



DiamondHeart Member Handbook

Welcome to DiamondHeart Striking & Grappling/PCC!

The thing that sets a good martial arts academy apart from a 'regular' gym is its strong sense of community. We come from all walks of life, from different cultures and experiences, and have our own personal motivations for training, but once we step through the door, we're all here for the same thing: to learn new skills, to get stronger and healthier, and above all, to have fun. This handbook outlines the standards we expect every DiamondHeart member to understand and uphold when training, plus a few house rules to help the gym run more smoothly for everybody.

HOUSE RULES

- **No shoes on the mats** - clean athletic shoes are fine in the weight and cardio areas, and of course out in the Yard.
- **Wash your feet** - sanitary foot-wash stations are positioned at each corner of the mat area - please use them before stepping onto the training surface, particularly if you're coming from the restroom.

- **Keep your sh*t together** - cubbies are available at the rear of the training space and in the locker area to stow your stuff. (We've never had a theft issue, but valuables are better left at home.)
- **Take your gear home** - anything left lying around for too long will be made available as loaner gear, donated, or thrown out.
- **Our locker area is gender-neutral, and space is limited** - please be respectful and don't dawdle if people are waiting for a changing room or the shower.
- **Clean up after yourself** - We have many fine garbage bins. Use them.
- **Put equipment back** when you're done - re-rack weights and tidy up any other toys you use.
- **Wipe down equipment** - weight benches, mats, gear, etc - with disinfectant wipes, a spritz and towel, or mat spray and mop - all are handy throughout the gym.
- **Keep your gear clean**, fresh-smelling and sanitary (Ask us for funk-fighting tips if things start to get stank.)
- **Pay attention** - don't walk through a class in session - go around.
- **Bring your own water bottle** - unlimited free refills are available from the fountains by the locker area.
- **Children under 12 are not permitted in the training areas**; kids in the Lounge must be supervised at all times.
- **We love pets** - as long as they're friendly, well-behaved, and not unduly disruptive. Extra points if you bring in an otter.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

- **Arrive on time** - cutoff is 8 minutes after class begins. Late arrivals are distracting and disruptive, and prevent you from participating in the warmup, which is an important part of our class design.
- **Act with courtesy and respect** toward coaches, fellow students, and guests. DiamondHeart is for everyone - except assholes. Chronic rudeness or disrespect will not be tolerated; harassment, bullying, or abuse of any kind will get you expelled from the gym.

- **Give coaches your full attention** - they've worked very hard to get where they are, and they're here to help you excel. When they're speaking, you're listening.
- Unless a loved one is about to go into labor, or you're a physician on call, **no phones on the training floor during class.**
- For the sake of privacy, respect, and focus, **recording group classes is not permitted.** (You're more than welcome to record your own private training sessions.)
- **Make new students feel welcome** - introduce yourself, offer to partner with them during class, help them feel at home!
- Make a point to **work with different people** during paired drills - it'll make you a smarter, more adaptable fighter, and it's a great way to get to know your fellow students better.
- Understand that **training partners are *NOT* opponents.** They're your peers - and the most valuable pieces of training equipment you will ever have. It's your duty to keep them safe from undue injury or harm as we all practice these arts we love, **so look out for each other**; check in with your partners as you're drilling or sparring, and **remember to thank them** for working with you!

ON TRUST & CONSENT

Martial arts can be both physically intense and physically intimate: whether you're clinching in Muay Thai or doing...well, just about anything in BJJ, close contact with other people - some of whom you won't know well, or at all - is unavoidable. That may be a nonissue for you, but that's not the case for everyone. Different people bring different comfort levels and lived experiences to the mats, and that reality is to be respected.

A key component of that respect is **'the tap.'** The tap could be a hand sign, an actual tap somewhere on a person's body or on the mat, or just saying 'tap.' **Tap means STOP.** When you tap during a drill, or sparring, or rolling, everything stops - no questions asked. You can tap for any reason - not just because something hurts. If something's too intense physically or mentally, or if you just need a second, **you can always, always tap.**

Training a combat sport requires a great deal of trust - between coaches and students, and between training partners. Without trust, learning is almost impossible. We all assume a certain amount of risk when we decide to train a martial art, but we reduce that risk by being respectful of each other, checking in and paying attention to what our training partners are telling us - **verbally and nonverbally** - and learning when we mess up.

Another key part of building and maintaining trust is understanding the concept of **consent**. Stepping onto the mats to train implies that you're okay with training partners touching or striking you, and with coaches physically adjusting your form; **but it does NOT cancel out your right to personal boundaries, or the right to speak up if something feels off.**

If a training partner crosses a line, let them know; if the issue persists, let a coach know; if a coach crosses a line, let another coach know. **We are wholly committed to maintaining a respectful, supportive, safe environment for our students**, and will take all appropriate steps to remedy any problems promptly and decisively.

GEAR LIST

Like any artist, martial artists need the right tools and supplies to fully express themselves. You don't have to run out and buy everything on this list all at once, and you don't need to buy top-of-the-line, professional-grade gear if you're training recreationally, but having the appropriate equipment is part of being prepared for class.

