

BURSTWICK MARTIAL ARTS & FITNESS

GRADING SYLLABUS

4K Martial Arts

Karate • Korean Kickboxing • Kung Fu

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CONTENTS

How to use this syllabus 3
Our direction and goals 3
Safety first 4
Belt levels and attendance 5
Grading requirements by belt 6
- Yellow Belt 6
- Orange Belt 7
- Green Belt 8
- Blue Belt 9
- Blue White Belt 10
- Purple Belt 11
- Purple White Belt 12
- Brown Belt 13
- Brown White Belt 14
- Black Belt 15

Forms – Kata (Karate) 16
A closing word 17

HOW TO USE THIS SYLLABUS

This syllabus sets out everything a student needs to show at a formal Burstwick Martial Arts & Fitness grading: the minimum time at each grade and the techniques required for every belt.

Grades are not based on attendance alone, but a minimum time at each grade gives students the chance to learn the techniques properly. On grading days students are assessed on their knowledge of the syllabus, their form and their technique.

Each grade builds on the last. Students must show the techniques for their next grade and everything from previous grades. For example, a student going for Blue belt shows the Blue belt requirements and all the Yellow, Orange and Green belt work too. This keeps skills sharp and gives good practice.

Little and often works best. Skills improve fastest with short, regular practice rather than occasional long sessions, so students are encouraged to practise their forms at home as well as in class. Any questions should go to the club instructors.

Standards oversight

The syllabus is reviewed periodically by its original creators – Michael McDonald (Kung Fu), Pete Waddingham (Karate), Jane Waddingham (Korean Kickboxing) and Tracey Kennedy (Kung Fu) – so that it stays technically sound and true to the principles of each style. All instructors follow the same grading framework, supported by standard grading days, regular instructor evaluations and instructor briefings whenever the syllabus is updated.

OUR DIRECTION AND GOALS

> **Our motto – Through martial arts we soar:** The discipline, confidence and resilience built through martial arts training carry far beyond the club. Train with commitment and respect, and you will go on to achieve great things in whatever you do in life.

Traditional values

Developing martial arts spirit, respect, courtesy, loyalty, self-management, self-awareness and strength of character.

Our styles

Burstwick Martial Arts brings together four styles: Shaolin Kung Fu, Karate, Korean Kickboxing and Feng Shou Kung Fu.

Goals of the syllabus

To develop health, physical fitness, balance, strength, self-defence skills, focus, discipline, co-ordination, awareness and persistence, and for students to take responsibility for their own actions.

SAFETY FIRST

Safety is at the heart of every class and every grading. Every student learns two simple checks from their very first grades – IFAST at Yellow belt and GRIP at Orange belt – and uses them before every session.

IFAST – the pre-training safety check

I	**Injury**	Do you have any injuries? Tell an instructor.
F	**Floor**	Is the floor safe and clear?
A	**Awareness**	Am I aware of what is around me?
S	**Safety**	Is what I am doing safe?
T	**Test technique**	Test the technique slowly before doing it fully.

GRIP – “Get a GRIP before you hit!”

G	**Gear**	Have the right kit for the session. Pad work: gloves (and foot pads if kicking). Sparring: gloves, foot pads, gum shield and head guard; groin and chest guards recommended.
R	**Required kit worn**	All required protective equipment is on and in good condition. A gum shield is mandatory for sparring – no gum shield, no sparring.
I	**Inspect fit**	Straps firm and secure, gloves fastened properly, nothing loose that could cause injury.
P	**Partner check**	Check in with your partner: both properly equipped, injury-free and ready to train with care.

Safe practice in every class

- Contact is never made to the head, eyes, throat or groin. Techniques aimed at these areas are shown with control and no contact. The stomach area is avoided when training with pregnant students.
- Students check their partner for existing injuries or conditions before training together.
- Sparring is light contact only and always supervised.
- Throws, takedowns, locks and chokes are practised on mats, slowly and with control, under instructor supervision. A partner taps to release and the technique stops immediately.
- Self-defence against weapons uses rubber training weapons only, at controlled speed.
- Fitness and stance times are guides. Instructors adjust them to each student’s age and fitness, and good form always matters more than time.
- All Assistant Instructors and Instructors hold a current first aid certificate and DBS check.

