

# Important things to know about your HTA sparring gear

2025

## Things to do today:

- Put name LARGE on both ends of gear bag  
(black marker on light colors and silver permanent marker on dark colors)
- Put name on every piece of gear with permanent marker  
(larger enough to be easy to see so we can get it back to its owner)
- Mold the mouthpiece.

Now that you have your first set of sparring gear, if you take care of it properly, it should last a long time. The items that will need to be replaced most often (unless you have a growth spurt) are the hand gear and foot gear because those items get the most use through contact during sparring, or students outgrow them. Kids do lose mouthpieces frequently and those are \$3 each.

## EVERY SINGLE CLASS FROM NOW ON:

- bring your gear to EVERY class - this is the student's responsibility to remember (we may not use the gear every class, but learning to bring it to every class is important)
- guys, wear cup to every class - there isn't time during class to put it on when we spar
- confirm it's YOUR gear bag before putting gear on AND before leaving the school.

Students cannot spar without all the proper sparring equipment. If they forget their gear bag, are missing pieces of gear, aren't wearing their cup, we have them spar a heavy bag, but they can only get their red stripe during sparring in gear with partners in class. And they can only develop the sparring skill they need to earn that stripe if they are getting regular practice & feedback from instructors. And, without the red stripe they aren't able to sign up to participate in belt rank testing.

### Gear should not be left in the car, especially during extreme temperatures.

Your gear will not be ruined, but extreme temperatures do cause it to wear out more quickly.

## Cleaning your gear

Red soft gear items should be wiped off with a damp cloth or paper towel and wiped thoroughly dry, but should never be immersed in water.

Elbow pads and athletic supporters need to be washed in the washing machine in hot water, and frequently. If it smells, wash it (and if it still smells, replace it)!

Rinse the mouthpiece and/or brush it with your toothbrush.

## Do not let students play with gear or spar at home.

They may practice putting it on and taking it off (the goal is to get it all on in 2 minutes or less and all of it off and stored in the gear bag in 1 minute or less), but improper use, loaning to friends and rough housing in it can ruin gear.

## If you have pets.

Store gear safely away from pets. Cats apparently like to find and sit on gearbags and use them like litter boxes; dogs tend to treat gear like a chew toy.

## If the student has any concerns about sparring,

please have them talk with us. Sparring is one of the most fun parts of taekwondo, but it is a new skill and can seem a bit intimidating for some kids until they get used to it.

If a student tell us the are "getting hit too hard" what we find they often mean, but have difficulty expressing is that they are getting kicked or punched gently but too often, and that even though they agree that they have much harder contact when they roughhouse with siblings,parents or friends than they do in sparring, having someone intentionally kicking and striking at them feels different. We do teach them how to block, evade and tighten their stomach muscles, as well as words to use if they do feel their partner is kicking too hard, and we do drills to help them gradually develop their sparring skills and increase their ability as they go up in belt rank.

Put student's name LARGE on both ENDS of gear bag so it can be seen from the workout floor side AND from the lobby side. Black permanent marker on light colors and silver permanent marker on dark colors. This helps decrease the odds that you will need to drive right back to the school to return the wrong gear bag your family member took home.



Gear bags must be soft sided (no wheels or hard expanding handles) and must be large enough so gear isn't squished inside.

The mouthpiece needs to be molded so it does not move around when the student is wearing it. Mouthpieces are best stored by shoving them into one of the openings in the head gear (where it can air out), **do NOT put it in a closed case or baggy that will let smelly bacteria grow.**



Follow the direction on the package for heating the mouthpiece before shaping. To shape it the student should close mouth naturally, and bite down gently, while pushing out with tongue to the front and sides, and at the same time using fingers to press along the skin on the outside of the upper lip to press the mouthpiece against the teeth. The mouthpiece should take on the shape of the teeth and should not move if the student talks while wearing it.

Put student's name LARGE on every piece of sparring gear (except mouthpiece and athletic cup).



We do have a rule that if any sparring gear is on the mats the student must do 5 push-ups. We've had so many situations where a student is missing a piece of sparring gear, and what has typically happened is students take gear out of their bags to put on (or when they are taking it off after sparring) and lay it on the mats. Items are accidentally picked up by the wrong student (or we find items) and if they don't have a name on them, we don't know who they belong to. Putting names on everything (and our push-up rule) decreases the chances that you'll need to spend more money replacing lost gear pieces.