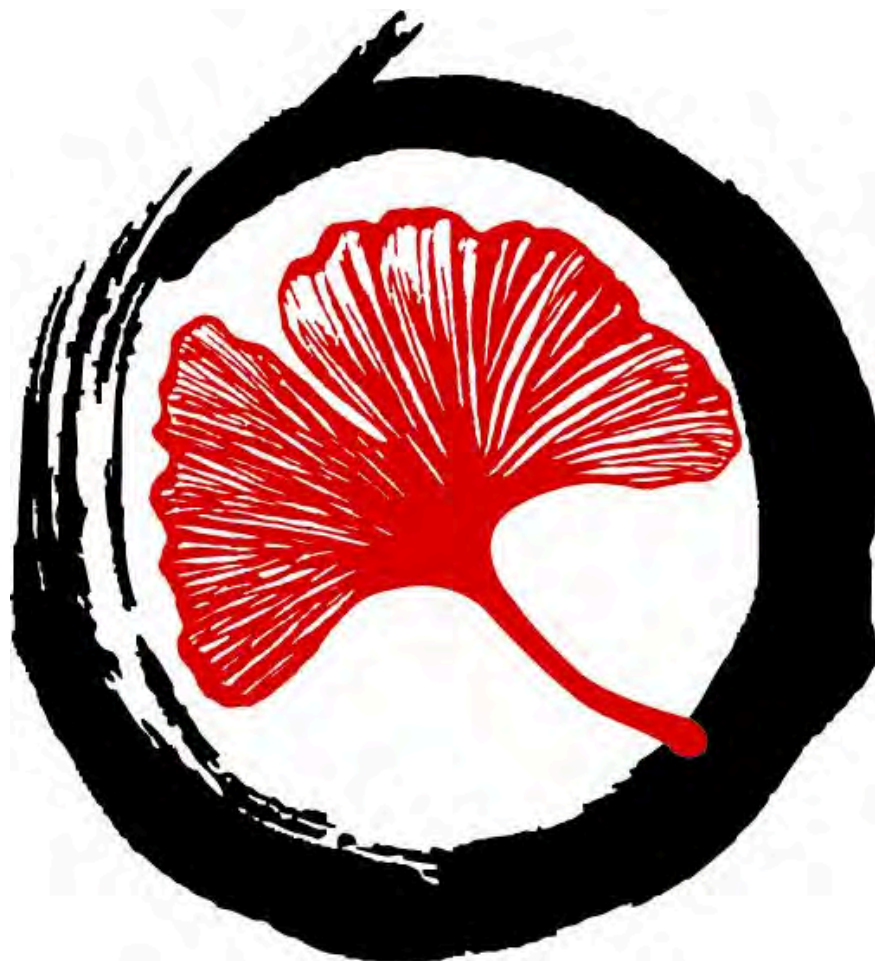


Aikido of Champlain Valley



Student Handbook

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A LETTER FROM SENSEI...

Welcome to Aikido of Champlain Valley. You have chosen a martial art that balances the elements of softness and hardness into a dynamic, harmonious unity. Aikido is graceful and flowing, like the movement of a mountain stream. It is also powerful and intense, like the breaking of a wave. Aikido can be many things— a method of exercise, self-defense, and an inquiry into one's place in the universe. This process of discovery and self-integration becomes deeper and more refined with the coming days and years of practice. But it takes time and patience. Stubborn determination helps too: In Japan, they say “Seven times down, Eight times up!” Aikido cultivates the growth of a resilient spirit and integrated body.

I will leave you with a few words of advice:

1. Read this manual! It may seem a bit didactic and preachy, so maybe read it quickly, don't fret over the details, and refer to it occasionally over the coming weeks of practice. The ritual and formality of traditional aikido allow us to leave our materialistic, egocentric selves and get lost in the doing of the art rather than striving for a particular goal. Bowing is an act of respect, humility and letting go. When we don our *keiko-gi* (uniform) and bow, we leave negative emotional baggage at the door.. After we bow and leave the *dojo*, we can always pick it back up— that is, if we *really* want it...

2. Show up. Daily practice - *keiko*- is the key to growth in Aikido. In the first several months, you should practice at least twice a week. We offer classes 6 days a week, so you could come as often as you like! I strongly encourage students to train every day, because daily practice is the best way to learn this subtle art. Try to establish a regular schedule so you get into the habit of consistent practice.

3. Have patience. Enjoy being a beginner. Aikido is challenging and sometimes frustrating; few people have the dedication and tenacity necessary to stick with the art. Have patience with yourself and commit to Aikido practice for at least six months (about 70 classes) before deciding if Aikido is the “right” martial art for you. If you decide to discontinue your Aikido training, please let us know; your feedback is important so we can continue to improve our instruction. The secret to learning aikido is daily practice that emphasizes improving your *ukemi* - falling skills. Aikido techniques become quite easy to internalize if you develop natural, relaxed and integrated *ukemi*. You can always ask for additional guidance if you feel like you need more practice, especially before classes begin. Free practice is a valuable part of your learning process.

