

Shinjinkai Dojo Etiquette

While each of the different martial arts practiced at Shinjinkai has its own specific traditions of etiquette, the following used by Aikido members may serve in many aspects as a general guide. If you have any questions regarding etiquette, please speak with your instructor.

1. There is an old saying that “*Budo* training begins and ends with etiquette”. Etiquette is not simply empty tradition, but is another method to train your awareness, and to develop proper use of *kiai*, *kokyū*, and *maai* (energy, time and space). A certain decorum and gravity should be maintained in the dojo, as befits a place where arts of life and death are instructed and mastery over the self is sought.

2. Bowing is appropriate on the following occasions:

- When entering and leaving the dojo: standing bow
- When stepping on and off the mat: seated bow
- At the beginning and end of class: seated bow
- When asking or thanking a partner for practice: seated bow
- After receiving special instructions from the teacher: seated bow

3, The cleanliness and purity of the mat and dojo are essential. Remove your shoes upon entering and place them neatly on the shoe rack. Do not walk anywhere inside the dojo in shoes, or outside the dojo in bare feet – sandals are provided near the door for walking between the dojo and the changing rooms across the hallway. Make sure your feet, uniform and body are clean before stepping on the mat. Students should take responsibility for cleaning the dojo following class.

4. At the beginning of a class (depending on the art), a senior student will call out “*Shomen ni rei*” – bow to the front. Next, he or she will call out “*Sensei ni rei*” – bow to the instructor (“*Sempai ni rei*” if someone other than the instructor is opening class). Upon making this bow, say strongly and clearly “*Onegaishimasu*” – “if you would be so kind (as to teach). At the end of a class, the same sequence will be performed. At this time, however, you will say “*Arigato gozaimashita*” – “thank you very much”.

5. Be on time for class. Five minutes before a class begins, students should line up and sit silently to practice meditation. If you are late for class, enter quietly and go to the changing room. Re-enter the dojo, sit on the wooden floor until the instructor indicates you may join the class. Bow to the *shomen* (front of the dojo) and instructor in that order, and then enter the mat.

6. If you or someone else is hurt, tell the instructor at once. If you need to rest, request permission from the instructor. If you have a problem during practice, let your partner know. Do not leave the mat without permission of the instructor. In all aspects of training, communication is essential: do not hesitate to communicate any needs or limitations to others.
7. When asking a partner to practice with you, say "Onegaishimasu". When thanking your partner, say "Arigato gozaimashita".
8. Students should seek out partners and not wait passively for someone to choose them. In general, attempt to practice with everyone, and avoid no one.
9. In general during training, unnecessary talking is forbidden. This is to encourage you to learn through your body, rather than conceptually, and to activate all of your senses.
10. Weapons, uniforms and other gear should always be carried in a bag or covered when outside the dojo.
11. Never use another person's weapons without their permission. Every member should have his/her own weapons – the weapons in the dojo are for the use of guests or large groups. To obtain weapons, uniforms or other gear, speak with the office staff.
12. If you have questions regarding membership or financial matters, address them to the office staff off the mat. If you plan to be absent from the dojo for a period of time, let your instructor know. If financial or other difficulties arise that make you membership difficult, let the staff know, and some accommodation may be made. Your continued training and membership in our community is a priority to the dojo.