



# SAFE TAEKWONDO GUIDE

Think Safe. Play Safe. Stay Safe.

**Sport**  
SINGAPORE

LIVE BETTER THROUGH SPORTS

## A Sports Safe Singapore

Sport Singapore (SportSG) recognises that safety must be a fundamental component of our sporting culture and a prerequisite for every healthy lifestyle. Therefore, SportSG has set a corporate goal of zero injuries, in belief that all accidents are preventable. Emphasising the need for personal accountability, SportSG also urges people to be responsible for the safety of others.

It is tasked to promote safety throughout Singapore's sporting community and to inculcate a safety-first mentality in the minds of every stakeholder.

For more information, please visit [sportsingapore.gov.sg/sports-education/sports-safety](https://sportsingapore.gov.sg/sports-education/sports-safety)

## Acknowledgement

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Another initiative by the Safety Management Division, ActiveSG

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## INTRODUCTION

Taekwondo, an Olympic sport, is one of the most systemic and scientific martial arts. It is **more than a sport** or an art of self-defense.

The primary aim of taekwondo is to build character, improve self-esteem and nurture life skills while developing the physical fitness and capability of the participants.

Hence, taekwondo is not just an enjoyable martial art and sport, a form of fun exercise or an effective self-defense but also an invaluable and power tool for the development of better persons and citizens.



## MAJOR DISCIPLINES OF TAEKWONDO

The major disciplines of taekwondo are 'poomsae' (artistic performance of the various sets of blocking, punching, striking and kicking movements); 'kyorugi' (sparring between two athletes with the primary objective of scoring points); 'kyukpa' (art of breaking boards, bricks and tiles); 'hoosinsool' (self-defence) and taekwondo aerobics (aerobic dancing using taekwondo techniques).



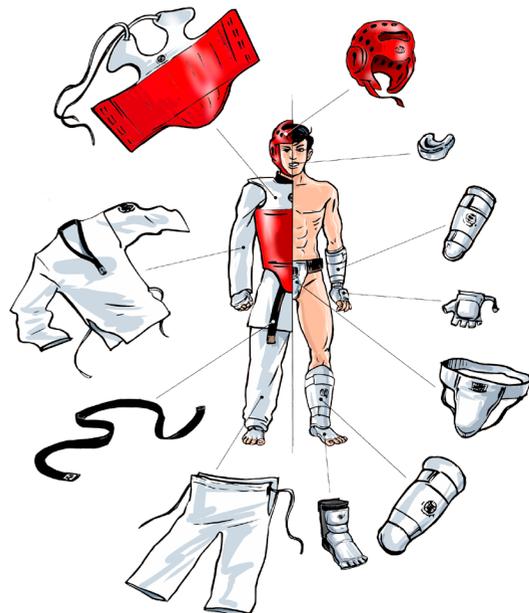
## SAFETY FOR TAEKWONDO

We recognise that, as with any sport, there is always the risk of accidental injury. Health insurers in France and elsewhere have placed taekwondo under the "mild risk" sport even for competitions at Olympic level. And the results of a recent study by Dr Paul Viscogliosi, Chairman of the World Taekwondo Federation Medical Committee, support the classification of the health insurance providers. What's more, the statistics reveal that the low injury rate has declined further over the last few years. This can be attributed to the new rules and requirements introduced by the WTF after the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Taekwondo sparring, which looks dangerous, is indeed a safe sport simply because the object of the game is to score points and not to hurt one another. If contact is required, participants have to wear protective equipment which covers the head, mouth, body, groin, arms, hands, shins and insteps.

In Singapore, participants below the age of 12 are strictly prohibited from delivering head shots in competition. What's more, sparring, non-contact and light-contact, is introduced as a requirement for promotion to higher grades only after the participants have acquired the fundamental skills – that is, after a year's training.

For training and practice of the various disciplines of taekwondo, there are safety guidelines to observe.



## SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR COACHES

For participants to have a safe training environment for the learning and enjoyment of taekwondo, the coach shall

