

Aikido

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Providence Aikikai Information on Aikido Practice and Etiquette

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Welcome to Providence Aikikai!

This document is intended to provide background and basic information and to address questions a new student of Aikido may have.

Aikido practice is fascinating but challenging. As a beginner, your main objective should be to get yourself onto the mat with some regularity. Beyond that, just relax, enjoy practicing and learning, and let Aikido unfold at its own pace.

The instructors and your fellow students are resources that will provide you with continuing support. Don't hesitate to ask questions or let them know if you need help or information.

Feel free at any time to talk to the Chief Instructor at the dojo, on the phone or via e-mail at aikidoprovidence@gmail.com.

History, Lineage & Affiliations

Providence Aikikai (PA) was founded in 2012 by David Halprin, Wayne Sherman, Dare Matheson and Paul Sheedy. David Sensei studied for over twenty-five years as a student of Kanai Sensei at New England Aikikai in Cambridge, and has practiced Aikido for thirty-five years.

PA is a member dojo of the United States Aikido Federation (USAF). The USAF was founded in the 1960's by Yoshimitsu Yamada, 8th Dan, of New York Aikikai, and Mitsunari Kanai, 8th Dan, of New England Aikikai. Yamada Sensei and Kanai Sensei were among the first Shihan (Master Instructors) to come to the United States from Aikido World Headquarters in Japan (Hombu Dojo).

Yamada Sensei and Kanai Sensei were among the last group of uchideshi (apprentice students) of O-Sensei -- Morihei Ueshiba -- the Founder of Aikido. Most of this last group of uchideshi left Japan to teach in the west, for example Nobuyoshi Tamura (France), Kazuo Chiba (San Diego Aikikai), Seiichi Sugano (New York Aikikai, Belgium and Australia) and Yutaka Kurita (Mexico). They truly represent an important lineage of Aikido.

This group is notable, and somewhat unique, in that they maintained their ties with each other, as well as to O-Sensei and the Ueshiba family, as Aikido has evolved under the leadership of O-Sensei's son, the Second Doshu (leader) Kisshomaru Ueshiba, and grandson, the present and Third Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba. Some years ago, this group formalized their relationships by creating an international Shihankai ("Shihan organization").

Kanai Sensei unfortunately passed away March 28, 2004, and Tamura Sensei and Sugano Sensei passed away in 2010, and Chiba Sensei in 2015, but Yamada Sensei continues

today as the Chairman of the USAF, and along with Kurita Sensei, remains our closest senior teacher.

The Aikido we practice at Providence Aikikai comes directly and most importantly from Kanai Sensei who was our teacher, but also from this group of O-Sensei's uchideshi, i.e. the members of the Shihankai.

The USAF can be thought of as the organization that formalizes our personal connections to O-Sensei, Kanai Sensei, Yamada Sensei and our other teachers including the current Aikido Doshu, Moriteru Ueshiba and Hombu Dojo.

Instructors and Certification

Providence Aikikai's Chief Instructor, David Halprin, is a 7th degree black belt (7th Dan) with the additional rank of Shihan, awarded by Hombu Dojo and the USAF in April 2008. He first practiced Aikido in 1975, and beginning in 1977 became a student of Kanai Sensei at New England Aikikai in Cambridge (NEA). He became an instructor at NEA in 1984. In addition to being Chief Instructor at Providence Aikikai, he continued to practice and teach at New England Aikikai until 2008.

Providence Aikikai's other regular instructors include Wayne Sherman, 6th Dan, Shidoiin (Shidoiin is an internationally recognized certification issued by the USAF, pursuant to Hombu Dojo regulations, and means "Instructor."), Dare Matheson, 2nd Dan, Laurie Seymour, 2nd Dan and Karry Sarkissian, 1st Dan. Wayne Sherman was a student of an early student of Kanai Sensei and has been practicing for over twenty five years. Dare, Laurie and Karry are students of David Sensei.

We are also fortunate to have as a visiting instructor David Farrell, 7th dan, Shihan, and Barbara Britton, 6th Dan, Shidoiin. David Farrell was a long time student of Kanai Sensei, and who Kanai Sensei designated as the person who should succeed him as Chief Instructor at NEA, a position he held from 2004 to 2008. Barbara Britton was Kanai Sensei's student beginning in 1978, and was also an instructor at NEA. Barbara is an instructor at Framingham Aikikai. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of the USAF.

The USAF and Hombu Dojo issue all rankings of Providence Aikikai's instructors and students. David, David and Barbara continued to receive direct guidance from Kanai Sensei until he passed away on 2004 and are now among the group of Kanai Sensei's senior students who are working diligently to preserve and transmit his incomparable legacy of Aikido teaching. We also continue to practice with and learn from the other USAF Shihan and senior Shidoiin.

Consistency of Technique

Because of our relationship with Kanai Sensei and the other Shihan, and our affiliation with the USAF, the transmission of Aikido remains as pure and true to O-Sensei's

teachings as possible. The same techniques and basic style will be taught in any USAF dojo, and the federation maintains consistent standards for testing and promotion of students.

Testing & Promotions

The USAF establishes test requirements and standards. The USAF also provides certificates of promotion for our students. All white belt ranks are registered with the USAF, and Dan (black belt) grades are also registered with Hombu Dojo through the USAF.

