



Dojo Etiquette

For your safety and that of your fellow students, you can only practice if you have martial arts insurance. This can be obtained free on joining the Aikido for Daily Life Association. Payment for membership to the association is obligatory after your third lesson.

1. Arrive at the dojo 10 - 15 minutes before the lesson starts to help put the mats down (if applicable) and get ready for the lesson.
2. Ensure you turn up clean and “sweet smelling” (apart from children, it is recommended to wear deodorant). Remember rule 4: put yourself in your partner's place i.e. would you like to practice with someone who has stinky feet or who honks like a pole cat.
3. Bring flip flops, slippers or japanese zori, so you can take your shoes and socks off and walk to the mat without picking up the dirt from the floor on your feet and then depositing it on the mat.
4. Bow to the dojo before getting onto the mat. The ki sign stands for life and the universe. Take your flip flops off and place them neatly with the heels touching the mat edge.
5. At the beginning of a class, line up in straight lines in seiza position (kneeling) with kyu grades first then dan grades in order.
6. Bow when the sensei (teacher) bows and bow to your partner. This is just a sign of acknowledgement and respect, a bit like a western handshake.
7. If you are late , no problem, but wait until the sensei invites you onto the mat.
8. The teacher of the dojo is called sensei, as is any visiting teacher who is teaching on the mat. You only call your own teacher sensei.
9. Do not wear any jewellery, watches etc. as these can either hurt your partner or yourself by getting caught up in hair etc.
10. Short hand and toe nails avoids cuts and scratches to your partner.
11. Your gi top sleeves should be at least 6 inches from your wrist to avoid broken and/or dislocated fingers. Your trouser shorts should be 4 - 6 inches from your ankle to avoid tripping over. A hakama should be long enough to just touch the top of your feet.
12. Ladies where possible should wear a hakama plus a white t shirt under their gi top. The gi top should have cotton ties (for modesty's sake).
13. When you put on your gi top the label in the bottom corner should show. If you tuck it in , it shows you have had a bereavement in the family.
14. When thrown always get up as soon as possible to avoid cluttering the floor with bodies, which can trip up people and so cause accidents.



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15. When the sensei claps please sit in seiza position, preferably relaxed or with crossed legs , with straight backs (good for breathing) and not slouching or leaning on walls along the side of the mat.
16. If you want to leave the mat for any reason, no problem. Generally ask the sensei first.
17. When you leave the mat to stop practicing put on your flip flops turn and bow.
18. Private lessons are available at a cost. For these you will need to turn up half an hour before the class is due to start to put down the mats and complete your own warm up.
19. Your partner is not an opponent. Techniques are learned through him/her and with him/her. It should be a pleasure to be thrown as well as to throw. Each movement in aikido teaches the principles and spirit of aikido and should be practiced sincerely.
20. Care should be taken to be aware of the ability of your partner so that no injuries occur.
21. A few more no-no's - don't lean against the walls and don't eat or drink on the mat.
22. If you are a member of our club, this basic code of conduct will be expected from you. As you can probably see most of the above is primarily for safety or common courtesy.