

GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING

Proper observance of etiquette is as much a part of your training as is learning techniques. Standards of etiquette may vary somewhat from one dojo or organization to another, but the following guidelines are nearly universal. Please take matters of etiquette seriously.

1. It is said that “training begins and ends with rei (etiquette)”. Etiquette is not just a formality, it is a way of training your awareness, your body, and your spirit. Please try to perform the etiquette associated with this art from the heart, and not just as an empty movement.
2. When entering or leaving the dojo, it is proper to execute a standing bow in the direction of O-sensei's picture, the kamiza, or the front of the dojo. You should also perform a seated bow when entering or leaving the mat.
3. It is appropriate to bow when asking or thanking a partner for practice and after receiving instruction from the teacher. When asking for advice or practice say “Onegaishimasu”, when thanking someone say “Arigato gozaimashita”.
4. No shoes are allowed on the mat, nor are food, gum, or beverages.
5. Keep your training uniform clean and in good shape, and your fingernails and toenails clean and cut short. Remove all jewelry before practice to avoid causing injury to yourself or your partner.
6. Be on time for class. Students line up and sit in seiza a few moments before the official start of class. Use this time to quiet your mind, and to reflect on what you are here to do at this time. If you do happen to arrive late, bow in on the mat and sit quietly in seiza on the edge of the mat until the instructor grants permission to join practice. Then, bow in to the instructor and join class.
7. If you should have to leave the mat or dojo for any reason during class, notify the instructor.
8. Avoid sitting on the mat with your back to the picture of O-sensei. Also, do not lean against the walls or sit with your legs stretched out.
9. Please keep talking during class to a minimum. Try to learn with your body, rather than by discussion.
10. Students should seek out partners and not passively wait to be chosen. Take an active part in your own training and development.
11. Weapons, uniforms and all equipment should be carried in a bag when outside the dojo. Never use another person's weapons without permission.
12. Remember that you are in class to learn, and not to gratify your ego. An attitude of receptivity is therefore advised.
13. The cleanliness of the mat and whole dojo is important. Please take great efforts to clean the mat and dojo after each class, or any time you notice something is in need of attention.
14. Please pay your dues on time. Dues are not a fee for instruction, it is a fee for maintaining your status as a member of the dojo. If there is some difficulty or question please feel free to ask one of the instructors so we can help you. Our members are of the utmost priority to us.

It is common for people to ask about the practice of bowing in Aikido. In particular, many people are concerned that bowing may have some religious significance. It does not. In Japanese culture, it is a way of greeting someone and of showing sincerity. Incorporating this particular aspect of Japanese culture

into our Aikido practice serves several purposes:

- Bowing is an expression of respect. As such, it indicates an open-minded attitude and a willingness to learn from one's teachers and fellow students.
- Bowing to a partner may serve to remind you that your partner is a person - not a practice dummy. Always train within the limits of your partner's abilities.

While training is in session, you should behave in a certain manner. A certain level of decorum should be maintained, as is appropriate for a place where development of self and techniques of life and death are taught. You should always remember that Aikido is a martial art and as such, deserves your full attention. Bowing is a means of acknowledging the importance of the training you are engaged in.