

Ranks

The Tree of Life

Cuong Nhu adult ranks are based on a tree. We have four belts in the adult curriculum (White, Green, Brown, Black) and each belt has two stripes that lead up to it:

- White represents the seed.
- Green stripes are the shoots of green coming out of the ground. The green belt is the sapling.
- Brown stripes are bark growing on the strengthening tree, and the brown belt is a strong, young tree.
- Black stripes are the shade that the tree begins to produce; the black belt is the mature tree.
- Red stripes on a black belt represent the fruit of the tree. To advance in rank and to continue growing as martial artists, Cuong Nhu black belts must teach and build their communities.

The children's curriculum is broken into smaller stages so students can stay motivated with more short-term goals. Kids pursue a parallel curriculum that has been modified with consideration for growing bodies and developing judgment. After blue belt, kids graduate into the adult curriculum.

Eligibility to Advance

Eligibility to test and advance in rank is determined most importantly by one's proficiency in the Cuong Nhu curriculum but also on attitude, effort and attendance. On average, adults take six to eight years to reach black belt and children take eight to ten. We take longer to become a black belt than many other styles, because we require a great deal in skill, knowledge and maturity.

Everyone comes to Cuong Nhu with a different combination of natural abilities, training schedules and attitudes. No one should be discouraged by or arrogant about how fast or slow they move from one rank to another.

See our [Testing handout](#) to learn more about advancing through the ranks.

