



Starting to Train at Seven Star

Welcome to Seven Star Women's Kung Fu! This handout is designed to provide useful information about your beginner's cycle training. Please feel free to talk to one of your beginner's cycle teachers if you have any questions.

Beginner's Cycle Schedule

Classes meet twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:30-9pm. Attendance at both classes per week is highly encouraged. During the last two weeks of the cycle, you're also invited to attend our Saturday morning All School Class 11am-1pm. Please contact gina@sevenstarwomenskungfu.com if you know you will have an extended leave of absence during the beginner's cycle.

What to Expect in Class

At the start of every class we circle up, salute each other (the first thing we'll teach you), and prepare to train with a short meditation. The first part of class is dedicated to joint rotations, light stretching, warm ups, and review. Each class will integrate martial arts basics/mechanics (i.e. kicks, punches, blocks) and self defense training (verbal self defense, response to physical grabs, self defense skills/strategies). At the end of each class there is an opportunity for questions, feedback, and announcements. Curious about the curriculum you will be learning? [View this topics list.](#)

About Seven Star

Our Martial Arts Style

At Seven Star, we practice the Gaylord Method of Chu'an Fa Kung Fu in the Kajukenbo system. Kajukenbo is an eclectic martial art that combines techniques from five different martial arts: Tang Soo Do (Korean Karate), Judo, Jujitsu, Chinese Kempo, and Kung Fu (Northern Shaolin).

Kajukenbo was developed in Hawaii in the late 1940's as a realistic street fighting/self defense system combining the most useful aspects of each of the five martial arts to create a new, eclectic, adaptive martial art. Kajukenbo is effective in real-life situations and does not rely on size or strength alone. Kajukenbo uses straight line kicks and punches from karate, the circular defense and footwork of kung fu, and the joint locks and throws of judo and jujitsu. We practice sparring, fighting skills, forms, and self-defense against both physical and verbal assaults.

Our School Structure

Seven Star is a nonprofit martial arts school founded in 1981. We teach Kajukenbo at our Central District location to women, trans, and gender-expansive individuals. We teach self defense to all populations throughout the Seattle area.

Our martial arts program is led by three sifus (teachers): Sigung Michelle McVadon (Co-Chief Instructor) Sifu Allyson Riley (Co-Chief Instructor) and Sifu Gina Mares Kurtz (Assistant Head Instructor/Acting Sifu). Our teaching staff is composed of advanced teachers (green-black belts) and assistant teachers (purple-green belts).

Our nonprofit is governed by a Board of Directors, referred to as the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is made up of representatives from each belt rank and meets monthly to discuss school business and set policy direction for the school. We also rely on student volunteers to help run and manage aspects of our school and business. Our teaching staff volunteer their time to teach classes as well.

Our nonprofit programs include: free and low cost self defense classes, sliding scale dues, ASL interpreting, and work study opportunities.

Martial Arts Lineage

Your martial arts lineage, beginning with your Sifu (teacher) and ending with the founder of Kajukenbo is as follows:

- Gina Mares Kurtz
- Michelle McVadon
- Anne Moon-founder of Seven Star
- Barbara Bones
- Richard Mainenti
- Gabe Vargas
- Charles Gaylord
- Adriano Emperado-founder of Kajukenbo

Seven Star Gender Policy

Seven Star empowers gender-marginalized individuals through martial arts and self-defense training. We serve the greater Seattle community by providing self-defense training to people of all genders.

Seven Star is committed to creating an environment free from toxic masculinity and strives to create a safe training environment. We welcome cisgender women, transgender, nonbinary, and gender-expansive folks over 13 years of age. [View our full gender policy as of October 23, 2024.](#)

Gender identities can be fluid and ever-changing. As a community, we strive to support our students in their various identities. To meet this goal, our teaching staff and steering

committee members invite all members of our community to participate in ongoing conversations about our role in serving women, trans, and gender-diverse students, and what it means to continue as a school that is not open to people who identify as cis- men.

Our teachers strive to use non-gendered language when referring to a group of students as a whole, or referring to a specific student whose pronouns we don't know. We invite students to share their pronouns in opening circles when we say our names and when we partner up. Ask a student/teacher what their pronoun is if you are uncertain. We strongly encourage all of our students to use non-gendered language--respecting students' pronouns and using terms like “folks”, “students”, “friends”, “you all (or y'all)”, “comrades”, etc. instead of “you guys” or “ladies.” Any student is invited to respectfully remind teachers/assistants to use gender neutral terms if they forget. In these ways, students and teachers work together to become diversity advocates.

Seven Star Health and Safety Guidelines

Training at Seven Star will challenge your body, mind, and spirit! It is important to follow these important training guidelines to keep your body healthy and safe while training at our school.

Training Frequency

We ask that you commit to training twice a week. Training a minimum of two days a week keeps your body limber and helps with memory recall of material. We understand it may not be possible to attend every single class in the session. That's ok. We review material each week. However, please talk to your teacher(s) if you cannot attend twice a week with regularity or if you will have an extended absence.

Community Health and Safety Measures (as of March 25, 2025)

All classes and school events at Seven Star are mask optional. Please observe our community health guidelines:

- Do not attend classes or events if you have cold/flu/Covid symptoms. When in doubt, stay home.
- If you've had a known respiratory disease exposure, mask up in class or stay home.
- Mask for a minimum of 48 hours after air travel.
- Mask for a minimum of 48 hours If you've attended large indoor gatherings such as concerts, conferences, etc and were unmasked.
- If your partner asks you to mask up during partner exercises, mask up! This is a part of the consent based partner work we do for health and safety.