We do keep some loaner gear on hand for guests and emergencies, of course - **and we have a full range of affordable, high-quality gear and training apparel for purchase in our Pro Shop.**

Below is a list of things you should eventually have in your training bag:

For Muay Thai:

- Hand wraps - 2-3 pairs so you've always got a fresh set
- Bag/pad gloves: **8,10, or 12oz** - these are *not* to be used for sparring
- Sparring gloves: **16oz** - these should not be used for anything *but* sparring and partner drilling
- Shin guards **with foot cover** - leather or synthetic is fine
- Knee & elbow pads - you'll need these eventually, but generally not until you're taking Open/Advanced classes
- Mouth guard - we recommend the single-sided style
- Groin protector for those who wish to protect their groins (Pro tip: protect your groin)
- Vaseline - to prevent leather burn during sparring/clinching

For BJJ:

- A gi - do your research and make sure you get the right size - **proper fit makes a huuuge difference!** (Eventually you'll probably want more than one so you aren't doing laundry every day.)
- Long- or short-sleeved rashguards for underneath your gi and for no-gi training
- Grappling shorts or spats/leggings - no pockets
- Mouthguard
- Groin protector
- Headgear, if desired

For Everybody:

- Comfortable, breathable, **CLEAN, NON-STINKY** training garments: shorts, leggings, t-shirts/tanks, etc. and appropriate underthings
- Shower sandals or flip-flops
- A reusable water bottle of your very own
- Nail clippers - key for both BJJ and Muay Thai clinch work
- Athletic tape
- Thai oil liniment - optional

RANK ADVANCEMENT & PREREQUISITES

MUAY THAI

Learning any new skill takes investment in time and sweat - and that goes double for martial arts. To help our beginner students build confidence and advance more quickly, and our more experienced players sharpen and test their skills, our Muay Thai program is graded in four tiers: **Intro Day 1, Foundations, Open, and Advanced**. In order to participate in higher-level classes, students must demonstrate basic competencies in both technique and physical capability; reasonable accommodations will be made on a subjective basis for reasons of injury, disability, or other extenuating factors.

The tiers are as follows:

Intro Level Day 1 - This class focuses on the absolute basics: how to throw a punch, deliver a kick, and hold pads safely for a partner. If you've never touched a pair of boxing gloves in your life, or are coming to Muay Thai from a different discipline, or after a long break, Intro is your first stop. These classes are typically small - usually between 2 and 8 students - and allow for plenty of one-on-one coaching so you can get oriented and enter the Foundations classes with confidence. To join Foundations classes, Intro students must successfully demonstrate the following:

- Basic understanding of striking form and mechanics - **the jab, cross, hook, uppercut, roundhouse, and low kick**
- Basic understanding of **pad holding technique** for those strikes
- Performing **Combos 1-4** as both striker *and* pad holder

Foundations Level - Students work a solid curriculum of fundamentals, including both bag and padwork. This format enables you to safely train 3-5 times per week, building a strong, structured foundation that will help you not only level up to the Open program with confidence, but do so as a great training partner. To join Open classes, Foundations students must successfully demonstrate the following:

- The 30/30 jump rope test - **65 consecutive jumps in 30 seconds** with a 30 second rest for **10 rounds**
- *Safely and competently* perform **5 rounds** of Simple & Sinister (SNS) - i.e., 10 kettlebell swings and 1 Turkish getup per side in **12 mins**.
Weight standards:
 - Students 140lbs or less: 14kg minimum for swings/8kg TGU
 - Students 141lbs and up: 16kg minimum for swings/12kg TGU
- Demonstrate the ability to **perform Combos 1-10** as both striker *and* pad holder

Open Level - At this level, students are introduced to partner drilling concepts, more advanced footwork, timing, and higher-level padwork that will challenge you safely as you move toward mastery of your new skills. To join Advanced classes, Open students must successfully demonstrate the following:

- The 30/30 jump rope test - **85 consecutive jumps in 30 seconds** with a 30 second rest for **10 rounds**
- *Safely and competently* perform **8 rounds** of SNS in **12 mins**
Weight standards:
 - Students 140lbs or less: 16kg minimum for swings/12kg TGU
 - Students 141lbs and up: 20kg minimum for swings/14kg TGU
- Demonstrate the ability to perform **Combos 1-20** as both striker *and* pad holder.

