



## The Seven Inside Secrets of Sparring!

"There is nothing better than free-style sparring in the practice of any combative art" – Bruce Lee

Welcome to the October issue of Through the Ranks! Listen: A couple months back, I discussed all the benefits of forms. This month, I'm going to expand my discussion of martial arts benefits and reveal the benefits of sparring. You see, sparring boasts tons of benefits and adds depth to your martial arts training. And like forms, sparring is a required, tested element on the path to becoming a black belt. In many ways, sparring is the centerpiece of our martial arts programs. Keep reading to discover all the benefits sparring offers!

### Benefit #1: Helps Overcome Fears and Develops Your Instincts

From a self-defense standpoint, your goal in the martial arts is to be able to defend yourself in any situation. Sparring helps that goal because it brings the realism of a real-world confrontation into a safe, controlled environment. With sparring, you can make mistakes safely and learn what works (and what doesn't) in a fluid, changing situation. In that way, sparring prepares you for a real-life self-defense situation, teaches you how to protect yourself and helps prevent injury.

Physically, sparring refines your

"instinctive responses". This enables you to throw kicks, punches and combinations reflexively...without conscious thought. Sparring helps "program" your muscle memory and that pays dividends in a real self-defense situation.

But sparring also prepares you mentally. How? Because sparring training takes the edge off your fears. It teaches you to calm your mind in a threatening situation, tame your adrenaline rush and stay relaxed (and confident) in a confrontation. The result? You're able to shrug off fear, keep your cool and stay composed when a bully tries to attack you. Nothing does a better job than sparring at creating confidence and peace of mind. You'll know how to handle any situation that comes your way. Here's the next big way sparring helps you:

### Benefit #2: Enhances Your Footwork

Punching comes naturally to most people. But not kicking – that takes time for most people to develop. However, kicking can be far more effective than punches. Why? Because kicks pack more power and extend your "reach". Think about it: Your legs are your longest and strongest weapons.



Ms. Lesley Casey  
3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt and  
Owner

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One of our goals in Taekwondo is for you to use your feet as well as your hands. Remember: Taekwondo literally means “way of the fist and foot”. Proper sparring brings your footwork up to par with your punches.

One of the ways sparring helps do this is through the balance required to throw various kicks in a dynamic sparring situation. Sparring requires you to shift your weight and center of gravity from leg to leg and throw combinations from new and unusual angles. This gives you better footwork and makes throwing kicks (and combinations) just as effective as your punches...and sometimes even more so!

### Benefit #3: Coordination and Timing

Want to sharpen your timing? How about your coordination? Then sparring is the answer! When you spar, you increase your overall coordination because you're constantly in motion and targeting a live, moving opponent. It takes

lightning-fast reflexes and excellent coordination to score points. You also have to think “defense” as well as “offense”. This builds your coordination, too.

Likewise, sparring improves your timing because to score, you need to time your strikes and kicks effectively. Believe me, this is more difficult than you might think! Most students who are new to sparring are amazed at how quickly their timing improves.

### Benefit #4: Boosts Your Speed and Focus

Sparring also develops your speed and explosiveness. How? Because to score, you have to be faster than your opponent. Sparring trains you to anticipate your opponent's moves and forces you to respond in milliseconds! It's for this reason many martial arts students say sparring training helps them in other sports, too! Their reflexes on the court, on the field and in the gym are heightened because sparring enhances their speed so much.

Sparring also sharpens your focus

and concentration. If you lose focus for just a second, your partner scores. Sparring requires you to funnel your focus and maintain your concentration to win the point...and not be scored upon yourself! Yes, sparring delivers the twin benefits of speed and focus to you.

### Benefit #5: Teaches Targeting

Here's another big benefit of sparring: it boosts your accuracy. To earn points, you have to pinpoint your target and score a clean punch or kick. Sparring is no place for sloppiness. Watch black belts spar and you'll see how controlled and accurate they are. They hone in on their opponent and pick their targets carefully.

