

Parent, Practitioner, Instructor

Parent

I am a father of three, two boys are practicing ITF Taekwon-Do at the moment, one (10-year-old) is 4th Gup, one (6-year-old) is mini kid red stripe, one (4-year-old) is observing from the side of the Dojang weekly. My wife was graded to 8th Gup 10 years ago, the reason of gone was pregnancy. As you can tell we are a young TKD family. Taekwon-Do has been part of our life for many years.

From a parent point of view, there are a few reasons why we choose iTKD (ITF Taekwon-Do) trainings for our kids.

1. Fun and enjoyment training environment

The convenient, safe, friendly and diversity environment with qualified instructors are very important and attractive.

When my kids first started, the training area was at local primary school hall, both parent and kids felt safe under familiar environment.

All New Zealand ITF Taekwon-Do instructors are qualified with updated police vetting check and hold current first aids certificate. We can easily find the club and instructors information on the iTKD (ITFNZ) website.

Friendly and professional instructing team, mixed with adults and teenagers, well balanced with both male and female instructors. Instructor team rotates after every grading, and they are not only focus on grading syllabus work, but also organize lots of fun training mixed with both physical and mental challenge for the kids.

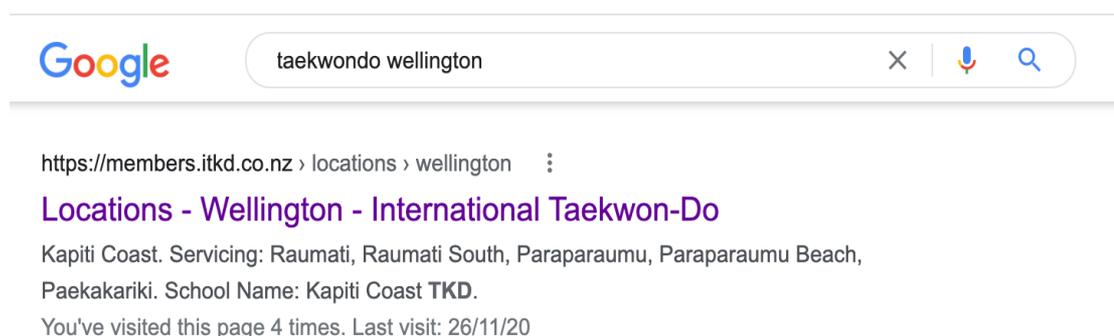
Also, some are family-oriented club, allow parents to sit inside and watch, and some parents can participate as well, even try and hold pads for their kids. The kids with special needs, the instructor is supportive and take rather slow but caring approach to encourage the kids participate as much as they want. My kids are enjoying their floor time. They are not only learning from the instructors, but also from the other senior color belts. So often we see a group of kids share their knowledge, also challenge each other.

As a parent, I like the small group training style, mixed TKD and fun activities, it is one of the best ways to teach the very young kid group. For my 6 years old boy, who was shy initially, a confident environment could help him to learn better. It will physically and mentally help him to move to the next level.

For bigger kids' group, like my 10 years old boy, good role model is super important, be able to train with seniors and adults are very beneficial to them. Training and learning with some seniors and black belts, some who are part of the NZ national team attended world championship and world cup, kids are amazed how they train. Showing their courtesy, discipline and self-control are so important to the kids.

2. Easy to find clubs and organization

Whenever I search on google, and type "taekwondo wellington" or "taekwondo nz", or "taekwondo tawa". The members.itkd.co.nz website always appear either as first search result or on the first page of the search result. (See recent search picture attached below.) Same as search on other social media like Facebook. It helps new members to find the club info easily.



All information is provided clearly from the instructor, or on the website or social media (like Facebook group or page).

- Initially everyone is welcome to try with instructor permission.
- Membership registration and renew process are easy and clear, done by club instructor.
- Membership login is also provided.
- Members can train at any clubs with instructor permission.
- Pre-grading and grading system are well setup both within the individual club and national level.
- Variety of Tournaments are available to suit different group of members. For instance, club level tournament, regional tournament, national tournament, also world championship and world cup. The clubs are also encouraging more members to compete in the tournament, it is a better way to improve and learn from others.
- Different courses, both online and practical. Seminars with different focus, for instance, Master seminar, pattern, sparring, breaking and specialty seminar etc.