4. Get Connected! Make friends and make yourself at home. Introduce yourself to your fellow training partners, member representatives, and arrange for an informal interview with

me during your first week of practice or before you step on the mat. We also encourage you to connect with the community by attending seminars and dojo events. Check out our website for additional inspiration and support. Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you feel discouraged, please speak up - we are here to support you!

Aikido of Champlain Valley is not a studio, club or gym; it is a *dojo*— literally “the place of the way.” The suffix *Do*-道 is the same kanji (character) as “*Tao*” meaning path, road, or way. A *dojo* is a sacred space, and part of understanding traditional Aikido means cultivating the sense that you are entering a unique and special place where you are beginning a journey of embodied self discovery and transformation.

Enough explanation: have fun, enjoy your practice, and see you on the mat!

*—Benjamin Pincus
Chief Instructor and Executive Director*

WHAT IS AIKIDO?



By now you have watched at least one class, read the ACV brochure and had an interview with Sensei. You may have even taken a few classes. You probably have a sense that Aikido is different from other martial arts. But you won't truly understand what Aikido is until you practice consistently.

Created by O Sensei Morihei Ueshiba, aikido grew out of his desire to integrate his spiritual practice with intensive martial arts training. He coined the name “aikido” in 1942. As a martial

art, aikido has roots in various forms of jujitsu, including Daito Ryu. Aikido also emphasizes the integral relationship between weapons and empty hands movement, especially through *jo* (staff), *bokken* (sword), and *tanto* (knife).

Whatever your reason for choosing Aikido, you have begun a path where there is no mastery, only deeper understanding over time. As a traditional martial art, there are no competitions, tournaments or trophies to gauge your progress— only sincere and dedicated practice. Kazuo Chiba *Sensei's* five pillars of aikido (openness, centeredness, connectedness, liveliness, and wholeness) take time to cultivate and develop (a direct student of O Sensei, Chiba Sensei was

also Pincus Sensei's aikido teacher). These principles are critical components of our practice. Cultivating martial skill, power, and sensitivity is a life-long path, and you have taken the first step.

If you would like additional information about the history or philosophy of Aikido, see the bibliography at the end of this handbook.

WHAT IS A DOJO?

The *dojo* provides the context to cultivate the self through physical training and continual refinement of technique. Please maintain the atmosphere of a traditional Japanese training hall by observing proper *reigi* or etiquette. We use *reigi* to demonstrate respect for ourselves, our teachers and for our training partners. When we enter the *dojo*, we perform a standing bow that symbolizes we are entering a place that is different from the outside world. We leave our troubles outside the door and enter with a clear mind and open heart.



The *shomen*, (“head/front”) is located at the head of the room and is a special part of the *dojo*. We orient ourselves at the beginning of class by bowing towards the *shomen* as a gesture of respect for the tradition of Aikido. Bowing does not have religious meaning; you are bowing to the space, a fellow student, or a teacher, and it is an important aspect of Japanese culture and polite conduct. If you find bowing difficult, consider it as a “salute” to yourself and other human beings. Remember: cultivating good etiquette and behavior in the *dojo* is an integral part of your training. Please conduct yourself in a safe, aware and polite manner while in the *dojo*. *If your personal or religious convictions don't allow you to follow this tradition, please let us know so we can support your practice.*

Do not use alcohol or recreational drugs before coming to the *dojo*. ACV does not tolerate harassment or excessive profanity. Repeated misbehavior will result in a termination of your membership. These policies (see page 19) are meant to ensure that a respectful, safe and positive environment is maintained for everyone.

ABOUT ACV, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization

Benjamin Pincus *Sensei* founded Aikido of Champlain Valley (ACV) in October 1997. *Sensei* had recently returned to Vermont after intensive training with Y. Yamada *Shihan*, T.K. Chiba *Shihan* and Paul Sylvain *Shihan*. With encouragement from his teachers, *Sensei* opened a traditional Aikido *dojo* in Winooski, Vermont, in a historic building on East Allen Street. At the time, the street was lined with ginkgo trees, so the ginkgo leaf became our official logo as a symbol of commitment, hope and longevity. In January 2002, we moved the *dojo* to its current location on Pine Street in Burlington.

Sensei wanted to ensure the *dojo* emphasized high-quality instruction, focused training and an understanding of the cultural aspects of *budo*, or traditional warrior arts of Japan. To achieve this goal, ACV was established as a 501(c)(3) Federal non-profit educational institution, governed by a Board of Directors. ACV does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, governing structure, or ethnicity in our admissions or employment, and donations are tax exempt. **Our Mission Statement:** “Create a sustainable community and peaceable world through the practice and principles of aikido.”

