

Moerushin Aikido Dojo

Dojo Handbook

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Ted Maclin, Dojo Cho

Welcome

Welcome to Moerushin Dojo! Aikido is a martial art that teaches harmony in the face of conflict. While it includes throws, pins, joint locks, and weapons training, Aikido is more than a set of techniques. It is a path of personal presence—strengthening the body, calming the mind, and cultivating respect for ourselves and others. The “techniques” of aikido are expressions of core mind/body principles: centering, unbalancing, leading, redirecting, entering, and more. The best way to learn those principles is through direct embodied learning.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

Moerushin Aikido Dojo provides traditional aikido training for people of all ages and abilities. We cultivate self-defense, personal growth, and empowerment by helping students meet life’s challenges with calm, compassion, and harmony of mind, body, and spirit.

Vision

Moerushin Aikido Dojo envisions a thriving community hub where martial and healing arts come together to support safety, awareness, resilience, and belonging. We seek to be recognized as a regional center of excellence in aikido, known for inclusivity and trauma-informed practice. By embodying aikido’s spirit of grounded, effective conflict resolution, we aim to contribute to a more compassionate, resilient world.

Values

Moerushin Aikido Dojo is guided by:

- Inclusivity, equity, and trauma-informed practice
- Effective technique practiced with focus, encouragement, and disciplined effort
- Community rooted in *rei* (respect), *shugyō* (dedicated training), and *misogi* (transformative change)

Through these values, we cultivate self-mastery, harmony, and presence in all who train with us.

What is Aikido?

Aikido is a modern Japanese martial art and **Budo** (martial Way) founded in the early twentieth century by Morihei Ueshiba (1883–1969), known as **O-Sensei** (“venerable teacher”). Drawing on his extensive training in traditional martial systems—including sword (*kenjutsu*), staff (*jojutsu*), spear, sumo, and several schools of *jujutsu*—Ueshiba created Aikido as a refined distillation of centuries of Japanese martial knowledge. Today it is practiced worldwide.

Technically, Aikido is a comprehensive system of throws, joint locks, pins, controls, and strikes, along with training in traditional weapons such as the sword, staff, and knife. Its methods emphasize blending with an attack, redirecting force, and resolving conflict without unnecessary harm. For this reason, Aikido is often described as a martial art of non-contention—a disciplined way of dealing with aggression through balance, timing, and connection rather than opposition.

For O-Sensei, however, Aikido was never meant to be only a system of fighting techniques. Influenced by spiritual and philosophical traditions flowing from India, China, and Japan, he taught that martial training should cultivate character, compassion, and inner integrity. He viewed Budo as a path of personal purification and self-development—a means to improve relationships with others, discover one’s true nature, and contribute to peace. His famous principle, *Masakatsu Agatsu* (“true victory is victory over the self”), expresses the core spirit of Aikido practice.

Training in Aikido is understood as *shugyo*—sincere physical and spiritual discipline aimed at refining the whole person. While technical skill is important, it is the cultivation of focused energy, relaxation, mental clarity, calmness, courage, and respect that defines authentic practice. Students are encouraged to carry these qualities beyond the dojo into everyday life—an idea often described as “Aikido in daily life.”

Aikido is practiced in a dojo (training hall) under the guidance of an instructor addressed as *Sensei* (“teacher”). Practice is cooperative, structured, and supervised, emphasizing safety, mutual respect, and continuous learning.

After O-Sensei’s death, leadership of Aikido passed through successive generations of the Ueshiba family—first to Kisshomaru Ueshiba, who organized and expanded Aikido internationally through the Aikikai Foundation, and then to Moriteru Ueshiba, the current Doshu (head of the Way). Through their efforts and those of many teachers worldwide, Aikido has grown into a global art open to people of all backgrounds.

Moerushin Aikido Dojo is a member of the **Aikido World Alliance (AWA)**. Andrew Sato Shihan, 7th dan, is the Founder and Chief Instructor of the Aikido World Alliance. Sato Shihan and several dedicated dojo and students started the organization in 2005. Under his leadership, the AWA has grown to more than 50 dojo worldwide, and is one of only a few US-based aikido associations directly affiliated with the Aikikai Foundation, Aikido World Headquarters, in Tokyo, Japan.

The dojo cho at Moerushin is Ted Maclin, 4th dan. Maclin Sensei began aikido training in 1989 in Knoxville and trained for ten years in Brooklyn, New York under Joseph Jarman Sensei.

The AWA hosts seminars around the world including occasional seminars in Memphis and the southern US. Check the AWA webpage for the most current schedule:

<https://www.aikidoworldalliance.com/> .

Dojo Etiquette, Rei

Budo begins and ends with **rei** (respect/courtesy/gratitude). Rei means all of those things—and the practice of martial arts is completely interwoven with *rei*. The practice of rei is also about maintaining self-awareness and awareness of the space around you so it supports safety, both in and out of the dojo.

The guidelines below are broken into three sections: the first set of guidelines always apply at Moerushin Aikido (and most other aikido dojo). The second and third sets of guidelines are more strict: some schools put even more emphasis on traditional Japanese etiquette. You should be aware of these in case you travel, attend a seminar, or host a visiting instructor.

Everyday Etiquette at Moerushin Aikido

These core practices maintain the safety, flow, and respectful atmosphere of our daily training.

- **Addressing Sensei:** Always use the title "**Sensei**" on the mat or at events. Respond with "**Hai, Sensei.**"
- **The Bow:** Bow to *shomen* when entering/leaving the mat. Bow to Sensei after corrections and to partners before/after practice. Standing bows are okay if the partner is standing.
- **Attention:** Stop training immediately when called. Sit in *seiza* for opening/closing. Face Sensei during demos and stay silent.
- **Movement:** Line up by rank before and after class. Walk behind seated students; never between them and Sensei. Do not turn your back to Sensei.

- **Dojo Care:** Wear a clean gi, trim nails, and remove jewelry. Help with setup and cleaning without being asked. Attack sincerely and take safe *ukemi*.