As a parent, I think the national body, the iTKD (ITF Taekwon-Do) organization is well structured. Clubs are located across majority of the areas in the city, easy to be found, and training environment is safe, friendly, and fun for all age group, especially for kids. Instructors are qualified and caring their members. Great value with great quality.

Practitioner

First, a brief introduction here. I started training when I was 24 at Khandallah club back September 2004. I was an international student with very limited English, I was just looking for somewhere close to where I live and do some exercise and try to use any opportunity to communicate with locals, then I searched online, and Khandallah club info popped up first, it is close, and very fast reply from Master Patterson with the location, day, and time info, then I tried about 3 or 4 weeks. It was a very friendly environment, and small group of people training hard together, and catch up after training. I simply liked the style. Then I formally started my Taekwon-Do training journey.

What I have noticed as a practitioner, the very good thing of the training is suitable for everyone, even with limited English, but I can observe the instructor and seniors what they do, and copy, practice and ask questions. As an adult, I focus on purpose and application of movements with correct breathing. That is what I practice at the beginning, later the years, I found out they are all part of the theory of power.

I personally enjoy more physical, technical, and supportive training style, and some days a small group of people, hard training, I have more opportunity to try and being focused more by the instructor. All seniors always provide positive feedback and training tips to me. My English was not that good when I first started, I had difficulties to understand. But instructor and the club members were very patient and friendly. It made me want to train with them and go further.

Here are the ways of training at different stages during my training journey I would like to share.

- Beginner stage (White to Yellow belt): Observe, listen, follow, copy and repeat
At this stage, I observe from everyone in the Dojang.
- Intermedia stage (Green to Red belt): Observe, listen, follow, copy, repeat, question and feedback, practice

In my opinion, the key difference between repeat and practice is trying to understand the application (purpose) of the movements. As Intermedia stage, I often ask WHY?

- Advance (Black belt): Observe, listen, question and feedback, practice, research other source, train at different club or different environment, specific training, self-development

I personal believe black belt is a **KEY**, just provide me opportunity open to the Martial **Art** door. The applications, meanings, and history behind start to show. Just like a big puzzle, I start to get a little clear on a small part of this artwork, the longer I train, learn, and discuss, it will give me opportunity to build this art puzzle

in my own pace. Hopefully one day, I can have the opportunity to view most of the art.

During my training journey, goal setting at different stages is also very helpful.

ITF TaeKwon-Do is well structured people's arts, anyone, any age, any ability with any language and culture background all can learn. The training is physical. There are many aspects, like Pattern, Sparring (Step sparring and free sparring), Self-defense, Breaking, specialty/flexibility and Theory/history etc.

Everyone who are from different background with different ability come together to learn the art, all will have some sort of goals in their mind they would like to achieve.

Step 1: Re access yourself at different stages is key

When training, know yourself better in the following areas:

- Health condition
- Injury history
- Flexibility
- Commitment (specially work, family and time)

The reason of going through all those things in your mind will help yourself during your training and be able to achieve your goals without further injury. It can extend your training life.

Step 2: Setup your training goals, choose style that most suitable for your body at different stage.

There are a few common goals we can setup for ourselves.

Goal 1: Trainings for Grading

- We have physical training twice a week in the Dojang, sometimes more.
- We follow our grading syllabus for different age group and ranks, including mini kids, kids, adult color belt and black belt syllabus in writing format.
- We also learn from other resources, like the Encyclopaedia of Taekwon-Do or TKDdigitalLibrary
- Attend Technical seminars etc.

Goal 2: Trainings for Tournament

- We often have tournament focus trainings in the Dojang, generally before tournament. Often focus on tournament techniques
- The region provides regional training before tournament as well.
- iTKD also provide clear club level, regional, national, and international level tournament rules document online.
- Each region provides umpire seminar yearly by qualified international umpire. It is the best way to learn the tournament rules for members. Even open to non-members, for instance parents as well.

