

Dressing Up to Train

Like all martial arts or sports for that matter, Aikido has their own set of uniforms. The aikidogi or the uniform used in aikido is similar to the keikogi used in most martial arts. Keikogi is a term used to refer to uniform for training.

This is a general term used to refer to uniforms of donned for traditional martial arts class. For Aikido it's the aikidogi, for Judo it's judogi, for Jiujitsu it's the jujutsugi, karategi for Karate, kendogi for kendo and the shinobi-iri and shinobi shozoku for Ninjutsu arts. The training uniforms used in martial arts are often times referred to as mere gi or dogi.

The aikidogi consists of simple trousers and a white jacket or uwagi or upper garment. For aikidogi, wraparound jackets used in judo and karate are acceptable. Judo jackets are thicker and are built for durability since in judo the jacket receives considerable stress from the techniques like seizing and throwing.

For aikidokas, judo jackets might be advisable since some Aikido techniques also involve some keikogi grabbing which could tear the cloth during practice. Sometimes, aikido uniforms are customized to handle precisely the stress in some techniques. Although, personalized or specialized aikidogis are uncommon. If you do find keikogi specially made for Aikido training, you'll notice that the gi has reinforced kneepatches.

The jacket is also a little longer around the waist which allows the aikidoka to easily tuck them to their hakama. The Aikido jacket might also have shorter sleeves since basic techniques of Aikido focuses on wrist grabs and twists. The uwagi might be made from heavyweight tightly woven terrycloth which is similar to uwagi of Judo or from heavy canvas similar to karategi. Regardless, both are strong enough to withstand the regular grappling and throwing found in Aikido training.

Aside from the trousers and wraparound jackets, Aikido schools also add hakama, which looks like a dress or skirt, to the uniform. The concept behind wearing a hakama is to be able to hide the movements of the feet. The hakama is commonly black or indigo in color and are usually reserved for aikidokas that have received the dan rank.

In Aikido, most of the styles or schools use the ky/dan ranking system which is the norm in the martial arts world. However, each style has different qualifications for meeting each rank and each style might use colored belts for

ky? levels while others do not. In some schools the hakama is worn by all students regardless of rank. While in other styles, only female aikidokas are required to wear them.

When buying for first aikidogi it is important to make sure that the size and fit is right. Uniforms that are too small will constrict your movements while too big a size will get in the way of executing techniques. As mentioned before, in Aikido you'll get considerable pulling, stretching, sliding, jumping and throwing thus the need for a set of uniform that will not easily tear from the regular training routine. Double stitched uniforms are usually stronger and will handle the stress.

Extra knee padding is also a plus. However, do remember that these things cost a little extra but its all worth it since you'll be having a uniform that will lasts longer. This is definitely better than buying a new one every time you tear it up during training.