Formal / Visiting / Seminar Etiquette

Use these when visiting other dojos, attending seminars, or in unfamiliar traditional settings. If it turns out that you are being too formal, someone will let you know.

- **Public/Social:** Refer to the instructor as **Sensei** even in casual or public settings. **Never** use their first name. Never contradict Sensei publicly.
- **Heightened Rei:** Sit in *seiza* for all instructions. Stand or bow when Sensei approaches your group. Bow when entering the dojo building.
- **Protocol:** No casual slang. Ask permission to leave the mat for any reason. Route logistical questions through a senior student (*sempai*).
- **Focus:** Maintain alert posture (no stretching/fatigue). Mental notes only. No phones.
- **Visiting:** Bring a small gift (*Omiyage*) when visiting other dojos.

Most Formal Etiquette (Hosting visiting instructors)

When hosting a visiting instructor, heightened etiquette applies.

- **The "Shadow":** Senior attendants walk slightly behind and to Sensei's left (guarding the sword side).
 - **The Guard:** Protect Sensei's social space at crowded events; act as a bridge for introductions.
 - **Service:** Proactively open doors and carry equipment. Ensure Sensei's *zori* are turned outward when they step off the mat.
 - **Uniform/Dining:** Offer to fold Sensei's *hakama*. Ensure Sensei is served first at meals; do not eat until they begin.
 - **Authority:** Never "test" or resist a dignitary's technique. Juniors must be introduced by a *sempai*.
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Code of Ethics

All members follow a **Code of Ethics**. Violations are addressed fairly, even when committed by leadership. Cover-ups, retaliation, or suppression of complaints are never acceptable.

Code of Ethics

1. **Respect and Presence** – Treat all members with attentiveness, courtesy, and respect for differences.
2. **Safety and Care** – Prioritize physical, emotional, and psychological safety. Modify or pause training as needed.
3. **Consent and Boundaries** – Obtain consent for physical contact, especially for things beyond the usual level of training. Respect others' boundaries and support students in asserting their own.
4. **Cooperative Practice** – Train to learn together, not dominate. Treat partners as collaborators.
5. **Inclusivity and Equity** – Welcome all students; reject discrimination, harassment, or exclusion. Correct bias or misgendering.
6. **Integrity and Accountability** – Follow dojo policies and ethical guidelines. Address breaches respectfully; hold yourself and others accountable.
7. **Mindfulness and Non-Harming** – Practice with awareness of limits; avoid aggression, coercion, or harm.
8. **Community and Service** – Contribute to dojo upkeep and culture; support peers; foster inclusive relationships.
9. **Personal Practice** – Approach training as a path to awareness, presence, and authentic self-understanding—not status or ego.

The Spirit of Training

Aikido is a cooperative martial art devoted to harmony, awareness, and personal presence. Rather than simply seeking to defeat others, training invites practitioners to meet conflict with awareness rather than aggression. Through sincere practice, students cultivate skill, resilience, and presence.

The dojo is a place of **shugyō**—a continuous process of discovering one's limits, honoring them, and gently stretching beyond them to practice with greater honesty and connection. Shugyō is not defined by short-term intensity or sweat; it is the commitment to a continual practice that extends out of the dojo and into every moment of life.

Our training is rooted in the spirit of **Moerushin**, the “burning heart”: focused effort joined with respect, compassion, and the transformation of the mind/body system. Intensity is not the goal; it is a side effect of sincere focus. Aikido is not a gym, and sweat is not a measure of success. Rather than seeking intensity for its own sake, we prioritize the discipline of presence and the refinement of our true nature.

Aikido exists to promote safety, resilience, deep self-understanding, and focused presence in the world. Individuals may practice aikido for many different reasons. Students may pursue:

- Self-defense
- Fitness
- Healing
- Spiritual practice
- Embodied insight into nonduality
- Etc.

Training is not about becoming someone new—it is about discovering and living fully in the authenticity of who we are. No single agenda overrides the dignity, safety, or autonomy of any student.

Safety, Training, and Community

“Always practice Aikido in a vibrant and joyful manner.”—Morihei Ueshiba

Training at Moerushin is cooperative, mindful, and safe. This is especially important early in practice, when resistance and unfamiliar techniques can lead to accidents. Our goal is for each member to feel secure, supported, and confident training with anyone in the dojo.

Key practices include:

- **Communicate.** Share concerns, injuries, or uncertainties with your training partners or instructors.
- **Consent.** The bow to your partner is more than respect; it is a statement of consent for practice. Either partner may revoke consent at any time.
- **Cooperate.** Focus on learning together; cooperation is more important than competition.
- **Commit.** Train sincerely to the best of your abilities in the moment. This is *shugyō*: disciplined, honest practice. Focus guides effort; intensity is a natural byproduct.
- **Have fun.** Aikido is not the Way of Suffering. This is not *Meifumado* (冥府魔道). If you aren't having fun, take a break and talk to the instructor before or after class.

- **Junior students should be encouraged.** Minimal talking is expected during practice, but questions are welcomed during designated times.
 - **Senior students should be guides.** Experienced students set the tone for safe, respectful training and help others practice mindfully.
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Trauma-Informed Practice and Consent

Moerushin Aikido Dojo assumes that many people carry histories of trauma. Our responsibility is not to treat trauma, but to avoid adding to it.

- Advance notice before intense or activating activities
- Clear consent practices
- Options to modify, opt out, or observe
- Respect for physical and emotional boundaries

Instructors and students obtain consent before initiating contact, especially outside normal training. The mutual bow before each round of practice is a form of consent, and words are also important. Students are supported when they set boundaries. Continuing after someone says no is never acceptable.

If at any point you feel like pausing your participation during practice, you are welcome to bow and sit to the side of the mat.

Injuries and Illness in Training

Aikido is an embodied practice; while we strive to minimize risk, injuries can occur. Our goal is to address causes immediately and support proper recovery.

Reporting & Immediate Response

- **Report Immediately:** If you are injured on the mat—no matter how minor it seems—stop training and notify your instructor immediately.
- **Observe Others:** If you notice your partner is injured or struggling, stop the practice and alert the Sensei.
- **First Aid:** The dojo is equipped with basic first aid and ice. Use them immediately to minimize severity.