In addition to our regular classes held at the *dojo*, we also hold demonstrations and conflict resolution workshops in Vermont. We currently seek funding to create Aikido scholarships for at-risk youth who want to study Aikido and non-violent conflict resolution.

ACV is a member *dojo* in good standing of Birankai North America.

Chief Instructor Benjamin Pincus Sensei



Pincus *Sensei* brings over four decades of Aikido experience to his classes. He studied under several direct students of O *Sensei*, beginning with the late M. Kanai *Shihan* (8th *dan*) in 1982. During his undergraduate years studying philosophy, he apprenticed with the late Paul Sylvain *Shihan* (6th *dan*) and with Y. Yamada *Shihan* (8th *dan*), Chairman of the United

States Aikido Federation, Eastern Region. In addition, he studied in San Diego with T. K. Chiba (8th *dan*) and Morihiko Murashige *Shihan* in an intensive instructors education program. He also studied with Seichi Sugano and Donovan Waite *Shihan* at New York Aikikai.

Sensei currently holds the rank of 6th *dan* with Hombu Dojo in Tokyo, Japan and the teaching certification of *Shidoin* through Birankai North America. He is 3rd *dan* in Muso Shinden Ryu Iaido, which he began studying under Paul Sylvain *Shihan*.

ABOUT BIRANKAI NORTH AMERICA

Birankai North America (BNA) is a “nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of its members through the practice of martial ways (budo) as exemplified by Aikido, Weapons, Iaido (the study of the Japanese sword), and Zazen meditation.” Birankai International was established by T.K. Chiba Sensei in 2000, and Birankai North America was established in 2006 as a separate entity from the United States Aikido Federation. In 2022, Aikido of Champlain



Valley changed its parent affiliation from USAF to BNA. BNA is one of several organizations affiliated with Hombu Dojo in Tokyo, Japan and as a member, ACV is part of a large, global Aikido community.

For more information about Birankai North America, visit their website at <http://birankai.org>.

We support the legacy of Chiba Sensei and BNA through intensive technical study, annual dues (included in membership fees) registration of testing ranks, and by hosting and attending seminars taught by senior BNA-affiliated instructors. BNA also provides scholarships for seminars and camps, and allows us to register for test certification and teacher’s certification within the U.S. and with Hombu Dojo in Tokyo, Japan.

GUIDELINES FOR TRAINING

The following guidelines are meant to help a student new to ACV with everyday etiquette, or *reigi*. While important, these guidelines are not meant as a list of absolutes. It may seem like a great deal of bowing, but keep in mind that it is important to demonstrate respect and

gratitude towards yourself, your fellow students and the instructors. After a while, *reigi* will become second nature.

As a beginner, you may feel intimidated or confused. Remember, even the most advanced Aikido practitioners had to step on the mat for the first time. Awkwardness is temporary and inevitable!

Aikido training involves partner practice, where each participant takes a turn as “*nage*”, performing the technique shown by the teacher, and as “*uke*”, or recipient of the technique. Both roles are an important part of aikido, and help us learn how to develop power,



awareness and sensitivity. Learning to receive a technique safely (rolling, falling or being pinned) also teaches us how to apply a technique more effectively. We do not resist techniques in the beginning because it is unsafe and doesn't allow us to learn the form. Instead, we emphasize learning how to move our bodies in a centered and connected way. We are not training to win or dominate, but to improve our own somatic awareness through connection and reciprocity.

As a practice that involves a high level of trust and physical contact, it is important to acknowledge that some students are survivors of trauma and may become triggered while training. We are learning how to support survivors, and recognize that people do not have an inherent knowledge of their partner's triggers. It is important to communicate with each other in the moment of the encounter and/or through the support of a member

representative, trusted fellow student, or the instructor. While we never require someone to communicate more than they wish regarding past trauma, our practice cultivates trust and a mutual desire to support each other. A trigger response, while not inevitable, can happen on the mat. If after watching a technique demonstration, or at any point while training, you realize that a technique will be triggering, you are welcome to sit out or choose another

partner. Please take the space needed (including stepping off the mat), and ask for more support if you need it.

Train with sensitivity and awareness of others. Your partner may not be the same skill level or physical ability as you. You must cultivate sensitivity in your practice, and an integral part of training is to learn how to harmonize with different people. This may mean you cannot throw your partner as hard or as fast as you would like, but there is still something to learn by training with that person. Your intensity of practice will change depending on whether your partner differs from you in size, age, physical fitness, skill or flexibility. You will discover that sensitivity will both protect your partner and increase your martial skill and power.

