

AIKIDO ISSHINKAI ASSOCIATION

# NEW STUDENT GUIDE



**issinkai**

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ABOUT

# AIKIDO ISSHINKAI

***Isshinkai translates from Japanese as One Heart, One Mind.***

Aikido Isshinkai Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the sincere study and practice of the martial art of Aikido. Every member regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation or race is valued and welcome to practice given their abilities and limitations.

By providing resources, guidance and instruction to our members, we pursue the fundamental principles of Aikido while rigorously maintaining its technical and martial roots.

## OUR MISSION

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1

Foster the development and dissemination of Aikido by establishing an open minded, cooperative community of dojos, instructors and members

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2

Foster relationships within our community and with other Aikido schools and organizations based on mutual respect, understanding and compassion

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3

Continue to maintain our relationship to Hombu Dojo (Aikikai Headquarters) and to support the Aikikai Foundation through our training and activities.

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# AIKIDO and the AIKIKAI ORGANIZATION

## ABOUT AIKIDO

Aikido is a Japanese martial art developed by Morihei Ueshiba (O-Sensei) in the 1920s. Aikido translates from Japanese as "the way of the spirit of harmony". By blending with the energy of another person's attack, the force can be safely redirected and this provides a means to peacefully resolve conflict.

## FOUNDER OF AIKIDO

Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei (1883-1969) trained and became an expert at various Japanese martial arts, including Jujutsu and the sword and spear arts. A profound spiritual experience led to his realization that the real way of the warrior is the Art of Peace.

## AIKIKAI FOUNDATION

Aikikai Foundation is the Japanese organization which Aikido Isshinkai Association is associated with and from which members receive our black belt rankings. It is directly related to the founder of Aikido, O-sensei, and is currently headed by O-sensei's grandson, Moriteru Ueshiba. It is our connection to the historical Aikido lineage and the global Aikido community.

## HOMBU DOJO

Hombu Dojo is the world headquarters for the Aikikai Foundation. It is located in Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan. All member dojos of the Aikido Isshinkai Association follow the rank grading system established by Hombu Dojo.

# MEMBER CONDUCT

Aikido Isshinkai Association operates in the spirit of Aikido's founder, Morihei Ueshiba O-Sensei.

Adherence to traditional standards and proper etiquette is a necessary element of a dojo's successful operation.

- Every student is responsible for creating an atmosphere of harmony, cooperation and respect.
- Respect O-Sensei's teachings as interpreted and taught by the head instructor .
- Respect the physical dojo space, your training tools, and the dojo community members.

# DOJO ETIQUETTE

In this guide, we provide an overview of the most common dojo etiquette practices in most Aikido dojos. As a beginner Aikido practitioner, it is important to observe and follow the local dojo etiquette to create a respectful, safe, and positive learning environment.

## **OVERALL FLOW OF A REGULAR CLASS**

- The students line up and sit kneeling ("in seiza") before class begins. The instructor will enter and lead the opening bow.
- The instructor leads warm-ups and possibly falling ("ukemi") practice.
- The instructor demonstrates a technique, possibly with some verbal instruction. Then everyone partners up and practices that technique.
- The instructor signals when it is time to do the next technique, at which time everyone should line up, typically in the same way as at the beginning of class.
- The instructor signals when it is the end of class, at which time everyone lines up the same way as at the beginning of class. Then the instructor leads the closing bow.

# DOJO ETIQUETTE

## BOWING

- Bowing when entering or leaving the dojo (in this case, the room with the training mats): A standing bow towards the 'shomen', marked by the portrait of O-sensei.
- Bowing when getting on or off the mat: The very first and last bow should be in the seiza position towards the 'shomen'. If there is need to get on or off the mat, a standing bow is acceptable.
- Bowing at the start and end of class: Students line up in seiza and the instructor leads these bows. The first bow is toward the 'shomen', marking the start or end of class together. The next bow is to the instructor and marked by saying (at the start of class) "*onegaishimasu*" or (at the end of class) "*arigato gozaimashita*".
- Bowing when starting or ending practice of a technique: After the instructor finishes demonstrating a technique, the students bow toward the instructor, then immediately partner up and bow to the partner, saying "*onegaishimasu*", to begin practicing.
- Bowing upon receiving individual instruction: While partners are practicing, the instructor may come join and practice, or give instruction. The person not immediately working with the instructor sits at a safe position/distance in seiza and observes. When the instructor is finished and ready to move on to another pair, the students sit and bow to the instructor, saying "*arigatogozaimashita*", then to each other with "*onegaishimasu*" to continue practicing.
- If the instructor is working very nearby e.g. throwing someone near you, it may be appropriate to sit and join the others who are observing. In this case, do the same as above when the instructor is finished and going away.