By being a member of a USAF dojo, you become part of the USAF. Your individual membership in the USAF is formalized when you take your first test.

There are six ranks of white belt and ten ranks of black belt. Once you have practiced the required number of days, you are eligible for promotion. Upon completing 20 days of practice (i.e. 20 days that you have attended class), you will become 6th kyu (6th rank white belt). Upon completing 40 additional days of practice after 6th kyu, you are eligible to take your first test, for 5th kyu. You progress to 1st kyu, and after that the next test is for Shodan (1st degree black belt). The number of days of practice required for a test increases with each grade. (Test requirements and techniques for each test are posted in the dojo and included later in this document.)

If you do the math based on the test requirements, a *minimum* of 1,140 days of practice is required for the first black belt test. If a new student practices four days a week, this would mean that such a test is five years in the future. In practice, candidates for shodan frequently have practiced significantly more than the minimum days required.

Testing is best thought of as a way to develop one's focus and understanding of Aikido techniques. However, each student sets his or her own goals, and there is little external pressure for students to test at any particular time, or on any specific schedule.

Testing works like this: tests are held three or four times each year. Once you have practiced the required number of days, you are eligible to test at the next scheduled test day. When a test date is announced, you should speak to the Chief Instructor to express your interest in testing.

The test format requires that you perform a number of techniques with a partner. So, to prepare, you practice the required techniques (and learn their names).

When the time comes to prepare for a test, a good way to get started is to work with a fellow student (preferably a student who already holds a rank at least one above the rank you are testing for) and practice the techniques before or after class. Once you have the permission of the Chief Instructor to attend Sunday's free practice session, you can work on test techniques there.

In the weeks before a test day, there will also usually be classes focused on test techniques, and sometimes special practice sessions. We also conduct practice tests, which are run-throughs in the same format as the actual test. Before the test, the student must pass a practice test and obtain final permission from the Chief Instructor, who will grant it if he is satisfied with the student's preparation, proficiency with the test techniques, and general level of practice.

During the time leading up to test day, one should practice as much as possible, both to increase general proficiency and to refine the required techniques.

We also have developing an Intensive Training Program, so if you are interested in making a major commitment to learning Aikido, please speak to the Chief Instructor.

Attendance

Frequency of attendance is up to you. Aikido is flexible and you should design your own schedule. If you want a benchmark for how often you should practice when you begin, you can think of two or three times a week. More important than how many times a week you practice is that you practice consistently (i.e. on some schedule over some time). This is especially true during the first three to six months that you practice.

Aikido poses many challenges to the beginner, both mentally and physically, and without establishing some routine, you may find it hard to persevere and reach the point where you will begin to feel and appreciate the benefits of Aikido training. Therefore, it is very important, regardless of how many times a week you practice, that Aikido becomes part of your routine.

Attendance is recorded on a sheet on the desk. Although the instructors often double-check attendance, please remember to check yourself off when you arrive. One day is recorded for each day of practice no matter how many hours of classes you attend on that day.

Status & Fees

Membership fees are paid by the month, and are due on the first of each month. Membership in the dojo entitles you to take as many classes in the month as you wish.

Please be prompt with your payments. We encourage members to set up an automatic billing process with the dojo, which also allows a discounted rate. Forms are available on the desk.

If you have any special issues about fees, please talk to the Chief Instructor. We don't want finances to prevent anyone from practicing, and consequently, when circumstances require, we will make an effort to structure fees accordingly.

In special situations, you can apply for mat fee status. It allows you to pay by the class instead of by the month. Mat fee status should be requested at the beginning of the month and must be for one or more full months. The mat fee is \$10 or \$15 per class, depending on the situation. What constitutes a special situation varies, so if you want to consider mat fee status, talk to the Chief Instructor.

It is a good practice to always be clear about the status of your practice schedule and keep the Chief Instructor informed about any changes in your situation. This is especially true if your practice schedule is going to change radically, or if you have any injuries or physical problems. If at any time you will be unable to practice for a month or more, please inform the instructor that you will be taking a leave of absence.

Dojo Cleanliness

This is your dojo. Aikido's tradition expects all students not only to practice diligently, but to commit themselves to help with the day-to-day maintenance and operation of the dojo. In Aikido's tradition, students are dojo members, not just "customers".

Aside from its practical importance, cleaning is an exercise in common sense and expanding awareness, and part of the training methodology of traditional martial arts in general, and Aikido in particular.

Your mindset should include a concern that the dojo remains a clean, healthy, enjoyable and orderly environment that supports the study of Aikido, and manifests the evolving awareness of its members. It is very accurate to say that one's Aikido practice includes a responsibility to keep the dojo clean, and to help out in other ways as well.

So, for example, when you arrive for practice, don't simply walk in, put on your uniform, and get onto the mat. Look around: is there something dusty or dirty? Are the carpets clean? Should the mat be swept or the kamiza dusted? Do the trashcans need to be emptied? Do the flowers need watering? Do the bathrooms or dressing rooms need some attention? Are there cups lying around, or things out of place? If so, grab a broom, a dustpan, a mop or whatever you need and take care of it.

If you don't know what tasks that need to be done most regularly, where to find cleaning supplies or how to do a specific task, ask the instructor or other students.

