



## HAPKIDO ORIENTATION

FOR NEW STUDENTS

The following two-page sheet will provide new students with important introductory information concerning their Hapkido training. Please read it in its entirety. If you have any questions, please ask your instructor.

### **What is Hapkido?**

Hapkido is a Korean martial art which emerged in the mid-twentieth century and quickly grew to become an international style. Its founders created the art by selectively fusing a wide range of existing martial skills, with new innovations. As a result, Hapkido possesses one of the most complex, unique, and varied arsenals of self-defense techniques to be found in any martial art. These skills encompass all major martial categories including: strikes, kicks, blocks, avoiding movements, holds, joint locks, chokes, throws, breakfalls, tumbling, ground fighting, weapons, meditation, and healing.

Like many Asian martial arts, Hapkido emphasizes the unification of body, mind, and spirit; the perfection of human character; social responsibility; and appropriate use of force. Unlike most martial arts, Hapkido utilizes more than 1100 core techniques, which are intuitively modified or combined to create thousands of variations. Self-defense techniques are characterized by a constant flow of striking, blocking, holding, and throwing techniques. Constant motion and fluid circular movements are designed to blend with an opponent's force. Tactics often alternate between highly aggressive and defensive modes, with power being generated through use of one's entire body. Internal energy development is fundamental to all training, leading to increased health and greater efficiency in self-defense techniques.

Hapkido techniques are not only for self-defense. Meditation and healing techniques are used to develop emotional stability, peace of mind, and confidence, while providing the same health benefits found in other arts, such as Tai Chi Chuan and Qi-Gong. Thus, Hapkido is a highly practical self-defense art with strong spiritual underpinnings.

In contemporary society, Hapkido is mostly practiced for self-defense, health, and spiritual growth. Although it is often compared to Aikido, Taekwondo, Jujutsu, Judo, and Tai Chi Chuan, it has a much broader range of techniques, suitable in a wider range of situations. This has made it adaptable to a wide range of body physiques, personalities, and lifestyles. Hapkido is currently practiced by a diverse range of men, women, and children of all ages; working professionals; gifted athletes; the physically impaired; those simply seeking physical exercise; as well as military and law enforcement professionals. Hapkido is practiced in over 100 countries and continues to expand rapidly worldwide.

### **Uniform and Clothing**

The jacket, belt, and pants worn during martial arts training is called a *dobok* (Korean). The jacket and pants are white, and the belt is color-coded according to the student's rank. The uniform worn in Hapkido is commonly referred to as a "grappling-style" uniform or a "Judo-style" uniform. All students are required to wear an approved uniform during training. The uniform must be entirely white. No patches, logos, names, lettering, patterns, or any other markings are permitted on the exterior of the uniform. You may obtain an approved uniform by either: renting one from the university; purchasing one from your instructor; or purchasing one from a martial arts retailer. If you purchase a uniform from an outside vendor, check with your instructor first, to verify the uniform is approved. If you already own a uniform, check with your instructor before wearing it to practice. No jewelry of any kind may be worn during practice. If your vision requires corrective lenses, we recommend soft contact lenses or glasses specifically designed for sports. Men should always wear appropriate groin support. Women should wear bras designed specifically for active sports. Keep your uniform clean and wash it regularly. Wearing a dirty or smelly uniform is disrespectful to others and unsanitary.

### **Etiquette**

Etiquette is the code of conduct and procedure by which you conduct yourself during martial arts training or when entering a training facility (called *dojang* in Korean). These traditional procedures are common to many martial arts and have been passed down through the centuries. Historically, many forms of etiquette arose for reasons of safety as well as respect. For example, the custom of shaking hands with one hand placed under the other, was done to show that you had no intention of drawing a weapon. The hands were plainly visible and signaled your peaceful intentions.

### **Bowing**

Bowing, from either a standing or sitting position, is a sign of gratitude and respect found throughout the martial arts world. Westerners often misinterpret this as an act of submission, or see it as part of some deviant totalitarian ideal. This is incorrect. When you bow, it signifies not only respect for your instructors or superiors, but respect for yourself, the art, and "life" in general. It is a symbol of your profound regard and caring for the rights and lives of others. This reflects a basic attitude found throughout East Asian culture. For example, it is usually considered extremely bad form to embarrass or humiliate someone, even if they deserve it. If this happens, the offender is said to "lose face" and must correct the matter through some form of reparation and expression of humility toward the person offended. This form of behavior is quite foreign to many Westerners, for whom personal expression is sometimes placed before the feelings of others.