BELT LEVELS AND ATTENDANCE

Belt levels follow British Martial Arts & Boxing Association guidelines. Each belt represents a further set of techniques and skills achieved.

Grade	Belt	Minimum time	Instructor pathway
9th Grade	Yellow	3 months	
8th Grade	Orange	3 months	
7th Grade	Green	6 months	
6th Grade	Blue	6 months	
5th Grade	Blue White	6 months	
4th Grade	Purple	6 months	Junior Instructor pathway
3rd Grade	Purple White	6 months	Assistant Instructor pathway
2nd Grade	Brown	1 year	Instructor pathway
1st Grade	Brown White	1 year	
1st Degree	Black	1 year	Full Instructor

Instructor pathway

Students who show the right skills, maturity and attitude can be invited onto the instructor pathway. Every instructor role works under the supervision of a Full Instructor.

Role	From belt	Minimum age	Requirements
Junior Instructor	Purple	16	Supports classes under the direct supervision of an instructor.
Assistant Instructor	Purple White	16	Current first aid certificate and DBS check.
Instructor	Brown	18	Current first aid certificate and DBS check.
Full Instructor	Black	18	Instructor qualification, current first aid certificate and DBS check.

Attendance

Minimum times are a guide only – some students need longer or shorter between grades. Instructors assess each student's progress individually during pre-grading week and tell students when they are ready to grade, including for Junior, Assistant and Full Instructor.

GRADING REQUIREMENTS BY BELT

At every grading, students show the requirements for their new belt and all previous belts. Partner work is performed at controlled speed with light or no contact; Student A and Student B work through the combination in the order shown, and each student also demonstrates the partner combinations from every earlier belt.



YELLOW BELT

9th Grade • Minimum time: 3 months

Stances	Attention, Salute
Punches / strikes	Front punch to head, Back fist punch to body
Kicking	Snap kick, Roundhouse kick
Blocking	Upper blocks, Lower blocks, Open palm block
Sparring & self-defence	Block down and punch
Fitness	5 press ups, 5 sit ups
Combination	Combo 1 – Jab, cross, back leg knee strike
Safety	Know and use the IFAST check (see Safety First)

Technique guide

Attention	Stand tall with feet together and arms by your sides, still and ready to listen.
Salute	A respectful bow to the instructor and your partner at the start and end of training.
Front punch	Straight punch from the front hand, turning the fist palm-down as it lands.
Back fist	A snapping strike with the back of the top two knuckles, using the elbow as a hinge.
Snap kick	Lift the knee, flick the lower leg forward to strike with the ball of the foot, then snap it back.
Roundhouse kick	Pivot on the standing foot and swing the shin or top of the foot round in an arc.
Upper / lower block	The forearm rises above the head to deflect a downward strike, or sweeps down to deflect a low punch or kick.
Open palm block	A flat open hand that redirects an incoming strike.
Jab / cross	A jab is a quick straight punch with the front hand; a cross is a straight punch with the rear hand, turning the hips.

Partner work – blocks and strikes combination

#	Student A	Student B
1	Right front hand punch to head	
2		Left open palm block
3	Left hammer fist overhead strike	
4		Left upward forearm block
5	Right snap kick to groin (controlled, no contact)	
6		Left open palm downwards block



ORANGE BELT

8th Grade • Minimum time: 3 months

Stances	Ready stance, Horse stance
Punches / strikes	Single, double and triple punches from horse stance
Kicking	Front kick
Blocking	Knife hand downwards block
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 1 minute; 2 combination techniques – block, shock and lock
Fitness	10 press ups, 10 sit ups
Combination	Combo 2 – Jab, cross, lead hook punch
Safety	Know and use the GRIP kit check (see Safety First)

Technique guide

Ready stance	Feet about shoulder-width apart, one foot slightly forward, knees soft and guard up.
Horse stance	Feet wide apart and parallel, knees bent and back straight – as if sitting on a horse.
Front kick	Lift the knee and push the foot straight forward, striking with the ball of the foot.
Knife hand downwards block	An open hand that chops downwards with its outer edge to deflect a low attack.
Block, shock and lock	Block the attack, follow with a counter-strike, then take control with a lock.
Lead hook	A short, curved punch with the front hand, elbow bent and turning through the hips.