Arriving at the Dojo

- Please remove your shoes and hat before you enter the *dojo* and place shoes beneath the shoe bench in the hallway.
- Upon entering and leaving the *dojo*, bow in the direction of the *shomen*, the shelf at the front of the mat. The bow does not have religious significance. It is a way of showing respect.
- Do not bring valuables to the *dojo*: ACV cannot be responsible for personal property.
- Check off attendance and check the Dojo Calendar board for notices. Make sure your uniform is clean, your hands and feet are clean and your nails trimmed short. Finger- and toe-nail polish should be removed before training, as it may leave marks on the mats.
- For everyone's safety, remove jewelry before training and secure piercings for full-contact sports as necessary.
- Respect allergies and chemical sensitivities: no perfume or cologne!
- Any open sores or wounds must be bandaged or covered before training.
- If you have an injury or sore joint you would like others to be gentle with, place red tape (located with the first-aid box) on your uniform in the appropriate spot.

During Class

- When you are ready to begin or end training for the day, please give a seated bow at the edge of the mat to the *shomen*. If you need to cross the mat or step onto it for another purpose, a standing bow is sufficient.
- If you are late to class, wait in a seated position at the edge of the mat until the instructor signals you to join the class. Please bow once to the instructor to thank him or her, then give a seated bow towards the *shomen* to signal you are beginning practice.
- At the beginning of class, we line up in order of rank, with the most senior (*sempai*) ranked person seated at the right and the most junior (*kohai*) student seated at the left, facing the *shomen*. Please sit in *seiza*, or kneeling position, when lining up, during a

demonstration or when the instructor is showing you something. If this is difficult, please sit cross-legged with your hands folded in your lap. Maintain good posture and stay alert.

- At the beginning of class, the instructor will lead the bowing. Bow with the instructor in the direction of the *shomen*, bow again when the instructor bows to the class, and say “*o negai shimasu*” (“please teach me”).
- During class, the instructor will clap their hands to signal a demonstration. Please move to the sides of the mat to observe from a seated position. After the demonstration, bow to the instructor and then to a new partner.
- Junior students (*kohai*) should seek out senior students (*sempai*) to train with in class. Do not bow sideways to anyone: move in front of your seniors and bow facing them.
- The same rules of formality and etiquette apply regardless of the instructor.

Partner Practice

- Bow to your partner before and after working together.
- Please sit down when the instructor is showing you something. Maintain good posture and stay alert.
- Always move out of the way if someone is being thrown or pinned in your direction!
- Bow to the instructor when they finish showing you something.
- Never sit with your back to the *shomen* (unless you are teaching class).
- If you need to fix your uniform, hair, etc. go to the edge of the mat and face away from the *shomen*.
- If there is an odd number of people in class, one group of three people can practice together. If someone seated near you does not have a partner, invite that person to train with you and your partner.
- If you are injured or need to leave the mat for ANY reason, inform the instructor before doing so. **Ask for help if you need it.**
- If you are bleeding, please inform the instructor immediately and leave the mat to care for your injury. All blood must be cleaned from the mat and the affected uniforms using the spray disinfectant solution provided in the cupboard above the utility sink. Do this immediately, even if class is still in session. Always wash your hands before returning to the mat.

The End of Class

- At the end of class, straighten your uniform and resume a seated position, lining up in order of rank. Bow with the instructor to the *shomen* and then bow to the instructor saying “*domo arigato gozaimashita*,” or “Thank you, Sensei.”
- Wait until the instructor has left the mat before bowing again to the *shomen*.

- Senior students may make announcements.
- Bow and thank your partners, beginning with the most senior students. Don't be shy! Introduce yourself if you don't know someone's name. Chances are, they don't know yours either!
- Help clean the *dojo* before you leave. The *dojo* does not have a cleaning service: it is easy to keep the *dojo* neat and beautiful if everyone helps out.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Dues

The financial obligations of the *dojo* are met entirely through membership dues and tax exempt donations. As such, timely payment of your monthly membership dues is extremely important. Your dues allow the *dojo* to survive. We require members to enroll in our automatic bank withdrawal program. If you cannot pay this way, have specific financial needs or unusual circumstances, please speak to the *dojo* Treasurer/bookkeeper so proper financial arrangements can be made. We provide discounts and scholarships for all serious students who cannot afford to pay membership and seminar dues in full.

Leave of Absence

If you are going to be away from the *dojo* for an extended period of time and would like to stay in touch with the *dojo* community, you can complete a Leave of Absence form. The form allows us to send you any information regarding *dojo* news that you might not otherwise receive. It is a great way to still be a part of the *dojo* even if you can't train.

All-Dojo Meetings

Once a year (usually in March) we hold an All-*Dojo* Meeting for the general membership. During these meetings, members meet the Board of Directors, hear proposed changes to items such as the schedule and dues, and voice concerns or comments. The All-*Dojo* Meeting is also the time when the members nominate and elect student representatives to act as liaisons to the Board. These member representatives attend Board meetings and communicate the needs and concerns of the general membership to the Board. All members are strongly encouraged to attend the All-*Dojo* Meeting and support your community!