Personal Cleanliness

Personal cleanliness is a valued quality in Aikido, in part because practice requires close physical contact with other Aikidoists. Make certain that your hands, feet and face are clean, that your finger and toenails are clipped and not jagged

Your gi (also "dogi" or "practice uniform") should always be clean. Wash it regularly -- especially after a hard practice, and after every practice during which you perspire (which

should be almost every practice). A clean, fresh gi will make both you and your partner's practice more enjoyable.

Note: when you buy a new gi, it will usually be quite large. Don't be overly concerned if it seems too large, just roll up the pants or sleeves. Once you start to wash it, it will shrink a lot, so much so that it is a good idea to use cold water the first few washes to help you estimate and control the shrinking.

Remove all jewelry when you practice, including all rings and earrings. Even a flat ring like a wedding ring can be dangerous to you and your partner.

Always ask permission of the instructor before you leave the mat for any reason, unless there is some reason why you must leave immediately. In that case, talk to the instructor as soon as possible after you leave the mat. It is important for the instructor know about any situation, especially health related, that would require a student to leave the mat.

For example, if, during practice, you notice that you're bleeding (typically from being scratched by a partner's fingernails), immediately stop practicing, ask the Instructor for permission to leave the mat, and clean and bandage the cut. There are medical supplies and band-aids in the bathroom.

After you've bandaged and taped the scratch, take a paper towel and a bit of soap (not peroxide) and clean any spots of blood that may have gotten on the mat.

Logistical Information

- The dojo class schedule is available on the website or at the dojo
- All classes are open to all students.
- All classes are mixed level classes open to all students.
- In the future, we may designate classes more specifically..
- If changes in the schedule are necessary (for example, during holidays or blizzards) I will generally send out an email notifying you. So, be sure to update the dojo's records of your contact information whenever it changes.
- We are fortunate to have plenty of parking spaces. Parking is permitted anywhere in the parking areas in front of the building.

Etiquette

Etiquette in the dojo is extremely important. Aikido practice is based on mutual respect, and through etiquette, one demonstrates respect for instructors and fellow students. These formalities provide a framework for safety and growth.

Much of etiquette comes from Aikido's tradition and traditional Japanese martial arts etiquette; other elements come from awareness and common sense. Like most of its aspects, Aikido's system of etiquette is fairly complex, but it need not be learned all at once. A good place to start is to know when to bow, and how to behave in the dojo.

Courtesy should be more than a formality; it should come from the heart and mind as well, so an open, positive, and respectful attitude will help you deal with many situations.

Please feel free to ask questions about etiquette, techniques, or anything else. The instructors and your sempei (your senior students.) are here to help you understand the many aspects of Aikido practice, both on and off the mat. This is part of their training, so you should never feel that you are wasting the time of more senior students when they are practicing with you, answering your questions, or helping you in any other way.

The following guidelines will get you started in developing an understanding of dojo etiquette:

- Bowing is very important in the etiquette of Aikido and in the Japanese martial arts tradition. In general, bowing is an expression of respect.
- When entering or leaving the dojo perform a standing bow at the doorway.
- Remove your shoes immediately upon entering the dojo in the tiled area and place them in the shoe rack. Do not wear shoes on the carpeted area.
- You should have your gi on completely (including your belt) before leaving the dressing room.
- When getting on or off the mat, always perform a kneeling bow to the kamiza (the front of the dojo where you see the picture of O-Sensei.) Note that this bowing has no religious meaning. Rather, it is a respectful greeting for O-Sensei, the Founder of the art and therefore teacher of all Aikido practitioners, for our teacher Kanai Sensei, and for all the people who have trained before you and helped develop this art. It and is much the same as your bow to the Instructor of the particular class and your practice partners.
- While waiting for class to begin, you may stretch, practice, or sit quietly as you wish.
- Five minutes before the start of any class, stop all activity and sit quietly. Sit with your fellow students in straight lines. If possible, sit in seiza (kneeling with your legs folded underneath you). If this is uncomfortable, sit cross-legged. In either case, sit with your back straight.
- Follow the instructor in bowing and through the initial warm-up and stretching exercises.

- When the instructor is ready to demonstrate a technique, quickly line up to watch.
- After the instructor demonstrates a technique, find a partner, bow, and begin practicing. In this dojo, we usually change partners for each new technique, so don't spend a lot of time deciding who to practice with. Just bow to whoever is around you.
- Practice as best you can, trying to follow the demonstration as closely as possible. This trains your eyes to analyze the movements. Don't worry if you are not sure how close you are coming.
- When practicing, avoid unnecessary talking. If you need to help your partner do the technique, use only words aimed at describing the basic physical movements. It isn't necessary to convey every subtlety of a movement, only it's most basic aspects.
- If the instructor interrupts you and your partner to clarify a technique or engage you in practice, pay attention. Always thank the teacher with a kneeling bow when he or she is finished.
- If you have to leave the mat for any reason during a class, first get permission from the instructor.
- If you arrive late for a class, wait at the back of the mat until the instructor signals you may enter the class. While you are waiting, stand or sit quietly. You should not be stretching while waiting to enter class. (You can stretch in the dressing room if you want to.) However, once you are invited onto the mat, you may stretch in the back of the mat until you are ready to begin practice.
- When observing class it is proper to exhibit the same respectful attitude as when you are on the mat. When observing class from the observation area it is proper to sit up straight and watch attentively. In a larger dojo with more separate areas, a lounge area would be used to talk, eat, or read. Since our lounge and observation areas are really the same, the division of the space is not distinct. So, adults in the lounge area during class are in the same space as the practice area, and the key point is that, for an adult, observing class is analogous to participating in the class. Therefore, when watching class, the observer should sit up straight and watch attentively, and not be engaged in unrelated activities, for example, reading (other than the information sheet or possibly Aikido related books).
- During children's class, and with regard to children that are in the dojo during adult's class, we relax the etiquette as appropriate to make the situation comfortable for the children and their parents. This kind of flexibility, judiciously applied, is also part of Aikido's etiquette.

