Taekwondo

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[Jump to navigation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#mw-head)[Jump to search](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#searchInput)

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| **Taekwondo** | |
| **Highest**[**governing body**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_governing_body) | [World Taekwondo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Taekwondo) (South Korea) |
| **First played** | [Korea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea), 1940s |
| **Characteristics** | |
| **Contact** | Yes |
| [**Mixed gender**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mixed-sex_sports) | Yes |
| **Type** | Martial art |
| **Presence** | |
| **Country or region** | Worldwide |
| [**Olympic**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_Games) | Since [2000](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo_at_the_2000_Summer_Olympics) |
| [**World Games**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Games) | [1981](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1981_World_Games)–[1993](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1993_World_Games) |

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| **Taekwondo** | |
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| [A picture containing sport, person, athletic game, player  Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Milad_Kharchegani_at_the_2016_Summer_Olympics.jpg)  A taekwondo contest at the 2016 Summer Olympics | |
| **Also known as** | TKD, Tae Kwon Do, Tae Kwon-Do, Taekwon-Do, Tae-Kwon-Do |
| **Focus** | [Striking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strike_(attack)), [kicking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kicking) |
| **Hardness** | [Full-contact (WT)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_arts#Full-contact), [Light and medium-contact (ITF, GTF, ATA, TI, TAGB)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_arts#Light-_and_medium-contact) |
| **Country of origin** | [Korea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea) |
| **Creator** | No single creator; a collaborative effort by representatives from the [original nine Kwans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kwan_(martial_arts)), initially supervised by [Choi Hong Hi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choi_Hong_Hi).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-1) |
| **Famous practitioners** | (see [notable practitioners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#Notable_practitioners)) |
| **Parenthood** | Mainly [Taekkyon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekkyon" \o "Taekkyon) and [Karate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karate),[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-Karate-2) and slight influence of [Chinese martial arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_martial_arts)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-3) |
| **Olympic sport** | Since 2000 ([World Taekwondo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Taekwondo)) |

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| Taekwondo | |
| [Hangul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hangul) | 태권도 |
| [Hanja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanja) | 跆拳道 |
| [Revised Romanization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revised_Romanization_of_Korean) | *taegwondo* |
| [McCune–Reischauer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCune%E2%80%93Reischauer) | *t'aekwŏndo* |
| [IPA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Korean) | [[tʰɛ.k͈wʌn.do]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Korean) ([About this sound](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ko-%ED%83%9C%EA%B6%8C%EB%8F%84.oga)[listen](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/Ko-%ED%83%9C%EA%B6%8C%EB%8F%84.oga)) |

**Taekwondo**, **Tae Kwon Do** or **Taekwon-Do** ([/ˌtaɪkwɒnˈdoʊ, ˌtaɪˈkwɒndoʊ/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English);[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-4)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-5)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-6) [Korean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_language): 태권도/跆拳道 [[tʰɛ.k͈wʌn.do]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Korean) ([About this sound](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ko-%ED%83%9C%EA%B6%8C%EB%8F%84.oga)[listen](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c7/Ko-%ED%83%9C%EA%B6%8C%EB%8F%84.oga))) is a [Korean martial art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_martial_arts), characterized by punching and kicking techniques, with emphasis on head-height kicks, jumping spinning kicks, and fast kicking techniques. The literal translation for tae kwon do is "kicking," "punching," and "the art or way of."[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-7) It is a martial art that attacks or defends with hands and feet anytime, anywhere without any weapons, and the purpose of physical training is important, but it also has great significance in fostering the right mind through mental armament.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-8)