Partner work – blocks and strikes combination

#	Student A	Student B
1		Left back fist to stomach
2	Right hand bar arm block	
3	Left hand take control of wrist	
4	Right hand back fist to side of head	
5		Drop down beneath strike



GREEN BELT

7th Grade • Minimum time: 6 months

Stances	Long stance, Lowered horse stance
Punches / strikes	Back fist to head
Kicking	Side kick
Blocking	Palm up block, Knife hand across face
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 2 minutes; self-defence against a kick (1) and a punch (1)
Fitness	15 press ups, 15 sit ups
Combination	Combo 3 – Jab, cross, leading leg knee strike, back leg front kick

Technique guide

Long stance	A long forward stance – front knee bent over the foot, back leg straight.
Lowered horse stance	A deeper version of horse stance, with the thighs closer to level.
Side kick	Lift the knee, turn the hips and drive the heel out sideways.
Palm up block	An open hand, palm up, that lifts and deflects a strike.
Knife hand across face	An open hand that sweeps across in front of the face to deflect a strike.

Partner work – blocks and strikes combination

#	Student A	Student B
1	Right leg side kick to stomach	
2		Left hand lowered bar arm block
3		Left elbow strike to side
4	Retreat into ready stance	



BLUE BELT

6th Grade • Minimum time: 6 months

Stances	Cat stance
Punches / strikes	Elbow strikes (high and low)
Kicking	Hook kick, Leading leg kick
Blocking	Bar arm, Double bar arm, Figure of four
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 2 minutes; self-defence against kicks (2) and punches (2)
Fitness	20 press ups, 20 sit ups, 10 crunches, 10 burpees, 10 squat thrusts
Combination	Combo 4 – Jab, leading leg kick, step through back fist to head, lead hook kick

Technique guide

Cat stance	Most of the weight on the back leg, with the front foot resting lightly on its ball.
Elbow strikes	Short-range strikes with the point of the elbow, aimed high and low on pads.
Hook kick	The leg extends just past the target, then the heel hooks back.
Leading leg kick	A fast kick with the front leg, often with a small skip step.
Bar arm / double bar arm	One forearm (or both) held across the body to absorb a strike.
Figure of four	An arm lock where the hands link to form a “4” shape around the partner’s arm.

Partner work – blocks and strikes combination

#	Student A	Student B
1	Right leg roundhouse kick	
2		Left hand lowered downwards knife edge block
3		Right hand front punch to solar plexus
4	Figure of four	
5		Raised elbow break out of (figure of four)
6		Right hand back fist to head
7	Double bar arm block	



BLUE WHITE BELT

5th Grade • Minimum time: 6 months

Stances	Horse to lowered horse transition
Punches / strikes	Rolling punch
Kicking	Back kick, Leg sweep (reverse and front)
Blocking	Golden scissor hands upwards and downwards
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 2 minutes; self-defence against kicks (2) and punches (2); escape from one choke or lock
Fitness	20 press ups, 20 sit ups, 20 crunches, 20 burpees, 20 squat thrusts
Combination	Combo 5 – Jab, lead hook, back leg pushing kick

Technique guide

Horse to lowered horse	Moving smoothly and with control between horse and lowered horse stance.
Rolling punch	A fast chain of straight punches, the fists rolling over one another.
Back kick	Turn away from the target and drive the heel straight back.
Leg sweep	Using the foot or lower leg to take a partner's leg away – front and reverse versions.
Golden scissor hands	Crossed forearms in an "X" shape that catch or deflect strikes upwards or downwards.
Pushing kick	A kick that pushes with the sole of the foot to create distance.

