

Etiquette

Proper observance of etiquette is as much a part of your training as is learning techniques. In many cases observing proper etiquette requires one to set aside one's pride or comfort. Nor should matters of etiquette be considered of importance only in the dojo. Standards of etiquette may vary somewhat from one dojo or organization to another, but the following guidelines are nearly universal. During the practice of Aikido, clear your mind of everything but the lesson being given and the principles of Aikido. Practice with unity of mind and body.

1. When entering or leaving the dojo, it is proper to bow in the direction of the shomen (the front of the dojo). You should also bow when entering or leaving the mat.
2. No shoes on the mat. Students wear sandals and leave them at the side of the mat, so as to keep feet and the mat as clean as possible.
3. Be on time for class. Students should arrive as early as possible so that they can help maintain the dojo, warm up, and be lined up and seated in seiza approximately 3-5 minutes *before* the official start of class. If you do happen to arrive late, sit quietly in seiza on the edge of the mat until the instructor grants permission to join practice.
4. If you should have to leave the mat or dojo for any reason during class, or if you need to leave early, approach the instructor and ask permission.
5. Avoid sitting on the mat with your back to the shomen. Also, do not lean against the walls or sit with your legs stretched out. (Either sit in seiza or cross-legged. If a black belt, cover your feet with your hakama.)
6. Remove watches, rings and other jewelry before practice as they may catch your partner's hair, skin, or clothing and cause injury to oneself or one's partner.
7. Do not bring food, gum, or beverages onto the mat. It is considered disrespectful in a traditional dojo to bring open food or beverages into the dojo. If you have a water bottle, excuse yourself and drink off the mat and then return.
8. Please keep your fingernails (and *especially* toenails) clean and cut short.

9. Keep your training uniform clean, in good shape, and free of offensive odors. Be considerate of others who may be offended by excessive odors.
10. Change your clothes only in designated areas (not on the mat!).
11. Please keep talking during class to a minimum. What conversation there is should be restricted to one topic - Aikido. It is particularly impolite to talk while the instructor is addressing the class.
12. If you are having trouble with a technique, do not shout across the room to the instructor for help. First, try to learn the technique by watching others. Effective observation is a skill you should strive to develop. If you still have trouble, approach the instructor at a convenient moment and ask for help.
13. Your partner is not an opponent. Techniques are learned through him/her and with him/her. It should be a pleasure to be thrown as well as to throw. Each movement teaches the principles and spirit of Aikido and should be practiced sincerely. Care should be taken to be aware of the ability of your partner so that no injuries occur. Always respect other members of the class.
14. When asked to help the instructor demonstrate, remember the other students are waiting. Respond quickly to the instructor's directions.
15. Please pay your membership dues promptly.
16. It is usually considered polite to bow upon receiving assistance or correction from the instructor. When changing partners during class, you should acknowledge your last partner as well as the new partner with a bow.
17. During class, if the instructor is assisting a group in your vicinity, it is frequently considered appropriate to suspend your own training so that the instructor has adequate room to demonstrate.