



COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

A MESSAGE FROM SENSEI
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LEVELING UP
REFERENCE MATERIAL

A MESSAGE FROM SENSEI

Welcome to the Aikido of San Diego community, and welcome to a fresh approach to martial arts practice, embodiment, and personal mastery.

To me, Aikido is (1) a collaborative conflict & contact art form, and (2) a way to embody power, wisdom, and beauty through martial arts. Ultimately, Aikido is premised on the founder's stated realization, "We are One," and I strive to create a practice that reflects that reality.

What I teach is not rooted in our mundane competitive paradigm—the one that frames life and conflict in terms of winners-losers, offense-defense, fight-flight, etc. I consider our program to be a doorway beyond that limited mold—a doorway to your next level of function, freedom, and wholeness. I'm here to help, through this (r)evolutionary art form and thirty-five years of experience, to guide you on this warrior journey into your body, mind, and heart.

I'm not inspired to lead a community based on boundaries of style and lineage, institutional beliefs and assumptions, or Japanese cultural norms. I'm not inspired to rest on those things either. What I'm interested in is the living principle of Aikido, and how each of us can embody it for ourselves.

If you're new to our community but not new to Aikido then this may be different from your previous experience in terms of culture and direction. I understand. Change is challenging. Do your best with a fresh mind and heart regardless of your rank or experience.

Speaking of change, in 2020 I made the difficult decision to give up our beautiful dojo and take training outdoors. Going from a contained space full of symbology to a natural, uncontained space with no traditional symbology truly informed me on the greater organic nature of Aikido. The change was not comfortable, and at the time it was not welcome. But the fact is that it's been surprisingly informative and refreshing. Now we have a new facility and we split our training time between outdoors in the park, and indoors on the mat. But either way, the focus is on the embodied principles of Aiki. Our approach and expression of the art continues to evolve, because as far as I'm concerned, that's the point. The "Covid Era" represents another chapter in that evolution.

I hope you find your experience with us to be powerful, inspiring, and insightful. Most of all, I hope you enjoy the ride!

Sincerely,
Dave Goldberg

BEING A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY

We're a community that's been dedicated to the practice, principles, and spirit of Aikido since 2000. Membership gains you access to our classes and gatherings, supports our ongoing exploration, and promotes the evolutionary values we share. Please support the spirit in which we all train and gather. When you support the community, you support an ideal and practice that benefits you, and those around you.

Keeping yourself connected...

The more you stay in the loop, the more you're likely to participate and get the most out of your Aikido of San Diego experience.

Our website is kept current. Visit at www.aikidosd.com.

Please "like" [our public Facebook page](#). It's also kept up-to-date with schedule, event, and community information.

Maybe most importantly, we have a closed group on Facebook that is strictly for current members. It's used for all the inside communication and information that the public has no use for. It is the primary communication portal for the dojo community. Please visit the following link to request entry into the group: www.facebook.com/groups/aikidosd.

Contacting Sensei...

The number is 619-993-2454. The email address is sensei@aikidosd.com, or just use any email link on our website. Please be sure that Sensei has an email address for you that is regularly checked. It's used for all business and membership matters.

Putting us out there...

If you're excited about what you're doing with us, share it on social media. Posting your own stuff about your experience, and sharing our posts is sincerely appreciated. We have a presence on all the major social media platforms, especially Facebook. Putting the community out there really helps promote and perpetuate our work.

Another cool thing you can do is to invite a friend to come watch a class. If they're interested, you can even invite them to train with you one day. That's a member-only privilege. Please schedule it with Sensei in advance, and have your friend [complete a registration form](#) before they arrive.

Keeping your membership current...

In the unusual occasion that there's an issue with your account, please do us the favor of resolving it as quickly as possible. All policies regarding fees and billing are clearly outlined in our [registration form](#), and are administered "by the book." The policies are deliberately very simple and transparent.

SOME GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

In the tradition of Budo, we use a simple bow to acknowledge important things.

Gratitude. Inclusion. Respect. Appreciation. Recognition. These are all things that are extended by a simple, heartfelt bow. If this is too challenging for your current belief system then please just use traditionally clear and considerate language with supportive body language until you get over it.

Please train with a clean, perfume-free body.

It's respectful and it simply makes it more pleasant for everyone. Please also make sure that your feet are clean before you get on the mat, and that your fingernails are short.

Don't leave anything at the studio after training, please.

That includes your uniform, sticks, water bottles, glasses, shoes, clothes, children, mind, etc. Take everything home with you every day.

