Taekwon-Do Federation**.

Tournaments are structured so that students compete against others of similar **age and belt level**, and events typically include **Forms, Sparring, and Breaking**. Participation in competition not only challenges students to perform their best, but also reinforces the principles of discipline, respect, and perseverance that are central to Taekwon-Do.

Visiting other Schools

A key benefit of training at Axe Taekwon-Do and as a member of the **United States Taekwon-Do Federation (USTF)** is the opportunity to practice with students at other USTF-affiliated schools nationwide. When traveling, students are encouraged to visit and participate in classes at USTF schools in the area, provided proper protocol is followed. **Prior permission from Grand Master Todd is required**, and he will assist in coordinating with the owner or head instructor of the school you wish to visit.

While students are welcome to **observe classes at other martial arts schools**, training at non-USTF schools is **not permitted**. For example, attending a Karate class as a spectator is acceptable, but practicing at that school while an active member of Axe Taekwon-Do is not allowed. This policy ensures that students remain fully committed to Taekwon-Do, as the techniques, forms, and principles must be executed with precision. Cross-training in another martial art may lead to confusion and hinder progress.

Additionally, this policy reflects the **importance of loyalty**. Our instructors are dedicated to the art of Taekwon-Do and to the development of each student, and we expect the same level of **commitment and loyalty** from our students. Respecting this principle ensures the integrity of training, fosters a strong sense of community within the dojang, and supports each student's steady progress in Taekwon-Do.

STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed for students in 6th grade and below. These students will be given an oral test based on the information provided below. Students in 7th grade and above, as well as all adults, will be required to take a written test covering all relevant information for their respective rank, including the **White Testing Syllabus**, the **Blue Patterns Handbook**, the **Yellow Step-Sparring Handbook**, and any additional material presented in class.

To use this guide effectively, locate your current rank and focus on studying the information listed under that specific belt level. Remember, after any promotion, you are still required to retain knowledge from your previous belt levels. For example, a student testing for a **Green Stripe** will still need to know the material from **White** and **Yellow Belt** levels.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact your instructor. We are providing the information up to the testing for **Green Belt**. After this time, it is required that students purchase the **White Testing Syllabus** book. We highly encourage you to purchase this book as soon as possible to assist with your continued learning and progress.

WHITE BELT: (10th Gup)

Q. The meaning of white belt.

A. **White Belt:** Signifies innocence as that of a beginning student who has no previous knowledge of Taekwon-Do.

Q. The number of moves, meaning and diagram of SAJU-JURUGI.

A. **SAJU-JURUGI** - Four directional punch with 14 moves (7 Right Side / 7 Left Side). The diagram is a plus sign (+).

Q. The number of moves, meaning and diagram of SAJU-MAKGI.

A. **SAJU-MAKGI** - Four directional block with 16 moves (8 Right Side / 8 Left Side). The diagram is a plus sign (+).

WHITE BELT/YELLOW STRIPE: (9th Gup)

Q. The meaning of yellow belt.

A. **Yellow Belt:** Signifies earth from which a plant sprouts and takes root as a Taekwon-Do foundation is being laid.

Q. The number of moves, meaning and diagram of CHON-JI.

A. **CHON-JI:** means literally "the Heaven the Earth." It is, in the Orient, interpreted as the creation of the world or the beginning of human history, therefore, it is the initial pattern played by the beginner. This pattern consists of two similar parts; one to represent the Heaven and the other the Earth. 19 Movements. The diagram is a plus sign (+).

YELLOW BELT: (8th Gup)

Q. The meaning of yellow belt.

A. **Yellow Belt:** Signifies earth from which a plant sprouts and takes root as a Taekwon-Do foundation is being laid.

Q. The number of moves, meaning and diagram of DAN-GUN.

A. **DAN-GUN:** is named after the holy Dan-Gun, the legendary founder of Korea in the year 2,333 B.C. 21 Movements. The diagram is a capital I.

YELLOW BELT/GREEN STRIPE: (7th Gup)

Q. The meaning of green belt.

A. **Green Belt:** Signifies the plants growth as the Taekwon-Do skills begin to develop.

Q. The number of moves, meaning and diagram of DO-SAN.

A. **DO-SAN:** is the pseudonym of the patriot Ahn Chang-Ho (1876-1938). The 24 movements represent his entire life which he devoted to furthering the education of Korea and its independence movement. 24 Movements. The diagram is backward Z (right stair step).