Guidelines for Training

- **When in Doubt:** Consult your physician and your Sensei before practicing if you have any physical condition that may affect your safety.
- **Do Not Train Ill:** If you are sick, stay home to recover and protect your fellow students. Notify your Sensei of your absence.
- **Respect the Recovery:** Students often rush back before an injury is healed. This is detrimental to long-term progress. Your body is your primary tool; abusing it prevents further training.

Training While Sidelined

- If you cannot participate in full class, treat your recovery itself as shugyo. Ask your Sensei about modified practice:
- **Alternative Methods:** Aikitaiso (stretching), weapons suburi, or internal training may still be appropriate.
- **Observation:** Sitting off-mat and taking notes is a valid way to train when the body needs rest.

Reporting Concerns

Moerushin Aikido Dojo is committed to the safety, dignity, and well-being of all students. This includes concerns about:

- Injuries or unsafe training practices
- Harassment, discrimination, or bullying
- Any behavior that violates dojo values or ethics

If you experience or witness a problem, you may report it directly to the **dojo cho, Ted Maclin**, via email at moerushin@gmail.com. Reports will be taken seriously, addressed confidentially, and followed up appropriately. Retaliation for reporting a concern is never acceptable.

Mindfulness and *rei* guide our practice, helping to prevent accidents and harm. Students are encouraged to communicate about boundaries, request modifications, and pause or observe practice if needed.

Inclusivity, Diversity, and Belonging

We are actively working to build a diverse and inclusive community. That includes addressing barriers—financial, cultural, physical, and social. Check our web site (<https://moerushin.org>) or talk to an instructor for information on:

- Scholarships for training and seminars
- Visiting and resident instructors from diverse backgrounds
- Policies welcoming historically excluded communities

We also have a policy of gender inclusivity:

- All genders are respected. Names and pronouns are honored.
- Instructors model pronoun use. Misgendering is corrected, and repeated misgendering is addressed.
- Changing rooms and bathrooms are safe and accessible.

No one should feel unsafe or unseen because of gender.

Discrimination or exclusion is not tolerated. When and if racial harm, microaggressions, or bias occur, they will be recognized and addressed, prioritizing the well-being and safety of the person harmed.

Training Beyond the Dojo

Training with other dojos and disciplines is encouraged. Students are never punished for broadening their practice. Seminars, workshops, and cross-training are seen as valuable for awareness and presence.

For students with another primary dojo, ask us about associate membership at Moerushin—a way to take periodic classes without worry about rank or promotion.

Aikido Beyond the Mat

Aikido is not confined to the dojo. Carry respect, calm, and compassion into everyday life.

Welcome to Moerushin Aikido Dojo.

Appendix 1: Aikido Terminology

I. Philosophy and Spirit

Concepts on the internal state and the "Way" of the martial artist.

- **Ai:** Meeting, joining, or harmony.
- **Aikido:** The way of unifying (harmony) with life energy.
- **Budo:** The martial way; a path of self-improvement through martial study.
- **Bushi / Bushido:** Warrior class / The way of the warrior.
- **Fudoshin:** "Immovable mind"; a state of psychological and emotional stability.
- **Giri:** Moral obligation or duty to others.
- **Ki:** Spirit, vital force, or life energy.
- **Kiai:** An explosive projection of energy, often in the form of a shout.
- **Misogi:** Purification/transformation practices (often involving breathing or ritual).
- **Mushin:** "No-mind"; a state of mind free from obstruction, ego, or attachment.
- **Shinken Shobu:** Lit. "a fight with live swords"; practicing with life-or-death sincerity.
- **Shugyō:** The "polishing" of the self through continuous practice to cultivate honesty and presence both on the mat and in every moment of life.
- **Zanshin:** "Remaining mind"; sustained focus and awareness after a technique is completed.

II. The Dojo and Hierarchy

Terms related to the training hall and the roles of practitioners.

- **Dojo:** "Place of the Way"; the training hall.
- **O-Sensei:** "Venerable Teacher"; refers specifically to the founder, Morihei Ueshiba.
- **Doshu:** Master of the Way; the hereditary head of Aikido (currently Moriteru Ueshiba).
- **Sensei:** Instructor (literally "one born before").
- **Shihan:** A master teacher; "teacher of teachers."
- **Uchideshi:** "Inner disciple"; a student who lives in the dojo to train full-time.

- **Sempai / Kohai:** Senior student / Junior student.
- **Nage / Tori:** The defender; the person who executes the technique.
- **Uke:** The attacker; the person who "receives" the technique and takes the fall.
- **Kamiza / Shomen:** The front of the dojo; the wall students bow toward.
- **Shimoza:** The "lower seat" where students sit, opposite the Kamiza.
- **Joseki / Shimoseki:** The senior (right) and junior (left) sides of the mat.

III. Posture, Movement, and Distance

Fundamental mechanics of how the body is positioned and moved.

- **Hanmi:** The basic "half-body" triangular stance of Aikido.
- **Kamae:** stance or posture (usually a specific posture)
- **Shisei:** overall posture/alignment of body/mind/spirit
- **Chūshin-sen:** Center line of the body
- **Kuzushi:** The process of unbalancing
- **Ai-hanmi:** Mutual stance (both uke and nage lead with the same foot).
- **Gyaku-hanmi:** Opposite stance (uke and nage lead with different feet).
- **Ma-ai:** The combative distance or interval between partners.
- **Tai Sabaki:** Body movement/pivoting (e.g., Irimi and Tenkan).
- **Irimi:** Entering movement.
- **Tenkan:** Turning or "spinning change" movement.
- **Shikko:** Knee-walking.
- **Hara / Tanden:** The lower abdomen; the center of gravity and source of power.
- **Seiza:** Formal kneeling position.
- **Hantachi (Hanmi Hantachi):** Half-standing; techniques where nage is kneeling and uke is standing.

