

# welcome to aikido



## **keep training!**

Aikido is a sophisticated activity and nobody gets good quickly. It takes at least six years of regular training to get a black belt. We know it's not possible to make every class as we all have family and work commitments that come first but we hope there is a place for aikido in your routine to help improve fitness, health, posture, and balance.

This booklet will help paint a picture of aikido for you with:

1. What is Aikido and the UKA?
2. Etiquette
3. Common Questions
4. Moving Your Body and Techniques
5. Attacks
6. Gradings
7. Other UKA Clubs

## 1. What is Aikido and the UKA?

A Japanese martial art based on self-defence and self-improvement. Aikido develops centred, dynamic movements which combine with pins or projections to create a powerful, almost effortless system of self-defence.



Although it's relatively modern, it's based on much older ju-jutsu techniques and principles of swordsmanship. Unlike judo, it's not a sport (so you'll never win anything), and, unlike karate, we don't kick or punch.

### The UKA



The UKA (United Kingdom Aikikai) operates with over 30 clubs spread throughout the UK and operates in partnerships with other Aikikai organisations throughout the world.

The UKA is affiliated to the Hombu Aikido World Headquarters in Tokyo (very few UK Aikido organisations are). Senior teachers from Hombu Dojo visit the UKA on a regular basis, ensuring we are kept on top form! All grades are awarded by senior teachers and are authorised by Hombu Dojo.

### Joining the UKA and Insurance

As well as this guide, we've given you a membership form for the UKA. If you train with us more than a couple of times, you must join the UKA. There is an annual fee for membership. This includes insurance (in case you injure somebody during training), which is valid at most aikido clubs in the UK.

## 2. Etiquette

We practice a mainstream style of aikido (aikikai), which means we follow simple rules of etiquette. These are the same in aikido clubs all over the world and exist to keep everything structured, safe, and respectful towards our training partners. During your "beginner" stage, try to follow what others are doing and you'll be OK—the basics are pretty straightforward.



**Kamiza** is the "high-end" of the mat, which is typically opposite the door you enter. To indicate the kamiza, we put a picture of O Sensei, aikido's founder, on the wall. Try to avoid having your back facing the kamiza when the instructor is demonstrating.

**Standing Bow** - You might feel self-conscious about all the bowing, but you'll soon get used to it. To do a standing bow, keep your feet together, drop your hands by your sides and keep your back straight.

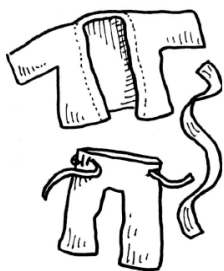


**Kneeling bow** - To bow when you're kneeling, simply remember to keep your back straight. Lightly place your hands flat on the mat, index fingers and thumbs touching to form a little triangle, and lean your face towards the mat.

**Kneeling or 'seiza'** - When you're on the mat, not doing anything or a teacher is demonstrating, kneel down. There's a right way to do this; keep your back straight with your bum on your feet and knees close together. Don't slouch. If your knees hurt, sit cross-legged.



### 3. Common Questions



#### **Keikogi (or just "gi")**

If you decide to keep training, you'll need to buy a keikogi. It should be white and suitable for judo (the heavier ones) or karate. We do grab the gi, which is why T-shirts aren't suitable, and some lightweight karate suits might not last long. You can buy online ([www.ninecircles.co.uk](http://www.ninecircles.co.uk) is popular) or in most big sports shops. If you're on a budget, try a second-hand judo suit.

#### **I'm not fit enough to do this regularly!**

Like any exercise, fitness helps, the fitter you are the more you can practise. Aikido is the kind of exercise that will leave you out of breath and with a sweat but not feel like you've run a marathon.

Aikido can help your fitness and suppleness. You are never forced to do something that feels uncomfortable or dangerous. Remember to follow your doctor's advice though, if you have any doubts over your fitness then consult your doctor before any exercise.

#### **How long to get a black belt?**

It depends how often you practice: twice as often and you will progress more quickly! This question is common but becomes secondary to people who enjoy a class. If you need a number, it's about 6 years for the average person before they are ready for a dan (black belt) grading.