Partner work – blocks and strikes combination

#	Student A	Student B
1		180 degree spinning back fist to head
2	Bar arm and take control	
3	Sweep kick	
4		Leg lift
5		Side kick
6	Retreat	
7		Back kick
8	Golden scissor hands downwards	



PURPLE BELT

4th Grade • Minimum time: 6 months • Junior Instructor pathway (age 16+)

Stances	Duck stance; Horse stance – 2 sets of up to 1 minute (guide only – good posture matters more than time)
Punches / strikes	Phoenix eye fist, Double phoenix eye fist
Kicking	Stamp kick, Lower sweeping (reverse and front)
Blocking	Palm up and phoenix eye blocks
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 3 minutes; self-defence against kicks (3) and punches (3); escapes from 2 chokes or locks
Fitness	25 press ups, 25 sit ups, 25 crunches, 25 burpees, 25 squat thrusts
Combination	Combo 6 – Roundhouse to calf, jab, hook, roundhouse to side
Throws	Shoulder throw – Seoi-nage (Karate). On mats, with controlled break-fall.
Form – Kata (Karate)	Sets 1–2

Technique guide

Duck stance	Most of the weight on the back foot, like a cat stance – but the front foot stays flat on the floor rather than resting on its toes.
Phoenix eye fist	A fist with the index finger knuckle pushed forward to make a small, precise striking point.
Stamp kick	Lift the knee and drive the heel forward and down in a stamping motion.
Lower sweeping	Low sweeps close to the floor to take away a partner's balance.
Shoulder throw – Seoi-nage (Karate)	Turn in, load the partner across your back and shoulder, and throw them forward onto the mat.
Break-fall	A safe way to land – rolling or slapping the mat to spread the impact.

Partner work – blocks and strikes combination

#	Student A	Student B
1		Left roundhouse kick
2	Downwards block	
3	Right low sweep	
4		Jump
5		Right punch downwards towards face
6	Upwards kick to chest	
7	Backwards roll into ready stance	
8		Double back break fall, backwards roll into ready stance



PURPLE WHITE BELT

3rd Grade • Minimum time: 6 months • Assistant Instructor pathway (age 16+)

Stances	Horse stance – 2 sets of up to 90 seconds (guide only)
Punches / strikes	Wing hand strike
Kicking	Jumping kick, Spinning roundhouse kick
Blocking	Scooping block, Double palm up (front)
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 3 minutes; self-defence against kicks (4) and punches (4); defence against a two-handed and a one-handed grab to the chest
Fitness	35 press ups, 35 sit ups, 35 crunches, 35 burpees, 35 squat thrusts
Combination	Combo 7 – Jab, cross, duck (× 3)
Throws	Hip throw – O-goshi (Karate). On mats, with controlled break-fall.
Form – Kata (Karate)	Sets 1–3

Technique guide

Wing hand strike	An outward strike with the forearm and edge of the hand, the elbow lifting and the arm opening away from the body like a wing.
Jumping kick	A kick delivered while in the air, landing back in a balanced guard.
Spinning roundhouse kick	A full turn of the body before releasing a roundhouse kick.
Scooping block	A circular arm movement that scoops a kick or punch up and away.
Double palm up (front)	Both open palms raised in front to lift and deflect a strike.
Hip throw – O-goshi (Karate)	Step in, place your hip across the partner's and arm around their waist, and turn them over your hip onto the mat.

Partner work – blocks and strikes combination

#	Student A	Student B
1	Jumping kick	
2		Side step into guard
3		Double front choke (light grip, controlled)
4	Double palm up hand block – tan sau (Kung Fu)	
5	Sliding palm up hand to neck (controlled, no contact)	
6	Pull head down and right knee strike (controlled, no contact)	
7		Golden scissor hands block to knee
8		Double wing hand into chest



