

DOJO ETIQUETTE

LEARNING THE TECHNIQUES

DOJO ETIQUETTE

It is important that all SKC members affiliated to the AKA abide by the rules and regulations stipulated in the karate Code of Conduct. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from this club. These rules and regulations have been set down to foster the promotion of good healthy karate-ka's, primarily for your own personal safety and development. Below you will find more information on the SKC Dojo Code of Conduct. See karate terminology page to understand some of the Japanese words and phrases.

BASIC DOJO ETIQUETTE

Standing bow (ritsurei): Stand with your heels together, feet pointing slightly outward (like a "V"). Keep your knees straight, elbows straight and relaxed, hands open and at the seams of your pants (the outside of your legs), and fingers together. Bend at the waist, about 30 degrees forward. Unbend. The whole bow takes about a breath's length.

Kneeling (seiza): Place your left knee on the floor, then right knee. Sit down on your feet. The big toes of your left and right feet should overlap (either one on top). Keep your back straight and shoulders relaxed. Rest your left hand (hand open, fingers together) on your left thigh and your right hand on your right thigh, so that your fingers point inward. For anatomical reasons, men should have about a fist or two's width between their knees, and women should have their knees together.

Bowing in seiza: Slide your left hand from the thigh to the floor immediately in front of the left knee (not too far in front, i.e., your left elbow shouldn't touch the floor). Do the same with your right hand, so that the right hand motion is slightly behind (in time) the left hand motion. Your palms should touch the floor to show deep respect. Bow at the waist, taking a little longer than for a standing bow (forehead comes close to the floor, but does not touch it). Slide your hands back up to their initial position on the thighs, this time with your left hand slightly behind the right hand.

Entering and exiting the dojo: Bow, standing at the entrance, facing the dojo or towards the front of the dojo, whenever you are entering or exiting the dojo.

Lateness: First of all, try not to be late. But if you are late, bow in, then quietly kneel near the entrance. Wait until the instructor acknowledges you. Then bow while kneeling, get up, and quickly join the group. If you arrive just as everyone is kneeling during the opening sequence (see below),

don't move or make any noise — just wait until class begins warming up, and bow in as when the instructor acknowledges you, in the manner described above.

Opening sequence: When you hear “Line up!” or “One line!” (Or however many lines is necessary for everyone to line up), stand shoulder-to-shoulder facing the front of the dojo, in rank order. Try to line up so that the instructor, standing before your line, is right in the middle of the line. If class is so big that the senior student says to form more than one line, try to line up so that the lines are approximately the same length.

“Seiza!” Sit down in seiza, so that knees are aligned with the person on your left. “Mokuso!” Quiet meditation — just lower your gaze, relax, and breathe. “Mokuso yame!” End meditation. “Shomen ni rei!” Bow to the front of the room (which shows respect for your training space, to the institution of karate, and to the line of instructors).

“Sensei ni rei!” Bow to the instructor. When you're bowing, you can say “onegaishimasu,” which, roughly translated, means “Please,” i.e., please teach me, please help me, please hold class, etc. (You may also say “oss,” the ubiquitous sign of respect in karate.)

“Otaga ni rei!” Bow to each other. This shows respect for each other. At the signal of the instructor, get up quickly, without necessarily waiting for the person on your left to rise.

Closing sequence: This is the same as the opening sequence. During the bow to the instructor (“sensei ni rei!”), you may say “arigato gozaimashita”, which means “Thank you.” “Thank you” in English is fine, too. At the end, the instructor will get up. Wait until the person on your left bows and gets up before you do the same.

Clean-up: After the class finishes, there is usually some sort of dojo-cleaning process. During this time, actively participate to the extent you can. Don't sit back and stretch when others are still cleaning.

Kiai: Don't say any words when you kiai. “Kiai” itself, being a Japanese word should NOT be a kiai. Common kiai include “Ya!” and “Ei!” Don't be afraid to kiai! In general, people tend to kiai too softly rather than too loudly. If you have a strong kiai, it will often spur others to work harder, as well. The overall tone of a class is set by the level of spirit of the class, which can be raised with better kiai. On the other hand, if your spirit is poor or your kiai weak, you might bring down the class spirit.