Desert Valley Shotokan

Rank Requirements

Belts

When karate began, it was taught only to adults, there were no uniforms, and belts were not used to denote rank. In the 1920s, karate adopted a uniform. Advanced practitioners wore black belts while everyone else wore white belts. Later, to reward incremental progress, colored belts were introduced between white and black. Later still, as karate began to be taught to more people, with different cultural and developmental needs, more changes were made. Today, most schools award 10 colored "kyu" ranks before awarding a black belt. Our school uses white (10th), yellow (9th), orange (8th), blue (7th), green (6th), purple (5th & 4th), and brown (3rd, 2nd, & 1st) belts.

Furthermore, some kyu grades are divided into "C", "B", and "Full" grades, awarded depending on the examinee's age and performance.

- For students under age 16, "C" grades are awarded at 10th-5th kyu, and 3rd kyu, indicating ***some*** requirements are satisfied.
- "B" grades are awarded to students of all ages, indicating ***most*** requirements are satisfied.
- "Full" grades are awarded to students of all ages, indicating ***all*** requirements are satisfied.

Testing

Eligibility

Testing opportunities will be scheduled at regular intervals, for eligible students, but you ***will not*** be eligible for every test. Each test will require more preparation than the last. Requirements for test eligibility are intended to give the best chance for success. Even diligent students should expect to be eligible for only 2-3 tests per year. Remember that patience and discipline are part of karate too.

If you are not eligible for a test, you should still attend, in uniform. This shows support for your classmates and familiarizes you with thes testing process, which will make your next test seem less intimidating.

Registration

To allow us to be adequately prepared, eligible students must register and pay any testing fees before the day of the test.

What to Expect on Your Test

The following pages list our requirements for each rank. You should be prepared to demonstrate all requirements shown. However, your examiner(s) may add items to or remove things from your test, so be flexible and prepared for anything. When Japanese terms are used, *knowing* those terms is part of the requirement. Depending on how many people are testing, and their ranks, you may take your test alone or in a small group. Remember, you're not competing against anyone else … only yourself.

Results

Results of rank exams are typically not announced on the day of the test so that judges have time to deliberate and prepare feedback. When you receive your results, you'll be told what you did well and what you can do to improve.

Testing for 9th Kyu – Yellow Belt

Kihon

- Stepping forward – Oi-zuki (chudan)
- Stepping forward – Age uke
- Stepping forward – Mae-geri keage (chudan)
- Stepping forward – Gedan barai
- Loud kiai

Kumite

- Kihon sanbon – Jodan oi-zuki vs. age-uke & chudan oi-zuki vs. gedan barai.

Kata

- Taikyoku Shodan

Fitness

- Push ups: 1
- Leg lifts: 10 seconds
- Balance on one leg: 10 seconds
- Sit still and quiet: 15 seconds

Pad Work

Application

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Demonstrate zenkutsu-dachi.
- Tie your belt without assistance.

Testing for 8th Kyu – Orange Belt

Kihon

- Stepping forward – Oi-zuki (chudan)
- Stepping forward – Age uke
- Stepping forward – Gedan barai
- Stepping forward – Mae-geri keage (chudan)
- Stepping forward – Soto uke
- Stepping forward in kokutsu dachi – Shuto uke

Kumite

- Kihon sanbon: Jodan oi-zuki vs. age-uke, chudan oi-zuki vs. gedan barai, & chudan oi-zuki vs. soto uke

Kata

- Heian Shodan

Fitness

- Push ups: 5
- Leg lifts: 20 seconds

Application

- Demonstrate the wrist escape in Heian Shodan (move #4) with a partner.
- Demonstrate cross-side wrist grab escape using downward block, with a partner.

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Explain the difference between jodan, chudan, and gedan.
- Explain the difference in hip position when blocking and attacking.
- Explain the difference beteween kihon, kata, and kumite.
- Count to ten in Japanese.

Testing for 7th kyu – Blue Belt

Kihon

- Stepping forward – Oi-zuki (chudan)
- Stepping forward – Age uke
- Stepping forward – Gedan barai
- Stepping forward – Soto uke
- Stepping forward in kokutsu dachi – Shuto uke
- Stepping forward – Uchi uke
- Stepping forward – Mae-geri keage (chudan)
- Stepping sideways in kiba dachi – Yoko-geri kekomi
- Stepping sideways in kiba dachi – Yoko-geri keage

Kumite

- Kihon ippon: Oi-zuki jodan & oi-zuki chudan (defender's choice of defense)

Kata

- Heian Nidan

Fitness

- Push ups on first two knuckles: 5
- Leg lifts: 30 seconds

Application

- Demonstrate any application of the first three moves of Heian Nidan with a partner.

