

# About Testing – Wing Tsun Grading Structure

Successful testing (grading) during Wing Tsun seminars requires the knowledge of most\* (\*read page 3) of the practical and theoretical program contents, as well as an exemplary attendance record for group classes and (optional) private lessons. When in doubt, use the time in group or private classes prior to the seminar, to ask questions. With the following lines, I want to share a few thoughts on the topic.

Progress throughout the Wing Tsun programs is of course not a steady curve up. Many factors influence us, as the intensity of our own training (at home), working out with others outside of regular group classes, or taking private lessons. In addition, our daily form varies depending on sleep pattern, stress and diet. We experience over time highs and lows of our performance, even every now and then a seemingly discouraging plateau. This is normal. Nobody can give 100% all the time and continuously improve.

Some students do not seem to show a great improvement throughout 2, 3 or even 4 levels and then at one point "suddenly" jumpstart.

Also, consider the different lifestyles people come from, motivations and a variety of goals as to why one attends Wing Tsun classes. Goals as well as our current performance are often greatly impacted by daily positive as well as negative events.

The Wing Tsun programs are only building blocks, pieces of the big puzzle, of the martial ART. At which point in time one begins to see/feel the structure of Wing Tsun, or when the CoreConcepts\* (\*see graphic on page 6) come to life in one's performance, differs very much from person to person.

This is the imperative part; the instructor has to keep an eye on the overall development of a student. Yet as I have experienced myself and as many of my instructors have taught me, as a teacher you are a guide only, the student her/himself has to get involved and train hard. As mentioned in another article and blog entry; this is when the 3 P's come into the game: Patience, Persistence, and Perseverance.

I often compare the 12 student levels of Wing Tsun to a puzzle. Some begin to see and understand the puzzle with four pieces; others may need all 12 pieces of the puzzle. I will never forget the time when I received my first Technician Grade (instructor) certificate from my Sifu Keith R. Kernspecht. Over a 100 students stood up applauding, a great moment, yet he whispered in my ear: "Now you are ready to start learning WingTsun!" See the two photos on page 3.

Each program level contains a certain number of techniques, drills, footwork, form components, Chi-Sau etc. I continuously check during group and private classes if the important parts of a program are present, meaning if the student knows what the program is about, understands it, and can perform it under regular conditions.

I also believe in keeping a group of students together, who usually work with each other, to advance as a team to the next program level.

We have to feel comfortable to achieve progress in the long run. A promotion can also be a motivational event that jumpstarts a person's ability to bring the training to the next level. However, I need to see the student at least several times in a group class scenario, and check the performance under various levels of stress exposure.

In order to be eligible for testing, the required attendance will be measured in group classes as well as (optional) private lessons taken during previous months; and the attendance record of past seminars.

One can test for student grade (SG) 1 if group classes have been visited for at least 2 to 3 months.

One can test for SG 1 AND 2 simultaneously, if group class and/or private lesson attendance is steady for at least 4 to 6 months.

The same is valid for possibly testing SG 2 AND 3 or SG 3 AND 4. Do NOT hesitate to ask if you qualify for testing SG 1+2, 2+3 or 3+4.

Beginning with SG 5 only one test per seminar is possible.




- 1) grading seminar 1987, Germany
- 2) grading seminar 1993, Denmark
- 3) grading seminar 1999, Canada

There will be at times exceptions based on the intensity of attending group and private classes. Extreme example? I once had a student, who took 30 private lessons in one week, 6 lessons a day, 5 days a week. And this continued over the course of several weeks.

As with any other kind of test or exam, results vary and can range from 'very good' or even 'with honours' to just 'satisfying'. It is up to your performance and preparation.

The certificate will also display three versions: 'passed', 'passed with waiting period', 'not passed: re-test on...yy/mm/dd' A second test (for a previous attempt) will not require an additional testing fee.

 We hold annually two to three seminars, offering optional testing. The required and necessary training time between two tests is approximately three months. This enables everyone to resume rank advancement on a continuous basis.

**Why at all grading?** Yes, there are many schools, gyms out there offering: no contract, no grading, and no commitment. While this may work for some, it is part of today's superficial "I want it now" attitude. If you want real results, if you want to achieve skill and attain knowledge, accountability is a part of it.

What I have also seen over the years, martial arts schools offering: "Get your black belt within one year. Guaranteed!" One of our students received recently the invitation to his black belt party at another school, even though he didn't attend classes for the past two years. How could you ever value such an "accomplishment"?

