

# Pinner Aikido Club

[www.pinner-aikido.com](http://www.pinner-aikido.com)



*Beginner's Guide to Training*

## Foreword

This document is a newcomer's guide to Aikido to aid in their training and to explain basics that will be introduced as part of their training. It can be used as a guide to assist progress through the grades over the coming years.

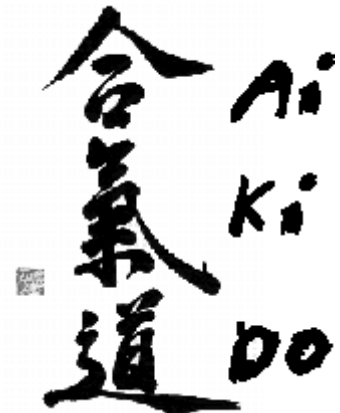
## History

Master Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969) founded the way of Aikido in the early 1900's. After mastering many traditional fighting arts he devised his own techniques that did not depend on physical strength but on circular motions that blended with the energy of the attacker. He decided that true victory was not the defeat of an opponent but the resolution of discord within oneself. He developed the art of Aikido as a means of deflecting harm away from yourself but without necessarily inflicting damage on an aggressor.



## Ai-Ki-Do

The word *Aikido* in Japanese is made up of three kanji (characters). "AI" means "to meet, to come together, to harmonise"; "KI" means "energy, spirit, mind" (in a larger context "KI" means "the spirit" or "the nature" or "of the universe," and not just the spirit of human beings). "DO" means "the Way" which signifies that the study of Aikido does not involve merely self-defence techniques but includes positive character-building ideals which a person can incorporate into his or her own life. AIKIDO therefore means the way of harmonising with the spirit of the universe.



## Philosophy

The most unusual aspect of Aikido is that although it is primarily a self-defense art, it takes as the basis of its philosophy the idea of being in harmony with the opponent rather than being in conflict. The ideal of Aikido is not to think of defeating the enemy but rather to be in harmony with him, both spiritually and physically.

This is why Aikido is sometimes called the "art of non-resistance" or the "non-fighting martial art".

During practice sessions, partners work in harmony with each other, learning when and how to yield, how to lead and guide another person's movements and how to down an opponent through non-aggressive techniques.

## Aikido movements and Techniques

The movements of Aikido emphasise a flowing flexibility and the maintaining of balance. The aim of the aikidoka is to be in complete control of his or her mind and body, and to maintain a calm, alert posture. The continuous and flexible motion, which originates at the waist, is like the performance of a dance, a graceful spherical motion. Much of the beauty of the Aikido movements derive from the coordinated motion of the entire body contributing to the integrated sequence of movements. Most of the joint techniques, such as those applied to the wrist or elbow, flex the joints in the direction of natural bending. They are in harmony with natural flexing

and although such techniques are painful and effective if resisted against they result in no permanent joint damage.

## Aikido Basics

### Gi or Keikogi

This is the Martial Arts suit worn whilst training. It is acceptable to wear loose-fitting jogging trousers and a T-shirt when you first start training. However, as these can become damaged, it is recommended that as soon as the decision is made to continue training' purpose-built Gi's should be purchased. They are made of heavy cotton and are capable of withstanding the demands placed upon them whilst training.



### Hakama

These are essentially culottes worn over the Gi. Our club recommends that these only be purchased after the second grading (Orange Belt) as they can be awkward to train in at first.

## Grades and Syllabus

The following shows the different grades (belt colours) and how to achieve them. It is important to always wear your belt when training, especially when training away from your home club. This shows other people what level you are at allowing them to temper their attacks accordingly and to be aware of your ability to take Ukemi (break falls).

White This is the belt you start with. This belt is usually included when you purchase a Gi.  
As you advance through the grades, the belt colours change with the following sequence:

Yellow	-	5 <sup>th</sup>	Kyu	
Orange	-	4 <sup>th</sup>	Kyu	
Green	-	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Kyu	
Blue	-	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Kyu	
Brown	-	1 <sup>st</sup>	Kyu	- Ikkyu
Black	-	1 <sup>st</sup>	Dan	- Shodan
Black	-	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Dan	- Nidan
Black	-	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Dan	- Sandan
Black -	-	4 <sup>th</sup>	Dan	- Yondan

Gradings up to Blue belt are taken at club level

1<sup>st</sup> Kyu gradings and above are tested once a year in front of senior yudansha

## **Tatami (Mat) Etiquette**

In Aikido training, etiquette is as important as the study of physical techniques. Proper execution of the etiquette forms not only creates a good atmosphere in the dojo, but it also develops your intuition and awareness. You will not be expected to know all of the etiquette forms in the beginning, but you should try to observe and learn as many as possible before entry into the regular classes.