- Create and maintain a health and safety policy with risk assessments and emergency plans
- Plan the training appropriate for the age, ability and state of development of trainees
- Require all participants and their parents or guardians, to sign an indemnity form
- Have valid first aid and CPR/AED training certifications
- Have a first-aid kit fully stocked with an adequate supply of the correct medical equipment and supplies
- Be prepared to summon professional medical help by having an emergency action plan
- Check the training area to make sure it is safe by removing hazards – for example, obstacles, obstructions or any kind of debris (like bits of sharp wood, stones, rocks, dried leaves and loose tiles) lying around, potholes, undulations, gaps between mats and wet patches
- Ensure that there is sufficient space for players to spar and perform drills
- Ensure that changing room is clean and dry
- Be aware of any medical conditions or physical limitation of each participant
- Ability to adapt moves for those with injuries or disabilities
- Ensure that the trainees are fit, physically and mentally, for training
- Ensure that trainees maintain the highest standard of personal hygiene including keeping fingernails short and grooming hair neatly
- Forbid the use of objects such as eyeglasses (during sparring), rings, necklaces, watches, bracelets and earrings
- Imbue in the participants the discipline of taekwondo and the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play
- Conduct proper warm-up and cool-down
- Provide hydration breaks in training regime
- Allow adequate rest in between vigorous exercises based on the physical capacity of the trainees
- Remind participants who are fatigue to take a longer break or stop training, if required for their well-being
- Increase work intensity gradually



## COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

- Introduce skills and exercises progressively
- Avoid exercises and techniques that are harmful and outdated
- Demonstrating techniques in a sequential manner where students learn at their own pace using proper stretching routines, matted flooring and protective safety equipment
- Use correct-fitting and approved protective gear for sparring
- Ensure that participants use training equipment correctly and safely
- Check training equipment to ensure that it is well-maintained and safe for use
- Ensure that participants know the rules
- Match participants according to size, physical maturity, skill level and experience
- Allow sparring or the performing of difficult techniques only under proper supervision
- Warn participants of inherent risks of difficult moves
- Forbid strictly horseplay and unruly behavior
- Disallow violence and dangerous techniques
- Ensure that participants take care of minor injuries immediately so that they do not become major ones
- Keep records of injuries that occur during training
- Stress the importance of observing safety practices when they are engaged in their own training



Every coach has a duty of care to safeguard the student's welfare, making sure the activities conducted at clubs, events competition, trips, or anywhere else that taekwondo takes place. We believe that everyone has the right to protection from abuse. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately by the Singapore Taekwondo Federation. All coaches should demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote your students' welfare. With this in mind, we expect all coaches to follow the following guidelines when working with children:

- Should have an ongoing commitment to their own training and work with others (i.e. referees, medical team, parents) to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all players in order that they can develop the sport
- Always work in an open environment (e.g avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication)
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance. (e.g it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Always put your student welfare first. This is far more important than winning or achieving goals
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust that empowers them to share in the decision-making process
- Make taekwondo fun, enjoyable and promote fair play
- Promote good behaviour within the rules of Taekwondo
- Keep up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport
- Strive to be a positive role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol while 'on duty'
- Give constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of our players - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given



## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS

The primary responsibility of participants is to get a qualified coach. Participants may contact the Singapore Taekwondo Federation for qualified coaches.

Without the co-operation and support of the participants, it will be difficult, to maintain a safe training environment for the sport.

The participants must be honest by, for example, informing their coach that they have a pre-existing medical condition or are not fit, physically or mentally or both, for training for the day or they require to take a break because they cannot handle the training rigor or the techniques to be performed are beyond their capability.

They must observe the safe practices of the sport. For example, avoid horseplay during training, stay hydrated, ensure that objects that may cause injury are removed, wear the required protective equipment whenever necessary, learn the skills progressively and pay attention to the correct and proper way of technique execution.

They also have the responsibility of keeping themselves healthy by giving themselves sufficient rest and recovery period including quality sleep. They have to also watch their diet and avoid taking drugs or smoking and having contact with potential source of infection.



## PARTICIPANTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

- Observe the rules of Taekwondo at all times
- Accept and observe the authority and decisions of referees, organisers and all other Taekwondo disciplinary bodies
- Ensure that Taekwondo is always conducted in a disciplined and sporting manner
- Co-operate in ensuring that the spirit of the rules of Taekwondo are upheld
- Shall not abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, organiser or other official, on or off the mat
- Shall not do anything which adversely affects the sport of Taekwondo, the Singapore Taekwondo Federation, or any commercial partner of the sport



# CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT

Conducting a risk assessment allows to identify the hazards present and to think of mitigating measures to reduce the risk. People have a right to be protected from harm which could be prevented.

A risk assessment enables the coach to:

- Identify the hazards
- Determine associated risks
- Prepare risk control action plan
- Determine who is responsible to implement the mitigating measures
- Review adequacy of action plan

In order to create a safe environment, the coach is advised to carry out a risk assessment plan. A risk assessment is a process of evaluating the probability and consequences of injury or illness arising from exposure to an identified hazard and determining the appropriate measures for risk control to prevent harm or injury. A sample of a risk assessment form is found below.

