



**PHOENIX**

**MUAYTHAI•KICKBOXING**  
**MARTIAL ARTS WITH GRIT**

**FORGED IN FIRE**

# **PHOENIX GRADING SYSTEM INFORMATION BOOKLET**

**MUAY THAI & KICKBOXING**

**CHALLENGING - REALISTIC - EFFECTIVE**

## **Includes:**

- **The Grading System.**
- **Muaythai Grading Requirements.**
- **General Information.**
- **The competency levels explained.**

**TRAINING ALWAYS MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER**

# **The Phoenix Grading System**

## **(Muay Thai – Kickboxing – Grit)**

Our grading system is credible, honest and measures improvement and development and competence, in every participation. Every level is exponentially harder than the level before. Our gradings are competency based and factor in coachability, aptitude, attendance, and attitude. Grading is a reward for effort recognition of ability and standing in the Club. It is a 'well done' from the coaches to recognize an individual's achievements.

There is no single industry recognised grading system in Muaythai. Many clubs have their own system, and the standard can vary incredibly. Ours is quality based and designed to be increasingly difficult. To grade at Phoenix to an intermediate level ensures you are at an intermediate level anywhere in the world! We are happy to have the hardest grading system in the world.

When I developed the grading system (prior to 1996) I set out to ensure it was quality and competency based. How someone looks, how much they pay, what their 'CV' is how much they technically understand or how many 'SM' likes someone has is irrelevant. It is a do or do not system to ensure when you get something, you earn it, and you know you have earned it. Your peers know it and you are proud of it. It is unlike any memory based traditional system. It requires absolute competence, dedication, consistency, ability, teamwork, character, humility and a ridiculous level of conditioning and determination.

### **GRADINGS AND TESTING FOR LEVELS IN THE SYSTEM**

Gradings occur when people are ready to move to the next level. We grade people predominately at gradings but also occasionally in routine classes. Grading often happens at a seminar or a set grading time. Seminars are practical training sessions that go for 2-3 hours and allow us time to delve deeper into the techniques, the system, and the training concepts as well as test candidates for grading.

None of the levels are time-based. 'How long' is intangible, as it depends on many factors. Factors assessed include competence, aptitude, attendance at training, effort at training, skill development, fitness level and factors of fitness including sport specific requirements, teamwork, loyalty and coachability.

**Graded levels are:**

**Level 1 > Level 2 > Level 3 > Level 4 > Level 5 > Level 6**

Novice Intermediate > Intermediate > Advanced Intermediate >  
Advanced > Senior > Master

White > Blue > Purple > Red > Gold > Black

**FORGED IN FIRE**

## Phoenix Level 1

Level 1 is recognition of being a Novice Intermediate. This is the level that cements your foundations for all future development. It means you have competence at the basics but also need more time to improve your application of basics. Your fitness ensures you are capable of doing a Beginner Class with correct skills and fitness technique, solid partner work and the ability to keep up.

You are required to demonstrate all basic techniques in the air, on Thai pads, on heavy bags and on strike shields. You are required to be a good partner and work with people of different levels.

To achieve Level 1, you must have demonstrated commitment to training on a regular and consistent basis over a period of time (approximately 6 months), plus a willingness to learn and to be coachable. Level 1 is not time based and will take as long as it takes you.

The coaches will judge you on your ability to do a Level 1 class to the level required in competence, teamwork, fitness, and discipline. When someone is Level 1 they are ready to do regular sparring, pad work, harder fitness, and partner drills.

A Level 1 student has an awareness of the Phoenix Philosophies and Warrior Code.