- If visitors come to the dojo, please feel free to greet them, give them information sheets and, and set up chairs for them to view class. If the instructor is unable to leave the mat to greet visitors (for example, if they arrive during warm-up exercises), one of the students should leave the mat to talk with them. If necessary, inform them of the correct etiquette for observers (basically the same as described above). Invite them to ask questions at the end of practice of any senior student.

Visiting other dojos, and seminars

Visiting another dojo, whether to attend a seminar or just share in a class or two, is an excellent opportunity to meet and learn from other Aikido instructors and students, and to experience the breadth of the Aikido community.

Member dojos of the United States Aikido Federation (and closely related organizations such as the Birankai and Canadian Aikido Federation) are usually where you will find the best quality Aikido, although you can also visit unaffiliated dojos.

If you are traveling, the Chief Instructor and other students can often advise you on good dojos to visit. It's a good idea to ask permission from your Chief Instructor when you plan to visit other dojos, and in some cases it will be advisable to carry a letter of introduction.

When visiting another dojo, it is courteous to introduce yourself to the instructor and ask permission to practice. There are sometimes differences in customs and training styles from one dojo to another but you will usually find yourself feeling right at home. If you're not sure about the appropriate etiquette in a new dojo, just ask the students or instructors there.

Seminars usually consist of one or more days with many classes. Attending seminars is very useful to your practice, and once you get comfortable with basics, you should make a strong effort to attend them when you can.

Important Points About Aikido Practice (on the mat)

Self-discipline, self-control and a measure of sober awareness are important to any athletic endeavor. Because martial arts deal with complex issues of power and human aggression, these attitudes are essential. These rules and customs of Providence Aikikai are typical of traditional dojos the world over; they promote alert and safe training, develop respect for ourselves, our partners, and our practice, and also express appreciation to O-Sensei for creating the gift of Aikido.

Many years ago, O-Sensei was asked to provide rules for the students Hombu Dojo in Tokyo. Although he initially was reluctant to define "rules" he eventually agreed. The following rules are adopted from those written by O-Sensei.

1. Carefully follow the instructor's directions, applying yourself to the training and to the correct performance of the techniques. The aim of Aikido is to develop the truly human self. It should not be used in displays of ego, tests of strength, any kind of competition, or to hurt your partner.
2. Always be alert, not just to what is in front of you and your partner but to the people all around you. Pay attention in order to avoid accidental collisions.
3. Training should always be conducted in a spirit of pleasure and enjoyment.
4. Always begin training by gently moving and stretching your body and then progressing gradually to more intensive practice. In practicing, never force anything unnaturally or unreasonably.
5. Although the instructor teaches one technique at a time, each technique's versatile applications must be discovered by each student through continuous and extensive practice between cooperating partners.
6. All practice must be adapted to the age, physical condition, limitations, and skill level of each partner. In this way all students, whether beginner or advanced, men or women, young or old, can train together pleurably and without injury.
7. The purpose of Aikido is to train the mind and body to be strong yet flexible and to produce sincere, earnest people. Since all techniques are to be transmitted person to person, only under the guidance of a trained instructor, do not deviate from the instruction, or attempt to apply any technique in a manner that would hurt or injure your partner.

Things to Keep in Mind As You Begin Aikido Practice

Aikido is very difficult and challenging to body and mind. The first two to three months are, in a way, the most difficult, so stay focused on the importance of making it through this period

During this time, don't worry about "making progress", "understanding the techniques", learning the Japanese "terminology", whether the techniques are "effective" or not, or anything else. None of these issues will be resolved in such a short period of time. Just keep coming to practice, do your best, enjoy yourself, and make it through the beginning period.

At the end of three months, you'll likely be in a much better position to decide what you think about Aikido. Before that, you'll be judging without really knowing it.

Each time the instructor demonstrates, watch carefully, and imitate the movement as closely as you can. Try to identify the main movements that are the components of the techniques, and make it through from the beginning to the end of the technique. Feel free

to ask questions. When the instructor passes near where you are practicing you can indicate you need help. (Also, listen carefully to the answers: they often won't be what you expected.)

If you feel a technique is "not working" it usually means you are doing something wrong. Reexamine how you are doing the most basic parts of the movement, and try to move using less force and less muscle. Trying to make a technique work by using more force will lead you down the wrong road.

When you use your body correctly according to Aikido's principles your body will work with high efficiency and you can generate a great deal of power without feeling that you are expending a great deal of effort. That is what you are aiming for.

