

Aikido Dojo Etiquette

Proper observance of etiquette is as much a part of your training as is learning techniques. In many cases observing proper etiquette requires one to set aside one's pride or comfort. Nor should matters of etiquette be considered of importance only in the dojo. Standards of etiquette may vary somewhat from one dojo or organization to another, but the following guidelines are nearly universal. Please take matters of etiquette seriously.

1. When entering or leaving the dojo, it is proper to bow in the direction of O-Sensei's picture, the kamiza, or the front of the dojo. You should also bow towards the kamiza when entering or leaving the mat.
2. Turn off all cell phones and pagers. If you are "on-call", advise Sensei that the device is active.
3. Be on time for class. Students should be lined up and seated in seiza approximately 3-5 minutes *before* the official start of class. If you do happen to arrive late, sit quietly in seiza on the edge of the mat until the instructor grants permission to join practice.
4. Remove watches, rings and other jewelry before practice as they may catch your partner's hair, skin, or clothing and cause injury to oneself or one's partner.
5. If you should have to leave the mat or dojo for any reason during class, approach the instructor and ask permission.
6. Keep your training uniform clean, in good shape, and free of offensive odors.
7. Please keep your fingernails and toenails clean and cut short.
8. Do not bring food, gum, or beverages onto the mat. It is also considered disrespectful in traditional dojo to bring open food or beverages into the dojo.
9. No shoes on the mat
10. Please keep talking during class to a minimum. It is particularly impolite to talk while the instructor is addressing the class.
11. If you are having trouble with a technique, do not shout across the room to the instructor for help. First, try to figure the technique out by watching others. If you still have trouble, approach the instructor at a convenient moment and ask for help.
12. Carry out the directives of the instructor *promptly*. Do not keep the rest of the class waiting for you!
13. Avoid sitting on the mat with your back to the picture of O-sensei. Also, do not lean against the walls or sit with your legs stretched out. (Either sit in seiza or cross-legged.)
14. Change your clothes only in designated areas.
15. Remember that you are in class to learn, and not to gratify your ego. An attitude of receptivity and humility (though not obsequiousness) is therefore advised.
16. It is usually considered polite to bow upon receiving assistance or correction from the instructor.
17. During class, if the instructor is assisting a group in your vicinity, it is frequently considered appropriate to suspend your own training so that the instructor has adequate room to demonstrate.
18. Remember that the chairs positioned at the far-side of the dojo are reserved for Sensei and other instructors.