



The Jasmine Dragon Kenpo Self-Defense & Yoga

How to Earn a White Belt

Read the Dojo Rules on the website:
www.KenpoJD.com

New Students Practice Dojo Etiquette,
Kenpo Techniques, and Yoga Exercises
For 3-6 Weeks Before Earning Their White Belts

To Earn A White Belt Students Must Demonstrate
Discipline and Answer Questions on the Dojo Rules.

White Belt Questions:

What does the Japanese word "Dojo" mean?

Why do we practice Dojo Etiquette?

Why do we bow?

Why do we take our shoes off before entering the Dojo?

What Does "Shyeh-Shyeh" mean? Why do We say it?

Why is Respect Important?

What does the Color White Symbolize?

Why is it Important to be Humble?

What is a “Dojo”?

The Place Where We Learn

Specifically the Place Where We Learn
Self-Defense, Discipline, & Respect.

The word “Dojo” is a combination of two Japanese Words, “Do” and “Jo.” “Jo” is the word for “the place,” and “Do” is the word for “the way.” When combined it literally translates as “the place where the way is studied.”

What the “the way” refers to may differ slightly in each school, but generally it is referring to Japanese-style martial arts, a code of honor for oneself and respectful behavior towards others.

Why do we practice Dojo Etiquette?

Safety!

Dojo Etiquette is the practice of respectful manners and behaviors that help keep everyone safe. It is highly recommended that students strive to practice this respectful code of behavior outside of the Dojo environment, as well as inside.

Proper Dojo Etiquette is one of the essential aspects of karate training, not just in our style but in every other kind of Eastern Martial Arts as well. Etiquette is the way of showing respect to fellow students, to the Dojo, to the sensei, and to all the other masters throughout history whose dedication and skills have come down to us as the art we now study.

Why do we bow?

Shows Respect to Everyone

Students bow to the Dojo when we enter and before leaving the training space. This shows respect for ourselves, the other students, the teachers, and all the masters of the art that made training today possible.

This is called “ritsu-rei” and shows deep respect to the teachings of your instructor as well as the seriousness of your study.

Why do we take our shoes off?

Clean & Safe Dojo Space

Students remove shoes to keep the dojo environment clean of tracked in dirt, prevent the mats from being torn, and to keep everyone safe in case of contact.

Students must wear socks indoors to mitigate spreading bacteria through the sweat glands in our feet.

What does “Shyeh-Shyeh” mean?

Thank you!

“Shyeh-shyeh” is Mandarin Chinese for “Thank you.” We say it at the end of class to thank the teachers for their time and the opportunity to learn from them. Teachers thank the students for their time and dedication towards learning. We say this in Chinese to honor the Chinese roots of our martial art, but students may choose to say “arigato” in private lessons to honor the Japanese roots of American Kenpo Karate.

Shotokan Karate Founder Gichin Funakoshi often remarked that
“Karate begins and ends with courtesy.”

Why is Respect Important?

Safety!

If we do not practice respectful behaviors in class, we risk injuring each other.
If we are all injured, then nobody can practice or learn anymore.

Shorin-ryu Karate Grandmaster Ansei Ueshiro said: “Respect benefits the one showing it far more than the one receiving it.”

Students must show respectful behaviors towards others, both inside and outside of class, even if they do not receive it.

What does the Color White Symbolize?

Beginner Level

Starting Something New

To be Humble / Show Humility

Ninja Minions only need to remember one of the above to pass this question.

Little Ninjas only need to remember two of the above to pass this question.

Ninja Warriors and Adults must remember all three to pass this question.

Students may wear white at any time or rank level to show humility and demonstrate they are open to learning.

Why is it Important to Be Humble?

Open to Learning

Humility is the First Step towards Greatness:
In Admitting that we do not know everything, we open ourselves to learning.

In admitting that we can fail, we open another pathway to success.

In admitting that we are flawed, we open ourselves to accepting others.

If we do not practice being humble, we are arrogant. When we are arrogant, we think we already know everything, which means we close ourselves off from learning new things. An attitude of arrogance also harms other students, often through bullying tactics. By being humble we are more open to learning for ourselves and we contribute to a safe, compassionate, and welcoming learning environment for everyone.

If a student answers all of the above questions to their instructor’s satisfaction, then they will be asked:

Are You Ready to Accept the White Belt Challenge?

What is the Difference Between a White Belt and a Black Belt?

White Belts are Beginners and Black Belts are Experts that are Sometimes Teachers

A Black Belt is just a White Belt that Never Quit.

If you Never Give Up and Keep Trying:
You Will Become a Black Belt.

A Black Belt is not just a Rank that you earn, it is something you Become.

What is the White Belt Challenge?

The Challenge to Never Give Up and Always Keep Trying

Students should answer:

- "Yes, Sensei!"
- "No, Sensei."
- "I do not understand the question, Sensei."

What Does a Black Belt Cost?

Time, Money, Blood, Sweat, and Tears

Time: You must invest years of your time to attend classes and practice at home.

Money: Your family is paying for the privilege of your training and your instructor's time and energy. Not everyone is able to participate; therefore you must be aware of this fact and honor this opportunity.

Blood: We make every effort to avoid any serious injuries, including broken bones and concussions, that can lead to permanent damage and the inability to participate in training. However, Black Belts are a tough group of people that have mastered effective coping mechanisms to get through moments of pain and achieve difficult goals.

Sweat: You will be required to stretch and exercise your body frequently; otherwise you may sustain a serious injury that prevents you from continuing training.

Tears: In some cultures crying is viewed as a sign of weakness and in other cultures it demonstrates compassion and empathy. Neurologically, tears are the release of a chemical overload created in the brain where glands secret specific hormones that we interpret as emotions. Therefore tears are scientifically the emotional release valve when we experience more physical, mental, and/or emotional pain or joy than our brains can currently handle. Training in martial arts will push you to your limits, which often leads to experiences of mental, physical, and emotional overwhelm. Tears can be a healthy mechanism for releasing negative emotions for some people, but not everyone. We, as a community, do not judge anyone for either expression.

All forms of bullying behavior are prohibited, but especially bullying anyone for crying can lead to severe consequences.