IV. Attacks (Strikes and Grabs)

Common methods an opponent uses to initiate an encounter.

- **Atemi:** A strike used as a distraction or to facilitate an Aikido technique.
- **Shomenuchi:** A vertical overhead strike to the front of the head.
- **Yokomenuchi:** A strike to the temple or side of the head.
- **Tsuki:** A straight thrust or punch (e.g., Mune tsuki to the chest).
- **Katatetori:** A single wrist grab.
- **Ryotetori:** Grasping both of nage's wrists from the front.
- **Morotetori:** One wrist grasped by both of uke's hands.
- **Katatori:** Grasping the shoulder or lapel.
- **Ushirotori:** A general term for rear attacks (e.g., rear bearhug).
- **Kubishime:** A neck choke.

V. Techniques (Waza)

Specific applications of throws and pins.

- **Ikkyo through Gokyo:** The five basic teachings (first through fifth) of arm and elbow control.
- **Shihonage:** "Four-corner throw."
- **Kotegaeshi:** "Wrist-turning" throw.
- **Iriminage:** Entering throw.
- **Koshinage:** Hip throw.
- **Tenchinage:** "Heaven-and-earth" throw.
- **Kaitenage:** Rotary throw.
- **Jiu-ji nage:** Crossed-arms (character "ten") throw.
- **Sumi otoshi:** "Corner drop" throw.
- **Katame waza:** Pinning or immobilization techniques.
- **Kaeshi waza:** Counter-techniques (reversing a technique on the person applying it).

- **Ukemi:** The art of receiving a technique and falling safely.

VI. Weapons and Equipment

Tools and clothing used in Aikido practice.

- **Bokken / Bokuto:** Wooden training sword.
- **Suburito:** A heavy wooden sword used specifically for individual cutting practice (Suburi).
- **Jo:** A short wooden staff (approx. 50 inches).
- **Tanto:** A wooden or blunt training knife.
- **Bokken dori / Jo dori:** Techniques for taking a sword or staff from an opponent.
- **Hakama:** The formal divided skirt worn by senior practitioners.
- **Dogi / Gi:** The training uniform.
- **Obi:** The belt.

VII. Anatomy and Directions

Terms for the body and relative space.

- **Men:** Head.
- **Kote / Tekubi:** Forearm / Wrist.
- **Hiji:** Elbow.
- **Kata:** Shoulder.
- **Kubi:** Neck.
- **Mune:** Chest.
- **Mae / Ushiro:** Front / Behind.
- **Migi / Hidari:** Right / Left.
- **Omote / Ura:** Front (entering) / Rear (turning/behind).
- **Jodan / Chudan / Gedan:** High / Middle / Low positions.

Appendix 2: Rank and Promotion Testing

Rank in Aikido serves as a subjective indicator of your personal progress. Within the AWA, Minimum Promotion Test Requirements ensure a high standard, but these are merely a baseline; true Aikido knowledge extends far beyond a list of requirements.

The Purpose of Testing

- **Integrity:** Testing prevents rank from being awarded based on favoritism, requiring a public display of skill before a committee.
- **The Internal Barrier:** The test is a training tool. It forces you to maintain concentration, relaxation, and intensity under the pressure of public performance.
- **Public Statement:** Testing is a demonstration of the skill you have gained through hard training, proving you can perform your technique at any time.

The Martial Mindset

When testing, you are treated as a martial artist. Approach the test with your whole self—concentration, dynamic energy, and a "last act of life" intensity. If you make a mistake, do not be disturbed; your reaction to the error shows the true level of your training. Do not give up. Even after the final bow, maintain your posture as you return to your seat; the test is never truly finished.

Understanding Dan Rank

Achieving **Shodan** (first-degree black belt) does not signify mastery. The word *shodan* literally means "**beginner**." It indicates that you are no longer a guest, but a legitimate practitioner on the first rung of a lifelong path.

Test Anxiety

People get stressed about tests. It may be better to think of belt promotion tests as demonstrations—even if you have the required hours, your Sensei won't ask you to demonstrate for rank until they are reasonably sure that you are ready.

Aikido Promotion Test: Final Checklist

I. Administrative Final Check (before test day)

- **Dues:** Verify AWA annual and dojo monthly dues are paid.
- **Fees/Forms:** Ensure your test application and fee have been submitted.
- **Hours:** Confirm you have met all training hour and seminar requirements.

II. The Night Before

- Rest: Get a full night's sleep. Your focus and reflexes depend on it.
- Gear: Pack a bleached, clean gi. Ensure weapons are splinter-free.
- Final Review: Mentally walk through your requirements, but don't over-train.

III. Day-Of Preparation

- Nutrition: Eat a light, high-energy meal 2–3 hours before the test. Avoid heavy or greasy foods.
- Hydration: Drink plenty of water throughout the morning.
- Mindset: Spend 10 minutes in quiet meditation or gentle stretching. Focus on breathing and "honoring your limits" while preparing to stretch beyond them.
- Arrival: Arrive early to help clean the mat and settle your mind in the space.

Additional Etiquette for Promotion Testing

These rules are in addition to everyday dojo etiquette and apply specifically during rank examinations.

1. Preparation and Eligibility

- Ensure all administrative requirements are met (applications, test fees, AWA dues, and dojo dues) before applying.
- Verify that you have met minimum training hours and seminar requirements.
- Be responsible for all cumulative techniques from previous ranks, not just the current requirements.

2. Supporting Others

- Offer to take *ukemi* (falls) for others testing.
- Be ready to assist the test committee in any capacity if called upon.

3. Procedure and Response

- When your name is called, answer "**Hai!**" clearly and move promptly to the designated spot at the front of the dojo.
- Sit in *seiza*, bow to *shomen*, turn and bow to the test committee, then face the shomen and wait calmly for instructions.
- Follow all directions from the test committee without hesitation.

4. Working with Uke

- When your *uke* (partner) is called, bow in unison to *shomen*, then bow to each other.
- When an *uke* is dismissed, sit in *seiza* and bow to them before facing *shomen* to await the next instruction.