Minors must be picked up by class ending times.

Parents—please remember that your teen has been granted permission to participate in an adult class. We go home when class is over. You're welcome to stay, watch, and wait. Coaching and participating from the sideline is strictly prohibited, though.

LEVELING UP

Aikido of San Diego uses a traditional Japanese system of “Kyu” and “Dan” ranks in a modernized way. Our ranking system focuses on your success in the most important way of all. It supports your efforts in becoming your own expression of what the art is all about. Ranks should be considered levels of invested commitment, and not necessarily objective levels of performance. Leveling up is about *your* personal best.

Structure

Once you reach the required number of training days for promotion, a demo opportunity is offered, and a date that allows enough time for preparation is set. Here are the basics:

6 Kyu	5 Kyu	4 Kyu	3 Kyu	2 Kyu	1 Kyu	1 Dan
15 classes Demo Inquiry	+30 classes Demo Inquiry	+40 classes Demo Inquiry	+50 classes Demo Inquiry	+60 classes Demo Inquiry	+80 classes Demo Inquiry	+80 classes Demo Inquiry

Process

Ask someone more experienced to help you through the process of preparing. This “mentor” will also be your primary partner on your demo. Mentors assume a shared responsibility for your preparedness and success. Don’t be shy about asking someone to fill that role for you. It’s a welcome question that is built into the system.

The specific guidelines for your demonstration will be provided once the groundwork of a date and support is established. Requirements and guidelines are commensurate with level and experience, of course. The guidelines will be clear and accessible.

Apart from preparing for your demo, a short inquiry statement is also expected each time you level up. It could be on anything related to your experience with the art. Aim for it to connect. The statement should be posted on our private Facebook group page the week of your demo. Some possibilities to get you started are listed below:

- * Reflecting on your training so far, describe any “ah-ha!” or “yes!” moments you’ve had.
- * Reflecting on your training so far, what has challenged you the most?
- * What top 5 things do you appreciate about Aikido / training / community / etc.?
- * What does Aikido mean to you?
- * What does it mean to be a student of this art?
- * Where/how has it been beneficial to be an “uke” or “nage” outside of class?
- * Describe the effect Aikido has had on your life, or how it has facilitated change for you.
- * Describe how you see Aikido from the perspectives of a body, a mind, or a heart.
- * Aikido is like...

REFERENCE MATERIAL

It should be understood that no one at Aikido of San Diego is expected to perfect the use of Japanese language in their training. With that said, they're just names, as good as any English names, and we do use them. "Aikido-ese" is widely understood worldwide. People seem to pick it up quite easily simply by being around. The following is not meant to be something memorized. It is simply available for your reference.

Names of the 20 Jo Suburi

<i>Japanese Term:</i>	<i>English Translation:</i>
1. Choku-tsuki	Straight - thrust
2. Kaeshi-tsuki	Reverse - thrust
3. Ushiro-tsuki	Rear - thrust
4. Tsuki-gedan-gaeshi	Thrust - low position - turning
5. Tsuki-jodan-gaeshi-uchi	Thrust - high position - turning - strike
6. Shomen-uchi-komi	Front - striking practice
7. Renzoku-uchi-komi	Repeating - striking practice
8. Menuchi-gedan-gaeshi	Strike to the head - low position - turning
9. Menuchi-ushiro-tsuki	Strike to the head - rear - thrust
10. Gyaku-yokomen-ushiro-tsuki	Opposite side - side of the head - rear - thrust
11. Katate-gedan-gaeshi	One hand - low position - turning
12. Katate-toma-uchi	One hand - far reaching - strike
13. Katate-hachi-no-ji-gaeshi	One hand - the character 8 - turning
14. Hasso-gaeshi-uchi	Turning - strike
15. Hasso-gaeshi-tsuki	Turning - thrust
16. Hasso-gaeshi-ushiro-tsuki	Turning - rear - thrust
17. Hasso-gaeshi-ushiro-uchi	Turning - rear - strike
18. Hasso-gaeshi-ushiro-barai	Turning - rear - low center
19. Hidari-nagare-gaeshi-uchi	Left - flowing - turning - strike
20. Migi-nagare-gaeshi-tsuki	Right - flowing - turning - thrust

Understanding Technique Names

Traditional techniques are named in the following way:

ATTACK + TECHNIQUE + OMOTE/URA IF RELEVANT (front/rear) = Full Technique Name

For instance: "Kata-dori Nikkyo Ura-waza" means, Shoulder grab, 2nd technique, Rear side.