During a Wing Tsun grading test, the student is put under increasing levels of pressure. He/she is at times being attacked in a very controlled manner, which eliminates injuries, yet produces very real stress and all the emotions that come with it. Grading through testing your abilities is one of the many milestones. Regular attendance of classes followed by a challenging yet successful grading seminar let you triumph over any tough training sessions you experienced, let any plateau turn into an obstacle that you mastered along the way. The learning of the martial ART of Wing Tsun turns into a road of discovery.

**Why at all advancing?** "I just want to learn how to defend myself." That's what I often hear. While this seems like a reasonable statement in the beginning, let us look at a few other areas of life. When are we fit enough, after one year of going to the gym or does it take two? What happens to your fitness level once you stop going to the gym? When do we live healthy enough, eating well four days a week or six? When is it time to get back to fast food? Will we still be healthy?

Training martial arts too, can be a continuous companion to stay healthy, active, and alert. When are we confident enough? How many opponents do we need to knock out, to be a good martial artist? Luckily, just like staying fit, eating healthy and getting enough sleep, the training of martial arts is a never-ending endeavour.

**Why did the other student pass his test?** Remember, how I started on the first page with the following words: "Successful testing (grading) during Wing Tsun seminars requires the knowledge of most of the practical and theoretical program contents."

What does "most" mean? Having trained very hard for extended periods of time, I encountered often during seminars less prepared participants, who eventually passed their test as well, yet performed worse and knew less. I then complained to my instructor about this seemingly unfair experience, how this could happen, I trained sooo much harder, performed better, and now this guy has the same level??

Later I experienced the same while grading my students. So what could be behind all that? Let's look at some possibilities.

1. The student gives everything he can, which might not be as much as you are able to give.
2. The student needs to pass this test to regain his motivation.
3. The student simply has a bad day and usually performs much better.

As I stated earlier, the training of a martial ART as Wing Tsun is a long-term project. Even if it might sound harsh, but when a student leaves the school at student level 10, it doesn't matter if he missed a few techniques or versions of a drill in student level 4. If he continues, he will have the complete programs if not at level 10, then at student level 12 or a bit later as 1<sup>st</sup> Technician Grade.

Wing Tsun is a martial ART.

Wing Tsun is a way of life.



### Grading structure

SG 1-5	basic levels
SG 6-9	intermediate levels (SG 8 is the entry level as assistant trainer)
SG 10-12	advanced levels
TG 1-4	instructor levels (the 'black belts' of Wing Tsun)

### Grading costs (valid 2006 through 2009)

SG 1-5	\$ 20 per level
SG 6-12	\$ 40 per level
TG 1-4	\$100 per level

### Trainer & Instructor information

Interestingly enough, out of Germany (WT) Wing Tsun Kung Fu has been organized in the world's largest professional Kung Fu organization as well as many other independent WT organizations and schools. For the past 25 years, well structured trainer courses are in place, focusing on learning how to teach. These courses include a variety of topics.

The feedback of hundreds if not thousands of instructors has formed a professional curriculum, which has been tested and improved under a variety of circumstances in schools around the world. All members of our trainer team go through a lengthy process of additional seminars and special courses, as well as licensed instructor programs.

Sign-up has always been limited and is only possible by invitation!



**Remember the story in the fifth paragraph on the first page? This here was the moment!**

# Grading Structure – Program Contents

Most student grades contain elements of form training, a Lat-Sau program, various degrees of Chi-Sau training and additional exercises plus required theory knowledge. A test can therefore contain up to five different fields of knowledge and skill.

The following program structure is only a, as we call it, "skeleton structure". Learning ability, focus, goals, talent and the level of participation does determine the volume of additional program contents. One can, for example, work on the first section of Chi-Sau for many years and still improve and eventually reach a higher skill level than someone who "races" through all of the seven Chi-Sau sections.

You set your own goals depending on your motivation, which can range all the way from practicing Wing Tsun Kung Fu just as a hobby to planning a possible part time career as future Wing Tsun Kung Fu instructor.

I know that some Wing Tsun schools use checklists, displaying how many moves/drills/techniques one has to know and perform for which level. It's also easier for the instructor. Student: "What do I need to know for my test?", Instructor: "Read your checklist!" I don't like the cookie cutter procedure.

Due to training and teaching martial arts for over 30 years, having worked with many teachers (also outside of Wing Tsun), I prefer to view the complete performance of a student.