Goal 3: Training for self-development, like self-defense, weight loss, build confidence and social development

- We can learn Self-defense skills from the instructors. We have self-defense syllabus. Also, we can attend self-defense seminars which are run by the experts.
- During our weekly Dojang training, we often have fitness training.
- All members can visit or have extra trainings at different clubs around the region and country.
- The club often organize fun cross club training, like beach training, combine training or guest instructor training etc.

I am very grateful being a practitioner, I have benefited in so many different areas in my life in NZ. I have met so many new friends, English has been improving, my fitness level has changed, learnt many useful real-life skills, not only physical, but also mental. Most importantly, I have achieved something I have never thought I would be able to achieve when I first arrive NZ.

Instructor

I have been training and assisting at Khandallah club until 2019, with recommendation, I started my own club, become head instructor of Courage ITF Taekwon-Do club in Tawa since July 2019. It was tough at the beginning, then Covid lockdowns, but I always look at things from the positive sides, as new instructor I am always learning from other instructors and adapt the new things quickly, hard work with a bit luck, the club become better and better.

As 87% of my members are kids age under 14. In the following section, I am going to focus on kids instructing.

The reasons that their parents or themselves would like to learn our art are: Improve their fitness, learning Self-defense skills, anti-bullying, build up resilient, self-control (control the fear, control the nervous and stress), build internal power (self-confidence), respect and care each other, challenge to get out of comfort zone, meet new friends

Strategy of instructing for kids' group as new club instructor

For Kids group, first, understand what kids like and what kids need

1. Kids need discipline, order, and structure

Initially kids form up can be a very challenge job, because they do not know the form up roles, where they should stand, and kids asking why she/he stand in front of me, why four across etc. My practical strategy: as soon as I put tape mark on the ground, kids easily followed every time. Not only for the existing members, but also easy for the new members to join. Another good thing is to explain our ranking system when

form up. Help Kids respect all members, and willing to help those who are new to the Dojang.

During the partner work, teaching kids how to hold pads properly also shows courtesy and support to each other. Respects are two ways.

How to respect instructors, seniors, and others inside and outside Dojang are key things for them to learn as well. Small things, like tidy up all gears after trainings, sweeping Dojang before training, shake hands with saying thank you after partner works etc. Wash and look after their Dobok and training gears themselves are equally important for kids to learn outside the Dojang.

2. Kids need demonstration

All kids love to see seniors to demonstrate the cool technique, it is one of the best ways for them to learn. And Kids like to be instructed by other kids with higher rank, for instance senior color belts or junior black belts. The reasons are:

- They are similar age, and less pressure, feel more relax when they are learning.
- They share common interest, and they can talk easily in their own kids' language.
- Also, it has inspiring effects. Sometimes have senior members to demonstrate the techniques are essential, kids will feel it is cool and impressive, which makes them all eager to try.

3. Kids need role model

Role model from the club could be instructors, black belts, or other senior members. Kids also need role model from home as well. That is why parents and old siblings are so important. When family members train together, not only they can help each other to learn new skills, but also build up a good relationship. Parents should not feel embarrassed training with kids together. Honestly, from little kids' point of view, it will make them want to train and build up healthy relationship.

4. Kids like challenge

All kids love to be challenged. A little bit challenge is good for the kids, challenge need to be positive and healthy. Challenge can happen at anywhere anytime, it could be during training, grading and tournaments etc. It can come from their instructors, their parents, their training partners, themselves, or their competitor during tournament. The key is to teach them how to handle the challenge in the correct way. Three essentials are etiquette, self-control, and indomitable spirits.

5. Kids need build up confidence and resilience

Generally, there are a few moments that kids give up quickly.

- When kids are lack of confidence of trying new things
- When kids are injured during training or tournament
- When kids are nervous into a new environment/group

-- When kids do not pass their pre-grading or do not get good result in the tournament

As instructor, I try to be on the side of the kids when things happen, and talk to them directly, explaining why this could happen, and encourage them, tell, or show them what can be done better next time. Then give them time to think through, or even redirect them into something else that they are good at, encourage them, then come back the point later.

6. Kids need to learn self-defense skills

It is important to raise their self-awareness in different environment. Teach them simple but effective skills on how to deal with the things happened outside Dojang. At the same time, teach them how to use correct ways/tools to defend themselves at different circumstance. These are in line with our traffic light system and A, B response in our self-defense syllabus. During self-defense training, I often provide different scenarios, to discuss with kids what they need to consider, and how to response in different scenarios. Then practice with partner or in a small group.