At the same time, you will be building up your body physically. Each person has a different body type, and therefore how you experience techniques will be different when practicing with different people. As you train with different partners, you should always find a happy medium that takes account of the different skill levels of you and your partner. This should be comfortable for both partners. If you feel you are being pushed beyond your comfort level, tell your partner, and slow down the practice. Feel free to tell the instructor as well, and get some help finding the correct level of practice.

Practice involves taking turns being the "nage" (the one who throws) and the "uke" (the one who is being thrown). Nage and uke are terms that include many connotations. Sometimes the terms "defender" and "attacker" are used, and sometimes the uke is called the "opponent" or the "other".

Your ukemi (falling techniques) is the cutting edge of your practice. It's more important to be able to be thrown well than to throw well. When you practice ukemi, you are learning to do several things. First, you can protect yourself when you are thrown with increasingly large forces. Second, you get to feel how the technique works and thus understand it much more clearly. Finally, you are training your body to become increasingly strong, elastic and flexible. It is also important to know that by allowing your partner to throw you with increasing force, you help his or her development in Aikido, and your partner will strive to do the same for you.

The first part of practice involves learning the physical rudiments of the techniques: where your feet go, where your hands go, how to maintain good posture while you are moving etc. This involves visual learning. Once you've begun to understand that, you can start to focus on how your movement is affecting your partner's position, balance and movement. This is done by the feeling what is happening, a kind of kinesthetic learning. You then combine this with your visual learning.

Aikido practice excludes competition. Trying to beat your opponent will interfere with your learning by encouraging you to use muscle instead of proper technique. So, always relax your body, and focus on executing the technique accurately, not on whether you are beating your partner.

Aikido aims to bring people together, and we hope you'll find the atmosphere in the dojo to be friendly and sociable. However, on the mat during practice, talking is kept to a minimum. Sometimes beginners find this contrast between behavior on and off the mat confusing, but don't take it as a sign of unfriendliness. Training is a serious endeavor so a serious attitude is required. Aikido's training is aimed at transforming the body, and using that as a vehicle to train the mind and spirit. Because the body is the initial object of training, verbal instruction is usually limited to describing how you should move (e.g. "tenkan, step back, step forward"). Most of the learning occurs non-verbally. While you shouldn't be afraid to ask questions or talk on the mat when necessary, in general your learning will not be advanced by trying to receive (or give) too much verbal instruction.

As you get comfortable with practice, begin to coordinate your breathing with the movements. Breath out when receiving or generating power (i.e. when you receive the attack or when you throw the uke). Breathe in when leading. Breathing for the uke is the same.

You'll soon hear people talking about "extension". It's a bit hard to define, but you can think of extension as the use of the body, especially the arms, in such a way that the contracting and extending muscles are in balance, and the result is a strong but elastic body state. It is often accompanied by a feeling of moving or pushing forward from your hips.

At every moment during practice, try to relax your body, especially your muscles. This means that the muscles are not contracted; but on the other hand, don't let them go limp either. To understand the correct body state you want to develop, you can think of the string of a guitar that must be tightened to the correct pitch. Correct pitch is in the middle of a continuum that on one extreme is too loose, and on the other is too tight. Another way to think of it is that you are trying to make your body like a spring: because of its elasticity it can bend, thus absorbing and storing energy and, then instantly uncompress and send it back out with great force.

Posture is very important both to help relax and to facilitate fluid movement. Good posture means keeping your back straight as you move, and trying to avoid leaning forward or backward.

Basic Concepts

The name of any technique consists of, first, the name of the attack (e.g. "katate tori" or "one hand grab"), then the name of the technique (e.g. "ikkyo"), and finally whether it is the omote or ura version.

Most techniques are practiced in two versions: omote (entering in the front of the uke) and ura (entering in the back of the uke). So, for example, if you were practicing the two

basic versions of ikkyo in response to a one-hand grab, you would call it “katate tori ikkyo - omote and ura”.

There are three parts to any technique: entering, leading, and throwing.

Entering is usually done by executing one of three movements: irimi (sliding in), tenkan (turning), or tenshin (stepping back).

One “enters” into uke’s “shikaku” or dead zone. This is a space in uke’s back, a position of relative weakness. Once having entered into shikaku, uke is in front of nage, but nage is not in front of uke.

Once having entered, nage “breaks uke’s balance” i.e. moves uke into an off-balance position, thereby making it difficult for uke to use his muscular strength.

The second part of the technique is leading. When leading, nage moves uke into position to be thrown, while maintaining a position in shikaku and keeping uke off balance.

The third part of the technique is the throw. At this time, nage “throws” his power into uke, using a unified movement that ideally utilizes every muscle, ligament and tendon in the body, including the internal muscles, and thus optimizes nage’s power.

Throws can be subdivided into projections and immobilizations or pins. In a projection type technique, the uke is projected away. In an immobilization, the uke is directed to the ground, and is pinned to the ground through a control usually of the shoulder joint.

Uke’s role is to learn the techniques of ukemi so as to be able to receive nage’s full power without injury, for self-protection and to provide nage with the opportunity to throw at full force. This is a process, so a beginner is not expected to be able to do this rapidly. One simply practices at a level of comfort and over time develops the ability to increasingly both project and receive power.

