

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF MARTIAL ARTS

Belt Philosophies

YELLOW BELT

Technical: Beginners show train slow, even, not too detailed, balanced, and aware of proper waist movement.

Philosophical: A newborn baby is soft and gentle; at death, man is hard and stiff. Green plants are tender and moist yet at death, they are withered and dry. Things of death are hard, stiff, dry, unbending and brittle. Things of life are soft, gently, moist, flexible and pliable.

We should make our primary goal of training to retain the physical qualities of life. This is why it is important to train a system that promotes the aspects of life instead of tension and other aspects of death.

If you want to live, copy the characteristics of life!

ORANGE BELT

Technical: Students should train all new things very slow. From slowness comes understanding. Through understanding comes comfort. Anything that is truly comfortable is useable. This is the formula for "usability."

Philosophical: Always train to promote good flow of the Great River. Our body's Great Rivers consists of Blood, Air, and Chi. If at any time one or all of these do not flow properly, the result will be detrimental.

Beavers work vigorously to dam up streams and rivers. When the beavers are successful, all below the dam lose out -withering and dying. Tension is our body's beaver. It, like a beaver, is always at work and so we must constantly fight it. Our weapon is our training. We must train daily to develop relaxation and good feeling. The exercises we practice are our tools with which we wage our battle.

BLUE BELT

Technical: The outer body revolves around the inner body. The torso acts like a spool.

A straight line from the center of the skull through the center between the legs is the spindle (or steel pipe). The spool revolves around the spindle.

This will stabilize the torso for rotation without slumping or arching the back. It helps to develop a true center to revolve around.

In inner pipe (spindle) sprouts the head up; the body hangs from the head...the tissue hangs from the bone. This is called Spool and Spindle.

Philosophical: The American culture inculcates in our minds with the belief: result is more important than the process (in many ways). Result-oriented communication is sort of a “short talk” that avoids any lengthy conversation by pinpointing as quickly as possible as result. An outstanding example of this happens when a child gets out of school for the summer – one of the first questions asked by people is “What are your grades?” Other things such as whether or not you enjoyed the school year, the various friends you made, what subjects intrigued you seem to be unimportant. In Martial Arts, we should enjoy the process (breathing, forms, techniques, theory, philosophy, etc.) and allow the result to unfold. When our process is abundant, our result will reflect that.

Process is for the long duration: result is only for the moment.

GREEN BELT

Technical: Stillness, Softness, Slowness.

The foundation of movement is stillness. The foundation of strength is softness. The foundation of speed is slowness.

These are called the Three Foundations.

Philosophical: From the greatest sincerity comes the greatest achievement.

BROWN BELT (3rd Level)

Technical: Defense, Strategy, Confidence.

Defense – Study defense to become unbeatable, then, simply wait for the opportunity to win. That opportunity will be provided by the opponent through error in footwork, balance or tactic.

Strategy – Those destined to win develop strategy, then fight. Those destined to lose fight first then study why they lost. Brute force is not a reliable strategy.

Confidence – Confidence comes from the planning. The plan is more important than the function. The battle is won in the planning and the encounter is just a matter of following the plan.

Philosophical: Train to let go of (release) Mind, Body and Self.

To let go of mind means “do not worry.”

To let go of body means “do not tense.”

To let go of self means “do not have excess ego.”

BROWN STRIPE (2nd Level)

Technical: The Four Golden Aspects are Transition, Rotation, Folding and Drifting.

Transition – The even shifting of weight from one foot to the other. Must be done smoothly and avoiding any prolonged double weighting.

Rotation – Waist axis. Outer body revolves around the inner body like Spool and Spindle.

Folding – Bent energy of the joints, especially includes smooth movement, which comes from the shock absorber or leveling effect of the bent knee joints.

Drifting - Vary the steps and distance between you and the opponent through the utilization of varied footwork.

Philosophical: Victory over yourself is greater than victory over an opponent. When faced with an opponent, you should try to harmonize (neutralize) the situation and then victory (self-preservation) is easy. Set out to win and you may lose; set out to harmonize and you will spot the way to peace.

RED BELT

Technical: The three muscle postures are Limp, Relaxed and Tense. Although there are times that limp and tense may work, Relaxed is the center of limp and tense is the position of greatest power and coordination.

Philosophical: Swiftness alone is meaningless. It gains meaning only when combined with correct technique. Note that correct technique does not always require full speed. Very often someone who throws a lot of moves in a short time is called fast. How can that be when someone else can throw one move and accomplish the same goal in less time? It is not how much you do; it is only "what," "quality," and "when."

Qualities of fighting swiftness are: Correct Technique, Simple Technique, Direct Technique, and Appropriate Technique