



The Path of a 1st Degree Black Belt Decided

Congratulations on attaining the rank of first degree black belt! We know you have worked very hard to achieve this prestigious rank, and are excited to know “what comes next”. This document will help explain what you will learn as a black belt, as well as what it takes to earn your second degree black belt. Please read this document carefully, and let your instructor know if you have any questions. Remember, as Grand Master Soon Ho Lee says, “There is always more to learn!”

What do I learn now?

Form: 1st Degree Black Belts learn the traditional form named Shimjun (81 moves). This form is practiced every cycle. Students must learn all 81 moves in order to mid-term or test. The Form sheet is attached to this document. The ATA has created excellent training DVDs that help explain and demonstrate this difficult form. Please see the front desk if you are interested in purchasing this training tool. The black belt DVD's are MUCH better than the color belt DVD's.

Traditional Training Weapons: 1st Degree Black Belts will learn up to five traditional weapons. They are:

- Single Bahng Mong Ee (Single Stick)
- Single Ssang Jeol Bahng (Single Nunchuck)
- Single Handed Sword
- Two Handed Sword
- Combat Sparring

Each weapon has a set form that students will learn and demonstrate at their testing. In the weapons cycle, Black Belts are highly encouraged to purchase their own weapon so they can train at home! (It is very hard to simulate a sword or Ssang Jeol Bang, etc.)



Sparring: 1st Degree Black belts will continue to progress in their sparring knowledge and application. At testing, black belt students will be tested on 2 rounds of sparring and will be judged on:

- Reading Opponent
- Defense
- Rank Appropriate Offense (Right leg round kick won't cut it at black belt!)
- Timing
- Speed/Stamina
- Set up (fakes)

Self Defense: Black belts will learn rotating self-defense. This self defense will be similar to what was taught at color belt, but will take the attack to the next level. For example, as a color belt, we learned how to defend against a front choke. As a black belt, you will learn how to defend a choke while on the ground.

Board Breaks: The board breaks will rotate each cycle and will be based on moves from the lower ranks. At the beginning of each cycle, we will announce what breaks will be performed.

How do I progress to 2nd Degree Black Belt?

Now that you have achieved your goal of black belt, it is important to set your next goal of second degree black belt! In order to rank advance, students have to perform at testing just like they did as a color belt (**and complete the homework paper each testing or mid term**), however there are some unique expectations for black belt students. These expectations are:

Time in Rank: A 1st Degree Black Belt must spend a **minimum of 12 months in rank** before the student can test for 2nd Degree Recommended. This is an ATA requirement. Students should expect to make huge improvements between first and second degree, and for these improvements to take place, a student needs time in rank, and consistent,



challenging training. Many students take 1-3 years to advance to second degree. Please remember, it is not a race! As long as you are moving forward and learning, you are succeeding!

Testing and Mid-Term Requirements:

- While in rank, **the student must pass 4 mid-terms**. The cost for each mid-term is \$55.00. In the situation where a student does not pass a mid-term and must retake a test, The ATA will only charge for 4 mid-terms. (An unsuccessful midterm may be re-attempted at no cost).
- Once the 1st Degree Black Belt has successfully passed the 4 mid-terms, the student can then test for 2nd Degree Recommended at the cost of \$55.00. Testing for mid-terms and 2nd Degree Recommended can be performed at any testing.
- Testing for 2nd Degree Decided must be performed at an Thrive Black Belt or regional testing. These occur 2-3 times per year. The cost for this testing is \$199.
- It is important to note: **Black Belt students may NOT attend make-up testing for any reason.**
- If a student does not pass a mid-term, they CANNOT do a make up, they just re-test at the next testing (2 months later). If a student does not pass a rank testing, they also wait two months for the next testing to re-test. There is no charge for a re-test.
- On cycles that a Thrive Black Belt testing is offered, students who wish to test or midterm must do so at the Black Belt testing, and may not test at any of the in-school testings that cycle. On testings that a black belt testing is NOT offered, students are welcome to test at the appropriate testing for their age at any Thrive location. (Example- A Windsor black belt may test at the Fort Collins black belt testing if that time or date works better for their schedule).
- An example time line for a 1st Degree to earn a 2nd Degree would be the following:
 - 1st Degree Black Belt Decided is earned:
 - 2 - 4 Months - 1st Mid-term
 - 4 - 6 Months - 2nd Mid-term
 - 6 - 8 Months - 3rd Mid-term
 - 8 - 10 Months - 4th Mid-term
 - 12th Month - Test for 2nd Degree Black Belt Recommended
 - Next Regional Testing – Test for 2nd Degree Decided.

Mid-Term Curriculum



At a mid-term, a first degree black belt must receive at least a seven (7) to pass. The testing is scored the following way:

Form- (0-5)

*Sparring (0-3)

*Board Breaks- (0-2)

* Weapons may be used to replace either sparring, or board breaks. Weapons is worth the amount of the event it replaces (3 if you replace sparring or 2 if you replace board breaks).

At a midterm, students select TWO of either sparring, weapons, or board breaks. At a rank testing (from 2R-2D) a student must do ALL events, and the lowest score is dropped. Any event that is not completed will result in an automatic “no change”. For example: an incomplete form, boards that don’t break, etc.

Resources

The ATA has a number of resources to assist students with their training for mid-terms and/or 2nd Degree testing. Instructors are always available for private lessons. In addition, we have DVDs that provide a complete look at all the components of the 1st Degree Black Belt curriculum. Please see the front desk for more information.

Black Belt Goal Setting and Opportunities

At Black Belt, you become a serious student of martial arts. You have completed a basic understanding of the techniques, and now will push forward toward “mastery” of the martial arts. Students are HIGHLY encouraged to set a goal to 2nd degree, an instructor trainee, or a state champion during their time as a first degree black belt. Students without goals do not stay students for long!

As a black belt, you know are eligible to compete for the title of World Champion, as well as to compete on Thrive Team Sparring teams! Please see your instructor to find out all the details for these great black belt opportunities!



We look forward to continuing your journey with you, and seeing you Thrive for many years to come!

Sincerely,

Thrive Martial Arts