Example Pak-Sau/Punch scenario: I look at how power is being developed, if the power can actually be delivered, what happens to the balance, how is the timing, is the hand & footwork coordination improving, how is the general mobility, fluidity of movements, do the positions survive stress, transform from single techniques into a flow of applications, is the (WT) centerline protected??? Check on page 6 the WingTsun-CoreConcepts™. It's not 'new' Wing Tsun, it is simply a learning and teaching method I have developed over the years, based on experience.

## Student Grade (SG) 1-5 Basic Levels

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| SG 1 | Siu-Nim-Tau part 1, 2, 3<br>Lat-Sau program 1 (Pak-Sau/Punch, inside/outside punches, kicks)<br>Forward step  |
| SG 2 | Siu-Nim-Tau complete (part 1-8)<br>Lat-Sau program 2 (balance, kicks)<br>Advancing step   |
| SG 3 | Siu-Nim-Tau complete, relaxed<br>Lat-Sau program 3 (back fists, round and straight kicks in no particular order)<br>Dan-Chi-Sau (single arm Chi-Sau)<br>Advancing step with chain-punching<br>Tan-Dar, Gum-Dar, Pak-Dar, Gan-Dar  |
| SG 4 | Siu-Nim-Tau (beginning the WT ChiKung version)<br>Cham-Kiu complete<br>Lat-Sau program 4 (round, swinging punches, any kick)<br>Dan-Chi-Sau with forward step and turning stance<br>Turning stance 45, 90 and 180 degrees<br>Tan-Dar, Gum-Dar, Pak-Dar, Gan-Dar with 45 degree turning stance<br>Tan-Dar, Gum-Dar, Pak-Dar, Gan-Dar with advancing step |
| SG 5 | Siu-Nim-Tau (variations)<br>Cham-Kiu complete, relaxed<br>Lat-Sau program 5 (close range, elbows and knees, choking, take downs)<br>Poon-Sau (simple attacks)   |

## Student Grade (SG) 6-9 Intermediate Levels

SG 6	Siu-Nim-Tau Cham-Kiu Lat-Sau program 6 Chi-Sau section 1 (first third) Applications Siu-Nim-Tau
SG 7	Siu-Nim-Tau Cham-Kiu Lat-Sau program 7 Chi-Sau section 1 (second third) Applications Cham-Kiu
SG 8	Siu-Nim-Tau Cham-Kiu Lat-Sau program 8 Chi-Sau section 1 (complete)
SG 9	Siu-Nim-Tau Cham-Kiu Lat-Sau program 9 (combination Lat-Sau 1-8), (stress and anger management) Chi-Sau section 1 relaxed (balance, Kao-Sau & Jum-Sau responses)

## Student Grade (SG) 10-12 Advanced levels

SG 10	Siu-Nim-Tau, ChiKung Siu-Nim-Tau, Cham-Kiu Lat-Sau program 10 (strategy and tactics against multiple opponents) Chi-Sau section 1 (increased balance, speed, power) Punching power Palm strikes
SG 11	Siu-Nim-Tau, ChiKung Siu-Nim-Tau, Cham-Kiu Lat-Sau program 11 (multiple opponents using round kicks and punches, including weaponless against stick and knife) (problems of stick against stick, knife against knife, knife against stick, stick against knife)
SG 12	Siu-Nim-Tau, ChiKung Siu-Nim-Tau, Cham-Kiu Lat-Sau program 12 (controlling techniques against various attacks)



# Technician Grade (TG) 1-4      Instructor Levels

TG 1	Siu-Nim-Tau, Cham-Kiu (explanation, details) Chi-Sau sections 2, 3 & 4 Applications of Chi-Sau sections
TG 2	Siu-Nim-Tau, Cham-Kiu (explanation, details, ability to teach forms) Biu-Tze complete Chi-Sau sections 5, 6 & 7 Applications of Chi-Sau sections Striking power, balance, hand & foot coordination
TG 3	Siu-Nim-Tau, Cham-Kiu, Biu-Tze Biu-Tze Chi-Sau sections 1-5 Applications of Biu-Tze Chi-Sau sections Muk-Yan-Chong (Wooden Dummy Form) part 1 & 2
TG 4	Siu-Nim-Tau, Cham-Kiu, Biu-Tze Muk-Yan-Chong (Wooden Dummy Form) complete

WingTsun-CoreConcepts™ a blueprint for learning and teaching Wing Tsun Kung Fu