Practical ways of instructing for different age group

1. Mini kids instructing – Fun, demonstrate and Try are the key

It is better to instruct in a small group. Lessons learnt from me at the beginning, I started with large numbers of small kids age between 4 to 7, the instructor and mini kids' ratio was 1: 15. It was very difficult to conduct the physical class without assistance at the beginning.

There is a fundamental behavior difference between preschooler (4, 5 years old) and Scholler (6, 7 years old), Those two age groups need to be separated or split in correct ratio for instructing. But there are things in common.

- They get tired quickly, especially around our normal training time (after 5pm)
- They can get distracted quickly as well.
- They cannot stand and concentrate very long

These age groups of kids tend to have two types.

- One type is over confidence (They often say, "This is easy, I can do it, please give me some hard tasks", but when they cannot properly do it, they will give up quickly as well). – These types of kids love challenge but need to provide boundary for them. And complement the areas they are good at, but most importantly to point out the areas they are not good at and show them how to find a way or solutions to improve.
- Another type is very quiet, and a bit afraid of trying new things, lack of confidence (they often shake their head, and would like to watch first, and sit down with adults (often mum and dad) to get support. -- These types of kids need more attention, and take slow process, I often ask them to feel free to join whenever they want to, and can sit down and watch when they are not

comfortable, during the time, I encourage them to try either with their mum and dad or older siblings.

Here are my strategies:

- Split the class into small group, instructor and kids' ratio became 1:6
- Clear and simple instruction is the key for this age group
- Interesting activities are also essential. Try functional exercises with games sometimes that suitable for them, and can improve their balance, concentration and speed are good.
- Choose better training time for the little one, to make suitable for the kids and young family. It is much earlier than other classes. Because I observe some mini kids are very tired after school, and they tend to go to bed very early. I put my mini kids' class as first class, around 5:15, suitable for the parents to drop them off.
- Get their parents and old siblings to join as well
- Organizing in club mini tournaments or challenges.
- Training with seniors sometimes, let them observe, and find role model in the club.

2. Junior color belt instructing (age from 8 to 14 years old) – Demonstrate, try, practice repeatedly, and explain why, the history and application behind it.

For this age group, most of them like the outlook and martial arts training, it is cool to be able to wear different color belts. They are very impressed and interested in cool techniques, for instance, kicks, jumping and breakings etc. Lots of them have Influence from the Kungfu or heroes' movies etc. They would like to enter tournament, compete, and get medals. At the same time, their parents would like to improve their confidence or learn discipline or find a good model in their life.

Common behaviors of these age group: Understanding and listening are good, following instruction clearly, prefer small group or partner works. Willing to learn new things, and challenge exercises and cool skills/kicks. Ask lots of questions. And like to challenge instructor and seniors.

My training strategies are:

- Small group discussion and Partner work, sometimes I provide opportunity for senior belts to assist.
- Build healthy competition in club, for instance, setup mini competition and tournament during training, and encourage them to enter bigger tournaments and seminars later.
- Always to show, tell, and explain why, it is important for this age group not only watch and try, but also explain the reason behind and purpose of each movements

At last, keep good communication with parents and guardians are also very important.

There are a few common challenges that I have encounter in the last couple of years of instructing. Here are the solutions as follow:

1. New and some existing kids Members do not know how to login, and find their info, and do their online course etc. – To solve this problem, I have created a simple road map for my members to follow (**See appendix1 – Roadmap of membership login**), also I have invited them online, then I share my screen and show them how to do.
2. New Members make lots of mistakes when first time entering tournament. My solution is I invite parents to the training, and I show them how to do on my computer after training.
3. New members and parents are not clear about the tournament rules. I run mini tournaments in the Dojang during training, and invited parents to participate at the same time.
4. When the physical training cannot be run due to lock down or unavailable hall, then Zoom training become option. Also, I provide related online resources, like kids TKD home sheets, pattern, and step sparring videos etc. for members to practice themselves. I even created my own videos to kids' members to learn.

