

10 Quick Tips for White Belts

- 1.** How to get good isn't a big secret. Get on the mats, get good instruction and do conditioning, drilling and sparring. Gameplans, flow charts, notebooks, journals and instructionals are gravy. Training is the meat and potatoes.
- 2.** Spar with everyone you can. Force yourself to go with guys who intimidate you. Experience is what counts, not mental tallies of who tapped who. And always finish the round, no matter how tired you are.
- 3.** Escaping submissions and bad positions isn't easy. And it's not supposed to be. That's kinda the point. But that's also what makes it good when you're on the winning side.
- 4.** The best answer to a problem is usually "don't let it happen in the first place." That's always disappointing to hear but it's unfortunately true. Of course learn the escapes and counters but also become aware of what mistakes got you there in the first place. Boxers don't ask "How do I get unpunched?"
- 5.** The difference between gi and no-gi is only as big as you make it. Do whichever you enjoy. Try both. And do whichever is appropriate to prepare for competition. Just don't be that guy who wastes time arguing one over the other.
- 6.** Feeling stupid or uncoordinated when trying a new move is a good thing. It means you've got something to learn and your body gets to gain a new skill.
- 7.** Being technical doesn't mean being lazy. Being aggressive doesn't mean being a meathead. But it will take a lot of training and mat time to balance the two.
- 8.** You'll think you're "getting it" at about 6 months. Then at 12 months you'll realize how wrong you were before and how now you're *really* getting it. Then 6 months later you'll actually start getting it.
- 9.** Getting your blue belt is good but don't blow it up too big in your mind or you risk losing motivation when you get promoted. Don't be one of those guys who races to his blue belt then disappears forever.
- 10.** When you do get your blue, don't worry too much if you feel like you don't deserve it yet. That's normal. Just do what it takes to grow into it.