Taekwondo practitioners wear a uniform, known as a [dobok](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dobok" \o "Dobok). It is a [combat sport](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Combat_sport) and was developed during the 1940s and 1950s by Korean martial artists with experience in martial arts such as [karate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karate), [Chinese martial arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_martial_arts), and indigenous Korean martial arts traditions such as [Taekkyon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekkyeon" \o "), [Subak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subak" \o "Subak), and [Gwonbeop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwonbeop" \o "Gwonbeop).[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-9)[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-Brief_History_of_Taekwondo-10) The oldest governing body for Taekwondo is the [Korea Taekwondo Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea_Taekwondo_Association) (KTA), formed in 1959 through a collaborative effort by representatives from the nine original [kwans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kwan_(martial_arts)" \l "The_five_original_Taekwondo_kwans" \o "Kwan (martial arts)), or martial arts schools, in Korea. The main international organisational bodies for Taekwondo today are the [International Taekwon-Do Federation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Taekwon-Do_Federation) (ITF), founded by [Choi Hong Hi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choi_Hong_Hi) in 1966, and the partnership of the [Kukkiwon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kukkiwon" \o "Kukkiwon) and [World Taekwondo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Taekwondo) (WT, formerly World Taekwondo Federation or WTF), founded in 1972 and 1973 respectively by the [Korea Taekwondo Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea_Taekwondo_Association).[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-KANG-11) *Gyeorugi* ([[kjʌɾuɡi]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/Korean)), a type of full-contact [sparring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sparring), has been an [Olympic event](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo_at_the_Summer_Olympics) since 2000. The governing body for Taekwondo in the [Olympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympic_Games) and [Paralympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paralympic_Games) is World Taekwondo.

Ranks, belts, and promotion[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Taekwondo&action=edit&section=14)]

[A group of people dancing

Description automatically generated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:04232012box_pilates059.JPG)

Exhibition of Taekwondo students at the [Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education, Mexico City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monterrey_Institute_of_Technology_and_Higher_Education,_Mexico_City)

Taekwondo ranks vary from style to style and are not standardized. Typically, these ranks are separated into "junior" and "senior" sections, colloquially referred to as "color belts" and "black belts":

* The junior section of ranks—the "color belt" ranks—are indicated by the Korean word *[geup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geup" \o "Geup)* 급 (級) (also Romanized as *gup* or *kup*). Practitioners in these ranks generally wear belts ranging in color from white (the lowest rank) to red or brown (higher ranks, depending on the style of Taekwondo). Belt colors may be solid or may include a colored stripe on a solid background. The number of geup ranks varies depending on the style, typically ranging between 8 and 12 geup ranks. The numbering sequence for geup ranks usually begins at the larger number of white belts, and then counts down to "1st geup" as the highest color-belt rank.
* The senior section of ranks—the "[black belt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_belt_(martial_arts))" ranks—is typically made up of nine ranks. Each rank is called a [*dan*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_(rank)) 단 (段) or "degree" (as in "third *dan*" or "third-degree black belt"). The numbering sequence for dan ranks is opposite that of geup ranks: numbering begins at 1st dan (the lowest black-belt rank) and counts upward for higher ranks. A practitioner's degree is sometimes indicated on the belt itself with stripes, Roman numerals, or other methods.

Some styles incorporate an additional rank between the geup and dan levels, called the "bo-dan" rank—essentially, a candidate rank for black belt promotion. Additionally, the Kukkiwon/WT-style of Taekwondo recognizes a "poom" rank for practitioners under the age of 15: these practitioners have passed dan-level tests but will not receive dan-level rank until age 15. At age 15, their poom rank is considered to transition to equivalent dan rank automatically. In some schools, holders of the poom rank wear a half-red/half-black belt rather than a solid black belt.

To advance from one rank to the next, students typically complete *promotion tests* in which they demonstrate their proficiency in the various aspects of the art before their teacher or a panel of judges. Promotion tests vary from school to school, but may include such elements as the execution of patterns, which combine various techniques in specific sequences; the breaking of boards to demonstrate the ability to use techniques with both power and control; sparring and self-defense to demonstrate the practical application and control of techniques; physical fitness usually with push-ups and sit-ups; and answering questions on terminology, concepts, and history to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the art. For higher *dan* tests, students are sometimes required to take a written test or submit a research paper in addition to taking the practical test.