Names of Basic Techniques

Ikkyo: 1st systemic technique.
Nikkyo: 2nd systemic technique.
Sankyo: 3rd systemic technique.
Yonkyo: 4th systemic technique.
Gokkyo: 5th systemic technique.

Irimi-nage: Entering throw.
Kaiten-nage: Rotary throw.
Kokyu-ho: "The way of breath" technique
Kokyu-nage: "Breath" throw
Kote-gaeshi: Wrist turning technique.
Shiho-nage: Four direction throw.
Tenshi-nage: Heaven and earth throw.

Names of Basic Attacks

STRIKES

Jodan-tsuki: Thrusting strike to face/head.
Mune-tsuki: Straight strike to center of body.
Shomen-uchi: Strike to the front of head.
Tsuki: Thrusting strike.
Yokomen-uchi: Strike to the side of the head.

GRABS

Gyakute-dori: Cross-hand grab
Kata-dori: Shoulder grab.
Katate-dori: Wrist grab (mirror image).
Morote-dori: Wrist held with both hands.
Ryokata-dori: Both shoulders held.
Ryote-dori: Both wrists are held.
Ushiro-ryote-dori: Wrists grabbed behind.

Counting in Japanese

Sometimes you'll hear technical work counted in Japanese. You're not expected to do it yourself, but it's nice to understand it. It's quite simple actually. Just memorize one through ten and the rest will fall in place:

1	2	3	4	5	5	7	8	9	10
ICHI	NI	SAN	SHI (yon)	GO	ROKU	SHICHI (nana)	HACHI	KYU	JYU

Ten through nineteen becomes 10+1, etc. Therefore, 11 is jyu-ichi, 12 is jyu-ni, etc... Twenty through twenty-nine becomes 2x10+... Therefore, 20 is ni-jyu, 21 is ni-jyu-ichi, 22 is ni-jyu-ni, etc...

Four Elements Reference Chart

We often reference the 4 elements of Earth, Water, Fire, and Air. Get some familiarity with these intuitive energies and perspectives from nature:

Aikido of San Diego 4-Elements Reference Chart

EARTH	WATER	FIRE	AIR
Speaks To: stability, integrity, control, form, practicality, correctness, balance, reliability, support, steadiness, organization, confidence, pattern, alignment	Speaks To: fluidity, relations, receptivity, flow, taking in, relaxation, acceptance, empathy, feeling, connection, compassion, seamless, inclusion, adaptability	Speaks To: drive, doing, action, passion, results, achievement, courage, purpose, power, inspiration, intention, effort, directness, perseverance, goals	Speaks To: vision, creativity, lightness, play, patience, possibility, spontaneity, spaciousness, non-attachment, intuition, insight, joy, levity, effortlessness
Directional Tendency: Down	Directional Tendency: Down / Inward	Directional Tendency: Forward / Out	Directional Tendency: Up / Out
Energetic Body: Bones	Energetic Body: Soft Tissue / Heart (receptive)	Energetic Body: Blood / Heart (active)	Energetic Body: Breath
Primary Virtue: Knowledge	Primary Virtue: Grace	Primary Virtue: Purpose	Primary Virtue: Appreciation
Primary Contemplation: What do I know?	Primary Contemplation: What do I feel?	Primary Contemplation: Why am I here?	Primary Contemplation: What am I grateful for?
Related Inquiries: What are the facts? What can I count on? What are my patterns? What is essential/fundamental?	Related Inquiries: What do I need to accept? How am I caring for myself? How am I caring for others? How do I feel about...?	Related Inquiries: What "lights" me up? What needs to be done? How do I/we move forward? What's the point?	Related Inquiries: How/where can I lighten up? What do I need to let go? What's possible? Where's the joy?
Sample Attitudes			
"The secret to Aikido is regular training, and focus on basics."	"Sure, but Aikido is relational. Feeling is the secret sauce."	"Aikido is what the world needs! The spirit of Irimi is the secret."	"The real secret to Aikido is in your willingness to let go and BE it."
"You know, Ikkyo is considered Aikido's roof technique."	"I did know. And I love the feeling of its waves and spirals."	"And the way it just connects right into center. Bam! Oh ya."	"The only good Ikkyo is the one that appears. Pass the wine."
"This room has everything we need for the week."	"It feels so open and welcoming! Just take it in. Oh, and a jacuzzi!"	"Hey, we do only have it for the week, so I'm getting to work."	"Wow, this room would make a beautiful dojo. Maybe one day."