



Grading Syllabus



10th Kup - 9th Kup (White belt - yellow tab)

Horse Riding stance - Front punch :
Long Stance - walking punch :
 Low section block :
 High section block :
 Mid section inner block :
 Spreading block :
Guarding Stance
 Front kick :
 Front push kick :

Forward roll
Forward break fall
Backward break fall
Sideways break fall

Non-contact Technical Free Sparring

This is THE single most important set of techniques in the art. These moves are the building blocks. Almost all of the techniques which follow, stem from this original set. Consequently, these are the techniques which should be practiced the most. Mastery of these basic movements will aid in learning the subsequent techniques.

At the grading itself, the techniques will be demonstrated by one of the senior grades, prior to your executing the technique.

Free sparring is an important aspect of Taekwondo training, so is introduced right from the beginning. You will be expected to spar, at your first grading but on a strictly non-contact basis.

As a prelude to the Hapkido and Yudo techniques introduced later, you will need to demonstrate the basic break falls.

No patterns are expected at this stage. However, pattern 1 is a bonus.

Ready Position (Joonbi Seogi)

This is the physical movement used to trigger the mind-set for combat. It is more mental preparation than a physical technique. You should now be ready to fight, if required. Your feet are shoulder-width apart, giving you both stability and the flexibility to move, if needed.

Arms are slightly bent, with 1 fist distance between your hands. Fists clenched. From this position, you are able to defend an attack from any angle or launch an attack of your own.

Horse-Riding stance (Joochum Seogi)

Horse-riding stance is not designed to be a practical stance to fight from. Its' point is three-fold.

Firstly, it makes you work at the technique. If you can get the technique right from this stance, you can definitely get it right from a more natural guarding stance.

Secondly, it builds strength into your thigh muscles, making your practical stances stronger.

Thirdly, on a more practical level, it is designed to break an opponent's grip, if they are holding you in a bear-hug.

- Lifting and crossing your arms loosens your opponent's grip.
- Stepping sideways breaks your opponent's balance
- Bending the knees drops you out of your opponent's grip.
- Driving your elbows back, attacks your opponent's ribs

Front punch : (Mom-tong Chereugi)

This punch is aimed at your opponent's solar plexus, where your rib cage joins the sternum at the centre of your chest.

All punches are aimed to land using the first two knuckles of the fist – NOT the last three. This guarantees a straight line from knuckle to elbow, along the forearm. This, in turn, guarantees a stable wrist position, both reducing the risk of breaking the wrist and increasing the strength of the attack.

The twisting motion of the punch is designed to "drill" through your opponent's guard, reducing their chances of stopping the punch.

All strikes, punches, blocks and kicks are driven from the hips, increasing both speed of movement and power.

The punching hand only moves forward. An initial "pull back" movement will increase the momentum built up in the punch but will drastically increase the time taken to complete the move, giving an opponent extra time in which to avoid the strike. It also gives a "warning sign" that the punch is coming. Removing the pull-back gives your opponent much less reaction time but doesn't greatly affect the power of the punch.

All strikes should be aimed for a target at least 1" (2.5cm) beyond the actual target, allowing the strike to go "through" the opponent, increasing its' effect.

Long Stance (Ab Koobi)

This stance is all about balance, stability and strength. It is the stance which generates maximum power into any movement.

The stance is very “square on”, with your chest facing forward. This ensures that your feet are shoulder-width apart, giving you side-ways stability.

The length of the stance is approximately twice that of a normal walking step. The back foot is facing forward, with the heel on the floor. This ensures the back leg is locked straight, giving you the strength and stability on the stance, to push all the power into the technique. The more the foot faces outward, the weaker the stance becomes and the more sideways pressure you put onto your knee. Facing the foot forward also pushes your hips into the technique, adding more power to it. It lowers your centre of gravity, too, making the stance even more powerful and stable.

The front leg is bent just enough for the knee to be directly above the heel. This allows you to shift your balance, if required.

Walking punch (Barro Chereugi)

Like the front punch, this technique is delivered using the first two knuckles of the fist, not the last three. Again, the punching hand only moves forward, reducing the chance of an opponent seeing the movement and avoiding, blocking or counter-attacking.

The punch itself does not move until the feet have almost completed the step into the long stance. This speeds the technique up, as it should finish at the same time the forward step completes.

The non-striking hand moves back to the hip just as fast as the punching hand moves. This opens up the chest and twists the hips, generating more speed and more power. This movement also mimics your taking hold of your opponent’s arm, pulling them onto your punch thus doubling the power of the strike.

Blocks (Makgi)

Blocks, by their nature, can only ever be reactive techniques. They are designed to defend against an attack, so can only be used once the attack has already started. Because of this, speed of technique is all important. Cutting down the time the movement takes greatly increases the chances of the block being successful.

High section block (Algul Makgi)

This technique is designed to stop a punch to the face, although it could also protect against an attack to the throat or to the top of the head.

The blocking hand begins at the hip and ends approximately 2 fists distance above the head, on the opposite side. The shortest distance and, therefore, the fastest movement, is in a straight line. So, the fist of the blocking arm needs to travel in a straight line between the two points – up and across, in one movement.

Twisting the forearm during the blocking movement helps to make the attack spin off of the block, increasing its effectiveness.

Mid-section inner block (Mom-tong An Makgi)

This technique is designed to stop a punch to the body (solar plexus).

The blocking hand begins at the hip, this time ending level with the opposite shoulder. Firstly bring your blocking hand up to your shoulder, keeping your elbow low. The block then moves across the body, bring the whole of the forearm with it. There should be a 90 degree bend in the elbow. This guarantees that the arm is at the correct position to maximize both the target coverage and the effective distance of the block.

