



Proper Dojo Etiquette

Aikido is a culturally Japanese art and with that comes Japanese etiquette that may seem excessive or strange to Western-people. The practice of refining these points of etiquette is part of your training in Aikido.

When entering or leaving the practice area make a standing bow toward the dojo.

Always bow when stepping on or off the mat in the direction of the Shomen.

When in doubt of the proper protocol, especially when visiting another dojo, kneel and bow.

Respect your training tools. Gi should be clean and mended. Weapons should be in good condition.

Never use someone's weapons without consent.

A few minutes before class time you should be warmed up and formally seated in quiet meditation to rid your mind of the day's problems and prepare for study.

It is important to be on time for practice and participate in the opening ceremony. If you are unavoidably late you should wait, formally seated beside the mat until the instructor signals permission for you to join the class. Quietly perform a simple seated bow as you get on the mat.

The only proper way to sit on the mat is in seiza. If you have an injury or disability, you may sit cross-legged, but never with legs outstretched, never reclining, and never leaning against a wall or post.

Do not leave the mat during class except in the case of injury or illness. You must notify the sensei before leaving.

During class when the instructor demonstrates a technique for practice, sit quietly and attentively in seiza. After the demonstration bow to the instructor, then to a partner and immediately begin to practice.

When the end of the technique is signaled, stop immediately, bow to your partner and quickly line up with the other students.

Never stand around idly on the mat. You should be practicing or, if necessary, seated in seiza awaiting your turn.

If it is necessary to ask a question of the instructor you should go to him or her and bow respectfully (standing bow). Never call the instructor over to you.

When receiving personal instruction, sit in seiza in the most out of the way possible and watch intently. Bow formally when the instructor has finished. When another near by is being instructed you may stop your practice to watch. Sit formally and bow at the end.

Respect those more experienced, never argue about technique.

Respect those less experienced. Do not pressure your ideas on others.

If you understand the movement and are working with someone who does not, you may lead that person through it. Do not correct or instruct your training partner unless you are authorized to do so.

Keep talking on the mat to an absolute minimum, Aikido is experience.

Fingernails and toenails must be short. Feet must be clean. Shoes and sandals are never allowed on the mat.

No eating, drinking*, smoking, or chewing gum on or off the mat during practice.

No hard jewelry should be worn during practice.

Never drink alcoholic beverages while still wearing your practice gi.

When observing a class:

Sit respectfully, never with legs propped up or in a reclining position.

Do not talk to anyone while they are on the mat and class is in progress.

Do not talk or walk around while the instructor is demonstrating or during the opening and closing ceremonies.

