

# Achieving Your Black Belt

## Specific Requirements

### Going from Brown Belt to Black Belt

Every style of martial arts is slightly different; however, there are similarities between styles. Achieving a black belt is a proud accomplishment in every case, and means that the martial artist has overcome many personal and physical obstacles to earn this high degree. It is very challenging, but the rewards are great, in pride, respect from others, physical fitness, confidence, strength and friendship. You can achieve a level of fitness and self assurance that you never dreamed possible.

For our particular organization, certain goals must be met. These fall into two categories. Set requirements, such as the time requirement, the mastery of forms and class attendance make up the first category, and are of the type that can be "checked off". The second category is much harder to define, but goes to the spirit and character of the martial artist. This requirement can only be met by exhibiting certain behavior in the classes and activities, putting as much energy into every part of class as possible, and listening and responding to instructors. Some initiative on the part of the student is necessary. If the student does not understand a direction or a general requirement, or is unable to meet a certain requirement due to special circumstances, the student must ask the instructors' help in solving these problems. These two categories of requirements are clarified below.

Category 1: Set requirements for Black Belt.

1. Participation in classes for 1 to 2 years after Brown Belt is achieved.
2. Mastery of all forms through Brown Belt.
3. Participation in special Black Belt classes. (usually Friday Night classes)
4. Running/ fitness requirement. This can usually be achieved through participation in Saturday Morning 7 A.M. activities. Schedules can be found on the Blue Wave Martial Arts website. This requirement usually culminates in a half marathon for adults, or a 10 K for kids before the Black Belt test.
5. Board Breaking. This requirement is different for different body types and ages. We do not practice this very much, but the snap and strength that you develop during forms and free style will translate very well to this skill.

Category 2: Spirit and Character.

The motto of our parent club is "Spirit, Focus, Power". To gain all three of these, commitment and energy are required. The student can check off all of the above requirements under category 1, but if the commitment and spirit are not present, the student will not be able to master the skills.

In Class:

1. Show up on time, with equipment and uniform ready to go, with belt tied and shirt tucked in. Show respect for your fellow students - no horsing around. The lower belts look up to Black Belts, so you must show that you are worthy of respect.

2. Do the run with energy - keep up.

3. Basics: These are the building blocks of everything in our style. Do them Hard! At the end of these, you should be sweating.

4. Forms: practice Spirit, Focus and Power. This means snapping every move, stopping at the end of every move (ours is not a flowing style), with correct stances and with shouts in the appropriate places. Respond to all direction of the instructors. Behave as though the instructors are talking to you personally, and check that you are doing what they ask. The snap that you develop in your forms will enable you to break boards for requirement 5 above. A Black Belt has no excuses. Your instructors are keeping track. Take a moment to notice how hard the Black Belts are working.

5. Free Style: be ready with gear on, and take the initiative to find a place in line. Fight every fight with good natured commitment, kicking hard and accurately (turn that back foot!) and blocking hard and accurately. Even though you're fighting a fellow student, treat this not as an exercise, but as a real fight. Free Style develops quickness in your reactions and accuracy, as well as stamina in short bursts.

6. Three Step: do all moves with speed and accuracy. This develops correct form and coordinates combinations of moves. Very good for coordination, balance and stamina.

7. Warm Downs: get gear off quickly and line up quickly.

8. Special Runs: This is not usually discussed in class, as it pertains to upper belts or students who are training for Black Belt. It takes many months of participation in the special Saturday Morning runs before you test for Black Belt. If you need a ride to these, speak to an instructor about arrangements for car pooling. If you can't make these runs for some reason, then speak to an instructor about what else you can do to meet this requirement. Usually a half marathon is required for First Degree, or completion of a 10 K for kids under 15. This develops endurance.

Any one of you can achieve a Black Belt with enough initiative and energy, and your instructors are always eager to help you overcome obstacles you may have in meeting these goals. We love to see you succeed!