Bowing is normally done at the beginning and ending of practice sessions, sparring, and drills. You should also bow at the entrance to our training hall when entering and leaving, or when addressing an instructor.

### **Informal Standing Bow**

To perform a standing bow, place both heels together with toes angled outward. Place your open hands at your side, fingers together, shoulders pulled back. Bow from the waist. The command to bow in Korean is *Kyōng-nyeo*.

### *Addressing Instructors*

An instructor is always addressed as *sir* unless permission has been given to call him or her by name. In Korean, there are different forms of “sir,” depending upon the rank of the person addressed. An instructor is addressed as *sa-bôm-nim*, a master as *kwan-jang-nim*. Never interrupt while an instructor is speaking, or another student is asking a question; give your full attention, remaining motionless. When an instructor finishes speaking, it is customary to respond by saying *sir*, *sa-bom-nim*, or *kwan-jang-nim* to signify your understanding and enthusiasm.

### *School Etiquette*

Every school has its own rules of etiquette. Some are very formal, others are quite relaxed. This is not a reflection of quality, but of choice. To assure that you do not cause any disrespect to your instructors, fellow students, or our school in general, always observe the following guidelines:

- Always address an instructor as “sir”
- Always bow when entering or leaving
- Never wear shoes on the mat
- Never wear unapproved uniforms
- Never practice with a dirty uniform
- Never sit or lie down unless directed
- Never spar unless directed
- Keep practicing until told to stop
- Never modify practice unless directed
- Always clean the practice area if asked
- Give instructors your full attention when they are speaking, remaining motionless
- Always show up for class on time and remain for the duration of training.
- If you must arrive late or leave early, always notify your instructor ahead of time.

### **Rank System**

In most Korean, Japanese, and Okinawan martial arts, level of skill (rank) is designated by a colored belt worn around the waist. Colored-belt ranks below black belt are called grades (*kûp* in Korean). The ten black-belt ranks are referred to as degrees or *dans*. Fourth-degree black belt or higher usually refers to a master-level practitioner. The ranks from lowest to highest are: white, yellow, green, blue, red, and black.

Ranks in Hapkido are awarded based on skills and the amount of time spent in training at one’s current rank. Promotion from one rank to another usually occurs through formal testing, which assesses a candidate’s skills according to specific rank requirements. At the discretion of the instructor, ranks may also be awarded based primarily on training time. This is usually done for individuals who exhibit extreme dedication but possess specific physical limitations which make it impossible for them to do certain techniques.

### **The Element of Risk**

Martial arts can be a safe, rewarding, and physically beneficial practice. There is no reason to suffer debilitating injuries to enjoy its benefits or acquire its skills. However, you must be comfortable accepting the element of risk associated with the style you practice. Your age, health, conditioning, and athleticism all influence the level of risk. Before training and periodically thereafter, obtain a thorough medical examination. Be aware of limitations or existing physical conditions that may affect training. Advise your instructor, and never do *anything* in which you do not feel comfortable or safe. Remember, you are the best judge of your own limits, and the one who must live with the physical results of your actions.

### **Resources and Textbooks**

Hapkido is a very complex martial art. If you are a new student or taking up Hapkido for the first time, we recommend you obtain the following 128-page book, which provides a concise overview of Hapkido’s history, philosophy, and techniques:

*Hapkido: An Introduction to the Art of Self-Defense.*

By Marc Tedeschi.

Published by Weatherhill, 2001.

If you are a serious student aspiring to black-belt level, then you will need to obtain the following 1136-page book:

*Hapkido: Traditions, Philosophy, Technique.*

By Marc Tedeschi.

Published by Weatherhill, 2000.

You can purchase these texts from any retail bookseller. For further information on these books, visit: [www.tedeschi-media.com](http://www.tedeschi-media.com)

### *Rank Manuals*

Hapkido West also publishes a series of rank manuals summarizing promotion requirements and techniques associated with specific Hapkido color-belt and black-belt ranks. For further information, see your instructor or visit [www.hapkidowest.org](http://www.hapkidowest.org).