

Preparing for the Cho Dan Test

Forward

Congratulations! You've passed your Cho Dan Bo test. The Black Belt test is a year away and you can relax a bit. However, that year is a much shorter timeframe than you might think. There is much to polish in your open-handed hyung, bong twirls and hyung, one-steps, self-defense, breaking, and the other techniques your instructors have taught you over the past three or four years.

Although Tang Soo Do is a physical art, our founder, Grandmaster Shin emphasized that Tang Soo Do is a Traditional Martial Art that requires mental acuity in addition to physical techniques. As with all the Gup tests and the Cho Dan Bo test, the Black Belt test requires the candidate to know the history and philosophy of Tang Soo Do, and the many Korean terms used during our training. This guide has been assembled to provide practical approaches for preparing for your Cho Dan test. For further guidance, read Mr. Waldie's November 2013 Dragon's Den newsletter article entitled: "The Black Belt Test: Reflections and Advice" (available on the Vaughn's Dojang website under News & Events).

Physical Training

□ Attend classes regularly

As you did in preparation for your Cho Dan Bo test, you should continue regular attendance and rigorous training in regular Tang Soo Do classes. This attendance not only demonstrates to your class instructor the dedication and perseverance required by you at the Cho Dan Bo level, but continuing regular training is also one of the 14 Attitude Requirements expected of all Black Belts.

□ Attend the Cho Dan Bo class

As part of your Cho Dan Bo test, you were given a contract that explains the requirements to be permitted to test for Cho Dan. That contract describes your commitment to attend the Cho Dan Bo class at least three times a month. This class has been established especially for you!

Master Vaughn and the Senior Dans have all been exactly where you are now and recognized long ago that to successfully prepare for the Cho Dan test a special class with a focus on the requirements for Cho Dan was required. The Cho Dan Bo class is taught by Master Altieri on Saturday mornings from 10:00 to 11:15. In this class, the curriculum specifically emphasizes improving one-steps and self-defense techniques.

□ Use your mentor and ask for help!

In addition to attending your regular classes and the Cho Dan Bo class, each Cho Dan Bo should arrange to have a mentor. Your mentor can provide valuable additional polish and instruction to meet any of the requirements of the Cho Dan test. If your mentor has not reached out to you yet, seek him or her out and ask for help. Finally, remember, you have a huge support network in Vaughn's Dojang. Make sure to use it wisely and pay it forward when it is your turn to help someone else.

□ Attend Sunday morning training sessions with the Senior Dans

Once you are time eligible for your Cho Dan test and have received a letter from the Test Committee that you have passed your maintenance test and are being recommended for testing at the next Dan test cycle, you are encouraged to add to your training with special training sessions on Sunday mornings with the Senior Dans. These special sessions will allow you to further refine your techniques. This training is not in a class format; however, the Senior Dans are very generous and offer tidbits of advice and commentary on your techniques and hyung. This is a special privilege to train with Black Belts who have been training for many years!

□ Practice your breaking

As with the Cho Dan Bo test, breaking is a part of the Cho Dan test. Master Vaughn comments regularly at the Dan tests that simply being able to demonstrate a technique does not correctly demonstrate the power intended by the technique. Breaking boards proves that the technique is effective and powerful enough to accomplish its goal.

There are various sizes of boards depending on the student's age to be used when breaking. When testing for Cho Dan, those who are 12 years of age and under use 8"×12"×1" boards. The 10"×12"×1" boards are the standard size for all others. Note: when testing for ranks higher than Cho Dan, 10"×12" boards are required regardless of age.

The typical Cho Dan test requires three breaks: 1) hand speed break, 2) single board spinning break, and 3) spinning back kick break. As mentioned above, ask your mentor or your instructor to help you practice your breaking before the test. On the day of the Cho Dan test, make sure you bring at least six boards that you know you can break. If you need assistance determining which boards are best for breaking, your instructor or mentor can help you.

□ Physical conditioning

Ask anyone who has taken the Cho Dan test and he or she will tell you how physically taxing it can be, and that physical conditioning is the key to making it through the test. To prepare, make sure that in addition to your Tang Soo Do training, you get regular aerobic exercise and eat right. If you cannot demonstrate your Tang Soo Do knowledge because you are completely spent physically, there's a good chance that your test results will reflect it.

Preparing for the Written Test

The Physical test is only half of the Cho Dan test. The Black Belt Candidate ***must*** pass both the physical ***AND*** the written test. The Association expects all Black Belts to have a working knowledge of the history, philosophy, and terminology used by the Association.

To prepare for your Cho Dan Bo test, you probably read and studied the Gup Manual. The Cho Dan test is similar; however, the written test is made up of 100 multiple-choice questions that test your knowledge from the Gup Manual and Volumes 1, 2, and 3 of Grandmaster Shin's books. Below are some suggestions to help prepare for the written test:

- 1) Reading the books and Gup Manual alone will not guarantee success on the Cho Dan test. You ***must*** use the many studying techniques that you have probably used in school such as: Flash cards, study guides, and finding a partner to quiz you.

- 2) Review all the Gup tests that are available on the Vaughn's Dojang website.
- 3) Review all the Dojang Newsletters on the Vaughn's Dojang website as they each contain quizzes.
- 4) Purchase Tang Soo Do Journal Volume II. This journal contains sample questions with answers that you will find very useful as you prepare. In addition, the Tang Soo Do Journal Volume IV: The Legacy, authored by Master Vaughn, contains many details about the heritage of Tang Soo Do.

Attached below are links to study guides and practice tests provided by past Cho Dan Bo students who have passed the written test. To open the files, simply double-click on the icon.

- Tang Soo Do flash cards:
<http://www.vaughnsdojang.com/downloads/TSD%20Flash%20Cards.pdf>
- Tang Soo Do Korean terms and important dates:
<http://www.vaughnsdojang.com/downloads/TSD%20Korean%20Terms%20&%20Important%20Dates.pdf>
- 100-question practice test on the Penn State website:
http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/p/z/pzb4/tang_soo_do_quiz.html
- 200-question practice test can be found here:
<http://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/story.php?title=advanced-dan-pretest>

Writing your Cho Dan Essay

Much like the Cho Dan Bo requirement to write an essay, the Cho Dan tests as well as subsequent Dan tests require the candidate to write an essay. The essay guidelines, "Cho Dan Bo & Black Belt Essay Guidelines", can be found on the Vaughn's Dojang website under the Downloads section. Please ensure that your essay meets the minimum requirements outlined in the Guideline. As with the physical and written test preparation, do not procrastinate! As noted in the Guideline, the essay needs to be submitted well in advance of your maintenance test.

Link to the Cho Dan Bo & Black Belt Essay Guideline:

[http://www.vaughnsdojang.com/downloads/Essay%20Guidelines%20\(13Apr2005-rev\).pdf](http://www.vaughnsdojang.com/downloads/Essay%20Guidelines%20(13Apr2005-rev).pdf)

Enjoy!

Finally, enjoy this next step in your journey towards Cho Dan. The next twelve months will go by far more quickly than you realize, so start now! There is a saying that aptly applies to preparing for the Cho Dan Test, "I have to do it myself, but I cannot do it alone", therefore, use your support network at Vaughn's Dojang and enjoy the ride!