This creates “kinetic efficiency” in your strikes and kicks. Why waste time and energy throwing four or five kicks when one carefully-placed side-kick does the job? Effective targeting is one of the hallmarks of a great martial artist and sparring helps you improve your accuracy.

### Benefit #6: Teaches Respect

Another often-overlooked aspect of sparring is that it teaches you respect. You always want to treat your training partner with the same respect you demand for yourself. Sparring provides an opportunity to do just that.

First, when you “bow in” before and after a round, you're showing your opponent respect. Second, when you spar with self-control and restraint, you're also showing respect for your training partner. Finally, when you say, “thank you, sir” or “thank you ma'am” when your partner scores on you during practice sessions, it demonstrates respect for *their* skills and abilities.



## Benefit #7: It's Just Plain Fun!

Let's cap things off with one of the greatest things about sparring: it's a ton of FUN! There's nothing like donning your sparring gear and mixing it up with an opponent. Sparring provides a great workout (it's intense!) and at the same time develops all the skills I just talked about.

Also, sparring opens up a brand new world to you: tournaments! Participating in tournaments gives you a chance to get ranked, go for state champ and make a name for yourself in the martial arts world! There's nothing like finishing a tough match at a tournament, having the judge raise YOUR hand and shouting, "First place!" as the crowd cheers! Sparring lets you wow a crowd, showcase your sparring skills and prove how you stack up against others.

## Your Monthly Call to Action

There are so many **other** advantages of your sparring training I

haven't even talked about: agility, flexibility, fitness, weight loss and more! I love sparring. It's one of the reasons I got involved with the martial arts. When you discover all the benefits it has to offer, you will, too! Focusing on your sparring skills will turn you into a great martial artist, ready for any challenge that comes your way!

Students: This month, I want you to focus on your sparring skills. I want you to bring better control, balance, timing and **focus** to your sparring sessions. Please see me for tips on how to improve your sparring: I'll critique your techniques and give you quick pointers on how to heighten all aspects of your sparring game.

-- Ms. Casey

## New Members Here at Casey's ATA Black Belt Academy!

### NEW MEMBERS:

Darren Andrews  
Caleb Borneo  
Avonlea Brooks  
Konnor Brown  
Brandon Byrne  
Malachi Church  
Sage Clawges  
Corban Cross  
Eli & Isaac DeBastiani  
Daylen DeBerry  
Canaan Gilleland  
Jack Goellner  
Patrick Graham  
Matthew Hamlin  
Casey Herring  
Gage Jekel

Levi Kelly  
Elias Khursand  
Logan Martin  
Griffin McMorro  
Luke Monti  
Aiden Pack  
Cullen Perry  
Eddie & Erin Pride  
Ali & Mustafa Rai  
Alex Robba  
Chloe & Eliza  
Robinson  
Seth Ryan  
Gabriel Shelton  
Luke Stirewalt  
Cayla Witschi  
Benjamin Wood

Gabriel Shelton  
Tomer Family  
Eli Veshneski  
Navada Wilson  
Nate Wolfe  
Abbie Alfred  
Nicholas Bozley  
Tanner Cava  
Emma Clouse  
JR & Sam Coburn  
Nicholas Fiber  
Aaron Flanigan  
Mavrick Foster  
Violet Goodwin  
Michaela Hart  
Michael Harte

Stephan Hess  
Jackson Howe  
Christopher Kocher  
Triston Lane  
Andrew Liu  
Colby Lodge  
John Makins  
Travis Kuhens  
Lawson Mangum  
Manuel Mayobre  
Douglas Mizell  
Jennifer Neely  
Tyler Oleyar  
Sean Patterson  
Ray Family  
Garry Riffle

Skylar Wooddell  
Young Family  
BLACK BELT CLUB  
UPGRADES:  
Max Johnson  
Chase Akers  
Darral Bennett  
LEADERSHIP CLUB  
UPGRADES:  
McKenna Bowlin  
Haley Johnston  
Alex Newman  
Jared Smith

# How To Calm Your Sparring Jitters!

Let's face it: if you're new to sparring, it can seem a bit intimidating at first. This is normal. I expect all new students to have a few "sparring butterflies" when they first start mixing it up. Just remember: a big part of martial arts is overcoming your fears and developing confidence and courage. And courage means "being scared and doing it anyway". It does NOT mean you're fearless from day one. So if you're having a tough time getting started with sparring, follow these tips to tame your "sparring butterflies" and spar with confidence!