Seminars

ACV hosts several seminars each year, inviting senior guest instructors to come to the *dojo* and teach classes. Remember to keep an open mind and try to do techniques as the instructor showed them. Seminars provide invaluable supplemental instruction, and all members are encouraged to attend in order to expand their breadth of knowledge of Aikido. However, you should feel comfortable with backward falls and forward rolls before attending a seminar. We provide discounts if you cannot afford the seminar fee.

Since many visitors from other *dojo* come to our seminars, all ACV students are expected to help host during the seminar. If you have room to lodge visitors in your home, it is a great way to meet other *aikidoka*, make new friends and “network” within the larger Aikido community. Show off your culinary skills at the potluck and help feed everyone who has trained hard during the weekend! If you cannot attend a seminar hosted by ACV, please let Sensei know well before the date of the seminar.

Many other *dojo* host seminars throughout the year, and ACV students are encouraged to attend these as well. If you would like to attend a seminar at another *dojo*, check for notices and speak to Sensei about the instructor who will be teaching. Ask if anyone else at ACV wants to go: sometimes you can find someone who would like to carpool.

Helping Out

We ask all students, from first-day beginners to long-time veterans, to contribute some time each day to keeping the *dojo* clean and tidy. There is always something to do! You can ask a senior student what needs to be done, or refer to the posted cleaning lists in each dressing room. Quiet cleaning jobs can be done even if there is a class in session. We occasionally hold scheduled cleanings, usually before tests or around the New Year, and preceding seminars. All members are expected to help, either by participating in the cleaning itself or checking in with Sensei to confirm your absence and offer to help out ahead of time.

Remember that the *dojo* is kept clean and in good working order through the efforts of the students. Carpenters, electricians, woodworkers, plumbers, lawyers, architects, printers and artists are welcome to volunteer their professional abilities in order to improve the *dojo*. If you would like to contribute your knowledge and expertise to helping ACV, please inform your member representative or Sensei. Your support is always appreciated!

MISCELLANEOUS

Bathroom Etiquette

ACV has three bathrooms: two gender neutral bathrooms and one women's bathroom adjacent to the women's dressing room. Please do not use them as dressing rooms unless absolutely necessary. Remember to flush, wash your hands, leave the toilet seat/lid down, and turn off the lights. Following Japanese tradition, use the *zori* (sandals) at the door so that your feet do not come into contact with the bathroom floor. When you leave the room, please step out of the *zori*, arranging them neatly on the threshold between the door jamb and door itself. This leaves the door cracked, which allows others to know that the bathroom is available to use.

Hallway Etiquette

The hallway is a space shared with other businesses in the building. It is our emergency exit, as well as the only wheelchair-accessible entrance to the building. Therefore it is imperative we keep the hallway clean and tidy.. Don't leave any personal belongings other than shoes in the hallway. Outdoor shoes should be placed under the benches or lined up neatly along the wall. Do not leave shoes on top of the bench— some folks need to sit down to put on or remove their shoes. Shoes should never be worn in the dojo or on the mat.

Class Attendance and Attendance Records

Students should try to attend at least two classes per week, or as often as your schedule and personal ability allow. If this is not possible, train when you can and check in with Sensei so he can better support your practice.

Please sign the attendance sheet at the front desk when you arrive at the *dojo*. Your attendance is tallied at the end of the month, and these records will be reviewed when testing and promotions are considered. If you aren't sure how to mark the attendance form or if your name is not on the form, just ask and someone will show you.

Every effort should be made to be on time for class. You are welcome to come early to warm up, tidy the dojo, or practice. When you are regularly late, it is disruptive to the class as well as disrespectful to the instructor. Please speak to Sensei if you must be consistently late. When you are late, sit quietly at the edge of the mat and wait for the instructor to signal you to join the class. During class, cell phones should be turned off (unless you need to have your phone on hand for emergency access, etc.)

Personal Hygiene

Always practice in a clean *keikogi*. Your *keikogi* should be taken home and washed regularly - if you sweat a great deal, you may need to wash their *gi* after every practice, or purchase more than one. A new, unbleached *keikogi* will shrink significantly when machine washed and dried. Please do not leave unwashed *keikogi* at the *dojo*. Storing *clean* uniforms on the hangers is acceptable if you mark your initials/name in permanent marker on the inside of your *gi* collar and waistband. Unmarked uniforms may be re-sold.

Keep your hands, face and feet clean. The bathroom zori should be used by all students, and should remain in the bathroom, toes facing inward. Trim your finger- and toenails so as not to injure your partner or yourself. Avoid using perfume, aftershave or cologne before class: some of your training partners may have sensitivity to strong chemical scents.