View our [full community health policy](#). This policy is subject to quarterly review and changes based on local/regional Covid viral activity levels.

Training Equipment & Etiquette

Clothing/Footwear

No uniform is required. However, you should dress comfortably for training. Loose-fitting pants that cover your knees are ideal (i.e. sweats, drawstring pants, leggings). Wear a shirt that is sturdy enough to be grabbed (i.e. t-shirt, tank top, or sweatshirt; no spaghetti strap tanks or crop tops). We have our windows open for the duration of class, wear layers that you can remove as your body warms up during class. Street shoes and plain socks are not allowed on our training floor. You can train barefoot, in training shoes (i.e. wrestling shoes, court shoes), or socks with a grippy surface.

Jewelry

Remove all jewelry before class. This is for your safety and the safety of your training partners. This includes necklaces, bracelets, watches, fitbits, etc. Body piercings are ok, but you may be asked by the teacher to “tape” the piercing to prevent injury.

Hygiene

It’s important that you keep your fingernails and toenails trimmed short and tidy. This is so you can form a tight fist and comfortably kick a surface. We also do techniques to people’s faces and we want to make sure you do not scratch your partner during exercises. We are a fragrance-free facility.

Targets on the Body

In the beginner’s cycle, you will practice giving/receiving contact to different targets on the body. This is practiced during martial arts basics, fighting skills exercises (i.e. sparring), and in self defense scenarios. At our school, martial arts/sparring targets are different from self defense targets. Sparring targets include temple, sternum, solar plexus, abdomen, groin, high ribs, floating ribs and kidneys. In self defense exercises, you will also target the knees, throat, and front of the face. We will practice giving/receiving controlled contact with our training partners in classes. We’ll also discuss what to do if you have off-limit targets when you are partnered with a classmate.

Protective Gear

Kajukenbo is a contact based sport. We make contact to vulnerable parts of each others’ bodies with controlled kicks and punches. Wear protective gear as it feels right for your body. Our school has a [gear recommendations document](#) if you have questions and aren’t sure what to purchase. If you have questions about appropriate protective training gear, please contact Sifu Gina.

Self-Care while Training

Listening to your Body

Part of martial arts training is cultivating an awareness of your body. Listen to your body and respond accordingly during classes. Understand the difference between pushing

yourself and overdoing it to the point of injury. You may find you are sore and tired after the first few classes of the beginner's cycle. That's typical for most students.

Modifications

The movements we'll do in classes should not be painful. If you feel pain during class (joints, low back, etc) ask a teacher to look at your alignment and/or ask for a modification for the exercise until your body gets stronger, the alignment is corrected, or the injury is healed. We can offer modifications for most exercises. Talk to the class teacher if you have a known injury, disability, or the movement you are being asked to do doesn't feel good for your body. If an injury occurs during class, tell the class teacher(s) as soon as you realize it so we can support you. We have protocols around injuries in class. No injury should be ignored.

Emotional Responses While Training

Training in the martial arts can bring up a wide range of emotions. Our training and material often simulate dangerous situations and responses to them. For some of us, emotional responses are triggered by past abuse or trauma. For others it can emerge from physical injuries (fear of re-injury, etc). Verbal harassment can also be a trigger when role playing as the aggressor or defender in self defense scenarios.

If you have an emotional response during class, that is natural! You can try to work through it during the exercise, you can "bow out" and observe the exercise; or you can take a moment and collect your thoughts. Please make sure to let the teacher know if you need to bow out, so they can check in with you. Please do not leave the training floor without talking to a teacher first. We have an amazing support network in our community for discussing how to deal with emotional responses while training. If you would like to talk to anyone about your experience or discuss coping strategies, please ask a teacher you feel comfortable talking to. Take advantage of the decades of experience we have at the school!

The "No Feedback" Rule

Our school practices a "no feedback" policy. This includes both positive and negative feedback. Please refrain from giving your training partners feedback during class (except when instructed to do so by the class teacher). The exception to this rule is when it is necessary for health and safety reasons (off limits targets, speed, or injuries). This policy ensures that students receive feedback only from the teacher, so the feedback is both correct and appropriate to the student's individual level and needs.

Continuing your Training at Seven Star

If you complete the beginner's cycle and decide to continue your training at Seven Star, you become an official white belt at our school. You will become a student of Sifu Gina Mares Kurtz. In Kajukenbo, we have a seven belt rank system: white, orange, purple,

blue, green, brown, and black. White and orange belts are beginner level belts. Purple and blue belts are intermediate ranks. Green through black belts represent our advanced belt ranks.

Class Schedule

After the completion of the beginner's cycle, white belts have four classes a week available to them.

- Mondays and Wednesdays 6:30-8:00pm (All levels)
- Thursdays 6:00-7:30pm (White/Orange class)
- Saturday 11am-1pm (All levels)

We offer white belt specific classes (mentor classes) once a month on the first Sunday of the month.

Testing

Our school's program is designed to test individuals when they are ready to test. Everyone moves at their own pace through the material based on the number of days/week they train, experience level, fitness level, and learning styles. As a point of reference, a white belt typically tests for an orange belt anywhere between 8-12 months after completing the beginner's cycle. However, there is no pressure to test for your next belt rank and we do not require test fees. You are asked to test once your Sifu feels you have reached proficiency in your material.

Community and Social Events

We offer community events such as special workshops, social hours, movie nights, and small fundraisers to support our martial arts community. Training at Seven Star can be much more than a good workout. Check after class announcements, our website, and weekly emails for current planned activities.

- [Seven Star Curriculum Resources Page](#)
- Instagram: @sevenstarwomenskungfu
- We also have a school Slack channel that we will invite you to join once you start the cycle.