When entering the dojo (training hall), students are expected to perform a standing bow (Ritsurei) to the head part of the dojo (Kamiza) or picture of O-Sensei (Shomen).

Before going onto the mat (Tatami) ensure that your suit (Gi) and belt (Obi) are tied properly. Approach the edge of the mat, slip your shoes off and bow towards the Shomen (the picture of O-Sensei).

Before starting to train it is important you follow the warm-up exercises, including the wrist exercises. These are designed to manipulate the joints you will be stressing throughout the training class.

Following the warm-up exercises every student is expected to practise break falls (Ukemi) and Tai Sabaki.

While the Sensei is demonstrating techniques it is expected that students will kneel or sit tidily around the edge of the mat. Once instructed to train a kneeling bow is performed before partnering up.

Your partners are not your opponents so it is important to take care of them and always Ritsurei before and after training with them. When throwing a partner, be aware of your surroundings, never put the Uke at risk of bumping into others. Also it is important to be aware of the Uke's abilities, be sensitive to their grade.

If you need to leave the mat during a training session always seek permission from the Sensei. This is not only polite but it is also important that the Sensei knows where you are going. This is in case you should become unwell or suffer an injury and move away to an area where you cannot be seen and looked after. Similarly if you arrive late, wait for permission by the Sensei before going onto the mat.

## **Rei (bowing)**

Bowing is a very important aspect of Japanese culture. In Aikido, we bow to show respect, honour and gratitude. There are two ways of bowing: from a kneeling position and from a standing position.

### **Kneeling Bow**

This is considered to be more formal and is performed at the beginning and end of each class, in grade order, facing the Sensei and the picture of O-Sensei. It is also used when the class is kneeling after being formally shown a technique by the Sensei before training recommences. To perform this from a kneeling position place your hands in front of your palm down on the mat with your thumb and index fingers together in the form of a triangle.



### **Standing Bow (Ritsurei)**

This is a less formal and more common form of bowing. It is used when first entering the Dojo (training hall), when coming onto and leaving the Tatami (training mat), to your opponent before training and also after receiving personal attention from Sensei.

## Break falls (Ukemi)

### Forward roll – Mai Ukemi



Although called Forward Ukemi, this actually a sideways roll in that you face sideways to the direction you want to roll.

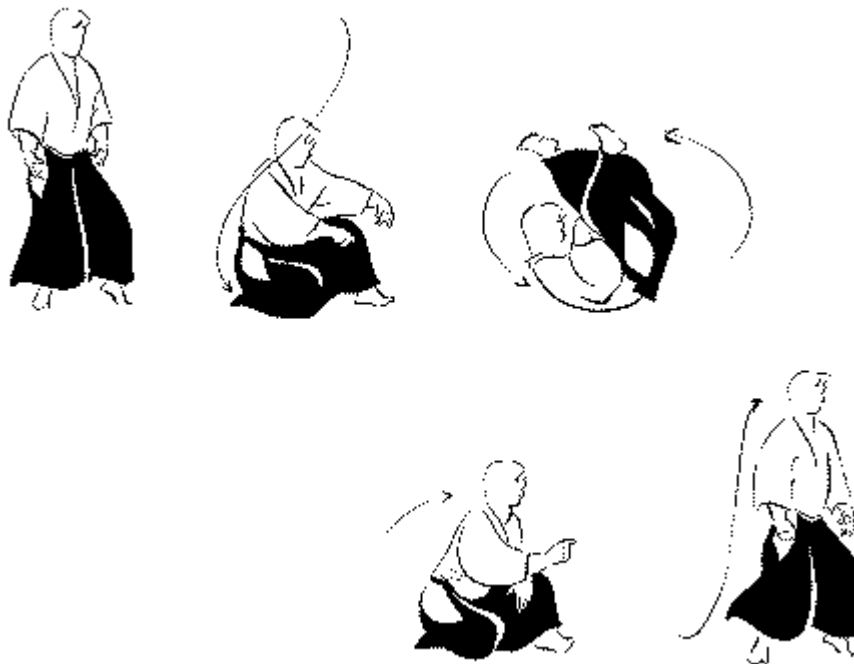
- Step forward with one foot bringing the hand on the same side ready to support your weight on the mat.
- Lean forward, placing the side of the hand onto to the mat.
- Tuck your chin into your chest and turn your head so that your chin is also touching your shoulder and you are looking along your arm so that can see where you are going.
- Allow the arm to bend only slightly. Enough to make a gentle curve to roll over but not enough to collapse under your weight as this would put your forearm on the mat and make for an uncomfortable roll.
- Push off with the back foot allowing yourself to roll along your arm and over your shoulder.
- Continue the roll back up to a standing position and back on posture.
- Beginners can start the process from one knee.
- Be sure to practice with rolling to both the left and right.