Wearing Your Keikogi (practice uniform)

The *keikogi* shirt should be worn with the left lapel over the right. The pants should be worn with the belt-loops and knee patches in the front. Pull the drawstring through the loops and tie in the front. Everyone should consider wearing a white or black t-shirt or tank top underneath the jacket. Avoid using your sleeve to wipe your forehead (or nose). It is best to have a senior student show you how to tie the belt. If you cannot afford to purchase a *keikogi*, we may have used uniforms available at a discount.

Testing and Promotions



The ranking system in Aikido consists of *kyu* (white-belt) and *dan* (black belt) grades. You start as *mukyu* (“no level”) and work your way from 5th *kyu* (50 hours of practice) to 1st *kyu*, and then you test for *shodan* (1st degree black belt). A sheet with the test requirements and minimum number of practice days needed for each grade is posted on the wall near the “Technique of the Month” chalkboard. ACV has additional requirements for 4th *kyu* and up.

The small wooden sticks inscribed with names hanging on the front wall are *nafudakake* (ranking sticks). Read from top to bottom, left to right, it shows the lineage of the *dojo* from the founder of Aikido to the most junior child in the children’s class. Anyone at ACV who has earned *kyu* or *dan* grades is included.

Testing is strongly encouraged because test practice provides clear goals that support technical proficiency. Testing occurs several times a year at ACV. If you are qualified to test, you will be notified well in advance of the test date to allow for extra practice. It is not sufficient to practice without guidance: make sure you ask a senior student to help you prepare for the test. If you do not show the appropriate level of commitment to training for the test, you will not be allowed to take the exam. There is always a scheduled *dojo* clean-up prior to testing. All those eligible to test are expected to participate: the clean-up is part of the exam and a demonstration of your willingness to support the community. Please support your fellow students by attending the exams, preferably wearing your *keikogi* if you want to watch on the mat.



Kenshusei Intensive Training Program

The *Kenshusei* program is for students who wish to deepen their understanding of traditional Aikido and/or would like to become a professional teacher. These students can join as *soto deshi* or “outside student” because they live outside the *dojo*, or become an *uchi deshi*, or “inside student”).

Intensive students receive more direct instruction in class and are expected to provide greater service to the *dojo* than regular members. They attend most classes, assist in teaching and help organize and run special events. Intensive students must attend a minimum number of seminars outside the *dojo* each year, as well as attend all in-house seminars.

The *kenshusei* program is open to students who have demonstrated an appropriate attitude both in and out of class. Eligible students must be 3rd *kyu*, able to train a minimum of 7 hours a week and be able to dedicate time outside of class to *dojo* service and intensive practice.

Hakama Policy

A *hakama* (split blue or black pants worn by *samurai*) is often worn by *yudansha* (black belts) only. It is not meant to signify any kind of mastery, but only marks the transition from beginning student to more serious and committed training. At ACV, students in the intensive training program wear a *hakama* at 2nd *kyu*. All regular students at ACV wear the *hakama* at 1st *kyu* if

they regularly practice, except when they are preparing to test for *shodan*. The privilege of wearing a *hakama* before *shodan* is always at Sensei's discretion.

Weapons Training and Etiquette

Weapons training is an integral part of traditional Aikido. Training with weapons increases focus, awareness, coordination and a better understanding of empty-hands technique. The *dojo* has several wall racks containing *bokken* (wooden swords), *jo* (staff) and *tanto* (knives). They are the property of students, and are stored there as a convenience. Weapons marked "ACV" are the



property of the *dojo* and are for member use within the *dojo* only. Never touch or use a weapon without the express permission of its owner. The rack next to the *shomen* is for Sensei's weapons, and should not be disturbed except for cleaning.

If you purchase weapons, make sure you have a carrying case. Never carry an uncovered weapon outside the *dojo*. Never step over a weapon that is lying on the mat.

Treat your weapons with respect, and take good care of them. Always inspect your weapons for splinters or cracks before you begin training. If you find any damage, bring them to the instructor's attention. Mark your weapons on the end with permanent marker so you and others can identify them.

FIRST-AID AND INJURIES

Injuries are a potential part of any physical activity, and Aikido is no exception. If you are injured in any way during class, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor, even if you decide to continue training. You train at your own risk.

Always practice at an intensity level you feel comfortable with, and let your partner know if they are exceeding your limits. Communication is a vital part of safe practice. If you feel uncomfortable training with a particular person or technique, you can sit down at the edge of the mat and observe. Rejoin the class when you are ready.

The first-aid box is a large, clear set of drawers located in the lounge area. The *dojo* absorbs the costs of maintaining supplies in it, so only use what you need. It is intended for injuries that occur during class time. If you have a chronic injury that requires taping or covering each time you practice, please bring your own first-aid supplies. If you use a large amount of any one supply, or use items such as the chemical ice packs, please replace them. Ice and reusable ice packs can be found in the freezer in the kitchen.

