

AIKIDO INSTITUTE DAVIS

STUDENT'S HANDBOOK

1. Welcome to the Dojo!

We are happy that you have joined us. This booklet will acquaint you with our Dojo and help you get the most out of your practice. Even if you have been training in Aikido the information contained herein will be useful to you. Please read it carefully and do not hesitate to ask Sensei for clarification.

2. About Aikido

Aikido is a non-competitive martial art that promotes non-violent conflict resolution. The techniques are low-impact, circular and executed from a balanced center.

The Founder, Morihei Uyeshiba, often referred to as *O Sensei*, had several skilled students who went on to spread Aikido around the world. The one who has been with him the longest (23 years) and who was entrusted with the care of the Aiki Shrine, was the late Saito Morihiro Sensei, 9th dan, from Iwama, Japan. Saito Sensei has traveled the world to spread O Sensei's teachings, some time referred to as the Iwama style of Aikido.

Other main lineages of Aikido are Ki Aikido, Yoshinkan, and Yoseikan.

3. About the Dojo

Our mission at Aikido Institute Davis is to increase world peace and harmony through the promotion of Aikido and related arts. The style of Aikido that we promote was handed down by Saito Sensei.

Saito Sensei emphasizes the constant practice of basic and firm techniques (*kihon waza*) to build a solid base from which *Takemusu Aiki* (spontaneous Aikido) can spring forth.

Hundred other dojos in the world are dedicated to the same goal of spreading Saito Sensei's teaching. They have come together under various associations, such as the Iwama Ryu of Europe, the California Aikido Association Division I and the Takemusu Aikido Association. Aikido Institute Davis is a member of the latter association, which is recognized by the Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo, Japan (Hombu Dojo)

Howard Hoa Newens, 7th dan, is the chief instructor and owner of the Dojo. Newens Sensei was the former chief instructor of Aikido Institute Oakland for several years. He studied with Dang Thong Phong Sensei, the late Seiichi Sugano *Shihan* and the late Morihiro Saito *Shihan*. He began Aikido training in 1967 at the age of 12 and has been teaching since 1972. Sensei personally selects the staff instructors based on their maturity and experience.

Newens Sensei also trained in and teaches Chi Kung and Wu Tai Chi, which are best known for increasing energy and health.

4. About the Programs

The Aikido program includes on-going classes for adults and juniors and leads to ranks recognized by Aikido World Headquarters. The Aikido curriculum is spelled out in detail in the Rank Requirements posted in the Dojo and on our web site.

Aikido for Children & Teens - The Children program includes two classes per week. Regular attendance is essential. If you are in the Teens program plan to attend any three classes a week on a regular basis. The purpose of the 3-class limit is to allow adequate time for academic homework. We also recommend that all students attend the seminars that are usually held in fall and spring. Regular attendance counts toward eligibility for promotion.

Aikido for Adults - The adult program includes five weekly regular classes and two weekly basic classes. We recommend regular attendance in at least three classes per week and individual training during open mat times. Kyuu examinations are held three times a year and dan examinations as needed. The monthly Advanced class is reserved for students ranked 2nd Kyuu and above.

Deshi Program – Serious students who are interested in a concentrated training program under Sensei’s personal guidance during a specified period can apply for admission into this program. Discuss with Sensei if interested.

Tai Chi & Chi Kung Course – Students learn the Wu Tai Chi short-form & long-form together with a simple yet powerful form of Chi Kung, at their own pace. Students are expected to attend both weekly classes. The Saturday class includes a half-hour push-hand session.

5. Getting the Most Out Of Your Training

We offer the following advice to help you to optimize your training.

- a) Set personal goals. Remember the reason that you enrolled into the Dojo. It is helpful to often review the requirements for the next rank and use them as training goals.
- b) Adhere to a regular training schedule. We recommend three or four times a week. Avoid lapses of more than one month. Get in some additional training before and after class at the Dojo.
- c) Participate in all activities sponsored by the Dojo. Attend all examinations and seminars. These sessions are opportunities for immersion into training.

6. Ranking and Examinations

In Aikido programs a ranking system based on *kyuu* (ranks below black belts) and *dan* (ranks for black belts) is used to measure progress in learning. This system and the corresponding requirements are consistent with those of the Takemusu Aikido Association and Aikido World Headquarters in Japan.