5. Performance and Resilience

- Demonstrate techniques without hesitation or pausing.
 - If you make a mistake, finish the movement or immediately recover into a defensive stance.
 - **Do not stop or give up.** Move cleanly and quickly until instructed otherwise.
 - If the committee stops the test to offer advice, immediately sit in *seiza* and listen carefully.
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Appendix 3: AWA Adult Test Requirements (2024)

7th KYU – White Belt with Stripe

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 2 months and 20 Days of training

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Seiza** - Sitting Japanese style with legs folded underneath.
- **Koho Tento Undo** - Rolling backward and forward from sitting, kneeling and standing positions
- **Ushiro Ukemi, Rolling** - Tumbling backward completely, from kneeling and standing positions
- **Mae Ukemi, Rolling** - Tumbling forward completely, from kneeling and standing positions
- **Kokyudosa** - Partner practice in seiza position; exercise to develop timing or “breath” power
- **Taisabaki Toshu** – Empty-hand body movement against Katatekosatori (cross hand) attack

Technique

- **Katatekosatori Kotegaeshi** - Cross-hand wrist grab - Wrist-turning throw and pin
- **Katatori Ikkyo** – Shoulder lapel grab - First teaching pin, omote and ura
- **Katatekosatori Kokyunage** - Cross-hand wrist grab -Timing throw, controlling the head

6th KYU – Yellow Belt

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 30 Days of training after earning 7th Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Ushiro Ukemi, Breakfall** - Rolling backward with **DOUBLE** slap, and returning to standing position
- **Mae Ukemi, Breakfall** - Falling forward with slap, and returning to standing position
- **Empty Hand Strikes** – Demonstration of basic strikes; shomenuchi, yokomenuchi & munetsuki
- **Funakogi Undo** - Rowing exercise
- **Shomenuchi Ikkyo Undo** - Raising and lowering the arms as if cutting with a sword
- **Taisabaki Toshu** – Empty-hand body movement against Katatori (shoulder grab) & Katatetori (same side hand) attacks.

Technique

- **Shomenuchi Kokyunage** - Downward strike to the head - Timing throw, controlling the head
- **Shomenuchi Kotegaeshi** - Downward strike to the head - Wrist turning throw and pin
- **Katatetori Shihonage** - Same side wrist grab - Four directions throw, irimi and tenkan
- **Katatori Nikyo** – Shoulder lapel grab – Second teaching pin, omote and ura

5th KYU – Yellow Belt with Stripe

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 4 months and 40 Days of training after earning 6th Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Hanmi No Kamae** - Half-body stance
- **Zengo Undo** - Raising and lowering arms as if cutting with a sword, with 180-degree pivoting motion
- **Happo Undo** - Raising and lowering arms with movement as if cutting in eight directions
- **Tekubikosa Undo** - Crossing the wrists exercise, high and low variations
- **Kamae with Bokken** - Demonstration of five basic sword stances
- **Bokken and Jo Suburi** - Demonstration of basic strikes with sword and staff
- **Taisabaki Toshu** – Shomenuchi and Munetsuki

Technique

- **Shomenuchi Iriminage** – Downward strike to the head - Entering throw, controlling the head
- **Shomenuchi Ikkyo** - Downward strike to the head - First teaching pin
- **Katatori Sankyo** – Shoulder lapel grab -Third teaching, both nage waza (throwing-irimi/tenkan) and katame waza (pin-omote/ura)
- **Yokomenuchi Sokumen Iriminage** - Strike to the side of the head - Side of the face entering throw
- **Munetsuki Kotegaeshi** - Punching strike to the chest - Wrist turning throw and pin

4th KYU – Blue Belt

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 5 months and 50 Days of training since earning 5th Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Sayu Choyaku Undo** - Left and right exercise with stepping movement
- **Udefuri Choyaku Undo** - Swinging the arms exercise with stepping and turning motion
- **Ushirotori Undo** - Grasped from behind exercise
- **Ushirotekubitori Undo** - Wrists grasped from behind exercise
- **Shikko** - Walking and turning on one's knees
- **Taisabaki Toshu** - Empty-hand body movement against Yokomenuchi attack.

Technique

- **Yokomenuchi Shihonage** - Strike to the side of the head - Four directions throw -irimi/tenkan movements
- **Ushirotekubitori Kokyunage** - Wrists grasped from behind - Timing throw, controlling the head and/or variations
- **Ushirotekubitori Kotegaeshi** - Wrists grasped from behind -Wrist turning throw and pin
- **Katatori Yonkyo** – Shoulder lapel grab - Fourth teaching pin, omote and ura
- **Ryotetori TENCHINAGE** - Grasping both wrists - Heaven and Earth throw, irimi and tenkan
- **Ryotetori Kokyunage** - Grasping both wrists - Timing throw, controlling the head and/or variations
- **Jo Kagami #1 & 2** – First & second mirrored movement with staff

3rd KYU – Blue Belt with Stripe

Time and Events Requirements

- **Minimum 6 months and 60 Days of training since earning 4th Kyu**
- **Prior attendance at 1 AWA Seminar since earning 4th kyu is *encouraged* though not required (minimum of 6 hours attendance at each event)**

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Tenkan Undo** - Spinning turn change exercise - turning body movement direct and step-with-pivot variations

Technique

- **Ushirohijitori Kotegaeshi** - Grasping elbows from behind - Wrist-turning throw and pin
- **Munetsuki Kokyunage** – Punching strike to the chest - Timing throw controlling the head and/or variations
- **Katatori Gokyo** – Shoulder lapel grab - Fifth teaching pin, omote and ura
- **Ushirotori Kokyunage** - Grasping bearhug from behind - Timing throw
- **Ryotetori Kaitenage** - Grasping both wrists - Rotary throw, irimi and tenkan - uchi and soto variations
- **Katateriyotetori Nikyo** - Grasping a forearm with both hands - Second teaching pin omote and ura
- **Suwariwaza** (the following techniques performed from seated (seiza) position):
 - **Shomenuchi Kokyunage**
 - **Shomenuchi Ikkyo**
 - **Katatori Nikyo**
- **Bokken Kata I** - First sword form; 13 movements - Happa Giri, cutting in eight directions)
- **Jo Kagami #3** – Third mirrored movement with staff
- **Jiyu Waza** - Free technique, defense against grasping attack, **no pinning techniques**. Katatetori, katateriyotetori, katatori, ryokatatori or ushirotekubitori, based on test committee's request