**Level 1 requirements:** All required to Level 1 competency.

TECHNIQUE	TECHNIQUE	TECHNIQUE
Fighting stance	Jab & Double Jab	L & R Rib Kicks
Solid head guard	Straight & cross	Switch kick
Linear footwork	Push Kick & front kick	Boxing strikes – 6 angles. Body, upper and hook.
Checking rib & leg kicks	Leg Kick. In & out	Over top punch
Cover/brace against ALL Kicks	Driving Knee & running knees	Spin back fist/Elbow
Dodge leg kicks	Elbow strikes 6 angles. Lift, hook, chop.	Catching rib kicks & take down
Collar tie & flow	Knees in collar tie	Arm control
Parallel footwork with punches	For hand marking & cross face	3 by 2 min Shadow Sparring with clarity
Push up, sit up, star jumps. 5,4,3,2,1.	Enduro Kicks – 80 Enduro Knees – 80 Enduro punches - 80 Enduro checks - 80	50 Burpees & 100 sit ups.
5 by 3 min effective bag work	Pad Work basics 3 by 2 min rounds.	Drills. 1-1 kicking, 2-2 punching, body sparring.

A selection of above will be tested when grading but all is required over classes in routine training. Other techniques may be given priority as it will depend on class focus and club development and following the 'what works' principle.

**Everything you overcome that is hard is what forges you, to be who you are.**

## Phoenix Level 2

Level 2 is recognition of being Intermediate. Measured by your ability to apply what you know in sparring, drills and in random un-structured training. Training is required over an extended period demonstrating development, coachability and commitment. (possible in 12 months but as long as you take). You must demonstrate a regular and diligent approach to attending intermediate classes. Sparring is where you demonstrate your ability to apply technique, have the required fitness, fortitude, and teamwork to bring all your training together.

Level 2 recognises competence to apply the basics and link them together at competency levels '2' in sparring and '3' in structured drills. You can do intermediate training at pad work, sparring, conditioning, and partner drills. Must be able to work with less experienced people and guide them. Level 2 students must show a level of composure sparring and deal with challenges with dignity.

A Level 2 demonstrates constant ability to be coachable while understanding the Phoenix Philosophies and Warrior Code. A level 2 student is a good team member.

**Level 2 requirements:** All required to Level 3 competencies.

All previous Level 1 techniques MUST have improved significantly. Plus:

TECHNIQUE	TECHNIQUE	TECHNIQUE
Open fighting stance	Front arm angle punching	Rib kicks with real power
Free clinching	Rear body hook and close short punches.	Roll up kicking
Linear & circular footwork	Kick catching & counters with takedowns & strikes.	Slipping & countering
Checking in 1-1 kick drills. All angles.	Back leg & inside leg kicks.	Up punching in combinations.
Hover checking	Jump, driving, drag & swinging knees.	Milling. Forward defence & bracing against power.
Lean backs and dodging to counters.	Elbow strikes in combination & clinching	3 Basic clinch takedowns.
Diagonal footwork punching	Power elbows off folding punches.	Free clinching for 3 by 3 min rounds. (keep posture)
Over hook, body lock doing & escaping.	Get up drill & basic ground kicks.	Head control and elbow defence.
Front leg sweeps in clinch and catching	Leg stomp and leg tep.	3 by 2 min Shadow Sparring with clarity
Mt Ainslie run. Male – 20 min. Female – 23min.	Enduro Kicks – 120 Enduro Knees – 120 Enduro punches - 120 Enduro checks - 120	100 Burpees & 100 sit ups, 100 plank touches and 50 push ups.
5 by 3 min effective bag work	Pad Work basics 3 by 3 min rounds. Holding and doing.	Sparring – 12 months of classes. 8 by 3 min rounds at level of partner.

A selection of above will be tested when grading but all is required over classes in routine training. Other techniques may be given priority as it will depend on class focus and club development and following the 'what works' principle.

## Phoenix Level 3

A Level 3 student has developed beyond the Intermediate level through application and excellence at an Intermediate level. Level 3 recognises your effort and ability to apply basics with excellence and apply advanced skills to sparring.

A Level 3 student is capable of practicing all their skills in an open environment with limited controls and can perform basics at a level of unconscious competence in non-structured scenarios against non-cooperative opponents with intensity and intent from both parties. Advanced students can spar at a competition level and handle a variety of opponents. People often compete prior to achieving Level 3 to demonstrate their ability and fortitude.