## Backward Roll – Ushiro Ukemi

### From Sitting



### From Standing

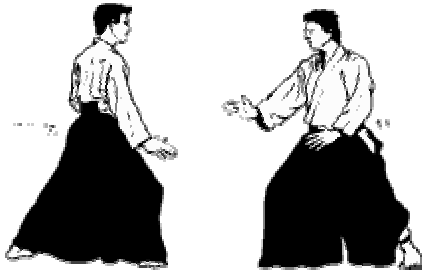


- Raise your arms in front of you and tuck in your chin.
- Drop down first to one knee, then sit down and roll backwards striking the mat with both of your arms just before your shoulders touch the mat **or**
- Raise your legs and continue the roll over the outside edge of your shoulder using your hands to assist you.
- By rolling over the outside edge of your shoulder, your head and neck will be protected from contact against the mat.
- As your feet pass over your head, flex your toes forward so that the ball of the foot touches the mat allowing you to complete the break fall by standing up and coming onto "posture".
- Beginners can start in a crouching position.
- Be sure to practice with rolling to both the left and right.

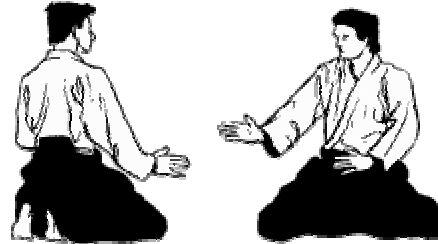
**Defensive Postures (Kamae or being “On Posture”)**

This is the typical stance for receiving a frontal attack. One leg forward with the foot turned out, the arm of the same side forward, hand open. Weight over the front foot with the knee slightly bent. Back foot loose but touching the mat.

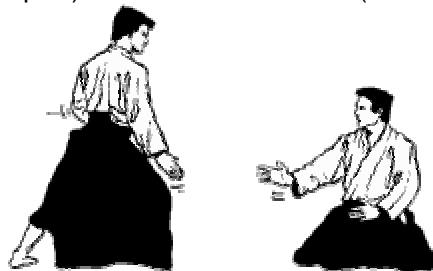
Keep your head up and watch Uke (your attacker) as well as being alert to what else may be going on around you.



**Tachi Waza**  
(Standing techniques)



**Suwari Waza**  
(Kneeling techniques)



**Hanmi Handachi Waza**  
(Kneeling with attacker standing)

**Tai Sabaki**

Tai Sabaki is a circular blending movement fundamental to the application of an Aikido technique. It has been described as the art of “not being there”. It is with Tai Sabaki that we avoid an attack, create movement and redirect the Uke's force against them.

**Positive Tai Sabaki**

Facing Uke and “On Posture”, sweep your rear foot and arm in a circular movement around Uke's attack, at the same time move your forward arm into a position to protect yourself from the attack. Transfer weight onto that foot and sweep the now back foot around in a circle and place it behind you. You should have turned 180° and be facing in the opposite direction with your weight over your front leg, foot facing slightly outward.

**Negative Tai Sabaki**

Facing Uke On Posture sweep your rear foot in a semi-circle behind you and away from Uke's attack with both of your arms facing forward. Transfer your weight onto this foot and sweep the other around and return on posture.

**Shikko**

This is the way to move around the mat on your knees. It is a similar movement to Positive Tai Sabaki but transferring weight from knee to knee. When training on your knees all Tai Sabaki and defensive movements can be made.

**Ubi ashi**

This is a way of advancing to meet an attack while remaining both Centred and On Posture To carry out a Tsuki, start On Posture and drive the front hand and foot forward, maintaining your weight forward, drawing your rear foot forward to remain On Posture. This is used to enter into an attack or close the space between Tori and Uke.