2nd KYU – Brown Belt

Time and Events Requirements

- **Minimum 8 months and 100 Days of training since earning 3rd Kyu**
- **Prior attendance at 1 AWA seminar since earning 3rd kyu (minimum of 6 hours attendance at each event)**

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Agura no Shisei** - Sitting cross legged
- **Agaranai Karada** - Unliftable body
- **Kokyuho** - Demonstration of breath training

Technique

- **Ryokatatori Kokyunage** - Grasping both shoulder lapels - Timing throw, controlling the head, and/or variations
- **Ushiro ryokatatori Kokyunage** - Grasping both shoulder lapels from behind - Timing throw with bowing movement, and/or variations
- **Katateriyotetori Kokyunage** - Grasping a forearm with both hands - Timing throw controlling the head, and/or variations
- **Ryokatatori Kotegaeshi** - Grasping both shoulder lapels - Wrist-turning throw and pin
- **Katatori Menuchi Iriminage** – Shoulder lapel grab with shomenuchi or yokomenuchi to head - Entering throw controlling the head
- **Hanmi Hantachi Waza** (the following techniques performed from a seated (seiza) position against a standing attacker:
 - **Katatetori Shihonage**
 - **Katatetori Sankyo**
 - **Munetsuki Kotegaeshi**
- **Ryotetori Koshinage** - Grasping both wrists - Hip throw,
- **Maegeri Kokyunage** - Front snapping kick - Timing throw controlling the head
- **Jiyu Waza** - Free technique, defense against a striking attack, **no pinning techniques**. Shomenuchi, yokomenuchi or munestuki, based on test committee's request.
- **Jo Kagami #4** – Fourth mirrored movement with staff
- **Jo Kata I** - First staff form, 22 movements

1st KYU – Brown Belt with Stripe

Time and Events Requirements

- **Minimum 12 months 120 Days of training since earning 2nd Kyu**
- **Prior attendance at 1 AWA seminar since earning 2nd Kyu (minimum of 6 hours attendance at each event)**

Ki Tests and Exercises

- **Tai Sabaki with Bokken** - Body movement and striking with the sword against an opponent, against shomenuchi, yokomenuchi, sliding and stepping munetsuki attacks

Technique

- **Ushirotekubitori Jujinage** - Grasp both wrists from behind, then entwining the arms in the shape of the Japanese number “10” (a cross) and throwing
- **Yokomenuchi Sudori** - Strike to the side of the head - Disappearing throw
- **Katateriyotetori Kotegaeshi** - Grasping a forearm with both hands - Wrist turning throw and pin
- **Munetsuki Sumiotoshi** – Punching attack to the chest - Corner drop throw, both irimi & tenkan
- **Katatori Ganmenuchi Ikkyo** – Shoulder lapel grab with straight punch to face -First teaching pin, omote and ura
- **Tantodori** – Unarmed defense against knife attacks; minimum 3 techniques each against shomenuchi, yokomenuchi, and munetsuki attacks
- **Jo Kagami #5** – Fifth mirrored movement with staff
- **Bokken Kata II** - Second sword form, 13 movements

Randori - Defense against multiple attackers (3)

Shodan – Black Belt, 1st Degree

Time In Grade Since Date Of Current Rank

18 Months and 150 Days Of Training Since Current Rank

Attendance Of events Since Time In Grade Of Current Rank

One AWA seminar

One AWA Camp

Note – Shochugeiko or Kangeiko are not the same as an AWA Camp

Two Requested Written Essays:

“What is your understanding of what is Aikido?” “What is your understanding of what is Shugyo?”

NO application for promotion testing will be accepted by the test committee without the knowledge and consent of the candidate’s dojo cho. A minimum age for shodan is 16 years, yondan 22 years. The Dan application form must be **typewritten** & applicant must have fulfilled the above guidelines prior to submitting the dan application. The Dan applications **must be** submitted **two months** or earlier to the expected test date. A late and/or handwritten application may possibly delay or be denied consideration for the opportunity to test for the requested new dan rank status.

AWA event(s) are to be completed **before** submitting a dan application for new rank status. Testing request may be denied if not completed.

All rank tests are **cumulative**; you must be prepared if asked to demonstrate previous kyu/dan tai sabaki or waza requirements.

The dojo cho **must** be present for any student he/she submits for testing. All above test requirements are the **minimum** to be completed before requesting to test.

Test Demonstration must show the below listed waza:

Nage waza both irimi & tenkan:

Iriminage, Jujinage, Kaitenage, Kokyu nage, Koshi nage, Shiho nage, Sokumen iriminage, Sumio toshi, Tenchi nage.

Katame waza both omote & ura:

Ikkyo, Nikyo, Sankyo, Yonkyo, Gokyo & Kotegaeshi

Attacks to demonstrate Nage waza & Katame waza:

Munetsuki, Yokomenuchi, Ushirotekubitori & Ryotetori attacks

Hanmi Hantachi (OR Tachiwaza If physical condition prohibits suwari waza)

Jiyuwaza (free technique, no pinning) one-person attack.

Bokken Dori - unarmed defense against sword attacks of: shomenuchi, yokomenuchi, and munetsuki both Nage & Katame waza

Jo Kata II - Second staff form; 22 movements

Randori - Defense against multiple attackers (4)

Nidan – Black Belt, 2nd Degree

Time In Grade Since Date Of Current Rank

24 Months and 300 Days Of Training Since Current Rank

Attendance Of Events Since Date Of Current Rank

Two AWA seminars

One AWA Camp

Note – Shochugeiko or Kangeiko are not the same as an AWA Camp

Requested Written Essay:

“Aikido History and your feelings about the Future of Aikido”

NO application for promotion testing will be accepted by the test committee without the knowledge and consent of the candidate's dojo cho. A minimum age for shodan is 16 years, yondan 22 years. The Dan application form must be **typewritten** & applicant must have fulfilled the above guidelines prior to submitting the dan application. The Dan applications **must be** submitted **two months** or earlier to the expected test date. A late and/or handwritten application may possibly delay or be denied consideration for the opportunity to test for the requested new dan rank status.