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Demonstrate zenkutsu-dachi, kokutsu-dachi, & kiba-dachi.
- Recite the Dojo Kun in English.
- Explain the differences between side snap kick and side thrust kick.

Testing for 6th kyu – Green Belt

Kihon

- Stepping forward – Oi-zuki (chudan)
- Stepping forward – Age uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping backward – Gedan barai & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Soto uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping backward in kokutsu dachi – Shuto uke
- Stepping forward – Uchi uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Mae-geri keage (chudan)
- Stepping sideways in kiba dachi – Yoko-geri kekomi
- Stepping sideways in kiba dachi – Yoko-geri keage
- Stepping forward – Mawashi-geri

Kumite

- Kihon ippon: Oi-zuki jodan, oi-zuki chudan, & mae-geri keage

Kata

- Heian Sandan

Fitness

- Push ups on first two knuckles: 10
- Leg lifts: 30 seconds

Application

- Demonstrate one application from your kata with a partner.

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Demonstrate the commands necessary to open and close class (including the Dojo Kun, in English).
- Explain the difference between oi-zuki and gyaku-zuki in terms of how power is generated.

Testing for 5th kyu – Purple Belt

Kihon

- Stepping forward – Oi-zuki (chudan)
- Stepping forward – Age uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping backward – Gedan barai & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Soto uke, then yoko empi uchi in kiba dachi
- Stepping backward in kokutsu dachi – Shuto uke, then nukite in zenkutsu dachi
- Stepping forward – Uchi uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Mae-geri keage (chudan)
- Stepping sideways in kiba dachi – Yoko-geri kekomi
- Stepping sideways in kiba dachi – Yoko-geri keage
- Stepping forward – Mawashi-geri
- Stepping forward – Ushiro-geri

Kumite

- Kihon ippon: Oi-zuki jodan, oi-zuki chudan, & mae-geri keage
- Jiyu ippon: Yori-ashi, jodan kizami-zuki & yori-ashi, chudan gyaku-zuki
- Three-to-five attack drill

Kata

- Heian Yondan

Fitness

- Push ups on first two knuckles: 15
- Leg lifts: 30 seconds

Application

- Demonstrate one application from your kata with a partner.

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Demonstrate stances: Zenkutsu dachi, kokutsu dachi, heisoku dachi, kiba dachi, & kosa dachi
- Demonstrate shomen, hanmi, and gyaku-hanmi hip positions, and explain when to use each.

Testing for 4th kyu – Purple Belt

Kihon

- Stepping forward – Oi-zuki (chudan)
- Shifting forward – Kizami-zuki (jodan)
- Stepping forward – Age uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping backward – Gedan barai & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Soto uke, yoko empi uchi in kiba dachi, then uraken uchi
- Stepping backward in kokutsu dachi – Shuto uke, then nukite in zenkutsu dachi
- Stepping forward – Uchi uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Ren mae-geri, rear leg first
- Stepping sideways in kiba dachi – Yoko-geri kekomi
- Stepping sideways in kiba dachi – Yoko-geri keage
- Stepping forward – Mawashi-geri & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Ushiro-geri

Kumite

- Kihon ippon: Oi-zuki jodan, oi-zuki chudan, mae-geri keage, yoko-geri keage, & mawashi-geri
- Jiyu ippon: Yori-ashi, jodan kizami-zuki & yori-ashi, chudan gyaku-zuki
- Three-to-five attack drill
- Jiyu kumite (slow)

Kata

- Heian Godan

Fitness

- Push ups on first two knuckles: 15
- Leg lifts: 45 seconds

Application

- Demonstrate one application from your kata with a partner.

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Explain the five precepts of the dojo kun.

Testing for 3rd kyu – Brown Belt

Kihon

- Stepping forward – Sanbon-zuki
- Shifting forward – Kizami-zuki (jodan) & gyaku-zuki (chudan)
- Stepping forward – Age uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping backward – Gedan barai & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Soto uke, yoko empi uchi in kiba dachi, then uraken uchi
- Stepping backward in kokutsu dachi – Shuto uke, then nukite in zenkutsu dachi
- Stepping forward – Uchi uke & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Ren mae-geri, front leg first
- Stepping forward – Ren mawashi-geri, front leg first
- Stepping sideways – Yoko-geri keage (in kiba dachi), then pivot to yoko-geri kekomi
- Stepping forward – Ushiro-geri, then gyaku-zuki
- In place, w/ rear leg, without putting it down: Mae-geri keage x 3, then ushiro-geri x 3.
- In place: Follow a moving target (up/down only) with gyaku-zuki, maintaining accuracy and control.