You must be able to hold your own with other advanced students as well work with beginner students and 'guide' them. Level 3 students can also coach basics and assist developing beginner through to Intermediate students.

To achieve Level 3, you must demonstrate that you have noticeable Grit and have been forged in fire since you started. You have a proven track record of hard work, dealing with adversity, loyalty, and teamwork. A Level 3 student understands the Phoenix Philosophies and Warrior Code.

**Level 3 requirements:** All required to Level 3&4 competencies. All previous Level 1 and 2 techniques MUST have improved significantly. Plus:

TECHNIQUE	TECHNIQUE	TECHNIQUE
Fighting stance & open guard for no glove striking.	Defending forward under pressure in sparring.	Front leg rib effectiveness
Free clinching for 5 by 3 min rounds.	Adapt to solid boxing skills for boxing only work.	Do clinch takedowns against less experienced people.
Adaptive footwork to control the ring.	Demonstrate 5 effective catch kick takedowns	Free clinching for 3 by 5 min rounds. (keep posture)
Checking solid in sparring with counters	Demonstrate 5 effective catch kick counter strikes.	Stay upright clinching less experienced people.
Evade clinching as required to win.	Knee in clinch & off punches in mid-range.	Sprawling and defence to non Muaythai takedowns.
Evasive work and ring control to adapt	Set up for elbows in clinching & combinations.	100 Burpees & 100 sit ups, 100 plank touches and 50 push ups.
Front leg sweeps in clinch and catching	Enduro Kicks - 200 Enduro Knees - 200 Enduro punches - 200 Enduro checks - 200	3 by 3 min Shadow Sparring with reality
Mt Majura via mine shaft run or Ainslie. You walk you fail everything.	Pad Work basics 5 by 3 min rounds. Holding and doing.	Sparring - 12 months+ of classes. 8 by 3 min rounds with Level 3+ people.

A selection of above will be tested when grading but all is required over classes in routine training. Other techniques may be given priority as it will depend on class focus and club development and following the 'what works' principle.

## Phoenix Level 4

A Level 4 student has consistently performed at an advanced level for many years and are a positive example to themselves, their peers, and the club. A Level 4 student 'owns' their technique and has integrated the benefits of training in their life and other achievements. A Level 4 student has demonstrated their ability in competition and can train anywhere in the world at an advanced level proudly representing themselves and Phoenix.

A Level 4 student has unconscious competence ability under pressure with all stand-up striking basics and can adapt to a variety of attacking styles and situations. A student has the composure to utilise tactics and strategies to enhance the applicability of their style. A Level 4 student has developed their own style based on concepts and self-awareness. A Level 4 student has the fitness and conditioning to handle the demands of regular training in an open environment, as well as the required athletic ability, humility, and proven repetitive mental toughness.

A Senior student understands the Phoenix Philosophies and abides by the Phoenix Warrior Code whilst being an inspiration and help top new students.

**Level 4 requirements:** All required to Level 4&5 competencies.

All previous Level 1,2,3 techniques MUST have improved significantly.

A repeat of the Level 3 test plus:

TECHNIQUE	
Any technique requested to demonstrate by the head Coach.	
A physical and mental challenge selected by the coach	
Holding pads for Intermediate students.	
Assisting coaching classes for a period of time.	
Ability to Coach a Beginner Class.	
Competition Experience.	
Self-assessment and learning from mistakes	

A selection of above will be tested when grading but all is required over classes in routine training. Other techniques may be given priority as it will depend on class focus and club development and following the 'what works' principle.

**“You don't really know yourself until you learn to take a punch in the face”**

## Level 5

A Level 5 student has a distinct style that they 'own' at a subconscious level. A Level 5 student can consistently perform effectively under pressure against an uncooperative opponent with intent to cause harm. Level 5 is consistently demonstrating the highest standards of diligence, mental toughness, humility, teamwork, and loyalty. A Level 5 student knows how to evaluate themselves and continue to learn and develop through self-assessment.