Promotion from one *geup* to the next can proceed rapidly in some [schools](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School) since schools often allow *geup* promotions every two, three, or four months. Students of *geup* rank learn the most basic techniques first, and then move on to more advanced techniques as they approach first *dan*. Many of the older and more traditional schools often take longer to allow students to test for higher ranks than newer, more contemporary schools, as they may not have the required testing intervals. In contrast, promotion from one *dan* to the next can take years. In fact, some styles impose age or time-in-rank limits on dan promotions. For example, the number of years between one dan promotion to the next may be limited to a minimum of the practitioner's current dan-rank, so that (for example) a 5th dan practitioner must wait 5 years to test for 6th dan.

Black belt ranks may have titles associated with them, such as "master" and "instructor", but Taekwondo organizations vary widely in rules and standards when it comes to ranks and titles. What holds true in one organization may not hold true in another, as is the case in many [martial art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_art) systems. For example, achieving first *dan ( black belt)* ranking with three years' training might be typical in one organization but considered too quick in another organization, and likewise for other ranks. Similarly, the title for a given *dan* rank in one organization might not be the same as the title for that *dan* rank in another organization.

In the [International Taekwon-Do Federation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Taekwon-Do_Federation), instructors holding 1st to 3rd *dan* are called *Boosabum* (assistant instructor), those holding 4th to 6th *dan* are called *Sabum* (instructor), those holding 7th to 8th *dan* are called *Sahyun* (master), and those holding 9th *dan* are called *Saseong* (grandmaster).[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-Choi1993-1.122-43) This system does not, however, necessarily apply to other Taekwondo organizations.

In the American Taekwondo Association, instructor designations are separate from rank. Black belts may be designated as an instructor trainee (red, white and blue collar), specialty trainer (red and black collar), certified trainer (black-red-black collar) and certified instructor (black collar). After a one-year waiting period, instructors who hold the sixth dan are eligible for the title of Master. Seventh dan black belts are eligible for the title Senior Master and eighth dan black belts are eligible for the title Chief Master.

In WT/Kukki-Taekwondo, instructors holding 1st. to 3rd. *dan* are considered assistant instructors (kyosa-nim), are not yet allowed to issue ranks, and are generally thought of as still having much to learn. Instructors who hold a 4th. to 6th. *dan* are considered master instructors (sabum-nim), and are allowed to grade students to color belt ranks from 4th. dan, and to black belt/dan-ranks from 6th. dan. Those who hold a 7th–9th *dan* are considered Grandmasters. These ranks also hold an age requirement of 40+.[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-44) In this style, a 10th dan rank is sometimes awarded posthumously for practitioners with a lifetime of demonstrable contributions to the practice of Taekwondo.

Historical influences[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Taekwondo&action=edit&section=15)]

*See also:*[*Korean martial arts*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_martial_arts)

The oldest [Korean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea) martial arts were an amalgamation of unarmed combat styles developed by the three rival Korean Kingdoms of [Goguryeo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goguryeo" \o "Hwarang), [Silla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silla), and [Baekje](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baekje" \o "Baekje),[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-SPIRIT-45) where young men were trained in unarmed combat techniques to develop strength, speed, and survival skills. The most popular of these techniques were [ssireum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ssireum" \o "Ssireum), [subak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subak" \o "Subak), and [Taekkyon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekkyeon" \o "Taekkyeon). The Northern Goguryeo kingdom was a dominant force in Northern Korea and North Eastern China prior to the 1st century CE, and again from the 3rd century to the 6th century. Before the fall of the Goguryeo Dynasty in the 6th century, the Silla Kingdom asked for help in training its people for defence against pirate invasions. During this time a few select Silla warriors were given training in [Taekkyon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekkyeon" \o "Taekkyeon) by the early masters from [Goguryeo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goguryeo" \o "Goguryeo). These Silla warriors then became known as [Hwarang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hwarang" \o "Hwarang) or "blossoming knights." The Hwarang set up a military academy for the sons of royalty in Silla called [Hwarang-do](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hwarang" \o "Hwarang) {花郎徒}, which means "flower-youth corps." The Hwarang studied Taekkyon, history, [Confucian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucian) philosophy, ethics, [Buddhist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist) morality, social skills, and military tactics. The guiding principles of the [Hwarang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hwarang" \o "Hwarang) warriors were based on [Won Gwang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Won_Gwang)'s five codes of human conduct and included loyalty, filial duty, trustworthiness, valour, and justice. [[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-Seth-46)

