

# Welcome!



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. . . to the **Okinawan Karate School and Royce Gracie Jiu-jitsu of Western Massachusetts**. As a new student, there are a few things which you should know to make sure your start-up an enjoyable experience. Please read the following and let us know if you have any questions.

## The Gi and Obi (Uniform and Belt)

A traditional white Gi is used in karate classes with approved patches only. A patch for the Okinawa Karate-Do Association (shown left) should be worn over the left chest area, vertically aligned. Gi's used for Jiu-jitsu can be more colorful and bear a variety of patches.

A clean uniform and properly tied belt is an important part of training. When putting on the gi pants, any loops at the waist should be in the front. The jacket should be worn with the right-front part pulled across the body first and tied to the string on the left. The left-front part is then pulled over and tied on the right. Jiu-jitsu gis do not usually have ties.

The **obi** or belt carries special significance in the martial arts and should be tied properly. The gi should always be kept clean and well maintained, but you should **not** wash the belt (especially if there are stripes on it!) The easiest way for the beginner to tie the belt is as follows:

- 1) Find the middle of the belt and place it against the abdomen just below the naval with the "tag-end" on the left side (white in Figure 1.) Belts typically have a tag on one end.
- 2) Wrap both ends of the belt around the body, crossing over at the spine, and continuing to the front.
- 3) Place the "tag-end" across the abdomen on top of the first wrap (Figure 1a).
- 4) Place the "other-end" (black in Figure 1) across the abdomen and Tuck it between the gi and the first two layers (Figure 1b).
- 5) Pull both ends outward and adjust the so they about the same length.
- 6) Cross the "tag-end" under the "other-end" to form a circle between the two lengths, and then flip the tag-end down through the circle (Figure 1c).
- 7) Pull both ends firmly to tighten the knot (Figure 1d).

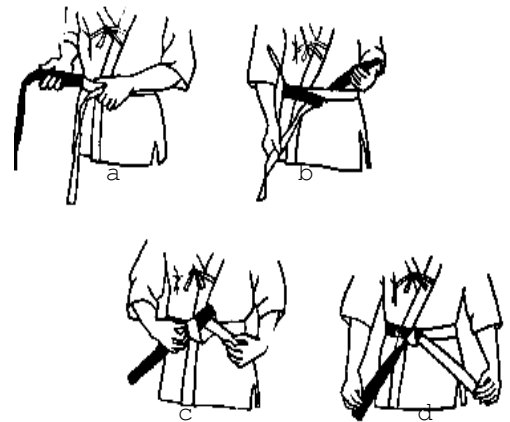


Figure 1



## Positive Attitude

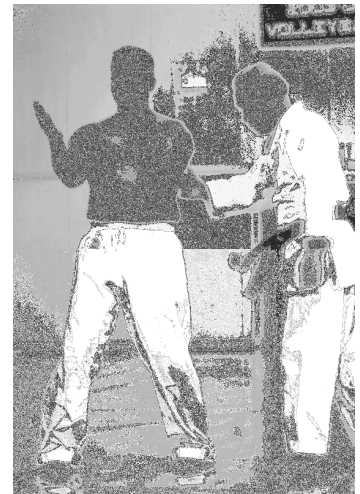
Successful training in the martial arts depends on a safe and supportive environment for every student. At the "Pittsfield Dojo" we strive to provide a mutually supportive environment where each student helps the next achieve their goals. It is very important that students develop a positive attitude towards their practice, their fellow students and instructors in the dojo, and do their best in every class. An enthusiastic approach to bettering oneself can eventually extend to many aspects of the students life!

## Self-Discipline and Behavior

Some of the most valuable traits that the student can learn from the martial arts are focus, self-discipline, and perseverance. In the dojo, it is extremely important for students to have self-control in order to provide a safe environment for all students. Students must listen carefully to the instructions that they are given and demonstrate effort in developing self-control.

There are expectations for behavior in and out of the dojo for each student age group. Students should familiarize themselves with the **Dojo Code** of behavior. These are guidelines which must be learned and followed. The Dojo Code has five principles:

- 1) **Respect** - Students must treat themselves, their instructors and those around them with courtesy and consideration.
- 2) **Self-Defense** - Students must use the combative skills they learn for self-protection only.
- 3) **Perseverance** - Through effort and dedication students will do their best to succeed and reach their goals.
- 4) **Honor** - Through increased awareness students will strive to have good moral character.
- 5) **Responsibility** - Students will strive to make good choices and take care of the needs of themselves and those around them.



Dojo policy is that there are appropriate consequences for the student's behavior. Good student behavior is rewarded with privileges and promotions. Poor behavior may result in a loss of privileges; delay in promotions; or, in extreme cases, suspension from the school.

A few important notes on dojo etiquette are:

- Students and families are asked to be neat and clean, and keep the noise level reasonable in all areas of the dojo,
- Students may enter the training room to practice before their class begins, but only after any earlier classes are finished, students should ask an instructor for permission before using any training equipment,
- No shoes are allowed in the training area! Before entering the training room, shoes should be placed in the shoe rack and jackets or hats should be hung on the coat racks, any personal belongings in the changing rooms should be kept neat as well.
- Only bottled water is allowed in the training area to drink. Empty bottles must be discarded properly. No food is allowed in the training area.

### Parental Support

Sometimes students will be faced with an opportunity to learn an important life skill and grow as a person by training in the martial arts. For example, students can learn good habits in self-discipline as a result of following the dojo rules. At times it can be difficult for younger students to change old habits for the better. In fact, sometimes the old behavior will actually get worst just before it begins to improve. In such cases, it is important for parents to support the "learning opportunity" and provide consistency for the student. The real challenge in this area comes when a consequence is provided for negative behavior.



### Promotions

It is normal for students to be excited about achieving rank or belts in the martial arts. It is a healthy way for students to monitor their progress and reach their goals. To achieve ranks in Karate or Jiu-jitsu the student must demonstrate a level of development in three areas. These are form or technical ability, strength, and focus or spirit. There are also minimal training time requirements that the student must meet, and a positive attitude is essential. Students and parents should place their energies for promotions into dedication and practice. It is considered bad form to repeatedly ask the instructors about promotions! Therefore, Students and parents are discouraged from doing so.

### Payment Policies

It is the student's (and parent's) responsibility to keep track of their tuition due dates and pay on time. A student should make-up any missed classes. Fees for promotions are due at the time of the test. For Jiu-jitsu students, promotion fees are covered by annual dues for the Royce Gracie Jiu-jitsu Network (collect in January.) For additional information, please see "**Payment and Attendance Policies.**"