After the rank of yellow belt green stripe, students should purchase the USTF Gup Testing Requirement Book. This book is available from Grand Master Todd. You may also buy this whenever you wish.

ETIQUETTE

A high degree of etiquette must be **consistently observed** by all students, both inside and outside of class. Proper conduct is especially important when **lower-ranking students interact with senior students during training**, when **higher-ranking students interact with elder students outside of class**, and when students **visit another school**. In every situation, the correct salutation should be observed, as it demonstrates **respect, courtesy, and humility**. It is considered improper for a black belt to dismiss or show disrespect toward a beginning white belt, who may in fact be **senior in age or life experience**.

When visiting other classes - whether USTF Taekwon-Do schools or other martial arts disciplines—students are expected to **display modesty, courtesy, and respect**. These qualities reflect well on the individual and on the larger martial arts community.

Etiquette is far more than a set of rules; it is a **fundamental aspect of one's character and personal development**. True etiquette arises naturally from the heart and is expressed through **actions, behavior, and speech**. It is closely linked to personality and moral character, enhancing a student's ability to interact respectfully and harmoniously with others. Practicing good etiquette improves one's quality of life, fostering **peace, discipline, and harmony** both within the individual and in the wider community.

Basics in the Class:

1. **Bowing** – When bowing, students must first stand at attention with their **feet forming a 45-degree angle**. Fists should be lightly clenched, and elbows slightly bent. Bend the body forward approximately **15 degrees** as a sign of respect.
2. **Posture in the Presence of Seniors** – While seated among senior members (either higher-ranking Taekwon-Do students or elders), students must maintain **proper posture at all times**. If a senior member enters the room, students must **stand immediately and bow**. Students should only resume their seat **after the senior member has been seated**.
3. **Entering Class** – Upon entering the training area, students should bow first to the **flag**, then to the **Instructor**, and finally to the **other students** in the dojang. When visiting other martial arts schools, the same **modesty, courtesy, and respect** must always be observed.
4. **Class Conduct** – Students should **refrain from excessive noise** and help maintain a focused and serious training environment. Discipline and attentiveness are essential for proper learning.
5. **Acknowledging Senior Black Belts** – When a senior-ranking black belt enters or leaves the class, the **first person to notice** will call the class to attention (**Charyot**). The next senior-ranking individual present will then **direct all students to bow**, demonstrating proper respect and adherence to hierarchy.

General Etiquette

Students are expected to **demonstrate proper etiquette at all times**, both at home and in public. This includes using **respectful and appropriate language** in conversation, avoiding slang or improper speech. In every relationship whether with teachers, peers, or others, students should **maintain courtesy, respect, and proper behavior**, reflecting the discipline and character cultivated through Taekwon-Do training.

Rules of Respectful Communication

1. Use **correct and appropriate language** at all times.
2. Speak **calmly and humbly**, avoiding abrupt, violent, or aggressive tones.
3. Always address others with the **proper title**, showing respect for their position or rank.
4. Be a **thoughtful listener**; do not interrupt or dominate a conversation. Consider your words carefully before expressing your opinion.
5. Avoid **pointing fingers** or making unnecessary physical contact during conversation.

Email Etiquette

1. Use proper and respectful language in all email correspondence.
2. Do not send unwanted jokes or messages to seniors or other students.
3. Do not share the email addresses of instructors or fellow students with others without their explicit permission.

Social Meetings

1. When introduced to a senior black belt or instructor by a friend, allow your friend to complete the introduction before speaking.
2. When shaking hands, a junior student must wait until the senior extends their hand first. A junior should never initiate the handshake.
3. Shake hands with an appropriate firmness—neither too tight nor too loose.

Visiting Other Schools

1. Do not make unscheduled or surprise visits. Provide ample notice before attending a class at another school.
2. Avoid visiting during early mornings or late evenings, unless prior arrangements have been made.
3. If your host provides subtle hints to leave—such as glancing at a watch—be considerate and depart promptly.