## OTHER DOs and DONTs

- Keep finger and toe nails trimmed short to reduce the risk of injury. Longer hair should be tied back. No jewelry should be worn during practice. Eyeglasses are worn with care. Practice uniforms should be clean and free of odor and stains. Never wear shoes onto the mat.
- Between classes, do not sit with your legs and feet out or leaning against walls or posts. Sitting with legs crossed is usually advisable.
- Do ask the instructor before leaving the mat during any class. At a minimum, it is courtesy. More seriously, if someone disappears from the mat, the instructor cannot respond if there is a medical emergency.
- Do check in with your instructor and other members (before or after class) early on to ask about etiquette and other aspects that may be new or confusing.
- Be on time and ready to line up before the start of class. If arriving late, discreetly sit in seiza at the edge of the mat and wait for the instructor's invitation into the class, at which point, do the 'shomen' bow and "*onegaishimasu*" by yourself. If you expect to be late for a particular class often, let the instructor know.
- Do participate in helping to clean the dojo, typically after class but, if time allows, before as well.
- Refrain from talking during class. If your more junior training partner appears to be having trouble, you may assist them but err on the side of doing less - assume they are going through the process of figuring something out and avoid stealing that process from them. If there is injury or some other urgent matter, attend to it appropriately and inform the instructor immediately.

# TEST REQUIREMENTS

Aikikai Foundation Grading System <http://www.aikikai.or.jp/eng/information/review.html>

Prerequi		Examination Content											
		Ik kyo	Ni kyo	San kyo	Yon kyo	Go kyo	Shiho-nage	Irimi-nage	Kote-gaeshi	Kaiten-nage	Tenchi-nage	Jiyu waza	Kokyu-ho
5th Kyu	30 days practice	Shomen-uchi					Katate-dori	Shomen-uchi					zagi
4th Kyu	40 days practice after obtaining 5th Kyu	Shomen-Katadori uchi					Yokome n-uchi	Shomen-uchi					zagi
3rd Kyu	50 days practice after obtaining 4th Kyu	Shomen-uchi (zagi and tachi waza)					Ryote-dori Yokome n-uchi	Shomen-uchi Tsuki			Ryote-dori		zagi
2nd Kyu	50 days practice after obtaining 3rd Kyu	Shomen-uchi (zagi and tachi waza) Katadori (zagi and tachi waza)					Katate-dori Hanmi-handach	Shomen-uchi Tsuki Katatedori	Katate-dori		Ryote-dori	Katatedori	zagi
1st Kyu	60 days practice after obtaining 2nd Kyu	Shomen-uchi (zagi and tachi waza) Yokomen-uchi (zagi and tachi waza) Katadori (zagi and tachi waza) Ushiro Ryotedori				Yokome n-uchi	Katate-dori Ryote-dori Hanmi-handach i waza & tachi	Shomen-uchi Tsuki Katatedori			Ryote-dori	Katate-dori Ryote-dori Morote dori	(zagi and tachi waza)
1st Dan	70 days practice after 1st Kyu (15 yrs or older)	Unarmed techniques (zagi, hami-handachi waza, tachi waza) for shoumen-uchi, yokomen-uchi (strikes), tsuki (thrusts), all forms of grasping shoulders, elbows, collar, wrists and hands; all techniques from the rear)											
2nd Dan	Min 1 yr since 1st dan, with 200 days practice	Same as above plus Tanto-dori and Futarigake (by two ukes) Submit an article on some Aikido-related subject											
3rd Dan	Min 2 yrs since 2nd dan, with 300 days practice	Same as above plus Tachi-dori, Jo-dori and Taninzugake (more than three ukes) Same as above (Topics will be assigned)											
4th Dan	Min 3 yrs since 3rd dan, with 400 days practice, (22 years or older)	Jiyuwaza for all of the above plus a short essay											

## Notes:

The number of practice days outlined are the minimum requirements, and eligibility for testing is at the discretion of your instructor.

# GLOSSARY

Japanese Aikido terminology can seem confusing at first. Don't worry - you will quickly pick it up during regular practice.

## GENERAL

Onegaishimasu	Please, Please do __ for me
Domo Arigato Gozaimashita	Thank you very much
Waza	Technique
Nage / Tori	Person doing the technique
Uke	Person receiving the technique
Ukemi	The skill of receiving the technique/the skill of falling safely

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## TECHNIQUES

Ikkyo	First technique
Nikyo	Second technique
Sankyo	Third technique
Yonkyo	Fourth technique
Gokyo	Fifth technique
Shiho-nage	Shiho = four directions
Irimi-nage	Irimi = entering
Kote-gaeshi	Kote = wrist
Kaiten-nage	Kaiten = rotating, revolving
Tenchi-nage	Tenchi = heaven and earth
Jiyuwaza	Jiyu = free. Jiyuwaza = practicing techniques of one's own choice
Kokyu-ho	Kokyu = breath, coordination

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## ATTACKS

Shomen-uchi	Shomen = front, center, main face
Katatedori	Katate = one hand; tori (dori) = take, hold, grab
Katadori	Kata = shoulder
Yokomen-uchi	Yokomen = side of the head; uchi = strike
Ryotedori	Ryote = both hands
Tsuki	Thrust, punch
Ushiro Ryotedori	Ushiro = behind, in back
Morotedori	Uke takes one of nage's wrists using two hands
Zagi (Suwari waza)	Seated techniques (za / suwari = seated)
Hanmi-handachi	Nage sitting and uke standing
Tachi waza	Standing techniques



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