Advanced/Competition Level - At this level, students are given higher-level partner drilling concepts - including clinching - and learn how to spar safely with a training partner. In order to participate in sparring class and (if you so desire) be considered for the DiamondHeart Fight Team, students must have coach permission **and** successfully demonstrate the following:

- Mastery of all Foundations and Open skills and requirements, **plus:**
- 30/30 jump rope test- **85 consecutive jumps in 30 seconds** with a 30 second rest for **10 rounds**

- *Safely and competently* perform **10 rounds** of SNS at competition/certification weight in **12 mins**:
 - Students 140lbs or less: 16kg minimum for swings/14kg TGU
 - Students 141lbs and up: 22kg minimum for swings/16kg TGU
- The ability to perform **Combos 1-20** both as striker *and* as pad holder
- The ability to assist senior coaches in class as requested

BJJ

Progression in Brazilian jiu jitsu is not fast, and it's not as formalized as most other martial arts. Advancement is marked by belts, in the following order: **White** → **Blue** → **Purple** → **Brown** → **Black**. While the International Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Federation (IBJJF) does set some limits on how quickly practitioners can advance, there's no standardized test to pass in order to move up in rank, and criteria for advancement may differ between academies. Students often ask: 'How long before my next stripe/belt?' The answer is, when your instructor thinks you're ready. At DiamondHeart, belt advancement is merit-based, and at the sole discretion of our instructors. Criteria for belt promotion include:

- Skill level
- Knowledge of technique
- Time on the mat
- Dedication to the sport and academy
- Sportsmanship and skill as a training partner
- Participating in tournaments, where applicable (To be clear: competition is **not** required for advancement!)

With all that in mind, most instructors agree on some basic principles and techniques that should be mastered before a student graduates to the next belt level:

White Belt - At this level, you'll learn fundamental movement patterns, basic escapes and submissions, as well as survival/defensive tactics and how to avoid unfavorable positions. You'll also learn the essential, all-important **tap**. At DiamondHeart, advancement from white belt to blue

belt includes four incremental stripes. There's no minimum amount of time to be a white belt; a white belt can graduate at any time at the discretion of their instructor.

Blue Belt - Earning your blue belt is a major milestone in BJJ, and signifies that you have a grasp of the art's fundamental competencies, including:

- Strong grasp of foundational movements
- Understanding of the history and core philosophies of BJJ
- A broad range of basic techniques
- Strong defense and escape skills

Depending how often and how seriously you train, it takes roughly 2-3 years to earn a blue belt. As a blue belt, you will start developing your own game, gaining a deeper understanding of the techniques you like, and honing your favorite approaches. The IBJJF requires practitioners to stay at blue for at least 2 years before becoming eligible for advancement to purple.

Purple Belt - Given the time and commitment it takes to get here - typically 4-6 years of consistent training - purple belts are considered advanced players. At this point you should be confident in your technique and knowledge of jiu jitsu, including both defense and offense, attack and counter-attack, and your tactics and strategy should be unified and coherent. The IBJJF mandates that a purple belt must remain at that rank for a minimum of 18 months before becoming eligible for advancement to brown.

Brown Belt - The brown belt is the last stop before black, and signifies near-mastery of the art. As a brown belt, you will know how to be dominant from any position, your technical knowledge will be expansive, and other students should be able to look to you as a mentor. As a brown belt, you should be ready and willing to assist or teach classes, if requested. The IBJJF requires at least one year as a brown belt before becoming eligible for black.

Black Belt - At this level, you are a master of your craft, and a true representative of the principles and practice of BJJ, both on and off the mat. Very few get this far - and those who do actually consider a black belt the symbol of someone who has just now started to truly understand jiu jitsu. There are 6 degrees within a 'regular' black belt - the IBJJF requires 3 years at each degree before one is eligible to advance to the next.

Red Belt - The red belt is the final belt in jiu jitsu. It represents the highest levels of achievement and personal contribution to the art, and is given only to those who have displayed decades of serious commitment to the sport. Only a few dozen practitioners in the world have achieved this level. #goals

STRENGTH, CONDITIONING & MOVEMENT

All of the group strength, conditioning, and movement (SCM) classes offered at DiamondHeart are designed to improve your experience and performance not only in Muay Thai and BJJ, but in life in general. Our coaches hold multiple certifications in a broad array of disciplines, and are committed to expanding and refining their own knowledge to help you get stronger and more resilient.

The focus and format of SCM classes can change from week to week and month to month, and incorporate tools like kettlebells, sandbags, ropes, clubs, medicine balls, tension bands, and bodyweight, depending on the coach and program. No matter the program or gear however, work done in SCM classes translates directly to the skills being taught and applied in both Muay Thai and BJJ classes - there's always a method to the madness.

SCM classes are all open level - there is no prerequisite to participate. Our coaches meet you where you are, teaching you the basics if you're just starting out, and introducing progressions and variations if you're more seasoned and want a challenge. No matter your level of experience or athleticism, group SCM work will improve your performance in the ring and

on the mat - so it's very much worth your time to check them out! SCM classes typically run around 45 mins, giving you plenty of time to change and gear up if you're taking Muay Thai or BJJ afterwards.

PRIVATE TRAINING

While group classes are the core of what we do at DiamondHeart, all of our Muay Thai, BJJ, and SCM coaches are available for private and semi-private training. Members who'd like to regularly supplement their group work, accelerate their progress, or just get an occasional tune-up on their technique can purchase packages or single sessions with the coach of their choice; just let your coach know you're interested, and we'll fill you in on the pricing, formatting, and scheduling options available.