The normal progression for a student is as follows:

Junior: 9th kyuu-8th-7th-6th-5th-4th-3rd

Adult: 6th kyuu-5th-4th-3rd-2nd-1st dan-2nd-3rd-4th-5th-6th

The rank requirements, posted on our web site are stated in terms of minimum attendance, technical ability and behavioral requirements.

We hold *kyuu* examinations three times a year. Based on personal observation and attendance records, Sensei determines students’ eligibility for testing. Names of eligible students are posted one month before the exams. An eligible student should ask a *sempai* for guidance on how to prepare for the exam. We hold dan rank exams as needed.

7. Code of Etiquette

The Code of Etiquette consists of a set of practical rules that are further expression of the Dojo Motto and are designed to ensure a safe and harmonious environment for Aikido training. We expect all students to adhere to the following rules of etiquette.

1. Follow Sensei’s instructions carefully.
2. Sempai go first. Follow their examples.
3. Upon entering the Dojo, focus your mind on training.
4. During class focus solely on the technique at hand.
5. Do not distract others who are training.
6. Take care of injuries timely and report to Sensei immediately.
7. Do not train when you are ill or have a contagious disease.
8. Keep the Dojo and mat clean always.
9. Ensure that hands, feet and gi are clean before training.
10. Do not wear sharp objects while training.
11. Train with all with an open mind and do not engage in contest.
12. Train according to the best of yours and your partner’s abilities.
13. In the Dojo, do not engage in any activity that is inconsistent with the Dojo’s mission and motto. When in doubt, ask Sensei.

8. **Administrative Matters**

The lighter our administrative work, the more energy we can devote to serving our students' needs. Students can do the following to help:

- Check off the attendance sheet each day you come in to train. This will help us maintain up to date records to determine eligibility for examination.
- Pay dues on time, that is, by the first day of every month. We do not bill. This main source of income supports the on-going operations of the Dojo.
- Inform us timely of changes of contact information: postal address, e-mail, phone number.
- Inform Sensei when you need to be absent from class longer than a week. Note that students pay monthly dues as long as they intend to remain enrolled, irrespective of breaks in training. However absence of more than three months will result in automatic removal from the roll.

9. **Spirit of Service**

Consistent with the mission of the Dojo, an integral part of training is service to the community and the world. We provide opportunities for students to foster this spirit of service by serving our little community in the Dojo. Thus, students will enrich their training by helping to welcome beginners, helping *kohai* train for their tests, sweeping the mat after class, bringing flowers for the *shomen*, helping to clean the dojo, helping with certain administrative tasks, etc. We encourage you to volunteer for these activities as appropriate. Remember that the Dojo is a place for self-transformation and growth, not a sports club.

10. **In Case of Pain or Injury**

Let the instructor know immediately upon sustaining an injury in class. Stop, check the injury and care for it before resuming training.

If you are recovering from an injury or an illness or have any physical limitations, let the instructor know before class and let your training partners know before you engage in the training. Listen to your body and do not ignore pain.

Some muscular soreness in the first few weeks of training is normal.

11. **Aikido Glossary**

Bokken: Wooden sword.

Chi Kung: a form of exercise that increases *chi* circulation in the body and thus increases health.

Deshi: a personal disciple of the teacher.

Dojo: Place for training in the path.

Dogi or *gi*: Training outfit.

Domo Arigato Gozaimashita: Thank you very much.

Gasshuku: Intensive seminar in which students live and train together.

Gomen nasai: I am very sorry.

Hajime: Begin!

Hakama: Skirt worn by dan-ranked students.

Jo: Wooden staff.

Kohai: Junior student (in relation to a sempai).

Nage: Person who executes the attack in a technique.

Onegai shimasu: I am requesting the favor of (training with you).

O Sensei: Great Teacher, referring to the Founder.

Sempai: Senior student (in relation to a kohai).

Sensei: Teacher. Usually refers to the chief instructor .

Shihan: "Master", honorific title usually conferred to teachers ranked 7th dan and above.

Shomen: The front of the dojo (toward which we bow).

Suburi: Set of single moves for bokken or jo practice.

Takemusu Aiki: Refers to the ultimate level of Aikido training in which techniques are executed effortlessly and spontaneously to fit any situation.

Uke: Person who executes the technique during paired training.

Yame: Stop!

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