

Welcome to Sokcho Taekwondo.

Starting a new activity amongst strangers in unfamiliar surroundings can be a nerve wracking experience for most people.

Being different from most other forms of exercise, martial arts classes have additional obstacles that the new student must overcome before starting to feel comfortable, such as; variations on exercises, strange sounds and actions, unfamiliar co-ordination drills that make the most confident of people feel self conscious and regimented lines of other “expert” students wearing uniforms.

The majority of new martial art students settle in quickly with the help of the other students and the instructors, however for some who may be slightly more self conscious the first class can even be an unpleasant experience that they don't wish to repeat.

This sheet contains some introductory information to assist you settle in and to hopefully explain some of the required class elements that can be quite confusing without explanation.

Most martial arts classes are formulated around certain rules of etiquette which stem from the country of origin of that specific martial art.

Taekwondo, being a Korean martial art is no different and the “in class” rules must be followed.

The club rules are different from the “in class” rules and the separate list is available from your instructor. They are not there to spoil your enjoyment, but to safeguard everyone's safety and to make sure every person is treated equally by all.

The following are some forms of etiquette you will encounter during a class; don't worry if you forget some of them or if they seem confusing initially as they will soon become second nature.

Entering the hall: Bow Twice.

1st bow to the hall. This signifies respect for your place of training and is an unspoken pledge that the hall will be well maintained by all students. Some countries more patriotic than the Scottish have the national flag hanging and the students bow to this. Bowing to the hall is also a general greeting to other students.

2nd bow to the instructor. Asian cultures bow as a method of greeting. So instead of running up and saying hello - students are requested to bow. Bowing should be done from “attention stance” which will be explained to you.

Awaiting the class to start:

The instructor may need to speak to people and organise the hall before the class starts. You are expected to wait in line to speak with the instructor if required, gently warm up or talk quietly with other students.

Class line up to start:

The instructor will request the students to line up in rows of a specified number.

This is done by rank / grade order starting from the most senior student at the forward right position and the grades descending across the hall until the first row is formed, the next student then forms a new row to the far right behind the senior grade and another row is formed from there and so on.

As a beginning student you will line up at the rear and at the furthest empty row to the right.

Start of class:

Once everyone is in place the senior student will formally start the class with two commands. Charyout (attention) Kyongre (bow).

Terminology:

Much of the class commands, such as; attention, bow, ready, start, stop etc along with counting and the names of stances, blocks, strikes and kicks will be given in Korean. Classes all over the world are conducted in Korean, so it is the instructor's responsibility to ensure basic commands are given in Korean. You will then be able to attend classes taught by foreign instructors or take part in a taekwondo class in any part of the world, having a basic understanding of what commands are being given.

Please don't let this confuse you initially as the words will be learned through time.

A terminology handout is available from the instructor and also for download from the club web site.

Beyond your first grading you should attempt to learn the terminology for techniques as you learn them.

Warm up:

All classes start with a general warm up, unless a specific warm up is conducted for a specific skills class. The warm up will gradually increase heart rate to increase blood flow to the muscles and dynamic stretching will mobilise the joints. In keeping with current trends and advice – static stretching is omitted from the initial warm up and will be done midway through or at the end of the classes.

Class content:

The main body of standard taekwondo classes consist of many things, with the main objective being exercises and drills to teach and improve technical aspects of movements with correct formation of stances, blocks, strikes and kicks, along with supplementary skills of coordination, timing, reflexes and speed.

Taekwondo can be split into two different sub divisions of the art, namely "Traditional Taekwondo" & "Sport Taekwondo".

Sport taekwondo is concerned only with the sport or sparring side of the art. This is a relatively recent addition to taekwondo and is geared towards competitions governed by scoring rules and penalties which is a full Olympic sport.

Sport taekwondo is a speciality area and not suited to everyone at its highest levels. At class level however it is practised mainly in its non contact form and is a compulsory part of the syllabus.

Traditional taekwondo encompasses all other elements within the class and consists of technique practice, set drills, self defence, breaking techniques and the most important area of patterns or "Poomsae".

Traditional taekwondo techniques (excluding self defence) can be grouped into "Formal" techniques.

Sport techniques are "Informal".

Classes can be split equally "traditional" & "sport" or can concentrate on one element depending on upcoming events like competitions (sport) or grading examinations (traditional).

Stretching, Conditioning & Warm Down:

Most classes will have some form of conditioning (strengthening) exercises. It would be unrealistic to expect extremely noticeable strength increases by performing a very limited number of conditioning routines twice per week during class times. Conditioning exercises during classes should be done in the context that they are a demonstration of the routine that can be repeated by the student in their own time if they so wish to strengthen any specific muscle groups.

Due to the infrequency of the classes, i.e. (twice per week); any conditioning drill will only serve to tone and maintain the student's current level.

Classes will end with stretching and warm down. Taekwondo static stretching is concentrated mostly on the leg muscle groups and hip joint mobilisation.

The stretching coupled with warm down will disperse lactic acid that has accumulated in the muscles during the class. This in turn will decrease the amount of D.O.M.S. (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) that is commonly experienced in the following 48 – 36 hours after increased exercise.

Class Finish:

To conclude the class the instructor will request students to re-form the rows that were set out at the start. Once everyone is in place the instructor requests all students to turn to the back of the hall to adjust their uniforms, replace belts, remove protective equipment etc. Only students with uniforms should about turn, if you do not have a uniform then stay facing forward.

When this is done; the senior grade student will request the class bows to the instructor once again with the commands Charyout - (Attention), Kyongre – (Bow).

All students say the Korean phrase “Gamsa Hamnida” (thank you) which is returned by the instructor to the students.

The senior grade then turns to fellow students and a nominated senior student repeats the same commands to all students as – attention, bow & thank you to the senior grade for their demonstration of technique and symbolic guidance during the class.

When leaving the hall; students are again requested to bow twice at the exit for the same reasons mentioned before.

Miscellaneous:

There are some further etiquette requirements during the classes e.g.

Bowing to partners before and after partner exercises, bowing to the front before moving around the hall, never throw items of equipment such as kick pads etc. to partners, always hand over with both hands.

Do not lean on walls etc. Stand with hands behind the back if the instructor is speaking or demonstrating, if seated cross legs and place hands on the knees leaning forward.

Any questions should be put to the instructor or senior students after the class.

On first impression there seems to be a never ending list of things to remember and conform with.

Please do not be overly concerned. All students and instructors were beginners at one stage.

Everyone encounters the same concerns and obstacles to overcome.

Our club has lasted over 25 years on the basis of being a friendly unit with a good spirit amongst its members.

Taekwondo is a challenge, this is what makes it so rewarding. Achieving is fulfilling.

The most progressive students are usually the ones who have to work hard for the levels they achieve by showing patience and having a positive attitude to the challenges.

Please ask questions for everything you need an answer for.