BROWN BELT

2nd Grade • Minimum time: 1 year • Instructor pathway opens

Stances	Horse stance – 3 sets of up to 90 seconds (guide only)
Punches / strikes	Leopard punch, Eagle strike
Kicking	Axe kick
Blocking	Double palm up (side), Knee block against kick
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 4 minutes; self-defence against kicks (5) and punches (5); escapes from 4 chokes or locks; defence against a bear hug from the front and from behind
Fitness	50 press ups, 50 sit ups, 50 crunches, 50 burpees, 50 squat thrusts
Combination	Combo 8 (advanced) – Jab, cross, stamp kick, side kick, back kick
Seize and control – Chin Na (Kung Fu)	Muscle / tendon grab – Fen Jin (Kung Fu): bicep (eagle claw). Joint lock – Cuo Gu (Kung Fu): wrist. Applied slowly; partner taps to release.
Form – Kata (Karate)	Sets 1–4, and create Set 5
Standard	All techniques performed with balance, strength and control; kicks in continual motion to the student's own waist height; blocks and strikes in continual motion to own shoulder height.

Technique guide

Leopard punch	A half-closed fist striking with the flat of the second knuckles.
Eagle strike	The fingers hooked like talons to grab or strike, as in the eagle claw.
Axe kick	Raise a straight leg high and bring the heel down like an axe.
Knee block	Lift the knee to block a low or middle kick.
Bear hug defence	Escaping when grabbed around the body from the front or from behind.
Seize and control – Chin Na (Kung Fu)	Techniques that grab muscles and tendons (Fen Jin) or lock joints (Cuo Gu) to control a partner.

Partner work – blocks and strikes combination

#	Student A	Student B
1	Walking forward right hook	
2		Walking backwards double bar arm
3	Walking forward left hook	
4		Walking backwards double bar arm
5	Walking forward right hook	
6		Duck beneath, double palm up block
7		Control wrist and elbow and rotate elbow upwards, guiding partner down
8	Roll forward to release the lock, returning to face partner in ready stance	



BROWN WHITE BELT

1st Grade • Minimum time: 1 year

Stances	Horse stance – 3 sets of up to 2 minutes (guide only)
Kicking	Crescent kick
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 5 minutes; defence against a one-hand grab to the outside wrist (double hand technique – snatch your own hand away and step away at the same time); self-defence against a rubber training weapon (e.g. knife) – thrusting, overhand and swinging attacks, at controlled speed
Fitness	50 press ups, 50 sit ups, 30 crunches, 30 burpees, 30 squat thrusts
Seize and control – Chin Na (Kung Fu)	Muscle / tendon grab – Fen Jin (Kung Fu): tricep (eagle claw). Joint lock – Cuo Gu (Kung Fu): elbow. Applied slowly; partner taps to release.
Form – Kata (Karate)	Sets 1–4, and create Sets 5 and 6
Standard	All techniques performed with balance, strength and control; kicks in continual motion to the student's own waist height; blocks and strikes in continual motion to own shoulder height.

Technique guide

Crescent kick	A straight leg swung in an arc across the front of the body.
One-hand wrist grab escape	Using both hands to snatch your own hand free, then stepping away.
Rubber weapon defence	Defending against thrusting, overhand and swinging attacks from a rubber training weapon, at controlled speed.

> **Partner work:** Students design and demonstrate their own partner combination, drawing on techniques from previous grades, performed safely and with control. All previous partner combinations remain examinable.



BLACK BELT

1st Degree Black • Minimum time: 1 year at Brown White • Full Instructor

Stances	Horse stance – sets of up to 2 minutes with short rests (guide only); number of sets adjusted to the student by the examiner. Any stance from Yellow to Brown White may be called.
Kicking	Lead leg axe kick, Jumping front kick, Spinning heel kick, Low round kick to calf and thigh (correct shin contact, guard kept up, full follow-through)
Sparring & self-defence	Light contact sparring – 3–5 minute rounds; self-defence against kicks (6) and punches (6); escapes from chokes and locks (5), including standing rear and front chokes
Takedowns	Chinese wrestling – Shuai Jiao (Kung Fu): single leg, double leg and underhook control takedowns. On mats, with control.
Seize and control – Chin Na (Kung Fu)	Muscle / tendon grab – Fen Jin (Kung Fu): shoulder (eagle claw). Joint lock – Cuo Gu (Kung Fu): shoulder lock. Applied slowly; partner taps to release.
Chokes	Sealing the breath – Bi Qi (Kung Fu): front headlock chokes, applied slowly on mats under instructor supervision; partner taps to release immediately.
Fitness	75 press ups, 75 sit ups, 50 crunches, 50 burpees, 50 squat thrusts, 10 pull ups
Form – Kata (Karate)	Sets 1–6 from memory
Standard	All techniques performed with balance, strength and control; kicks in continual motion to the student's own waist height; blocks and strikes in continual motion to own shoulder height.