Kumite

- Kihon ippon: Oi-zuki jodan & chudan, mae-geri, yoko-geri keage, mawashi-geri, & ushiro-geri
- Jiyu ippon: Yori-ashi jodan kizami-zuki, yori-ashi chudan gyaku-zuki, oi-zuki jodan, oi-zuki chudan, & mae-geri keage
- Three-to-five attack drill
- Jiyu kumite (slow)

Kata

- Tekki Shodan

Fitness

- Push ups on first two knuckles: 20
- Leg lifts: 60 seconds

Application

- Demonstrate one application from your kata with a partner.

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Demonstrate the ability to lead lead warm-up exercises before class.
- Explain the meaning and purpose of “hikite.”

Testing for 2nd kyu – Brown Belt

Kihon

- Stepping forward – Sanbon-zuki
- Stepping forward – Age uke, mae-ashi mae-geri keage, & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping backward – Gedan barai & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Soto uke, yoko empi uchi in kiba dachi, then uraken uchi, then gyaku zuki in zenkutsu dachi
- Stepping backward in kokutsu dachi – Shuto uke, then mae-ashi mae-geri keage, and land with nukite in zenkutsu dachi
- Stepping forward – Uchi uke, same hand kizami-zuki, then gyaku-zuki
- Shifting forward – Kizami-zuki (jodan), gyaku-zuki (chudan), then step forward with mae-geri keage
- Shifting forward – Kizami-zuki (jodan), gyaku-zuki (chudan), then step forward with mawashi-geri
- Stepping sideways – Yoko-geri keage (in kiba dachi), then pivot to yoko-geri kekomi
- Stepping forward – Ushiro-geri & gyaku-zuki
- In place, w/rear leg, without putting it down: Mae-geri keage & ushiro geri
- In place: Follow a moving target (up/down/left/right) with gyaku-zuki, maintaining accuracy and control.

Kumite

- Jiyu ippon: Yori-ashi jodan kizami zuki, yori-ashi chudan gyaku-zuki, oi-zuki jodan, oi-zuki chudan, mae-geri keage, yoko-geri kekomi, & mawashi-geri
- Three-to-five attack drill
- Jiyu kumite (slow)

Kata

- Bassai Dai

Fitness

- Push ups on first two knuckles: 20
- Leg lifts: 60 seconds

Application

- With a partner, demonstrate the wrist lock in move #18 of Bassai Dai.

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Recite the Dojo Kun in Japanese.

Testing for 1st kyu – Brown Belt

Kihon

- From jiyu-kamae, slide forward jab, then step forward lunge punch
- From jiyu-kamae, slide forward jab & reverse punch, then step forward with front kick and land with reverse punch
- From jiyu-kamae, slide forward jab & reverse punch, then step forward with round kick and land with reverse punch
- From jiyu-kamae, step forward with front kick and land with lunge punch
- From jiyu-kamae, step forward with foot sweep and land with lunge punch
- Stepping forward – Age uke, mae-ashi mae-geri keage, & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping backward – Gedan barai & gyaku-zuki
- Stepping forward – Soto uke & yoko empi uchi (kiba dachi) & uraken uchi & gyaku zuki (zenkutsu dachi)
- Stepping backward in kokutsu dachi – Shuto uke, then mae-ashi mae-geri keage, and land with nukite in zenkutsu dachi
- Stepping forward – Uchi uke, same hand kizami-zuki, then gyaku-zuki
- Stepping sideways – Yoko-geri keage (in kiba dachi), pivot to yoko-geri kekomi, then spin to ushir geri
- In place, w/rear leg, without putting it down: Mae-geri keage & ushiro geri
- In place: Gyaku-zuki contact drill – wearing gloves, contact the target with the glove, but not the fist

Kumite

- Jiyu ippon: Yori-ashi jodan kizami zuki, yori-ashi chudan gyaku-zuki, oi-zuki jodan, oi-zuki chudan, mae-geri keage, yoko-geri kekomi, mawashi-geri, & ushiro-geri
- Three-to-five attack drill
- Jiyu kumite (slow)

Kata

- Bassai Dai
- One other kata of examiner's choice from among Heian katas or Tekki Shodan

Fitness

- Push ups on first two knuckles: 20
- Leg lifts: 60 seconds

Application

- With a partner, demonstrate the wrist lock in move #18 of Bassai Dai.
- With a partner, demonstrate one other application from Bassai Dai.
- With a partner, demonstrate one application from a kata selected by the examiner.

Self-Protection

Knowledge

- Demonstrate the ability to lead class through the 7 basic techniques (oi-zuki, mae-geri, gedan barai, age-uke, soto-uke, uchi-uke, and shuto-uke).