

## Gi/Dobok Care

We practice Korean and Japanese martial arts. We use the Taekwondo V-neck DOBOK and the traditional style crossover GI for Judo, Jujitsu, and Hapkido training. Whichever uniform you are using, it should be washed after every practice. Not having a clean gi is disrespectful to your training partner. Also, unclean gi's can pick up and transmit unwanted skin infections [such as ringworm] to your partner's skin and the mat. Here are some gi care tips:

- Wash your gi as soon as possible after practice. If you cannot wash it immediately, hang it up so it can 'air out' until you wash it. Once certain bacteria start growing in your gi, no washing will get them out and the gi will acquire a certain smell every time you work out in it.
- Do not bleach your gi - bleaching will greatly reduce the life span of your gi.
- Wash your gi on the regular cycle using warm or cold water. Hot water will shrink it.
- Remove bloodstains by using hydrogen peroxide instead of bleach. The sooner you apply hydrogen peroxide to the bloodstains, the better the chance you have at removing them.
- Line drying or the dryer is fine for drying your gi. Line drying will leave your gi stiff like it has been starched. If you put your gi in the dryer it will come out softer, drying will also shrink your gi. Drying your gi in the dryer will shorten its life.

Additionally

- Get a bag to carry your gi in.
- Gi's are to always be neatly folded and carried if you do not have a bag to carry it in
- Taekwondo doboks are very thin and lightweight. They can wrinkle easily, especially after a sweaty training session. Folding or hanging the dobok is recommended.
- Always repair your gi as soon as possible when you notice it is damaged.
- Write your name on the inside of your gi with a permanent marker (Except for RENTAL judo gis).

## Belt Care

- Wash your belt as needed. Belts are cotton and can collect bacteria like a GI. Kids taekwondo belts don't normally need to be washed because they are not practicing a lot of groundwork. Adults practicing throws and jujitsu should wash their belts as needed.

## Slippers

They go by many names: slippers, flip-flops, zori, or slippah if you are from Hawaii. Bringing slippers to practice is just as important as bringing the GI or DOBOK to practice. Wearing slippers while off the mat is very important because it represents good hygiene and shows respect to the Dojo. Good hygiene is not only important at practice, but all players need to follow the same guidelines at tournaments. All of these topics will be covered in this article. Generally, Judo, Jujitsu, and Hapkido practitioners spend a lot of time practicing mat work or newaza (groundwork). While practicing newaza, student's faces and bodies come into close contact with the mat and their opponent. During a practice session a player will share whatever is on their gi, on their opponent's gi or whatever may be on the mat with each other.

**For example**, if a person walks into a bathroom or out of the dojo without slippers during practice and then returns to the practice mat, whatever germs or bacteria that got picked up during that trip is now on the mat. Later two students may be working out over that same spot and are now exposed to those germs. Bottom line: personal cleanliness is extremely important. Close contact demands that everyone involved is as clean as possible. Every student's body must be clean, the mats should be swept and wiped down when dirty, and the gi must be clean. GI is a great bacteria attractor, especially when they are moist and warm after practice. It is highly recommended that you wash your gi as soon as possible after practice and that you wash your gi after every practice. (Please see the article on caring for your gi).

Aside from the medical implications of wearing your slippers off the mat, the second reason for taking wearing shoes off while off the mat is respect for the dojo. In the Japanese language the word 'do' means way and word 'jo' means place, so literally dojo means 'the way place'. In a room where Martial Arts is practiced, it is important that students give the 'way place' the utmost respect by properly bowing and wearing their slippers while off the mat. Not wearing slippers or shoes off the mat, and then walking on to it is considered a form of disrespect. It may be just a gym to others, but when Martial Arts is practiced there, it is the dojo.