

An explanation

Sparring or 'controlled combat', self defence training and competition 'fighting' are important parts of martial arts.

Research indicates that besides a sudden illness, injury or perhaps public speaking, physical violence is generally regarded by the population as one of the worse things that could happen to a person in everyday life. Often, as in public speaking, the fear has a far worse effect on a person than the actual cause of the fear. This principal applies in varying degrees to all fears, including the fear of violence.

Therefore, by learning how to analyse and respond to an extreme physical attack in a *controlled* way, martial arts students can explore, demystify and deal with some of the important aspects of the body, mind and spirit that are often suppressed due to a lack of confidence, in a way that makes them stronger - without hurting anybody else.

For a lot of people, martial arts training helps in discovering how to confront and deal with aggression, fear, ego and pain - throughout life. Consequently in everyday life, 'troublemakers' find this lack of fear in martial artist's unsettling and this is why black belts do not seem to get 'picked on', even though they do not advertise the fact that they are a black belt.

After attaining a 'coloured belt' each of our martial arts students must learn how to be able to 'free spar' to the best of *their* ability confidently. Our black belt school is committed to teaching powerful and strong techniques that involve some controlled contact (giving & receiving hits).

When a student becomes a 'senior belt' (5th gup basic blue belt), they must learn how to experience a little more contact because their martial arts moves become faster and more powerful when they free spar.

To encourage the necessary vigorous training to acquire these skills in a safe way, we are also committed to a strict policy of safety which includes:

- **No contact for white belts.**
- **Compulsory use of safety equipment for any student participating in sparring.**
- **Strict use of martial arts etiquette and respect.**
- **All sparring must be supervised by an instructor**



SMA Student Jason Turpin in Red on his way to winning in the NSW black belt heavy weight championships



Sparring (*jurugi*)

The 3 Golden Rules of Sparring

- 1) Under no circumstance is any part of a student's arm, elbow or hand permitted to make ANY contact with another student's body ABOVE the shoulder line.
- 2) Under no circumstance is any part of a student's body permitted to make ANY contact with another student's body BELOW the belt line.
- 3) Under no circumstance is any part of a student's body permitted to make ANY contact with another student's back of head, neck, back or spine.

Any breaches of these 3 golden rules, **regardless if they are unintentional** (lack of caution) or not may result in severe disciplinary action.

Sparring etiquette

For reasons just mentioned, etiquette is critical when sparring.

- Avoid seeking out 'easy' or favoured sparring partners. Fall into line and accept with relish whoever you may be randomly teamed up against. Every partner big or small, old or young can teach us something about attack or defence.
- Don't talk or chit chat during a sparring drill and always resist the temptation to say to your partner, "... can you go a bit easy on me today" even if you *feel* like saying it. This is vital because this attitude helps to build an indomitable spirit within you. In these sorts of situations, think about your defences and 'recovery' instead of 'attacking' all the time. Just bow and concentrate on your breathing.
- When sparring someone who is a lower belt than you and regardless of your or their relative ability, lead by example and always be the one to show them respect, humility and friendship. That way it will be easier for them to reciprocate.
- Always look out for your sparring partner's safety – even more than your own. If they are heading backwards into a collision with someone else, if there is a chair, a wall or a wet patch on the floor, ensure you warn them BEFORE they encounter it.
- If a sparring partner inadvertently 'stings' you with a technique, DO NOT GET ANGRY with them. Instead change your defensive strategy so you can counter them next time. Keep working on it. If you do feel angry, bear in mind that your partner's attacking move *worked* while your defensive move did *not*. To become a black belt you must develop a mindset where you become responsible and active in remedying *your* lack of defence as opposed to being upset at another student because they are good at an attack. When sparring a partner who is bigger than you this may mean standing further away than you would against someone who is smaller.
- No true martial arts student deliberately sets out to hurt another. If your kick or strike combination is going to be too close to an unsuspecting partner, 'pull' the technique back or go wide to avoid hitting them at ALL costs.
- If a partner 'pulls' a legitimate technique that would of 'wiped you out' *if* they were not controlled or if they out step and out wit you, acknowledge them by bowing in respect of their skill (in a genuine way) each time they do so, no matter what their belt, age, size or gender is.
- Unless invited to do so, do not 'go in hard' when sparring a senior belt. Although it may not appear so, senior belts must often slow down their moves to achieve the extra control they need to limit contact against less experienced students, for safety's sake, which can leave them open to an unnecessary and unfair injury.