In spite of Korea's rich history of ancient and martial arts, Korean martial arts faded during the late [Joseon Dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseon_Dynasty). Korean society became highly centralized under [Korean Confucianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_Confucianism), and martial arts were poorly regarded in a society whose ideals were epitomized by its scholar-kings.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-47) Formal practices of traditional martial arts such as [subak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subak" \o "Subak) and [Taekkyon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekkyeon" \o "Taekkyeon) were reserved for sanctioned military uses. However, [Taekkyon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekkyeon" \o ") persisted into the 19th century as a folk game during the May-Dano festival, and was still taught as the formal military martial art throughout the Joseon Dynasty.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-SPIRIT-45)

Early progenitors of Taekwondo—the founders of the nine original [kwans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kwans" \o "Kwans)—who were able to study in Japan were exposed to [Japanese martial arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_martial_arts), including [karate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karate), [judo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judo), and [kendo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kendo),[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-Park-48) while others were exposed to the martial arts of China and Manchuria, as well as to the indigenous Korean martial art of [Taekkyon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekkyeon" \o "Taekkyeon).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-Brief_History_of_Taekwondo-10)[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-Glen-49)[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-50)[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-51) [Hwang Kee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hwang_Kee) founder of [Moo Duk Kwan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moo_Duk_Kwan), further incorporated elements of Korean [Gwonbeop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwonbeop" \o "Gwonbeop) from the [Muye Dobo Tongji](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muye_Dobo_Tongji" \o "Muye Dobo Tongji) into the style that eventually became [Tang Soo Do](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tang_Soo_Do).

The historical influences of Taekwondo is controversial with a split between two schools of thought: traditionalism and revisionism. Traditionalism holds that the origins of Taekwondo can be traced through Korean martial arts while revisionism, which has become the prevailing theory, argues that Taekwondo is rooted in Karate.[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-52) Traditionalism has mainly been supported by the Korean government as a concerted effort to divorce Korean martial arts from their Japanese past to give Korean a "legitimate cultural past".[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-53)

Philosophy[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Taekwondo&action=edit&section=16)]

Different styles of Taekwondo adopt different philosophical underpinnings. Many of these underpinnings however refer back to the Five Commandments of the [Hwarang](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hwarang" \o ") as a historical referent. For example, Choi Hong Hi expressed his philosophical basis for Taekwondo as the [Five Tenets of Taekwondo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Taekwon-Do_Federation#Philosophy):[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-The_Tenants_Of_Tae_Kwon_Do-54)

* Courtesy (*yeui* / 예의, 禮儀)
* Integrity (*yeomchi* / 염치, 廉恥)
* Perseverance (*innae* / 인내, 忍耐)
* Self-control (*geukgi* / 극기, 克己)
* Indomitable spirit (*baekjeolbulgul* / 백절불굴, 百折不屈)

These tenets are further articulated in a Taekwondo oath, also authored by Choi:

* I shall observe the tenets of Taekwondo
* I shall respect the instructor and seniors
* I shall never misuse Taekwondo
* I shall be a champion of freedom and justice
* I shall build a more peaceful world

Modern ITF organizations have continued to update and expand upon this philosophy.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-55)[[51]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-56)

The World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) also refers to the commandments of the Hwarang in the articulation of its Taekwondo philosophy.[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-57) Like the ITF philosophy, it centers on the development of a peaceful society as one of the overarching goals for the practice of Taekwondo. The WT's stated philosophy is that this goal can be furthered by adoption of the Hwarang spirit, by behaving rationally ("education in accordance with the reason of heaven"), and by recognition of the philosophies embodied in the [taegeuk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taegeuk" \o "Taegeuk) (the yin and the yang, i.e., "the unity of opposites") and the [sam taegeuk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taegeuk" \l "Tricolored_Taegeuk" \o "Taegeuk) (understanding change in the world as the interactions of the heavens, the Earth, and Man). The philosophical position articulated by the Kukkiwon is likewise based on the Hwarang tradition.[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taekwondo#cite_note-58)