



Sparring

Sparring is controlled combat against real opponents. It is an integral part of martial arts. One-steps give you experience against an opponent, but sparring is unscripted fighting. You have to act and react without stopping. Sparring is demanding – you need flexibility, speed, stamina, and control.

Sparring teaches timing, footwork, control and good target selection. It also teaches you how to judge and use distance to control the flow of a match. You will learn that different opponents will require different tactics. An attack that will work on a smaller opponent will not have the same effect on a larger one. Effective fighting includes alternating legs and the use of all weapon ranges from elbow techniques to full extension kicks.

Dragon School does not teach tournament sparring. With tournament sparring, points are counted and there are breaks after each point. Dragon School sparring is continuous - no points are counted. A good sparring match is about improving your strengths, reducing your weaknesses, and practicing your techniques with a real opponent.

Safety First

- Mouth guards are required.
- Protective groin cups are required for male students.
- No sparring without an instructor to referee.
- Your instructor controls the match - pay attention to their commands.
- No head contact, light body contact to good targets, no kicking at the knees or below.
- Keep your mouth closed – don't bite your lips or stick out your tongue.
- Wear shin pads or other pads if you have an injury to protect.
- If you wear glasses, try to spar without them – they will get knocked off at some point in a real confrontation.

Bowing

At the beginning and end of each sparring match, you will bow to your opponent and to the instructor. This shows respect for your instructor and for your opponent. It should remind you that your purpose is not to hurt your opponent, but to improve your sparring.

Rhythm Sparring

The first sparring you will do in class as a white belt is very controlled and non-contact.



The first person will attack three times, using any techniques they have been shown in class. The second person will move and defend. As soon as the first person finishes the third attack, the second person attacks three times while the first person moves and defends.

Rhythm sparring will give you a feel for how sparring should flow and introduce you to attacking using multiple techniques in combination. Try to eliminate the gap between defending and attacking and vice versa. Don't move away so far that you have to run forward to attack when it's your turn.

Free Sparring

Free sparring is light contact sparring between two opponents. There should be no contact to the head. Kicks should be kept well above the knees – even with light contact, knees are easy to seriously injure.

Free sparring is just what it sounds like – a free flowing, unscripted match where you are responsible for attacking and defending as your opponent does the same.

Don't forget to listen to your instructor – he or she controls the starts and stops during the match. Stop attacking immediately when instructed, but don't drop your guard until it is clear your opponent has heard the command as well.

Multiple Sparring

Multiple sparring is like free sparring, but you will be facing more than one opponent at the same time. The multiple opponents may not grab the single opponent.

Sparring multiple opponents will teach you to be aware of your surroundings so you don't get pinned against a wall or backed into a corner. It will also teach you to be aware of more than one person at a time. The keys to multiple sparring are to keep moving, spar one person at a time, and try to keep the smallest or weakest opponent in between you and your other opponents.

Sparring Tips

- Watch your opponent at all times – you can't block a technique if you can't see it.
- Use techniques in combination – follow up an attack – don't use one technique and then stop.
- Breathe! Try to relax. Don't let your emotions get the better of you as you spar.
- Stay calm and focused mentally and physically.



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Student Guide

- Guard your head – keep at least one hand up at all times.
- Minimize the targets you present to your opponent – don't face them straight on.
- Stay light on your feet and move around on angles, not just backwards and forwards.
- Use high techniques to mask a low attack and vice versa.
- Observe other's sparring habits to discover what techniques might work against them.
- A good KIA can momentarily distract your opponent and adds confidence and power to your attack.