## Tip #1: Think "Tag"

I like to think of sparring as a game of tag using hands and feet. Your goal is to win points by "tagging" your opponent's target areas. Your goal is NOT to "knock somebody out" or pound away without restraint. In fact, it's the exact opposite: when sparring, you want to develop your control and accuracy. This requires concentration, focus and skill. When you think of sparring as a game of "tag", it removes your fear and makes it a lot more fun!

## Tip #2: Try Statue Sparring

Statue sparring is where one partner stands in a sparring stance completely motionless. The other student then throws combinations towards legal target areas without touching. Statue sparring with no contact develops sparring skills and helps you overcome your fear. It helps you learn to relax when somebody is throwing punches and kicks at you.

## Tip #3: Spar Black Belts

It might sound crazy, but when you first start sparring, black belts are some of the best ones to spar. The reason for this is simple: they have greater self-control and accuracy than colored belts. Again, sparring is all about scoring points. By sparring black belts, you pick up on what works in a sparring situation. Black belts will go easy on you and inspire you to improve your skills. You can even "steal" some of their sparring secrets and use them in the future! See me if you'd like me to match you up with one of our black belts.

## Tip #4: Stay Relaxed

Don't tense up when sparring. You want to enter the ring relaxed and loose. If you have a problem doing that, use deep breathing before you spar...it really works! Visualize yourself as relaxed and confident and you will be. Remember - you CAN handle it...and you won't get



Sparring doesn't have to be scary when you follow these five simple tips!

hurt. Which brings me to the next tip...

## Tip #5: Remember You're Safe

Keep in mind you're in a safe, controlled environment. Here at our academy, our #1 focus is safety first. We'll quickly intervene if anything ever gets out of hand. Also, believe in your sparring gear. Your gear has been developed over many years to protect all your vital areas and keep you free from harm. (This is one of the reasons martial arts ranks far lower than most other sports - even "non-contact" sports - in terms of injuries). Did you know people get injured far more frequently in soccer, baseball, basketball and football than in martial arts? It's true!

My advice? Don't let your initial fear of sparring stop you! Change your outlook and make it your goal to become one of the best at sparring here at our academy! Invest the time to follow these tips and you'll spend more time having fun and less time worrying about sparring! Please see me in person for even more little pointers to overcome your sparring jitters!

# October 2008 Calendar of Special Events

October 2008 Calendar of Special Events						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 ACADEMY CLOSED -cheat lake	16	17 ACADEMY CLOSED	18
FALL NATIONALS - ORLANDO						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
BOSTER PHOTO SHOOT - MORGANTOWN			BOSTER PHOTO SHOOT - BRGPORT			

## October Announcements – Please Read!

DEAR PARENT: Do you own a business? Are you a professional who would like to reach other people in our community? If so, you can now sponsor our newsletter each month! By doing so, you'll reach other parents in your target market and pick up some new clients or customers! You never know whose hand this newsletter lands in. The price is just \$25 for a business card-sized ad for one full month. We even post this newsletter online. Try it out for a month, help our school and get some extra business to boot! See me, Ms. Casey, to get started. All you have to do is provide me with a copy of your business card and we'll insert it in our Through the Ranks for as many months as you want! Give it a try and see what happens! See me NOW to get started! Thanks for your support.

# Oct 2008 Student of the Month!

## Sydney Newman: Sparring Superstar!



Oct 2008 Student of the Month:  
**Sydney Newman**

This month I want to highlight a student who has come a long way with their sparring skills:

### **Sydney Newman.**

Sydney is a black belt recommended and started at our academy back in May of 2005 as a Tiny Tiger. And, like many students, Sydney was a bit intimidated by the whole "sparring thing".