Technique guide

Lead leg axe kick	The axe kick thrown with the front leg, testing speed off the front foot.
Jumping front kick	Drive one knee up, jump and kick with the other leg in the air.
Spinning heel kick	Spin the body and swing the heel round at the target, generating power from the hips.
Low round kick	A roundhouse kick to the calf or thigh using the shin, keeping the guard up.
Chinese wrestling – Shuai Jiao (Kung Fu)	Upright grappling and takedowns: single leg, double leg and underhook control.
Sealing the breath – Bi Qi (Kung Fu)	The Chin Na family of choke techniques, practised slowly with an immediate tap to release.

Partner work: Students design and demonstrate their own partner combination, drawing on techniques from previous grades, performed safely and with control. All previous partner combinations remain examinable.

Teach

Create Set 7 and teach it to junior class members, assessed by the instructor.

Instructor requirements

Current instructor qualification, first aid certificate and DBS check.

Martial arts theory

Verbal or written: history and principles of our styles, traditional values and etiquette, safe practice, injury management and duty of care.

FORMS – KATA (KARATE)

Sets 1–4 are the core forms of the syllabus. From Brown belt, students create their own sets (Set 5 at Brown, Sets 5 and 6 at Brown White, and Set 7 at Black belt, which is also taught to junior class members).

Set 1 – Foundations

1. Attention
2. Bow into left ready stance
3. Step forward right – right front punch to head
4. Step forward left – left back fist to body
5. Turn 180° into right ready stance
6. Left snap kick – step forward
7. Right roundhouse kick

Set 2 – Kicking & Horse

1. Into left-facing horse stance (ready fists)
2. Single strike (right)
3. Double strike
4. Triple strike
5. Face left – left ready stance
6. Right front kick

Set 3 – Long Stance

1. Lowered horse stance (arms forward)
2. Turn left – left ready stance
3. Right (rear) side kick
4. Land in right long stance
5. Forward step – left back fist to head

Set 4 – Bar Arms & Control

1. Turn 180° (face right), right foot forward
2. Step forward on left – single bar arm
3. Left back fist to head
4. Step forward on right – single bar arm
5. Right back fist to head
6. Step forward on left – double bar arm
7. Take control with right hand – right back fist
8. Step forward on right – double bar arm
9. Take control with left hand – left back fist

A CLOSING WORD

This syllabus brings together what our instructors have learned over many years of teaching Karate, Korean Kickboxing and Kung Fu at Burstwick. It sets out a clear path from a student's first Yellow belt to Black belt, with each grade building carefully on the last.

What every grade stands for

- **Safety –** Every technique is learned slowly, practised with control and tested with care. IFAST and GRIP are part of every class, not just every grading.
- **Respect –** For instructors, training partners and the traditions our styles come from. Looking after a partner is as important as any technique.
- **Progress –** Every belt is earned through steady practice. A belt is a record of effort and character as much as technical skill.
- **Leadership –** From Purple belt (aged 16 and over), students can begin the instructor pathway, helping to teach and support newer members of the club.

Through martial arts we soar

Our motto is a reminder that what is learned on the mat – discipline, confidence, focus and resilience – carries into school, work, family and community. We hope every student leaves each class a little fitter, more confident and more aware, and goes on to achieve great things in whatever they do in life.

Keeping the syllabus current

The syllabus is reviewed regularly by its creators so that it stays safe, relevant and true to the traditions it draws on. Any changes are shared with all instructors at an instructor briefing before they are used at a grading.

> **Syllabus creators:** Michael McDonald (Kung Fu) • Pete Waddingham (Karate) • Jane Waddingham (Korean Kickboxing) • Tracey Kennedy (Kung Fu)

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