Ukemi can be divided into three types: backward rolls, forward rolls, and breakfalls. You learn the first two within your first few classes. Breakfalls are a more advanced ukemi that you don’t have to worry about for the moment. Keep in mind, however, that a break fall uses the same basic body movement as a forward roll.

Things you will learn initially include:

- How to stand in hanmi position;
- Three basic movements: irimi, tenkan, tenshin;
- Ukemi i.e. receiving techniques (includes forward and backward rolls);
- Basic attacks;
- How to practice with a partner (roles of Nage and Uke).

See also the "Beginner's Curriculum" (on the website).

Iaido

Iaido, the art of drawing, cutting and resheathing the Japanese sword, is a martial art separate and distinct from Aikido. However, they both arose from a similar social and cultural setting, and many of the most advanced Aikido teachers are also Iaido practitioners. As a result, it is not unusual for Aikido students to also practice Iaido.

In the future, Providence Aikikai plans to offer an Iaido program. If you are interested in participating please talk to the Chief Instructor.

Recommended Resources

Videos/DVDs:

- “Technical Aikido” by Kanai Sensei
- Other videos featuring Kanai Sensei, Yamada Sensei, Chiba Sensei and other instructors of the Shihankai.
- Videos of O-Sensei

Websites

- AikidoSphere (www.aikidosphere.com)
- US Aikido Federation (www.usaikifed.com)

Japanese Terms Used in Aikido:

General

Aikido	The way of harmonizing with the universal energy. Made up of three Japanese characters: AI (harmony), KI (spirit, mind, or universal energy), DO - Way.
Aikidoka	A practitioner of Aikido. Also Aikidoist.
Aikikai	Aikido association. A term used to designate the organization created by the founder for the dissemination of Aikido, the "Aikikai Foundation".
Budo	Warrior way; group of disciplines that simultaneously teach martial technique and guide mental and spiritual development
Do	Way/path.
Dojo	Training hall. Literally "place of the Way."
Doshu	Leader
Hombu Dojo	A term used to refer to the central dojo of an organization. In Aikido, it thus usually designates Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo.
Iaido	The art of drawing, cutting and resheathing the Japanese sword.
Kaiso	Founder. Another title sometimes used to refer to O-Sensei.
Keiko	Practice session; training in general
Ki	Spirit; vital force of the body; universal energy; energy of nature
Mae	Front. Thus "Mae Ukemi" = forward fall/roll.
Misogi	Purification or purification exercise
Omotokyo	a religion largely grounded in Shinto mysticism but also including elements of Christianity and Japanese folk religion. One of the so-called "new-religions" of Japan. O-Sensei was a devotee but insisted, however, that one need not be a follower of Omotokyo in order to study Aikido or to

comprehend Aikido's purpose. Few of O-Sensei's students followed Omotokyo as well.

O-Sensei	Great Teacher; the Founder of Aikido: Morihei Ueshiba, 1883-1969
Rei	Salutation, bow
Reigi	Etiquette
Shinto	"The way of the gods." The indigenous religion of Japan.
Tachi	A type of Japanese sword (thus "standing position").
Takemusu Aiki	A "slogan" of the founder's meaning "infinitely generative martial art of Aiki."
Uchi	Inside
Uchi Deshi	A live-in student, or "inside" student, traditionally, a student who lives in a dojo and devotes him/herself to training and maintenance of the dojo.
Ueshiba Kisshomaru	The late son of the founder of Aikido. Was Aikido's Second Doshu, following O-Sensei.
Ueshiba Morihei	The founder of Aikido. (see O-Sensei and Kaiso).
Ueshiba Moriteru	The grandson of the founder and current (third) Doshu.
Zanshin	Unbroken awareness and concentration.
Zazen	Sitting meditation.

Parts of the body

Koshi	Hips, waist, also the entire hip area of the body
Tanden	A point located in the lower abdomen about two inches below the navel, the physical and spiritual center of a person; also "hara"
Tegatana	Hand blade; sword edge of hand below the pinky finger

Terms used to describe principles or components of techniques

Ai hanmi	Equal or mutual stance; partners stand facing one another with the same foot forward, i.e. both have their right foot forward.
Atemi	Defensive strike to the vital parts of the opponent's body; striking techniques
Chokusen	Direct. Thus Chokusen Iriminage = direct entry Iriminage.
Chudan	Middle position
Gedan	Low position
Gyaku hanmi	Opposite stance; partners stand with the opposite foot forward, i.e. one has right foot forward, the other has left foot forward
Haishin undo	Backstretch
Hanmi	Triangular stance with either left or right foot forward
Hidari	Left
Hiji Dome	Controlling the outside of the uke's elbow.
Hiza Tate	Technique that ends with both knees down.
Irimi	To enter moving forward and pass through without collision, one of three basic entering movements
Jodan	High position
Kata	Set series of movements that teaches basic forms and principles
Kiai	A piercing scream or cry, to shout with Ki
Ki Musubi	Ki blending
Kokyuhō	Seated kokyū exercise
Kokyū Ryoku	The power harnessed through practice of kokyū
Kokyū	Breath- power