Types of Sparring

No contact

In this type of sparring no physical contact is to be made of ANY kind.

This applies to making contact by a kick, strike or by defence, such as a block.

A 'no contact' spar works best when students stand slightly further apart than they would during a 'contact' spar. Also, to avoid chaos a non contact spar should be done in a way where each student takes turns at either simulating an attack or defence, backwards and forwards. This type of sparring is good for trying out new moves with the knowledge you won't be hit.

Hands only

As the name suggests only hands are used. Preferably the more difficult techniques such as Back fist, Knife hand, Spear hand, Ridge hand, Batangson and elbows are used instead of only punching.

This form of sparring is excellent for developing spinning hand strikes. The only contact allowed in hands only sparring are WT style punches to the mid section of the partner - not the face.

Extreme caution must be made not to make contact with a partners head as in golden rule #1. Forearm pads and mouth guard are compulsory for all students, while senior belts must also wear head protection if there is ANY contact whatsoever.

WT rules

These are the rules of contact for regional, state, national and international sport Taekwondo:

- Under no circumstance is any part of a student's arm, elbow or hand permitted to make ANY contact with another student's body ABOVE the shoulder line. Straight punches to the body are the only hand techniques allowed. No elbows, Knife hands, Batangson or any other hand technique is to be used at any time – punches ONLY.
- Juniors and mature students are not allowed to receive contact from any head kicks what so ever. However, in the open division of State, National and International competition, head kicks are allowed. A head kick is when any part of the foot BELOW the ankle bone makes contact with the front of the head of an opponent. In a competition a head kick is worth 2 points. No contact can be made with a knee strike or by the shin or calf in kicks or sweeps.
- No contact of ANY kind is EVER to be made on anyone's spine, back, neck or back of head.



- Under no circumstance at any time is any part of any student's body permitted to make ANY contact with another student's body BELOW the belt line.
- No holding, pushing, grabbing, grappling, take downs, sweeping or deliberately falling down after an attacking move is permitted at any time.
- Full WT approved safety gear must be worn in WT style contact sparring including, shin/instep pads, groin guard for males (females optional), chest guard (hogu), forearm guards, mouth guard, head guard.



Sparring (*jurugi*)

Free style sparring

'Free style' sparring is one of the most exciting drills in martial arts. The same rules of contact apply as WT style along with the freedom, spontaneity and safety protocols of 'hands only' sparring.

The most important aspect of this sparring is being able to control all contact and not striking your partner with a careless 'illegal' technique while blocking and attempting to make contact with a legal technique.

Unless expressly specified by an instructor, no holding, pushing, grabbing, grappling, take downs, sweeping or deliberately falling down after an attacking move is permitted at any time in free style sparring.

Multiple opponents

This is also a very exciting style of sparring. Usually, multiple spars involve 3 – 4 students 'out for themselves' or 2 against 1.

Occasionally we have some 'awareness' drills that involve a 'free for all' with many students in a confined space.

During 'multiple sparring' no contact, the WT rules and free style sparring rules apply at the discretion of the instructor and all WT approved safety protection must be used.

Safety Equipment

After attaining a 'coloured belt' each Shire Martial Arts student must learn how to be able to 'free spar' to the best of their ability confidently.

Our black belt school is committed to teaching powerful and strong techniques that involve some controlled contact (giving & receiving hits).

To encourage the necessary vigorous training in a safe way, we are also committed to a strict policy of compulsory safety equipment for all students.

For safety's sake, on reaching 9th Gup Yellow/white belt, all students must acquire the following inexpensive items:

- Shin/Instep pads
- Forearm pads
- Mouth Guard
- Groin Guard (male only)

All these items will last for years if they are looked after and are all **available from reception.**