Conclusion

I would like to say Taekwon-Do has been part of my life since I first arrived NZ, and it will be, but I do not know for how long, maybe to one day that my body does not allow me to. I am sure it will be a great thing that I can share with the future generation.

As parent, I see my kids enjoy their weekly trainings and club environment since the very beginning, it is a place that they make friends and share their interests. The instructors, trainings, the skills and environment have huge positive influence on their childhood life. I am sure they will not regret if they continue their trainings.

However, I will not forget I am also a TaeKwon-Do practitioner myself. I have never stopped learning, at different stage of my life with my own pace. “三人行，必有我师焉” is one of the most famous sentences from the Analects of Confucius. Simply means “If you walk with any other two people in this world, at least one of them can be your teacher.” When you believe and practice this, you have a virtue of humility, are eager to learn anything good from the others. Because I believe everyone in this world is unique, with some special qualities, talents, abilities, knowledge, skills, experiences, etc. If you want to learn, you always get improved to some extent. I am always keeping this in my mind.

I am still enthusiastic being an instructor after two years instructing. I will keep my enthusiasm going. Of course, keep learning, maintaining the good traditions of our art, at the same time trying new things, and share and pass my knowledge and enthusiasm to the next generation will become my goal for going forward.

Appendix1 – Roadmap of membership login

1

International Taekwon-Do

Sponsors Advertise Merchandise Contact Us Helpline
About Locations Join Events HP TKD Talk News Reference

Members! Keep up your training while in lock-down... join one of our club's Zoom sessions! [CLICK HERE](#) to see what's on.

Members Join Our Facebook Group >

Upcoming Events News

Click here for National Gup Gradings

Sunday, August 29
[POSTPONED] Special Techniques and Power Breaking
10:00am [POSTONED] Sparring Syllabus Seminar - I
Saturday, September 4
Special Techniques and Power Breaking Seminar - Chris

2

Members Sign-In

This section lets you view your membership information and check your current qualifications. You can also download files and subscribe to our new email newsletter.

Black belts can take part in the black belt forum and Instructors have access to the on-line database, Instructors' Talk Newsletters and more.

If you don't have a password yet (or have forgotten it) - click [here](#).

If a new member and having trouble with signing in, try copying and pasting each field from your welcome email (avoid copying any spaces before or after).

Members	Sign-In	Instructors
Surname: <input type="text" value="Ren"/>	<input type="text" value="Login"/>	
Membership Number: <input type="text" value="*****"/>		
Password: <input type="password" value="*****"/>		Password: <input type="password"/>
	<input type="button" value="Login"/>	

Members please enter your surname EXACTLY as you have been registered in the database. If you don't know your membership number, please ask your instructor. If you have not obtained a password yet - [click here](#).

Instructors & Examiners or anyone with an existing traditional database login, can optionally use that login and password in the relevant 3-belled boxes (no membership).

Don't know your membership number, ask your instructor

First timer, click this to get your password, it will lead you to another page, and make sure your email address must exactly match the email when you register. (ask your instructor if not sure)

3

My Information – Thomas

All your membership detail is on this page.

Here is some of the information about your membership with International Taekwon-Do. Please [email the database Manager](#) if you have any corrections, updates or additions to this information.

My Details

Formal firstname: Thomas
Preferred firstname:
Club:
Rank:
Address:
Phone:
Work Phone:
Mobile:
Email:
Date of Birth:

ITF Database#

Email Newsletter Registration

You are currently subscribed to our free email newsletter.
Email: rwncse@hotmail.com
Click here to UNSUBSCRIBE

NEW: ITKD Digital Library >

Members Only Section

- Members Only Section >
- eTalk Newsletters >

Tournament Entry Forms [click here](#)

Online Courses [Click here](#)

4

Members Only Section

This section is restricted to members only.

[TKD Zoom Sessions you are invited to during lockdown >](#)

[Order handbooks and other merchandise >](#)

Governance

Strategic Plan 2021

- Strategic Plan Cover Letter
- International Taekwon-Do Developing a Strategic Plan
- International Taekwon-Do Strategic Plan
- International Taekwon-Do Vision Statement

Annual Reports >

AGM Meeting Minutes >

Road Updates >

Technical

Gup Technique Handbook 2017