- ***Before practicing, please examine yourself for any open wounds.*** If you have a recent cut or other open wound, bandage it or securely cover it before practice. If you receive a cut or scratch while practicing, leave the mat immediately after notifying the instructor and clean and bandage the wound. Clean any blood off the mat with the spray solution provided, even if class is in session.
- ***If you are injured more seriously in class, notify the instructor immediately, even if you decide to continue training.*** Some injuries are not painful until a few hours after they occur. You know your own body and its limits better than anyone, but it is always better to be cautious. If you decide you need to leave the mat, please sit on the couch and have someone administer first-aid, ice, compression or elevation to your injury. We have injury report forms that must be filled out for any injury that is more serious than a minor cut or scratch. The forms allow us to document and track serious injuries.

THE PINE STREET SITTING ROOM

We now have a large waiting area available to children whose parents or other family members are actively training. Anyone waiting for a student to finish training may use this area to read, engage in digital activities on phones, tablets, laptops, etc., and eat. We ask that parents train on a part of the mat where their children are visible, if children are waiting on parents to finish training. If your child is not ready or too young to independently engage in an activity, you should arrange for a childcare provider to come to the *dojo* with your family. Please wear headphones while engaging with videos, audiobooks, and music.

Dojo potlucks and other events are often held using this sitting room. Please help keep it clean and orderly by disposing of trash and recycling, taking all personal items with you when you leave, and straightening up after you leave. This may look like pushing in chairs, realigning couch cushions, vacuuming up after meals, and putting away art materials. Thank you for your help!

The Pine Street lounge is ***not*** intended as a place to drop your kids during a class while you run errands! A parent, childcare provider or older sibling **MUST** be in the *dojo* at all times while your child is using this space.

WHICH CLASSES SHOULD I TAKE?

ACV classes are designed to provide safe training for members of all levels. In the beginning, it is best to take classes such as “Intro/Basic” and “Basics” where students learn foundational footwork and techniques, as well as how to fall safely. Usually after a month new students can begin attending the “All levels” classes. You should feel comfortable taking forward and backward rolls before attending all levels or intermediate classes. If you aren’t certain which classes are right for you, speak to Sensei.



Weapons

Weapons (*bokken* and *jo*), Intermediate, and Iaido (sword) classes are by instructor permission. Beginners are welcome to join if you can make a long term commitment (one year or more) to consistent weapons practice. Please speak to Sensei if you would like to join a weapons class.

Iaido

Iaido (pronounced “ee-eye-doe”) is the art of drawing a sword and is a separate art from Aikido. Iaido requires additional equipment, including an *iaito* (practice sword), kneepads and a *hakama*. Students of Iaido must pay additional dues to ACV. We do not offer Iaido classes for practitioners who do not also train in Aikido. Please speak to Sensei if you are interested in Iaido.

Zazen

Zazen is seated *Zen* meditation. ACV has a *zazen* session that is free and open to the public as well as regular members. Check with the front desk to find out when this is offered. Please speak to Sensei if you would like to try *zazen*, and he or another experienced practitioner will give you some guidelines on posture and breathing before you sit.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

Code of Behavior/Non-Discrimination Policy

THE AIKIDO DOJO is a sacred space. Our goal is to create an atmosphere conducive to focused training and personal growth. This statement provides guidelines to preserve and promote a positive training environment for everyone, regardless of age, ability, gender, sex, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS CONSTITUTE INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR AND/OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. Jokes and/or teasing related to age, ability, gender, sex, ethnicity, religion, and/or sexual orientation. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of historically and contemporary discriminatory language and concepts related to age, ability, gender, sex, ethnicity, religion, and/or sexual orientation.
2. Text messages, written messages, or online posts/pictures, posters, and/or calendars of a racist, ableist, ageist, or sexual nature within the dojo.
3. Leering, staring, inappropriate gestures, uninvited touching (ex.: kissing, hugging, brushing up against, pats, shoulder rubs, pinches, groping/grabbing) and/or requests for dates with romantic intent on dojo grounds.
4. Lack of respect for members, teachers and visitors based on age, ability, gender, sex, ethnicity, religion, and/or sexual orientation.
5. Continuing the above behaviors after you are asked to stop.

Aikido is intense, and individuals have varying levels of tolerance for intensity. Therefore, it is imperative that consent and communication exists in order for us to train in a safe and joyful manner. All teachers and students should be mindful of the difference between implied consent for physical contact while training and the explicit consent necessary for verbal and/or physical contact off the mat. Please keep in mind that what constitutes harassment is often subtle. An uninvited touch or hug can feel like an assault, and/or trigger traumatic memories for some people. When someone is harassed, she/he/they often remain silent and feel diminished and helpless. Ignorance is not an appropriate excuse for inappropriate behavior. Seek education. Ask respectful questions.