Level 5 students have repeated their performance under continually gruelling and challenging situations. Level 5 students have overcome adversity in life and used their training to be resilient, adapt and grow. Level 5 students know they can endure anything and that everything in life worth anything is hard.

Competition experience must be extensive, and this is balanced against the betterment of self and Phoenix. Long term dedication to the club over a 10 year+ period is also a contributing factor. This is balanced against competency at an advanced level and the ability to inspire and share their experience with others.

## Level 6 – Master Trainer

This is a level of recognition for long term students who are an inspiration, who give back and who have achieved as examples in life. This is recognition to further excellence of a Level 5 student over many years. Improving the Phoenix System for the benefit of the club and the future. Contributing through years of dedication and developing the standards of the Phoenix System to ensure it continually improves and remains world class. An activity that betters others and the community. A Level 6 graded student is an inspiration and role model to every member. This is very much a grading of honour and timeless recognition.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Lifestyle:** Phoenix encourages lifestyle integration, remembering that Phoenix is a part of your life – that what we do should be transferable and enhance your life! Grading should never be the main goal as many people benefit from just constant participation and will improve over time as they grow and develop. Everyone has a limit, and everyone must balance their life. Everyone will take a different amount of time because everyone is different and starts from a different place. You should be proud of whatever level you reach and be happy remaining there. Doing the program consistently is far more important than what level you are graded to.

**Not grading:** Gradings are never a sure thing and must be earned. This shows that anything worth achieving takes time, persistence, dedication and is hard. Competency, Aptitude, constant effort, teamwork, and class participation are essential. When you do not grade, there is always a good reason – ask why and learn from it. Self-assessment is tough but essential. It means you are not ready yet and have to work harder. Gradings are not comparisons and individual improvement is required. Some factors that may cause someone to not grade; you are not ready yet, not up to the required standard, entitlement, unrealistic expectations, low standards for technique with fitness/skills, poor teamwork, good physical skill but not consistent effort, composure, arrogance, quitting under

pressure, inconsistent training, your ego, poor coachability and not taking responsibility for your work.

**Rewards:** When you grade you get personal pride, and we give you a certificate to frame and proudly display plus a badge showing your level. The badge is for sewing on your Muaythai shorts. We do not have a set uniform but like you to wear your badge proudly to show other students your level. **Please wear it to seminars and sparring classes.**

## CONCLUSION

Well done for being a part of the system and following the grading system. Aim to grade but set realistic goals. Grade to a level that fits into your life and be happy being there. Enjoy your training first and be disciplined over time. Grading is a reward system for your progression and development. Remain humble and grateful.

If everyone comes regularly and enjoying themselves then they are benefiting from being in a challenging environment and learning about themselves. A grading system and development program allows for an activity to have a long-life span and remain an integral part of your life for many years. The fundamental goal is positive character development regardless of the level achieved by every member. For Phoenix, we want to contribute to the success of members lives by providing valuable life lessons and a center line to your life.

Higher graded students are expected to assist and develop junior grades by direct assistance and by example.

**‘ONCE YOU HAVE TRAINED AT PHOENIX,  
EVERYTHING ELSE IS EASY’**

### What are the competency requirements:

- 1 > **Non pressured competence.** Competent individual technique and basic linking with clarity, precision and power. Tested in programmed structured demonstration.
- 2 > **Concentrated pressure competence.** Competent linking of techniques in attack and defence with structured scenarios. Have flow with adaptations of power, speed, and timing. Risk is evident but varied.
- 3 > **Conscious competence.** Competent Random display of attack and defence techniques in unstructured scenarios. Can adapt level, speed, power, and timing depending on coach instructions and partner level. Risk is moderate but constant. Has conscious competence at all basics.
- 4 > **Subconscious competence.** Competent under pressure in random unstructured scenarios. Ability to adapt under pressure when a style doesn't work or to exploit a situation. Must be an element of risk and chance of failure. Has subconscious competence under pressure with varied risk.
- 5 > Has subconscious competence in varied, random scenarios under pressure for **a sustained period**, in situations that are challenging, unpredictable and threatening with a high level of risk.