



The Path of a 3rd Degree Black Belt

Congratulations on attaining the level of third-degree black belt! We know you have worked very hard to achieve this prestigious level, 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 fourth-degree black belt. Please read this document carefully, and let us 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: 3rd Degree Black Belts learn the traditional form named Chungsan (83 moves). This form is practiced every cycle. Students must learn all 83 moves in order to mid-term or test. The Form sheet is attached to this document.

Traditional Training Weapons: 3rd Degree Black Belts will learn a number of traditional weapons. They include:

- Mid Range Jong Bong
- Long Range Jong Bong
- 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: 3rd 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
- Belt Level 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 color or black belt forms. At the beginning of each cycle, we will announce what breaks will be performed.

How do I progress to 4th Degree Black Belt?

Now that you have achieved your goal of 3rd-degree black belt, it is important to set your next goal of 4th-degree black belt! In order to belt test, students will continue to perform at testing just like they did as a color belt (**and complete the homework paper each testing or mid-term**). There are some unique expectations for black belt students. These expectations include:

Time Requirement: A 3rd Degree Black Belt must spend a **minimum of 36 months as a 3rd degree black belt** before the student can test for 4th Degree. This is an ATA requirement. Students should expect to make huge improvements between third and fourth degree, and for these improvements to take place, a student needs time at this level, and consistent, challenging training. Many students take 3-5 years to advance to fourth 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:

- As a 3rd degree, **students must pass 12 mid-terms**. The cost for each mid-term is currently \$59.00. In the situation where a student does not pass a mid-term and must retake a test, The ATA will only charge for 12 mid-terms. (An unsuccessful midterm may be re-attempted at no cost).
- Testing for 4th Degree must be performed at a national level testing. These occur 2-3 times per year.



- 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 belt testing, they also wait for the next national event. There is currently no charge for a first re-test. Should the ATA change this policy, students must follow the most current ATA rules.
- If a student wishes to test for fourth degree in just 36 months, they should aim to midterm at 4 of the 6 midterm opportunities each year. **Please remember a signed black belt contract is due many months before you are allowed to test! See this document under downloads on thriveata.com for more info!**

Mid-Term Curriculum

At a mid-term, a third black belt must receive at least a seven (7) to pass. At 4th degree testing, you must receive an 8 to pass. The testing is scored the following way:

Form- (0-4)

*Sparring (0-3)

*Weapons (0-3)

*Board Breaks- (0-3)

At a test or midterm, students select TWO of either sparring, weapons, or board breaks. 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 4th-degree testing. Instructors are always available for private lessons. 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 4th degree, an instructor



trainee, or a state champion during their time as a third-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



Future High Rank Black Belt,

Congratulations on all of your martial arts successes to this point. Our staff at Thrive Martial Arts is so proud of all you have already achieved, and is excited to help guide you on your continued black belt journey! Becoming a black belt is an incredible accomplishment, as nation wide, only 1 in 100 people who start training in ATA taekwondo will achieve this rank.

As Songahm Grandmaster In Ho Lee says, “Change me first!” As a black belt leader we should look to not only make positive changes in the world around us, but also to make positive changes in our own lives. One of the very best ways to grow is by giving. As apart of your high rank black belt testing, you are required to complete a black belt project. This black belt project is extremely “open ended” as there is no topic, type, or scope expectations. All we ask is that you find something you are passionate about, and make it happen! One past example includes making up your own form, creating a form sheet, and presenting it at testing. Another example is a service project in the community that has nothing at all to do with martial arts. This is YOUR project, make it meaningful to you!

As always, if you have any questions, please see your instructor. We look forward to celebrating your black belt testing with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Masters Overby
Thrive Martial Arts