AWA event(s) are to be completed **before** submitting a dan application for new rank status. Testing request may be denied if not completed.

All rank tests are **cumulative**; you must be prepared if asked to demonstrate previous kyu/dan tai sabaki or waza requirements.

The dojo cho **must** be present for any student he/she submits for testing. All above test requirements are the **minimum** to be completed before requesting to test.

Test Demonstration must show the below listed waza:

Test Committee Request –Free demonstration from one of the Shodan requirements, five arts

Katatori Ganmenuchi – Free demonstration, nage waza – irimi/tenkan and katame waza omote/ura, five arts

Shomenuchi- Free demonstration, nage waza - irimi/tenkan and katame waza - omote/ura, five arts

Hanmi Hantachi – Jiyu waza (free technique, no pinning) against two attackers. **(OR Tachiwaza If physical condition prohibits suwari waza)**

Jo Dori - Unarmed defense against the JO; minimum 3 techniques each against shomenuchi, yokomenuchi, and munetsuki attacks

Jo Awase- Blending movement with a partner using the JO

Randori - Defense against multiple attackers (5)

Sandan – Black Belt, 3rd Degree

Time In Grade Since Date Of Current Rank

36 Months and 400 Days Of Training Since Current Rank

Attendance Of Events Since Date Of Current Rank

Two AWA seminars since earning Nidan

One AWA Camp

One Ninteï Kosu

Note – Shochugeïko may be substituted in lieu of an AWA Camp

Requested Written Essay:

“How has Aikido become part of your philosophy?”

NO application for promotion testing will be accepted by the test committee without the knowledge and consent of the candidate’s dojo cho. A minimum age for shodan is 16 years, yondan 22 years. The Dan application form must be **typewritten** & applicant must have fulfilled the above guidelines prior to submitting the dan application. The Dan applications **must be** submitted **two months** or earlier to the expected test date. A late and/or handwritten application may possibly delay or be denied consideration for the opportunity to test for the requested new dan rank status.

AWA event(s) are to be completed **before** submitting a dan application for new rank status. Testing request may be denied if not completed.

All rank tests are **cumulative**; you must be prepared if asked to demonstrate previous kyu/dan tai sabaki or waza requirements.

The dojo cho **must** be present for any student he/she submits for testing. All above test requirements are the **minimum** to be completed before requesting to test.

Test Demonstration must show the below listed waza:

Test Committee Request - Free demonstration from Nidan requirements; nage waza, irimi/tenkan and katame waza, omote/ura five arts

Katatekosatori – Free demonstration, nage waza – irimi/tenkan and katame waza – omote/ura; five arts

Jo Nage – Free demonstration of nage waza and katame waza using the JO

Kumijo – Free demonstration of the five kata, JO versus JO – both nage and uke positions

Kumitachi – Free demonstration six kata, Bokken versus Bokken – both nage and uke positions

Randori - Defense against multiple attackers (6)

Yondan – Black Belt, 4th Degree

Time In Grade Since Date Of Current Rank

48 Months and 480 Days Of Training Since Current Rank

Attendance Of Events Since Date Of Current Rank

Three AWA seminars

One AWA Camp

One Nintei Kosu

Note – Shochugeiko may be substituted in lieu of an AWA Camp

Requested Written Essay:

“The application of Aikido in your daily life”

NO application for promotion testing will be accepted by the test committee without the knowledge and consent of the candidate's dojo cho. A minimum age for shodan is 16 years, yondan 22 years. The Dan application form must be **typewritten** & applicant must have fulfilled the above guidelines prior to submitting the dan application. The Dan applications **must be** submitted **two months** or earlier to the expected test date. A late and/or handwritten application may possibly delay or be denied consideration for the opportunity to test for the requested new dan rank status.

AWA event(s) are to be completed **before** submitting a dan application for new rank status. Testing request may be denied if not completed.

All rank tests are **cumulative**; you must be prepared if asked to demonstrate previous kyu/dan tai sabaki or waza requirements.

The dojo cho **must** be present for any student he/she submits for testing. All above test requirements are the **minimum** to be completed before requesting to test.

Test Demonstration must show the below listed waza:

Ushirotekubidori Kubeshime – Free demonstration, nage waza – irimi/tenkan and katame waza - omote/ura, five arts

Kihon Waza – Free demonstration, nage waza - irimi/tenkan and katame waza - omote/ura, five arts

Henka Waza - Free demonstration, nage waza – irimi/tenkan and katame waza – omote/ura, five arts

Free Demonstration; One Shodan five arts, one Nidan five art and either Kumi Jo or Kumi Tachi

Kumi Jo/Ken – Free demonstration five kata of JO versus Bokken forms – both nage and uke positions

Possible additional test committee requests; Oyo waza five arts and/or katateryotei dori five arts and/or randori

Dan Recommendation Guidelines For Godan And Rokudan Ranking

Recommendation for Godan and above ranking is only offered to those who have a high level of Aikido knowledge, consistently demonstrated extraordinary commitment to their training, their dojo and the transmission of Aikido to others by their example.

All recommendations must be submitted September 10th the year before.

Godan Guidelines For Recommendation

Time In Grade Since Current Rank – Yondan

Minimum six years from Yondan to Godan based on full calendar years:

(Example: Yondan registration date is 7/2000 it will be 01/2007 for Godan promotion)

Seminar, Camp & Ninteï Kosu Attendance

Attendance At Six AWA Seminars Since Time In Grade Of Current Rank

Attendance At Two AWA Camps Since Time In Grade Of Current Rank

Attendance At Three Ninteï Kosu Since Time In Grade Of Current Rank

Note – One Shochugeiko may be substituted in lieu of an AWA Camp

Days Of Training & Days Teaching As Assistant Instructor

More than 680 days of training since time in grade of current rank

More than 400 days of assistant teaching at your dojo included as days of training.

