

## SPARRING GROUND RULES

1. Assume a correct, comfortable, relaxed and suitable stance
2. Keep center of gravity low without losing balance
3. Face opponent slightly sideways with one hand up to protect the face, the other hand low to protect the midsection or groin. (Arms extended with palms facing upward and towards the body).
4. Keep body completely relaxed and flexible at all times, except, and only, when completing the execution of your intended technique.
5. Body muscles are relaxed when starting an attack and tense just before completing the attack. A quick start and a strong focus are essential for any of the Karate techniques.
6. When thrusting, have good balance, twist the hips and have a straight back leg at impact. Grip floor with toes for traction.
7. Never punch or thrust beyond a set target
8. Never lower the head or blink the eyes
9. Bending and twisting of the waist is necessary to utilize reactionary power when thrusting and kicking.
10. Do not wear yourself out by aimless pacing about or stance changing
11. Keep in mind the range of the hands and feet, including their potential speed and momentum.
12. Coordinate feet and hands to the stance and posture.
13. Do not lose balance; attack when the opponent has lost his balance.
14. Every technique is for attack; defense, or preparation for the next attack.
15. Use distracting or feinting techniques which are particularly suited to you, but do not use them too often.
16. Do not lose any time in attacking the opponent when he has been taken in by a distracting or feinting technique.
17. Keep elbows close to your body.
18. Use the loudest kiai possible.
19. Use combinations –follow through with a second or third technique in combinations, if the first technique is blocked.
20. Move in a circle and try to attack the opponent from an unexpected angle or direction. Be prepared to change direction at any time.
21. If you wish to tempt the opponent to attack, intentionally step within range (do not drop your guard) or relax your posture and lower your guard when outside the critical area.
22. Move your attacks strong (but controlled), and if your opponent retreats, continue to attack with another combination. Never just stand away and pick at your opponent with only one technique.
23. Attack immediately upon blocking or thwarting the opponent's attack (block-strike).
24. No matter what technique and combinations you utilize, remember that you are executing Karate techniques (not street fighting), so retain your proper posture and balance. Be smooth, not jerky.
25. Counter-attack immediately during your opponent's technique. An opening is created after a kick or a punch by the opponent.
26. Play the contest according to your own judgment, using your favorite combinations and those given to you by your teacher.
27. Look your opponent straight in the eyes. Remain cool, calm and alert at all times.
28. Never telegraph any attack or defensive move.
29. Make your mind up on what combination to use, and use it to completion.
30. Move in a proper stance as close to your opponent as possible. And try to anticipate his attack. Attack the instant he moves to attack you.

31. Analyze your opponent's movements- his strong points and his weaknesses-at the beginning of the match. If opponent's kicks are his strong points, move in close and jam his kicks as you counter-punch. If his hands are his best points, utilize your kicks to keep him off of you.
32. Immediately upon striking, turn your body slightly to the side. If the thrust be too short and incomplete, lean back.
33. Before attacking, move a step forward and take the attack position.
34. Make your first attack violent by dashing strongly against your opponent simultaneously move forward with the opposite (rear)leg and attack again.
35. A lunge attack is best executed by stepping forward with the rear leg. Upon completion of the attack, bring the opposite leg for and attack again.
36. Dodge, duck, side step or ride the opponents' blows.
37. Without lowering the head, feint with the eyes give an impression with the eyes to force the opponent to drop his guard by feinting to the area that you want cleared for attack.
38. Slash or strike before opponents attack has achieved maximum force.
39. When cornered, as in in-fighting place head against opponent's shoulder. Watch opponent's feet for information on opponents' movement.
40. When there is a large (size) difference between you and your opponent a push defense is very effective.
41. Never underestimate the size or look of the opponent.
42. An opening attack is created:
  - a. When you have completed a technique
  - b. When you are tempted to attack the opponent.
  - c. When you lose your balance.
  - d. When you have been tricked by the opponent by a distraction or feinting technique.
  - e. When your range of techniques is short or your movements too slow.
  - f. When you are in the process of completing a technique.
  - g. When you intentionally lower your guard and invite an attack.
43. When grabbing the opponents' leg lift up and dash forward; as the opponent falls, follow through with a series of thrusts.
44. When grabbing the opponent's sleeve, pull down and dash forward; as the opponent falls, follow through with a series of thrusts.
45. Advance and retreat with dignity and finesse.
46. Refrain from anything that will tend to anger the opponent, referee, or judges.
47. Have a good attitude. Be a good sport. Have the desire and confidence to win.

Excerpt from the book The Pinnacle by Grand Master Robert A. Trias