It is not possible to finish this block with the chest square on, due to the finishing position of the arm.

Low section block (Arae Makgi)

This technique is designed to stop a kick to the stomach or groin.

It is not possible to perform this block in a straight line movement, like the other blocks. However, the chamber position should still be at the optimum position for both speed of execution and strength of technique.

The non-blocking arm should move to cover the groin / stomach. That way, if the block is not fast enough, you still have something in the way of the kick to, at least, take some of the sting out of it.

The blocking hand then moves to the non-blocking elbow. Again, this is the position where the chamber is enough to generate power in the block but not so much that it increases the time taken to perform it.

The blocking hand then moves to just above the front knee. The arm should have a slight bend.

At the same time, the non-blocking arm needs to pull back to the hip at the same speed as the block is executed. This opens up the hips and the chest, increasing both speed and power in the block.

A low block should be aimed to land on the outside of the incoming leg.

Otherwise, you will be blocking against the shin bone. Your forearm will not be strong enough to withstand this.

Guarding Stance (Kereugi Seogi)

This is the ultimate in flexible stances. One which allows you to move in all directions easily or to launch an attack of your own, freely.

The stance itself is akin to a sprinter's starting position, on the blocks, as both are designed to propel you forward as fast as possible when required.

The length and width of the stance is the same as a normal walking stride - a distance at which we should all feel comfortable. Both feet face forward and both knees are slightly bent.

The hand position depends on a number of factors ...

- Distance
- Confidence
- Technique to be thrown

The closer the range of the fight, the higher up the hands go, to cover the face. At a longer range, keeping the hands up can prove a disadvantage as it tenses the shoulders, slowing down a leg technique. After all, coming back to the sprinter analogy, top sprinters do not run with their hands up. The lower you keep your hands, the more relaxed they are and the easier it is to "pump" them like a sprinter. This has the same effect on either covering the distance to an opponent or in throwing a kick.

Also, generally, the more confident you become in your own technique and speed of movement, the lower your guard drops.

Front kick (Ab Chaggi)

This is the first of the snap-kicks. All of the other snap-kick techniques stem from this one.

There are 2 ways to throw this kick.

1. This kick should be thrown in a “wave” motion, with the shoulders acting as the pivot point. Imagine you are a player in a bar football game. The bar goes through your shoulders. When you kick, everything below the shoulders goes forward and everything above goes back. This gives you extra reach on the kick, extra power by throwing the hips and it keeps your head out the way of any potential counter-attack.

Your hips lead, then the knee, then the foot. The height of the knee dictates the height of the final kick.

You should be on the ball of your standing foot, which remains forward facing.

If you need to, you can hold your hands in front, in “gun sight” position.

Kicking between the hands guarantees that the kick is straight in front.

Again, any kick should be thrown beyond the target, to guarantee maximum impact.

There are three potential targets for a front kick. The face and the body need the kick to be landed with the ball of the foot. An attack to the groin is landed with the instep.

2. Keep your back straight and lift the knee so that your foot is directly beneath you. Then, at the point when you actually throw the kick, thrust your hips forward, your shoulders backwards and extend the knee. This drives the kick in a straight line into the target. It generates more direct thrust but lacks the speed of the first version.

When throwing the kick in this way, you will be landing it with the ball of the foot, so the toes must be pulled back.

Front push kick (Nelryo Chaggi)

The point of this kick is two-fold.

It is used to either push a static opponent backwards or to stop an advancing opponent in their tracks. In the second case, it usually has the added effect of “bouncing” you out of harm’s way, too.

Lift the knee as high as you can, with your back still straight. The knee should have roughly a 90 degree bend, with the flat of the foot facing forward. Do not lean into the kick as this both reduces the effect of the kick and puts your head in the firing line.

Once the knee reaches maximum height, then the kick can “explode” out. Open up the hips and lean the shoulders back as you extend the knee. You are looking to land, with the flat of the foot, onto your opponent’s chest, solar plexus or stomach.

Break Falls

These techniques prepare you for the Hapkido techniques which will follow. Also, as Taekwondo is a contact art, knowing how to land safely, should you fall or be knocked down, is an essential skill.

Forward roll

This technique is designed to allow you to fall safely and recover to a standing position again, as quickly as possible.

Assuming a right leg lead, bend your right arm to create a slight “curve” down it. Lift your arm with your elbow above your head and your hand at roughly forehead level. Tuck your head in below your elbow. Turn your hand so that your thumb points back toward you. Bend your front leg until, at the point where you lose your balance, you roll down the knife-edge of your hand, your arm and across your shoulder line. At no point should your head touch the floor. Bring your legs in, so that the roll naturally takes you back onto your feet, when you can stand up again ready to continue the combat.

Forward break fall

If you are thrown / knocked forward and are unable to roll, the break fall attempts to spread the impact of the landing as much as possible. As you fall forward, land on your forearms and lower legs at the same time. Slapping the ground as you land ensures that you land on your entire forearm, not just the elbows, spreading the impact further.

Backward break fall

In a similar way to the forward break fall, this is designed to spread the impact and lessen the chances of injury. Bend your knees and roll backwards, using your entire back. Make sure you roll or you will injure your back. As your shoulders reach the ground, extend your arms and slap the ground, in order to spread the impact along your arms and not just your spine.

Sideways break fall

The side break fall is similar to the forward roll but the angle of roll is different. Your head remains higher than your arm at all times. If your opponent has let go of you, you will be able to roll back to a standing position. If they still have hold of your arm, slap the ground with your free arm, to spread the impact with the ground.