Letter of Recommendation from the Dojo cho*

Letter of Rationale for Recommended Promotion by Applicant*

Rokudan Guidelines For Recommendation

Time In Grade Since Current Rank - Godan

Minimum seven years from Godan to Rokudan based on full calendar years:

(Example: Godan registration date is 01/2007 it will be 01/2014 for Rokudan promotion)

Seminar, Camp & Ninteï Kosu Attendance

Attendance At Seven AWA seminars Since Time In Grade Of Current Rank

Attendance At Two AWA Camps Since Time In Grade Of Current Rank

Attendance At Four Ninteï Kosu events Since Time In Grade Of Current Rank

Note – One Shochugeiko may be substituted in lieu of an AWA Camp

Days Of Training & Days Teaching As Assistant Instructor

More than 760 days of training since time in grade or current rank.

More than 500 days of assistant teaching at your dojo included as days of training.

Letter of Recommendation from the Dojo cho*

*Dojo cho submits brief record of the nominee, it should contain; time in grade since registration of nominee's current rank, frequency nominee receives dojo cho's instruction and reasons for the recommendation. Please give a brief history of nominee to current, including teaching experience. Also, any position(s) in dojo cho's dojo and/or organization.

Letter of Rationale for Recommended Promotion by Applicant**

**Applicant submits short letter of rationale as to why his/her application should be approved to send to Aikikai Hombu Dojo.

Appendix 4: AWA Children Test Requirements (2022)

8th KYU – Orange Belt

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours of training

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Seiza
- Hanmi No Kamae
- Orenaite
- Koho Tento Undo
- Munetsuki Strike

Technique

- Katatori Ikkyo
- Katatekosatori Kokyunage
- Katatekosatori Kotegaeshi

7.5 KYU – Orange Belt with one stripe

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 8th Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Shizentai
- Agura No Shisei
- Funakogi Undo
- Shomenuchi Strike

Technique

- Shomenuchi Kokyunage
- Katatetori Shihonage
- Katatetori Nikyo

7th KYU – Orange belt with two stripes

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 7.5 Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Shomenuchi Ikkyo Undo
- Zengo Undo
- Mae Ukemi, Rolling

Technique

- Shomenuchi Kotegaeshi
- Shomenuchi Iriminage
- Katatekosatori Sankyo

6.5 KYU – Blue Belt

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 7th Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Happon Undo
- Banzai no Kamae
- Ushiro Ukemi, Rolling
- Yokomenuchi Strike

Technique

- Yokomenuchi Kokyunage
- Katatetori Kaitenage
- Ushiroryokatatori Kokyunage

6th KYU – Blue belt with one stripe

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 6.5 Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Tekubikosa Undo
- Sayu Undo
- Sayu Choyaku Undo
- Udefuri Undo
- Udefuri Choyaku Undo

Technique

- Yokomenuchi Shihonage
- Ushirotekubitori Kokyunage
- Shomenuchi Ikkyo

5.5 KYU – Blue belt with two stripes

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 6th Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Ushirosori
- Maekagami
- Ushirotori Undo
- Ushirotekubitori Undo

Technique

- Ushirotekubitori Kotegaeshi
- Katatori Sankyo
- Ryotetori Tenchinage

5th KYU – Blue belt with three stripes

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 5.5 Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Tenkan Undo
- Shikko
- Yoko Ukemi (full breakfall)

Technique

- Ryotetori Kokyunage
- Ushirohijitori Kotegaeshi
- Munetsuki Kokyunage
- Suwariwaza: Shomenuchi Ikkyo

4.5 KYU – Purple belt

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 5th Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Kata Ashiage
- Kamae with Bokken

Technique

- Katatori Kokyunage
- Ushirotori Kokyunage
- Ryotetori Kaitenage

4th KYU – Purple belt with one stripe

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 4.5 Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Agaranai Karada
- Bokken Suburi

Technique

- Katateryotetori Nikyo
- Suwariwaza:
- Shomenuchi Kokyunage
- Katatori Nikyo

3.5 KYU – Purple belt with two stripes

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 3 months and 20 hours after earning 4th Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Jo Suburi

Technique

- Ryokatatori Kokyunage
- Katatetori Sumiotoshi
- Katateryotetori Kokyunage

3rd KYU – Purple belt with three stripes

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 4 months and 30 hours after earning 3.5 Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Koryuho
- Meisoho

Technique

- Ryokatatori Kotegaeshi
- Ryokatatori Ikkyo
- Hanmi Hantachi Waza:
- Katatetori Shihonage
- Katatetori Sankyo

2.5 KYU – Brown belt

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 4 months and 30 hours after earning 3rd Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Questions about Four Basic Principles of Aikido

Technique

- Ushirotekubitori Jujinage
- Ushirokatatedori Kubishime Kokyunage
- Ryotetori Koshinage
- Hanmi Hantachi Waza:
- Munetsuki Kotegaeshi

2nd KYU – Brown belt with one stripe

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 4 months and 40 hours after earning 2.5 Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Walking with mind and body unified

Technique

- Yokomenuchi Sudori
- Ushirotekubitori Shihonage
- Katateryotetori Kotegaeshi
- Jiyuwaza: Grasping attacks

1 .5 KYU – Brown belt with two stripes

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 6 months and 60 hours after earning 2nd Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Bokken Kata I (Happo Giri)

Technique

- Munetsuki Kaitenage
- Yokomenuchi Sokumen Iriminage
- Hanmi Hantachi: Jiyuwaza
- Randori (2 attackers)

1st KYU – Brown belt with three stripes

Time and Events Requirements

Minimum 9 months and 80 hours after earning 1.5 Kyu

Ki Tests and Exercises

- Jo Kata I
- (22 movement)

Technique

- Ushirotekubitori Koshinage
- Ushiro Waza Free Technique
- Tanto Dori
- Randori (3 attackers)