Ma-ai	Distance between uke and nage, also relative position
Migi	Right
Omote	Front
Omote waza	Variation of technique to front side of uke, moving in front
Nage	The person who is attacked and performs the technique; he who throws
Seiza	Formal kneeling position with back straight
Shihosabaki	A movement like a shihonage technique but that results in a technique other than shihonage.
Shikko	Knee walking; basic way of moving when performing suwari waza techniques
Shikaku	Literally "dead angle." A position in which it is difficult for uke to continue to attack, and from which it is relatively easy to control uke's balance and movement. The first phase of an Aikido technique is almost always to enter Shikaku.
Sotokaiten	Outside turning variation of a technique
Suburi	A single movement using the bokken or jo, done as a solo practice, e.g. practicing shomenuchi repeatedly
Surinuke	Passing through variation of a technique
Taijutsu	Body techniques, i.e., unarmed practice.
Tai Sabaki	Body movement
Tenkan	Turning movement, one of the three basic entering movements
Tenkan Dosa	The basic blending practice; tenkan exercise, also "Tai No Henko"
Tenshin	Stepping back, the third basic way of entering

Toitsutai	The united body; a position used when throwing in which the face, hands, tanden, hips and toes are all pointed in the same direction.
Uchikaiten	Variation of technique using inside turning
Uke	Person who gives the attack and receives the technique
Ukemi	The art of receiving the technique and falling without harm.
Ura	the back side of uke; moving behind
Ura waza	variation of technique moving to back side of uke
Ushiro	Back, behind, rear
Waza	Technique

Types of Attacks/Techniques

Basic Categories of Techniques

Tachi Waza	Standing techniques
Hanmi Handachi	Techniques that begin with nage kneeling and uke standing.
Suwari Waza	Sitting techniques

Advanced Techniques

Henka Waza	Varied technique. Beginning with one technique and changing to another
Kaeshi Waza	Technique reversal. (Uke becomes Nage and vice- versa).
Renzoko Waza	Subset of henka waza, in which the initial and subsequent techniques are completely different.

Techniques against weapons

Tachitori	Techniques where uke attacks with a sword and nage is empty handed, techniques of taking an opponent's sword
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Tantotori Techniques where uke attacks with a knife; Knife disarming techniques

Jo tori Techniques against an attack with a jo, concludes with taking the jo from the attacker.

Kinds of practice

Jyu waza A kind of free style practice usually done with the uke making only one kind of attack.

Kakarienko Group or line practice.

Randori Multiple person attack; freestyle

Types of attacks

Grabbing Attacks

Hijitori Elbow grab

Katatori Shoulder grab

Katatetori Wrist grab

Morotetori Uke uses both hands to hold one of the nage's wrist/forearms

Munatori Lapel grab

Ryokatatori Both shoulders grabbed

Ryotetori Both wrists are grabbed

Attacks from behind

Ushiro Eritori Collar grab from behind

Ushiro Hijitori Elbows grabbed from the rear

Ushiro Kubishimi Rear choke, uke grabs one of nage's wrists from behind, and chokes with the other hand.

Ushiro Tekubitori Both wrists grabbed from behind

Ushiro Ryokatatori Both shoulders grabbed from behind

Ushiro Ryotetori Same as Ushiro Tekubitori

Striking attacks

Shomenuchi Strike to the center of the head

Katatetori Menuchi Grab the wrist one hand and block the nage's strike with the other hand. Alternatively grab and strike with the other hand.

Tsuki Straight thrust, punch.

Yokomenuchi Strike to the side of the head

Types of techniques

Basic Pinning Techniques

Ikkyo First pinning technique; applying pressure to the arm & elbow

Nikkyo Second technique; Wrist-bending technique

Sankyo Third technique; wrist-twisting technique

Yonkyo Fourth pinning technique

Gokyo Fifth pinning technique; used against tanto

Basic Projection Techniques

Hajikigoshi Pushing hip throw

Hitoe Iriminage Iriminage with both arms in uke's front

Iriminage Entering technique

Juji garami Crossed-arm control

Juji nage Cross-armed throw

Kata hiki otoshi Pulling the shoulder throw.

Kaitennage	Rotary throw
Kokyunage	Breath throw or timing throw; usually where nage is not grabbing the uke when executing the throw, often used for techniques that do not have a specific name
Kotegaeshi	Wrist turn out throw; wrist twisting technique
Makiotoshi	Rolling drop
Saoiotoshi	Shoulder drop
Shihonage	Four directions throw
Sumiotoshi	Corner drop throw
Tenchinage	Heaven and earth throw; One hand moves up, the other down
Taiotoshi	Body drop; usually pushing on uke's elbow
Tsukiage	Lifting uke's chin to throw
Ukiotoshi	Receiving drop

Hip Throws

Koshinage	Hip throw
Ogoshi	Basic big koshinage
Koshigaruma (Kotehineri koshinage)	Koshinage while grabbing the uke's wrist
Ukigoshi (ukashigoshi)	Front hip koshinage
Tsurube goshi	Holding the sleeve koshinage
Irimigoshi	Koshinage that begins with Iriminage
Kogoshi	Koshinage while grabbing the uke's neck

Ukemi

Zempo Kaiten	Forward roll
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Koho Kaiten Backward roll

Weapons

Kumi jo Practice in which both partners have a jo

Kumi tachi Practice in which both partners have a bokken

Equipment:

Bokken Wooden sword

Gi Training uniform (also Dogi)

Hakama A divided, skirt-like pants normally worn by advanced Aikido students. In some dojos, women of all ranks can wear the hakama.