Activity Description:			Risk Assessment Ownership:			Initials and Org Stamp:			Issue		Issue Date:		Initials	
			Activity OIC:						Approved by:		(DD/MM/YYYY)			
			Organisation:						1					
Location:			Risk Assessment Team Members						Issue		Issue Date:		Initials	
			RA Leader:						Vetted by:		(DD/MM/YYYY)			
			RA Members:						1					
Group Description:			RA Members:						Date of next review:					
			RA Members:											
			RA Members:											
Type of Activity														
Hard Identification			Inherent Risk						Control measures and residual risks					
Step	Description of Activity	Possible Hazard	Potential Injury (Effect)	Severity	Cause of Effect	Existing Control Measures	Likelihood	Risk	Additional Control Measures	Action Owner	Severity	Likelihood	Residual Risk	

Level	Severity	Description
5	Catastrophic	Fatality, fatal disease or multiple major injuries.
4	Major	Serious injuries or life-threatening occupational disease (includes amputations, major fractures, multiple injuries, occupational cancer, acute poisoning).
3	Moderate	Injury requiring medical treatment or ill-health leading to disability (includes lacerations, burns, sprains, minor fractures, dermatitis, deafness, work-related upper limb disorders).
2	Minor	Injury or ill-health requiring first-aid only (includes minor cuts and bruises, irritation, ill-health with temporary discomfort).
1	Negligible	Not likely to cause injury or ill-health.

Level	Likelihood	Description
1	Rare	Not expected to occur but still possible.
2	Remote	Not likely to occur under normal circumstances
3	Occasional	Possible or known to occur.
4	Frequent	Common occurrence.
5	Almost Certain	Continual or repeating experience.

Severity \ Likelihood	Rare (1)	Remote (2)	Occasional (3)	Frequent (4)	Almost Certain (5)
Catastrophic (5)	5	10	15	20	25
Major (4)	4	8	12	16	20
Moderate (3)	3	6	9	12	15
Minor (2)	2	4	6	8	10
Negligible (1)	1	2	3	4	5

# RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The following is a suggested process intended as a guide to undertaking a risk assessment:

- Make an inventory of club activities and tasks
- Identify the hazards for each of these activities
- Evaluate the risk level of their severity from insignificant to catastrophic and likelihood from rare to definitely
- Once severity and likelihood have been established, the risk level is determined using the 5 x 5 matrix (refer to the table below)
- Decide whether or not the risk is acceptable and prioritise the significant hazards
- Select a method of control to eliminate or reduce the risk level
- Record the findings
- Review periodically

It is good practice to review your assessment to make sure that the precautions are still working effectively.

## Where can participants obtain more information on safe practices for taekwondo?

For clarifications and more information on sports safety in taekwondo, email Singapore Taekwondo Federation at [stkdf@mail.com](mailto:stkdf@mail.com).

Risk Priority Number - Scoring Guide	
Use this guide for consistent scoring of Severity and Occurrence throughout the risk assessment. It is recommended that a copy be printed for easy reference.	

Risk Matrix						
		Occurrence				
		1	2	3	4	5
Severity	1	1	2	3	4	5
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	5	5	10	15	20	25

Severity Scoring			
Score	Impact	Description	Guidelines
1	Negligible	Not likely to cause injury	No injury
2	Minor	Minor injury which does not require medical treatment	Minor irritation, superficial cuts, bruises, muscle cramps
3	Moderate	Injury requiring medical treatment	Sprains, fractures, deep cuts, lacerations, heat exhaustion
4	Major	Serious or potentially fatal injuries	Severe allergic reaction, shock, heat stroke
5	Catastrophic	Fatal injuries	Death, drowning, electrocution

Occurrence Scoring			
Score	Likelihood	Description	Guidelines
1	Rare	Remote possibility	Single occurrence per event or less than once per year
2	Remote	Not expected under normal circumstances	Under 3 occurrences per event or once every 6 months
3	Occasional	Few occurrences expected	Under 5 occurrences per event or once every 3 months
4	Frequent	Occurrence anticipated	Under 10 occurrences per event or once every month
5	Almost Certain	Occurrence is inevitable	Exceeding 10 occurrences per event or once per month

Overall Risk Rating		
Score	Risk	Action Required
1 - 4	Low	Introduction of control measures not required (optional).
6 - 12	Moderate	Where possible, introduce control measures to mitigate risk.
15 - 25	High	Avoid activity. Control measures mandatory to mitigate risk.

Note: Where impact is rated 4 and above, mitigate measures are also required.



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