

## Aikido Weaponry is All About Techniques

Aikido is a kind of martial arts which is often considered as modern Japanese budo. This martial art's emphasis is on the spiritual and philosophical development of one's self. The word "Aikido" basically means "The Way of Harmony with the Spirit." It is the study of the natural laws and how they harmonize with the mind and body.

Aikido is encompassing. You will be taught to use both armed and unarmed forms of combat and self defense. For unarmed attacks, you have at your disposal a variety of throws, strikes, joint-lock techniques, vital points and even those so-called mystery attacks wherein you attack the opponent without laying a hand on him or her. Meanwhile, armed attacks involve the use of every kind of weapon imaginable. From swords to knives, from sticks to spears, practically everything can be utilized in Aikido as a weapon.

However, in general most Aikido classes are conducted with exclusive training with the use of the jo or staff, tanto or knife and the bokken or sword. These three serve as the main weapons used in Aikido. Even though Aikido appears to be using more unarmed forms and techniques of martial arts, there are a couple of reasons why weapons are studied in Aikido classes and training sessions. Aikido has a strong weapon martial arts foundation and any training with weapons will only reinforce the basic techniques of the martial art.

Aikido founder Morihei Ueshiba, known to his students and Aikido practitioners as ?-sensei which means Great Teacher, was particularly skilled with the staff. He was able to integrate weapon techniques with basic Aikido movements. But among the multitude of weapons out there the sword has the most influence on the development stages of Aikido techniques.

Through weapons training, an Aikido practitioner will be able to measure the distance between attacks. Also called ma-ai, the proper distancing is very important in timing an attack and defending one. And speaking of defense, weapons training is also necessary since advanced Aikido techniques involve defending against people bearing all sorts of weapons.

In order to practice each advanced move safely, Aikido practitioners needed to be familiar with each weapons' capabilities. Therefore, with Aikido weapons training, one will be able to develop his skills, intuitiveness and reflexes in both attacking and defending movements.

Among the weapons used in Aikido weapons training include the katana, the single edged, slightly curved sword famous in the world as the sword of the samurai. In

Aikido weapons training, you will also be taught to handle, hold, fight and defend using the tanto which in actuality is a knife or a short blade. The tanto was also extremely popular amongst the men and women who lived by the samurai code during their time.

Another bladed weapon used in Aikido weapons training is the ninja-to. The ninja-to are swords used by those mysterious ninjas. Samurais back then also have wakizashi swords at their disposal. Wakizashi are usually two feet long and are paired with the katana. The j? meanwhile is a four-foot long wooden staff used by not only Aikido but by other martial artists as well. When Aikido techniques are fused with jo, the principle is called aiki-j? which involves an integration of Aikido techniques in Aikido which uses the j? to illustrate Aikido's principles with a weapon.