Jo Wooden staff

Katana Japanese long sword

Obi Belt

Tanto Knife or dagger; in practice a wooden knife

Zoris Sandals

Ranks and Titles

Dan Aikido grade holder, black belt rank

Deshi Student, pupil, disciple

Dojo Cho The head of the dojo. Chief Instructor

Doshu The leader of Aikido world headquarters, presently Third Doshu Moriteru Ueshiba.

Fukushidoin First instructors rank (approximately 2nd or 3rd Dan)

Kohai	Junior student
Kyu	White belt ranks or grades that are below black belt grades
Nidan	Second degree black belt
Sempai	Senior student
Sensei	Teacher, instructor
Sandan	Third degree black belt
Shidoi	Certified instructor rank (usually 4th Dan and higher)
Shihan	Master Instructor (usually 6th Dan and above).
Shodan	First degree black belt
Yudansha	Black belt grade holder(s)
Yukyusha	Kyu belt grade holder(s)

Counting

Itchi	One
Ni	Two
San	Three
Shi	Four
Go	Five
Roku	Six
Shichi	Seven
Hachi	Eight
Ku	Nine
Ju	Ten

Happo Eight directions; as in Happo-undo (eight direction exercise) or Happo-Giri (eight direction cutting with the sword).

Japanese Phrases

Domo arigato gozaimashita Thank you very much for what you have done (spoken by students to teacher at end of class)

Onegai shimasu "I welcome you to train with me," or literally, "I make a request." Often said to one's partner when initiating practice.

USAF Test Requirements

KYU TESTS

5th Kyu (60 Days)

1. Shomenuchi Ikkyo (omote & ura)
2. Shomenuchi Iriminage (**ura**)
3. Katatetori Shihonage (omote & ura)
4. Ryotetori Tenchinage (**omote**)
5. Tsuki Kotegaeshi (**ura**)
6. Ushiro Tekubitori Kotegaeshi (**omote**)
7. Morotetori Kokyuhō (**omote & ura**)

4th Kyu (80 Days)

1. Shomenuchi Nikkyo (omote & ura)
2. Yokomenuchi Shihonage (omote & ura)
3. Tsuki Iriminage (**3 ways**)
4. Ushiro Tekubi Sankyo (omote & ura)
5. Ushiro Ryokatatori Kotegaeshi (**omote**)
6. Suwari Waza: Shomenuchi Ikkyo (**omote & ura**)
Katatori Nikkyo (omote & ura)
Katatori Sankyo (**omote & ura**)

3rd Kyu (100 Days)

1. Yokomenuchi Iriminage (2 ways) (**3 ways**)
2. Yokomenuchi Kotegaeshi (**omote & ura**)
3. Tsuki Kaitennage (**omote & ura**)
4. Ushiro Ryokatatori Sankyo (omote & ura)
5. Morotetori Iriminage (2 ways) (**3 ways**)
6. Shomenuchi Sankyo (omote & ura)
7. Suwari Waza: Shomenuchi Iriminage
Shomenuchi Nikkyo (omote & ura)
8. Hanmi-Handachi: Katatetori Shihonage (**omote & ura**)
Katatetori Kaitennage
(uchi & soto mawari)

2nd Kyu (200 Days)

1. Shomenuchi Shihonage
2. Shomenuchi Kaitennage (**omote & ura**)
3. Yokomenuchi Gokyo (**omote & ura**)
4. Ushiro Tekubitori Shihonage (**omote & ura**)
5. Ushiro Tekubitori Jujinage
6. Ushiro Kubishime Koshinage (**2 ways**)
7. Morotetori Nikkyo (**omote & ura**)
8. Hanmi-Handachi: Shomenuchi Iriminage
Katatetori Nikkyo
Yokomenuchi Kotegaeshi
9. Freestyle -- 2 persons

(DH annotations in bold 4.20.06)

1st Kyu (300 Days)

1. Katatori Menuchi -- 5 techniques
2. Yokomenuchi -- 5 techniques
3. Morotetori -- 5 techniques
4. Shomenuchi -- 5 techniques
5. Ryotetori -- 5 techniques
6. Koshinage -- 5 techniques
7. Tantotori
8. Hanmi-Handachi (Ushiro Waza -- 5 techniques)
9. Freestyle -- 3 persons

DAN TESTS

Sho-Dan (400 Days)

1. All of 1st Kyu requirements
2. Tachitori
3. Jotori
4. Henkawaza
5. Freestyle -- 4 persons

Ni-Dan (600 Days)

1. Attend 2 seminars per year after Sho-Dan
2. All of Sho-Dan requirements
3. Tachitori -- 2
4. Freestyle -- 5 persons
5. Kaeshiwaza

San-Dan (700 Days)

1. Attend 2 seminars per year after Ni-Dan.
Subject of exam to be determined by examiner at the time of the exam.

NOTE: Days requirements are counted from the last test.

Uchi & Soto Mawari -- both inside (uchi) and outside (soto) movements

Henkawaza -- switching from one technique to another. Examiner will call the first technique.

Kaeshiwaza -- counter techniques. Uke applies the technique to nage. Original technique will be called by examiner (e.g., apply sankyo against nikkyo).