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Hayward Aikido
Dojo Etiquette
Guidelines

HAYWARD AIKIDO ETIQUETTE GUIDELINES

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The purpose of this handout is to help you understand Aikido etiquette. Mainly you will use your common sense, and treat the dojo and your partners with respect. Etiquette varies slightly in each dojo so follow the instructor's lead; if you are not sure about the etiquette, ask a senior member or Sensei.

BOWING

Aikido is not a sport; it teaches a way of life and respect. Because of this, Aikido deserves our respect. That respect is expressed through the concept of rei, which means "appreciation and respect", and through the manner in which rei is performed. Rei literally translates to a bow given during the course of practice.



1. When entering and leaving the dojo, perform a standing bow to shomen.
2. When stepping on or off the mat for a temporary absence, perform a standing bow facing shomen.
3. At the beginning and at the end of class, perform a seated bow before stepping off the mat.

4. Before and after practicing with a partner, perform a seated bow.
5. Perform a seated or standing bow after Sensei gives instruction.

HYGIENE

1. Take your shoes off when entering the dojo. Do not walk past the entry area with your shoes on, or exit the dojo with bare feet.
2. Make sure your feet are clean when stepping on the mat. If necessary, use the paper towels to wipe your feet before you step on the mat.
3. No jewelry, watches, or metal hair accessories should be worn during practice.
4. Your gi should be clean and mended.
5. Keep your nails trimmed and filed to minimize scratching.
6. Wash your hands before and after training.



Precautions for Training by O'Sensei

These are O'Sensei's original precautions for training.

1. The original intent of *bujutsu* was to kill an enemy with one blow; since all techniques can be lethal, observe the instructor's directions and do not engage in contests of strength.

2. *Bujutsu* is an art in which the one is used to strike the many. Therefore, train yourself always to be

mindful of, and alert to, opponents in the four and eight directions.

3. Always train in a vibrant and joyful manner.

4. The instructor can only impart a small portion of the teaching; only through ceaseless training can you obtain the necessary experience allowing you to bring these mysteries alive. Hence, do not chase after many techniques; one by one, make each technique your own.

5. In daily training, begin with basic movements to strengthen the body without overexertion. Spend the first ten minutes warming up, and there will be no fear of injury, even for old people. Enjoy yourself in training and strive to comprehend its true purpose.

6. Training in *bujutsu* is to foster *yamato-damashii* and to build one's character. The techniques are transmitted from person to person, on an individual basis, and should not be disclosed indiscriminately to the public. Such secret techniques should not be misused for evil purposes.

TRAINING - GENERAL

1. Do your best to arrive 15 minutes before class starts. If you are late, dress, then sit on the edge of the mat and wait for the instructor to indicate you may join the class, then bow to shomen and instructor in that order. Join in the warming-up exercises or if these are over, do your own warm-up at the edge of the mat.

2. Seek out a partner to train with; do not wait for someone to find you. When asking a partner to practice with you, say "*Onegai shimasu*," which translates to "please, let us train together." At the end of class and when thanking your partner, say "*Domo arigato gozaimashita*."

3. When the instructor demonstrates a technique, sit in seiza and watch attentively. Do not talk.

4. Respect those that are more experienced. Do not argue about a technique on the mat. Do not teach -- leave that for the the instructor.



5. If you know the technique being studied, and you are working with someone who does not, you may lead the person through it.
6. Do not resist when the technique is being performed on you. It will lead to you being injured and is not helping your partner. Resistance is not the same as guidance.
7. Keep talking on the mat to a minimum. Save questions for after class or in free practice.
8. During class, sit on the mat in seiza. If you have a knee injury, you may sit with cross-legged, but do not sit with legs outstretched, leaning on walls, or with your feet pointed at shomen.
9. If you need to leave the mat during class, ask the instructor first.

INJURIES AND ACCIDENTS

1. If there is an incident on the mat (i.e. there is a collision, someone is injured in a throw), stop training immediately and verify that there are no injuries. If there are no injuries, perform a seated bow and apologize to everyone involved in the incident.
2. If someone is hurt or injured, tell the instructor immediately. Do not move the person.
3. If there is any blood or bodily fluid on the mat, stop training and clean the affected area immediately. Blood on the mat must be cleaned promptly with bleach.
4. If you are bleeding, stop training and use bandages or tape to stop the bleeding and prevent blood transference.
5. If you do not know where the first aid or cleaning supplies are, ask a senior member.

WEAPONS

Respect your training tools. Even a piece of wood can be a great help in one's aikido training. Treat the wooden weapons with the same respect you would treat a live blade.

1. When taking the weapons on/off the rack or edge of the mat, hold the weapon at eye level with both hands towards shomen and do a standing bow.
2. When you are bowing in with weapons, place the weapon to your right side. The bokken blade should be facing inward towards you.

3. If your weapon is not needed in a technique, either place your weapon back on the rack or move it towards the edge of the mat. When placing the bokken on the mat, place the bokken with the handle towards shomen and the blade facing outward from the mat.



4. Weapons and gi should always be carried in a bag or covered when outside the dojo.

5. When you come into the dojo with your weapons, take them out of the bag, and place your weapons on the weapons racks. If class is already in session, place the weapons on the edge of the mat out of the way.

6. If you are borrowing weapons from the dojo rack, check to make sure they are in good condition, and then use them with respect.

7. Never throw your weapons.

8. Never step over your weapons or use your feet to move them.

9. Take care of your weapons. Sand and oil wooden weapons as necessary. Clean your iaito or katana after each use.

DOJO MAINTENANCE

The dojo is what we make of it. Take pride in our dojo and take the initiative to keep it clean and tidy. If you see something that needs to be cleaned/fixd/replaced, clean, fix, or replace it.

1. All students should participate in cleaning the dojo before and after daily practice and special events. The cleaning tasks include but are not limited to:

- cleaning shomen (dusting, wiping, watering/replacing the flowers as needed)
- sweeping the mat (after every class) and wiping the map (done weekly)
- sweeping or vacuuming/cleaning the dojo floors
- wiping the ceiling, walls, plants, etc.
- cleaning the mirrors and window
- thoroughly cleaning the bathrooms (including the toilet seat, floors, sink, mirrors)



2. There is no eating or drinking on the mat unless it is for a special event.

3. Do not leave your personal items on the visitors' bench.

4. Do not leave your personal belongings in the changing rooms without expressed permission of Sensei.

5. If there is a leak, place a rag or a bucket to catch the water so the mat is not damaged.

DUES

1. Pay your dues at the first of the month. Even if you have not trained that month, you should pay your dues. If you are having financial difficulties, speak to Sensei.

2. If you will be unable to train for more than a month, discuss your situation with Sensei.

HOURS AND ABSENCES

1. If you cannot make it to a class that you have previously committed to attending, it is up to you to let the instructor know before the class starts. Call or text the instructor.

2. If you are sick or injured, please let Sensei know, and rest at home to avoid getting other members sick.

3. If you would like to train at another dojo, please let Sensei know first.

4. There is a binder that you may use to track your hours. If you do not use the binder, it is a good practice to track your hours separately so you have it for reference.