

The Promotion System / Testing Tips

Promotion tests are usually held six times per year, and are normally scheduled on a Saturday morning, with Belt Presentation occurring the following Saturday.

The judges are certified through the World Martial Arts Federation. A ranking registration fee is required by this association, and is determined by the WMAF.

The following is the chronological order by which a student climbs the ranks (from lowest to highest).

RANK COLOR

- White
- Yellow
- Senior Yellow
- Green
- Senior Green
- Blue
- Senior Blue
- Brown
- Senior Brown
- Red
- Temporary Black Belt
- Black Belt

The testing fee includes the belt, which will be presented to the student in the traditional manner by Grand Master Chung. This will be approximately one week after the testing, and will be presented with a certificate.

Each rank has a specific set of requirements. The promotion examination is a means of evaluating the student's ability and knowledge of these requirements. The areas in which a student is tested are: basics, form, free sparring, one step sparring, terminology, and breaking. Class attendance is also considered in the overall grade.

If the student does not meet the requirements in any given area, he cannot change his belt until he improves in that area. This does not mean that he will have to wait for two months or pay another testing fee. He will be given time to improve his performance and then be retested.

In addition to the evaluation aspect of testing, the promotions also give a student incentive to practice harder. The students perform before the judges, instructor, family, and peers. He/she is, therefore, under greater pressure to try to do better.

Learning to handle himself under pressure can help in other aspects of his life. For example, the student may know his requirements for promotion, but because he is nervous, he cannot perform to the fullest of his ability. Through training and testing, he can work to overcome this problem which will help him not only here but in other situations as well.

Many people look toward the rank of Black Belt as the highest goal. Attaining this rank only means that the student has learned the basics. Black Belt status is only a beginning, and not the end of a student's training.

The beginning student whose goal is to acquire good techniques has much training ahead of him. The ranks are steps of accomplishment toward a higher goal. They are not a final goal in themselves. Some students hesitate to take a promotion test because they feel that they are not skilled enough in that they compare their skills to those of a higher rank. The judges at a testing do not expect a yellow belt to perform brown belt quality techniques, or a brown belt to be as skilled as a black belt. The judges look for discipline, confidence, and effort. They are aware of the standard of quality for each rank, and judge according to that standard.

The main requirement for promotion to a higher rank within the Chung's Academy of Martial Arts is the proper attitude of the student, along with recognized technical skill required by the organization. This technical skill aspect is checked by the performance of the required forms and free sparring, as well as basic motions, one-step sparring, self-defense techniques, breaking techniques, terminology, and knowledge of the art.

Form is only one aspect of the test, but it is the most important skill. It has been stated that forms are the secret to the martial art way. Without forms, there can be no martial art, only a form of kickboxing. All aspects of a form must be perfected. Nothing must be neglected, for all parts of the form are equal. Once that is understood, the student will have an easier time perfecting the form. Eyes, blocks, punches, strikes, stances, kicks, breathing, turns, attitude, balance, and much more become part of the student.

The secret to good form is sweat and practice, not talk and theory. There are four (4) key points to remember when practicing and performing forms:

1. *Imaginary opponent.* One must visualize the opponent / attacker.
2. *Blocking like striking.* One must apply at least as much focus and power to blocking as striking.
3. *Balance.* One must use equal balance for both sides of the body (left and right).
4. *Ki-ap! Yell loudly* at the appropriate technique in the form.

Free sparring is another very important aspect of the test. Although good basic motions and forms may indicate the student has attained a certain ability level, free sparring shows that he / she can put these motions to good practical use. It is like building a house. The basic motions and forms are the foundation and walls. Although you could call that a house, it is not really livable until it is furnished with lights, stove, refrigerator, furniture, etc. Through free sparring, students learn to control their techniques so that can attack any part of their opponent's bodies with varying degrees of force; from a light touch to a full power knock-out attack.

Some organizations overemphasize fighting skills, forms, or breaking techniques, but Chung's Academy of Martial Arts believes that you should better yourself through the dedicated lifestyle of the martial artist, rather than physical skills alone.