But now, Sydney demonstrates some truly awesome sparring skills! Here's what I look for in somebody with kickin' sparring skills AND why I chose Sydney for Student of the Month for October 2008!

#1.) Respect - As I said in the main article, you learn (and show) respect through sparring. She always treats her opponents with respect and restraint. She focuses on points, not punishment. She always taps gloves before a round and treats her sparring partners the way she wants to be treated: with self-control.

#2.) Intensity - Here's another great thing about Sydney: her mindset. She always approaches her sparring sessions with a black belt attitude and gives it her ALL: 110%.

#3.) Focus - Over the last few months, I've really seen a big improvement in Sydney's focus and concentration. During her sparring sessions, she doesn't let anything break her focus – and for that reason, she racks up tons of points!

#4.) Courage - Remember, courage does NOT mean you're fearless. Nope. It means you're scared and you do it anyway. Then, with time and experience, your fears subside and you become more confident in the ring. But it starts with courage: getting out and mixing it up even if you have a few jitters!! Sydney did exactly that. Like most students, she had her challenges when she first started sparring, but didn't let that stop her. She pushed through her fear and eventually overcame them. Now she's something to behold in the ring!

#5.) Accuracy - One of the things Sydney brings to sparring is a focus on accuracy. She

strives to time her strikes, kicks and combinations for maximum points and maximum effectiveness. She has also developed patience over the course of the last year or so. This patience has allowed her to focus on her fundamentals and therefore, heighten her accuracy.

Let's all Congratulate Sydney On  
Being Casey's ATA Black Belt  
Academy's Student of the Month for  
October 2008! She's a great  
example to follow!

## Student Birthdays Here At Casey's ATA Black Belt Academy

Oct 1<sup>st</sup> – Sammy Paugh  
Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> – Lynn Johnson  
Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> – Nathanael Clemmer  
Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> – Dalton Moran  
Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> – Austin Gardner  
Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> – Eric Post  
Oct 5<sup>th</sup> – John Makins  
Oct 6<sup>th</sup> – Sasha Krasnitskaya  
Oct 7<sup>th</sup> – Max Johnson  
Oct 8<sup>th</sup> – Jackson Howe  
Oct 10<sup>th</sup> – Gage Jekel  
Oct 10<sup>th</sup> – Rossi LaBastida  
Oct 12<sup>th</sup> – Elias Khursand

Oct 13<sup>th</sup> – Noah Berry  
Oct 13<sup>th</sup> – Hayden Lynch  
Oct 15<sup>th</sup> – Gage Vest  
Oct 16<sup>th</sup> – Nathan Spencer  
Oct 16<sup>th</sup> – Patrick Johnston  
Oct 18<sup>th</sup> – Karen Feder  
Oct 18<sup>th</sup> – Darral Bennett  
Oct 19<sup>th</sup> – Ari & Orli Feder  
Oct 19<sup>th</sup> – Rob Bennett  
Oct 20<sup>th</sup> – Isaac DeBastiani  
Oct 21<sup>st</sup> – Manuel Mayobre  
Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> – Charles Cunningham  
Oct 26<sup>th</sup> – Casey Herring

Oct 26<sup>th</sup> – Ashalia Aggarwal  
Oct 26<sup>th</sup> – Jeremy Harp  
Oct 26<sup>th</sup> – Alexis Berrios  
Oct 27<sup>th</sup> – Gabriel Shelton  
Oct 27<sup>th</sup> – Aaron Sausen  
Oct 27<sup>th</sup> – Canaan Gilleland  
Oct. 30<sup>th</sup> – Darren Andrews  
Oct 31<sup>st</sup> – Daniel Hoins

Let's wish all the  
birthday students a  
warm and happy  
birthday!

It's time for... **TAEKWONDO TRIVIA**  
Test Your Martial Arts Knowledge...and Win!