Harassment should not stop a person from practicing aikido. If practicing or interacting with a student or teacher bothers you in a way that adversely affects your practice and you feel unable to resolve the situation alone, please speak with an instructor or a senior student. You may

request a private place to talk. You do not have to mention a particular person--the important thing is to communicate. Be as direct as you can, whether you are speaking, writing, or using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (e.g., electronic speaking device, signing, or other tools used in place of natural speech). If you are approached in regard to your own behavior, treat the approach as a learning experience and be willing to change your behavior.

Openness to other perspectives is a key aspect of our practice. Be aware of your reactions and feelings, as well as those of the people around you. It is crucial that the dojo remains a safe, joyful place for everyone.



Dealing with Frustration

Don't worry, everyone gets frustrated! The important thing is to keep training: don't give up! If you feel like you aren't learning quickly enough, have patience with yourself. Not everyone learns at the same pace, or in the same way. We are human beings, not machines. O Sensei said that your greatest opponent is yourself. Aikido can help you overcome your feelings of self-doubt and pride. Remember to keep a beginner's mind (*shoshin*) and see each day as an exciting opportunity to learn a little bit more. Reach out to your member representative, teacher or senior student if you are frustrated and need support.

An Aikido Bibliography

Please support your local, independently-owned bookstore or public library!

Aikido, by Peter Brady

Budo by Morihei Ueshiba
The Spirit of Aikido by Kisshomaru Ueshiba
Aikido Student Handbook by Greg O'Connor
Abundant Peace by John Stevens
The Essence of Aikido by John Stevens/M. Ueshiba
Invincible Warrior by John Stevens
The Spiritual Foundations of Aikido by William Gleason
Meditations on Violence: A Comparison of Martial Arts Training and Real World Violence
by Rory Miller

Glossary of Terms

General

ai - blend, harmonize
budo - way of the warrior, traditional martial arts
bushido - code of the warrior
dan - step, level (for black belts)
do - path, way
domo arigato gozaimasu/gozaimashita - thank you
fukushidoin - certified junior instructor
iaido - martial way of drawing a sword
kamiza - “spirit shelf” alcove at the front of a traditional *dojo*
ki - spirit, vital energy/force
kohai - junior students
kokyu - breath or connection
kyu - level (for white belts)
nage - one who throws
o ne gai shimasu - please teach me
omote - technique to *uke*’s front
seiza - formal kneeling position
sempai - senior students
sensei - teacher (literally “before born”)
shihan - “primary model,” the highest teaching title
shidoin - certified instructor
shomen - front, head of room- secular term for alcove
shoshin - beginner’s mind, being open to learning

uke - one who falls/receives the throw or pin

ukemi - the art of falling/receiving

ura - technique to *uke*'s rear

waza - technique

yudansha - black belts

kyukyusha - white belts

kenshusei - intensive training student

Equipment

bokken - wooden sword

iaito - practice sword

jo - wooden staff

keiko gi – uniform

tanto - wooden dagger

zafu/zabuton - cushions for *zazen* practice- *zafu* is circular, *zabuton* rectangular

zori - indoor sandals

Basic Body Movements

Ayumi ashi-entering but stepping/sliding to the other foot (similar to walking)

hanmi - basic stance

hanmi handachi - *nage* sitting, *uke* standing

irimi - entering movement

kaiten - pivot/changing direction

shikko - knee walking

suwari waza - seated technique from *shikko*

tenkan - circular turning movement

Tsugi ashi - sliding movement keeping same foot forward

Ushiro tenkan - retreat, stepping back

Yoko ashi - evasion to the side

Basic Attacks

ai hanmi katatetori - wrist grab, same stance

gyaku hanmi katatetori - opposite stance grab

katamenuchi - shoulder grab with head strike

katatetori - wrist grab

katatori - shoulder grab

mae geri - front kick

morotetori - one wrist grabbed with two hands

randori - multiple attackers

ryokatatori- both shoulders grabbed
ryotetori - both wrists grabbed
shomenuchi - strike to front of head
tori - to grab
tsuki - punch
ushiro - attacks from behind
yoko geri - side kick
yokomenuchi - strike to temple/side of head

Basic Techniques

atemi - strike/punch
gokyo- fifth technique, an elbow lock
hijigatame - elbow pin
ikkyo- first pinning technique
iriminage - entering throw
Jujinage- arm cross throw (like the Japanese character
十 *For the number 10*)
kaitenage - pivoting throw
kata - form/static body positioning
kokyu ho/dosa - seated ki exercise, or backward throw
kokyunage - breath throw/generally refers to projection
throws
koshinage - hip throw
kotegaeshi - wrist turn throw
kubishime - choking technique
nikkyo - second pinning technique, a joint lock to the wrist
rokkyo - sixth pinning technique, an elbow lock
sankyo – third pinning technique, a wrist lock
shihonage - four directions throw
sumi otoshi - corner drop
tegatana - “knife edge hand”
tenchinage “heaven and earth” throw
udegarame - entwined throw
yonkyo - fourth pinning technique using a pressure point

