



Milton Keynes
Keihatsu Aikido Club
www.mkkac.com

Dojo etiquette and attitude

Entering the dojo

Fasten your gi (training uniform) left over right for both sexes and ensure your obi (belt) is tied properly - the ends should finish out to the sides.

As you enter the door, perform a standing bow towards the kamiza (top of the dojo, where the photo of O Sensei is displayed). Zori (sandals) should be worn to and from the tatami (mat). Step out of them backwards onto the mat to avoid dragging dust and dirt onto the mat. Immediately on the mat, perform a kneeling bow towards the kamiza.

How to perform a kneeling bow

While kneeling in seiza (kneeling position), place the left hand, then the right on the tatami in front of you so that the two thumbs and the index fingers form a triangle. Lean forwards to bow the head, while keeping the back straight, towards the tatami. Your forehead should not touch the mat, but remain a few centimetres above it.

Start of the class

When the sensei (instructor) is ready to begin the class, there will be a clap from either the sensei, or a senior pupil. All pupils must then line up in grade order, with more senior students on the right hand side. All pupils will be facing the kamiza and the most senior student will announce rei (bow), at which point everyone bows towards O Sensei, then towards your sensei. You can optionally say "Onegaishimasu" (please teach me) at this point. Warming-up exercises will follow this.

During the class

You should bow to each partner before and after training with them and optionally can express "Onegaishimasu" as well before training with them and "Arigato" (thank-you) when done. If the sensei should instruct you individually, kneel at a safe distance while paying attention, but be ready to participate - the usual kneeling position for this is one knee up (not full seiza). Both of you should thank and bow to sensei afterwards.

Make sure your gi and obi stay tied properly during practice. Should you need to tidy up, excuse yourself for a moment and do so, but at the edge of the mat. Try to keep chatting to a minimum during training and keep it focussed on Aikido.

Finishing the class

When the end is indicated by the sensei, return to grade order as per the start of the class. All class members then perform a kneeling bow to O Sensei, then to your sensei, who may then additionally bow to senior students. Sensei will leave the mat at this point. The senior students will then stand up, followed by the kyu (non-black belt) grades. All will then perform a standing bow to the whole while saying "Domo arigato gozaimashita" (thank-you very much). Finally, everyone can leave the mat. It is often custom to individually thank each person you can remember practising with before leaving.

Leaving the dojo

Perform a kneeling bow when leaving the mat. Step into your sandals as you leave the mat. Perform a standing bow as you leave the dojo premises.

General etiquette

Wash your gi regularly and keep it in good order

Wash yourself before attending class and wear deodorant as appropriate

Ensure your fingernails and toenails are short and long hair is safely tied back

No jewellery of any kind should be worn during training - any non-removable jewellery should be taped over before class.

Take pride in your dojo - keep it tidy, sweep the mat before class if necessary.