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

According to the main article:

QUESTION #1: Sparring helps you in a real-life self-defense situation because...

- \_\_\_ a.) Sparring boosts your instinctive responses
- \_\_\_ b.) You are a black belt by that time
- \_\_\_ c.) You develop your concentration and focus
- \_\_\_ d.) It develops your "kinetic efficiency"
- \_\_\_ e.) None of the above

QUESTION #2: One of the goals of Taekwondo is...

- \_\_\_ a.) Getting to black belt within 28 months
- \_\_\_ b.) Attending as many tournaments outside our region as you can
- \_\_\_ c.) The ability for you to use your feet just as well as you do your hands
- \_\_\_ d.) All of the above

QUESTION #3: Sparring develops your coordination because...

- \_\_\_ a.) It's easy to fall down when sparring
- \_\_\_ b.) Your training partners normally have much more experience than you do
- \_\_\_ c.) You're constantly in motion and targeting a live,

moving opponent

- \_\_\_ d.) Your feet change position so often it's almost like a "dance"

QUESTION #4: Sparring teaches targeting through...

- \_\_\_ a.) The use of your Jahng-Bahng
- \_\_\_ b.) Pinpointing your strikes and striving for a clean kick or punch
- \_\_\_ c.) Your safety gear was developed over a long period of time to keep you safe
- \_\_\_ d.) Applying your forms to a fluid, changing situation

QUESTION #5: Sparring skills pay off in other sports because...

- \_\_\_ a.) You're more confident on the court, in the gym or on the playing field
- \_\_\_ b.) It develops your speed to such a great degree
- \_\_\_ c.) It helps you defend yourself against overly-aggressive ball carriers
- \_\_\_ d.) Other players are impressed by your "fancy footwork"

**Don't forget!** Any student who answers all the questions correctly (without help from an adult) wins a \$5 Karate Dollar towards their next testing, something from the pro shop or tuition! (Note: one Karate dollar per purchase, please).

## Referral Reward Program

I'd like to thank those of you who have participated in the Student Referral Program! Marketing for new students costs us tons of time, money and energy. Like any business, we need new students to stay in business. Over the years we have found that looking for new students takes away from the time we would rather be spending with you and for you and teaching other students!

If I've already helped you or your child with Taekwondo instruction, then you know how well I serve my students. When you refer your friends and relatives to us, everybody benefits. We can serve you and your kids better. You receive a nice gift. And we assure that we'll take the very best care of any friends or family that you refer our way! For more information about our referral reward program,

just give us a call at: (304) 282-1664. It's a great program where, as our way of saying "thanks", we send you a token of our appreciation for recommending us!

Also: If you would like any of your friends, coworkers, relatives, business acquaintances, etc. to receive a FREE subscription to this newsletter, please call me at the same number: (304) 282-1664. We'll also send them a note with their first issue telling them that you suggested they receive this newsletter, and to contact us if they would like it to stop at any time. If you enjoy this newsletter, share it with people you know, with no hassle for you!

Oct 2008 ATA Essay Contest! Win \$15, \$10 or \$5 in Karate Dollars!

# Special ATA Essay Contest!

## What Do YOU Love Most About the ATA?

This month – October - we're going to hold a special essay contest and YOU can win BIG:

- ✓ \$15 in Casey's Cash for 1<sup>st</sup> Place!
- ✓ \$10 in Casey's Cash for 2<sup>nd</sup> Place!
- ✓ \$ 5 in Casey's Cash for 3<sup>rd</sup> Place!

All you have to do is list why YOU love the ATA...and what it does for YOU. Please limit your answers to a half-sheet of paper. And feel free to draw a picture that goes along with it! All the winners will have their answers posted prominently in our school. You can use your Karate Dollars for something in the pro shop, towards tuition or upgrades...whatever you want! Put pencil to paper to WIN! See me now to get started! Put pencil to paper to WIN!

Oct 2008 ATA Essay Contest! Win \$15, \$10 or \$5 in Casey's Cash!

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