

# Plot Twist: I'm a Black Belt Now 🥋😄

By Lily Botts

So... this Saturday (2/28/26), I officially earned my black belt in taekwondo. After 4 (maybe 5? I've lost track at this point) years of training, I finally did it. I went from barely remembering my stances to technically being an instructor. Wild.

At my test in Portland, there were 17 of us. One of the scariest parts? Breaking three wooden boards with a reverse jumping side kick. Yes, reverse. Yes, jumping. Yes, side kick. Basically, all the hard things at once.



When it was my turn, I tried not to think about falling on my face. I jumped, kicked... and broke all three boards on my first try. Only about four of us broke on the first attempt, and somehow I was one of them. I'm still replaying that moment in my head like it's a slow-motion sports movie.

Now that I'm a black belt, I'm technically an instructor for First Kicks, which means I help teach 4- and 5-year-olds. So I went from being nervous at my own belt tests to telling tiny humans to keep their hands up and yell louder. Full circle.

Taekwondo has taught me discipline, confidence, and how to kick things (responsibly). I'm really proud of how far I've come.

White belt Lily would be shocked. Black belt Lily is just trying to act cool about it.