合気道

„Ai ki do“ - written in kanji

## 4. Moving Your Body and Techniques

There are three basic steps you need to be aware of irimi, tenkan and kaiten.

### Irimi



Irimi can be achieved by either entering with the back foot (normal walking motion) or sliding with the front foot.

### Tenkan



To do a tenkan, you must pivot your body around your lead foot to face the opposite way.

### Kaiten



Move front foot off the centre line and rotate hips, in order to turn your body minimum 90°.

## Techniques

**Tori** - the defender

**Uke** - the attacker

- Ikkyo - the most important aikido technique, is an arm pin.
- Shihonage - (4 direction throw) tori turns under uke's arm. Ends with uke being thrown at tori's feet.
- Iriminage - Tori enters behind or alongside uke, breaks balance using neck or collar.



Ikkyo



Shihonage



Iriminage

## 5. Attacks

Aikido techniques are taught by practising them against formalised attacks. Here is a list of some of the basic attacks you can expect.



**Ai hanmi katate dori** Cross grip on wrist



**Gyaku hanmi katate dori** Same side grip on wrist



**Shomen uchi**



**Yokomen uchi**



**Chudan tsuki**

Punch to body



**Morote dori** Wrist hold with both hands



**Ushiro ryokata dori**

Double shoulder hold from behind



**Ushiro Ryotedori** Double wrist hold from behind



**Katadori** Shoulder hold



**Ryotemochi ryotedori** Double wrist hold



## 6. Gradings

Grades aren't important, but they help track your progress. There are two categories of grades: kyu grades (white belt) and dan grades (black belt). You need to work your way through kyu grades before achieving your dan grade. Kyu grades start at 6th kyu and work up to 1st kyu. Below are the requirements for the first grading, most of which are described in this booklet:

SOLO EXERCISES	
Ukemi - mae and ushiro	Break falling forwards and backwards
Shikko	Knee walking
Tenkan	Turning (from posture)
Irimi tenkan	Step in with back foot and turn
Tsugi ashi and ayumi ashi	Front foot step and back foot step
Shomen uchi	Strike to top of head
Yokomen uchi	Strike to side of head
Chudan tsuki	Punch
PARTNER EXERCISES	
<b>Ai hanmi katatedori</b>	Left to left or right to right wrist grab
Irimi	Step with front foot or back foot
Kaiten	Step with rear foot and turn on balls of feet
Uchikaiten	Cut up and step under your partners arm
Ikkyo tachiwaza and suwariwaza	Ikkyo from standing and kneeling
Iriminage tachiwaza and suwariwaza	Iriminage from standing and kneeling
<b>Gyaku hanmi katatedori</b>	Left to right or right to left wrist grab
Irimi	Step with front foot, or back foot in front of partner
Kaiten	Step with front foot behind partner and break grip
Uchi and soto kaiten	Cut up and step inside and outside partner's arm
Tenkan	Turn
Ushiro tenkan	Stepping back
Ikkyo tachiwaza	Ikkyo while standing up
Shihonage tachiwaza	Shihonage while standing up
Suwariwaza kokyuho	Kneeling down, kokyuho
Tachiwaza kokyuho	Standing up, kokyuho

## **7. Other UKA Clubs**

We've got a fair number of clubs around the country and one or two abroad. Your UKA membership means you can practice at any location and be guaranteed the same style of aikido and similar practice. Here are a few of our locations:

- Barking, Essex
- Bedford
- Birmingham - City Centre
- Birmingham - Perry Bar
- Dudley
- Egham
- Leicester
- London
- Shrewsbury
- Staines
- Stroud
- Telford
- Wigan

For more information about our clubs, courses, and other aikido information, visit us @

<https://ukaikikai.org.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/UKAikikai>

### **Thanks**

A big thank you to all those that contributed artwork, words, and photos to this booklet to make it an original piece of work.

Special thanks to Ben Fairbanks for the photos from UKA courses and a thank you to [www.beholder.co.uk](http://www.beholder.co.uk) for graphics and artwork.