**Tsugi ashi**

This is an opposite movement to an Ubi ashi i.e. a retreating movement. Your weight is brought backwards, still over the front leg, as your foot is raised up onto the ball of your foot (both feet together). Your front hand driving down towards your knee. The following movement is generally a Tsuki driving your hand and foot back through Uke's centre to complete a posture break in readiness for the application of technique.

**Irimi**

A forward movement that breaks Uke's posture by advancing straight through his centre of balance.

**Tenkan**

A turning movement that breaks Uke's posture by using Tai Sabaki to destroy his balance.

**Omote**

Entering across the front of your partner. This movement brings you into range of Uke's other Hand/leg and requires an Atemi – a distracting movement in order to remain safe.

**Ura**

Entering or Turning towards the outside of your partner and therefore away from Uke's other Hand/leg. This is the opposite side to Omote.



## Some of the attacks used in Aikido training

### Blows



**Shomen Uchi**

Downward attack to centre of the head



**Yokomen Uchi**

Side attack to the temple



**Chudan Tsuki**

Straight punch to stomach



**Kata Dori Shomen Uchi**

Downward attack whilst gripping the shoulder



**Jodan Tsuki**

Straight punch to the face



**Mae Geri**

Front Kick

## Grips



**Ai Katate Dori**



**Gyaku Katate Dori**



**Morote Dori**



**Ryote Dori**



**Mune Dori**



**Kata Dori**



**Ryo Kata Dori**

## Grips From Behind



**Ushiro Ryo Katate Dori**



**Ushiro Ryo Hiji Dori**



**Ushiro Ryo Kata Dori**



**Ushiro Eri Dori**



**Ushiro Katate Dori Kubishime**

## Weapons

Training in the use and defence of these weapons are a part of Aikido. In addition to those shown below, chain and wooden baton are also sometimes used.

### Training Weapons



**Tanto (Wooden Knife)**



**Bokken (Wooden Sword)**



**Jo (4 foot long Wooden Staff)**

**Aikido Techniques**  
**Controlling Techniques (Basic Techniques)**



**Ikkyo**



**Nikyo**



**Sankyo**



**Yonkyo**



**Gokyo**



**Ude Garami**



**Hiji Shime**

**Nage Waza (Throwing Techniques)**



**Irimi Nage**



**Shiho Nage**



**Kote Gaeshi**



**Kaiten Nage**



**Tenchi Nage**



**Koshi Nage  
(Over Hip Throw)**



**Sukumen**



**Juji Garami**



**Mai Otoshi**



**Aiki Otoshi**



**Ushiro Kiri Otoshi**



**Kokyo Nage**

### Some Aikido Terminology

Atemi	Distraction Hand Strike
Tsuki	Punch or strike to the body
Hanmi / Dori	Basic posture in which one hand or foot is advanced one half step
Nage	Throw
Uke	Attacker – the person receiving the technique
Tori	Defender – the person delivering technique
Mai Ai	The correct distance between you and your training partner
Sensei	Teacher / Instructor
Zan Shin	Being Ready and Alert
Tatami	Training Mat
Tai Sabaki	Circular blending movement
Ki No Nagare	Blending with Uke
Omote	Moving across the front of Uke
Ura	Moving outside of Uke
Irimi	Entering movement through Uke's centre
Tenkan	Turning movement
Hijime	Begin, Start
Yame	Stop, End
Seiza	Sitting posture
Kamae	Ready stance – being "On Posture"
Shikko	Knee walking
Domo Arigato Gozaimashita	Thank you for everything

Tachi Waza	Both Tori and Uke standing
Hanmi Handachi Waza	Tori sitting, Uke standing
Suwara Waza	Both Tori and Uke sitting
Katate Dori	Wrist Grip
Morote Dori	2 handed Grip to one wrist
Ryote Dori (Ryo Katate Dori)	Both wrists Gripped
Hiji Dori	Grip to elbow
Ryo Hiji Dori	Grip to both elbows
Kata Dori	Grip to shoulder
Ryo Kata Dori	Grip to both shoulders
Mune Dori	Grip to the lapel
Ryo Mune Dori	Grip to both lapels
Eri Dori	Grip to collar
Ushiro	From Behind
Kubishime	Neck Strangulation
Ushiro Katate Dori Kubishime	From Behind, one arm around the neck, the other hand gripping a wrist
Ushiro Mune Dakishime	Bear hug from behind
Ninnin Dori	Practice with two Uke's with named attacks
Futari Gaeki	Defence against 2 or more Uke's with freestyle attack & attitude