

To the Black Belt in Training,

These 9 steps have been created to help broaden your horizons, ability, and to increase your understanding of the importance of this accomplishment. Enjoy, and learn from each step. Understand the lessons being taught, and learned. Most importantly, have fun!

Create a “Black Belt” portfolio. Most of the listed activities require reports or written documentation and logs. Include this material in your notebook, and submit the notebook to your instructor once per month for review.

If you have any questions about the requirements please ask your instructor. Also, parents are strongly encouraged to help participate in these steps. You've helped so much so far, now is no different.

1) **Fitness** ~ A Black Belt must be an example to all, mentally as well as physically. In this step you will demonstrate physical improvements.

To complete this step you must complete the following activities. (Under instructor supervision.) Count the number of pushups and sit ups you can do in 60 seconds. The instructor will then give you a new target goal. Also measure your splits (center, left, right). You will also be given new targets for splits by your instructor.

Create a log of your original number of pushups and situps. Record both your initial count, your new targets, and your final counts. Record the same data for your splits.

2) **Mental/Knowledge** ~ In this step you will research Taekwondo history. You have a few options, but learning all of them is suggested. (At testing, questions covering these topics may be asked).

- The Hwa Rang
- *The Hwa Rang code of Chivalry (Code of conduct and Tenets of TKD)
- USCDKA History
- Personal history of Grandmaster Edward B. Sell and Brenda Sell
- Korean Culture
- *Korean Language (ask the instructor for a sheet of required words/phrases)

Write a 250 word essay on any two of these topics. Include the essay in your Black Belt notebook.

*Mandatory/ Memorized

- 3) **Leadership** ~ Leadership is leading by example. It's leading from the front. A leader also knows when to step back. In this step you will help with 24 classes. If you are already in a Leadership Program, these 24 classes must be in addition to your previous agreed upon schedule. From this activity, you should realize how much you have to give, realize how far you've come, and how much the other students look up to you.

Keep a log of your 24 classes. Record the date, the type of class, the number of students. Also, comment on what you learned during this class. Add this log to your Black Belt folder.

- 4) **All or Nothing** ~ For this step you will be asked to demonstrate a few forms, one steps and sparring segments (of the instructors choosing.) If you fail this test you must start over at step 1 again. If you are prepared you will have nothing to fear, and if you fail learn from the experience. Failure is only negative when nothing is learned. Failure with a lesson is usually more valuable than success.

Log the date of this test in your Black Belt notebook. Record the forms, one steps, and sparring segments performed. Comment on your performance/proficiency. Where were you strong, and in what areas should you work to improve?

- 5) **Perfection** ~ While true perfection can never be accomplished we can strive to come close. You have done your form many, many times, but you will now do it 99 more times outside of class

Log the dates. The forms are to be performed just like it should be done at testing; full bow in and bow out, competition speed

- 6) **Volunteering** ~ Giving back to the community is a wonderful experience. You see how much you can increase someone's life with just a little bit of your time. For this step you must volunteer 9 hours. This must be done for someone that you do not know (no parents, friends, family, etc). Examples are the Soup Kitchen or Habitat for Humanity store. You may also volunteer at your school, a church, convalescence home, or for a political candidate. This is a great step to have parents participate also.

Log the time and locations of your volunteer hours. Describe your specific activities or duties. Also discuss or describe your experiences or reaction to your volunteer service.

- 7) **100 Acts of Kindness** ~ These acts of kindness will allow you to see that you are not just a Black Belt at The Martial Artist Foundation, but one everywhere! These "Acts of Kindness" can be as simple as helping an elderly person with their walker at a restaurant, to more involved, such as holding a bake sale to raise money for a charity.

Log the time and locations in your Black Belt Notebook. When appropriate, describe or discuss the reactions from your "Acts of Kindness".

- 8) **Courage** ~ We all have daily battles, and things that we are afraid of. In a recent study, Americans were more afraid of public speaking than death. To help you and your life skills, you must compete in 4 tournaments between 1st Degree Black Belt and 2nd Degree. There is no restriction on placing, simply competing. The phrase “To Compete is To Win,” should be remembered. You only have two tasks here. Learn something new, and meet someone new. Tournaments are a great place to meet new people and also have new people help you with your Taekwondo. Enjoy this opportunity!

Log the location and date of your tournament. Write 25-50 words describing your experience at each event. List the names and schools of other members you met or competed with.

- 9) **Paper** ~ You must write 2 additional papers. The first paper should describe what you have learned through these 9 steps. The second paper is titled “What Being a 2nd degree Black Belt Means to Me.”

Add these final papers to your Black Belt portfolio. You may ask to see others papers for ideas. Be honest, be inquisitive, and really take your time to reflect. These papers will be filed at the school, and kept for you and future students to come. These papers are a time capsule of your thoughts.

A Black belt is a journey. And the saying of, “It's not the destination, it's how you got there,” has never been more appropriate. As you become close to your goal, your instructors hope you will set new goals. At 1st Degree Black Belt you have just **begun** to understand all that Taekwondo has to offer, and how this training applies to and benefits so many other areas of your life. You should be recognizing what you are truly capable of accomplishing. This is indeed an amazing accomplishment, and one that you should remember for the rest of your life! Reflect on how far you have come, and understand how far you can still go!

1st Degree Black Belt is not the end of the journey, but the beginning of the next part of your next journey.

Enjoy your journey,
Master Kevin Luttrell
President
The Martial Artist Foundation
TaeKwonDo Advantage