



## **DOJO HANDBOOK**

Orientation Information  
Dojo Policies  
Ranking & Embodiment Guide  
Reference Material

## **A MESSAGE FROM SENSEI TO ALL NEW COMMUNITY MEMBERS...**

Hello! And Welcome to Aikido of San Diego.

If you're new to Aikido then you are about to embark on a great journey—one which is probably unlike any other you've taken. This journey is about your evolution. Aikido is premised on the fact that we are all connected. It's not rooted in the usual competitive paradigm that we function in—the one that says that what happens “out there” is separate from me “in here.” That limits what people believe about conflict, and therefore martial arts practice, too.

The old paradigm says that martial arts must be a win-lose deal. Aikido breaks that mold and offers a path towards a more whole, inclusive, effective, and unlimited reality. Aikido places life and conflict in clearer light, and I find, illuminates limiting assumptions with no basis in reality, e.g., more violent or aggressive means more “real,” or, what benefits one must mean a loss to another, etc.

I am here to help, through this (r)evolutionary practice, to guide you on this journey, which is in fact a warrior's journey into your body, mind, and heart. So, welcome to Aikido, and welcome to a new paradigm—a new operating system for engaging all of life.

If you are not new to Aikido then you are very welcome at our dojo, too. It's very likely that your previous experience with Aikido will be somewhat different than your experience here. Sometimes that is not easy. I ask that you pay attention to the values and practices that are emphasized at Aikido of San Diego, and let your sensibilities take care of the rest.

Whether you're new to Aikido or not, I'd like you to know where I'm coming from. I see Aikido as an operating system that functions as both a martial art and a living map for how to be with life. Where I choose to take the dojo community is always intended to be congruent with that direction. How I do it day to day is based on the simple question, *“Me being who I am, how can I best bring a fully embodied Aikido practice to people as they are, and a world as it is?”*

I'm not inspired to lead a dojo based on unquestioned boundaries of style and lineage, institutional beliefs and assumptions, or Japanese cultural norms. If you're new to the dojo but not new to Aikido then this may be different from your previous experience in terms of culture and direction. I request that you approach your practice here with a fresh mind and heart regardless of your rank or experience.

What follows here is a current collection of tips for success from me to you, dojo policies, reference material, and our guide for ranking and embodiment. I hope you find it useful. Most of all, though, I hope you find your experience at Aikido of San Diego to be fulfilling, powerful, insightful, and supportive. Oh, and don't forget to enjoy the ride!

Sincerely,  
Dave Goldberg

## ON BEING A STUDENT

### Inquiry

This is about personal clarity. Before you even begin, and at any other stage along the journey, ask yourself clarifying questions. Here's a few for you to start with. Others will come up along the path. In fact, many important questions are included in our ranking process. Take them seriously, and practice acceptance of whatever comes up:

*What do you want from Aikido?*

I mean *really* want. Just be honest with yourself. If your answer is, "To be like Steven Seagal," or anything else that's fantasy-based, then ask yourself what you would get out of that. Keep going until your answers can't be reduced any more.

*What assets do you already bring with you on this journey?*

You most certainly have strengths and other assets that have served you well up until now. Be grateful for them. They're gifts. Call on them when they're needed in your practice, and remain open to discovering other gifts you never knew you had!

*What do you need to let go, and/or, what are you willing to let go of in order to get what you want?*

This is about seeing yourself, and making choices about things in life that no longer serve you well. It's an important part of clearing space for something new to emerge. There may be some fear and anxiety. That's natural, and you'll never be fearless. But there is also courage and trust. Practice is set up for you to work with that. Be brave, but also be reasonable.

### Presence

A hypothetical situation: Two beginners start Aikido at the same time. One of them (Student A) has a plan to show up for training on the evenings that he/she could fit it in, when he/she isn't too tired from the work day, and when he/she isn't catching up on TV. The other (Student B) has scheduled particular times in the week that he/she is going to class as part of their weekly/monthly routine. If only one of those students will still be around a year later and moving forward in their training, it will be Student B almost one-hundred percent of the time.

Even if you have a work schedule or lifestyle that is unpredictable, there is still some level of commitment you can make to simply showing up. Frequency is important, but not as important as the established commitment itself. Establish it and stick to it. If it needs to change then so be it. Change it, and then incorporate that into your life routine.

Sharing the news of your commitment with family, friends, and co-workers is also very helpful. When other people know about your commitment, you're more likely to remain on track.

Okay, so you showed up. All that means, though, is that your body is now inside the space of the dojo. Now your awareness needs to be here, too, and not elsewhere. So what does that

mean? Basically, that means to be in your current experience. You are not at work now, with your family, or anywhere else. There may be current thoughts of those places and situations, but you choose whether or not to make them relevant right now. This is an important point to recognize—that there is your experience, and there is something else *about* your experience. Recognize that one is real, and the other is a storyline. Allegedly, you're doing this as an investment in yourself, so be with it when you're here. Drop down into your experience with practice, recognize when you're sucked into a dramatic storyline *about* the practice, or anything else, and move on without punishing yourself over it. That's life, and we all find ourselves there, which is not here...until we don't.

## **Sincerity in Practice**

Aikido is fundamentally practiced through a training partnership between two roles called “Uke” and “Nage.” Uke literally means “one who receives,” and nage translates as “one who throws.” If you have some familiarity with Yin and Yang then you can think of those roles in the same way.

Unlike many martial arts modeled to work *against* an attack or “opponent,” Aikido teaches us to effectively work *with* the energy of attack, and the person from where it's coming. There is no competition in Aikido—no pitting of one person against another. Instead, you are partners in conflict and each of you is half of a whole. Uke and Nage represent two perspectives of a single event unfolding towards resolution, and both are equally important in the evolutionary process.

It's helpful to remember that as Uke, you're going to give sincerely before you receive the technique, and as Nage, you're going to receive sincerely before you apply the technique. Both Uke and Nage are doing Aikido—not just the one who's executing the technique.

The better you understand the Uke-Nage relationship, which is to say Yin and Yang, the more possibility you open yourself up to and the better you authentically embody the heart and principle of the art. When you are sincere in your roles, you are contributing to the development of everyone involved.

## **ON BEING A DOJO MEMBER**

The dojo is more than a training space. It's also a community of people. When you join the dojo you are a member of this community, and a larger family of Aikidoists all over the world. The dojo exists so we may develop together with a support system and guidance. Its quality depends on all of us.

Please make yourself available for help in the dojo when it's needed, be sure your membership billing information is up-to-date, support the spirited atmosphere in which we all train, and pass the good news of our community on to your friends. Unlike a spa or gym, the dojo is an extension of our collective intent to develop ourselves in body, mind, and heart. Your support of the dojo is your support of an ideal in practice that benefits you, and those around you.

I'm always grateful when you show up to train in good spirits. If everyone did only that, though, it wouldn't be enough to serve the needs of the dojo at large. The facility needs to be cared for, new people need to be introduced to our community, and projects and events need to be supported. Sorry, but I can't do it all by myself. It starts with my leadership, but the fact is that we are the dojo and the community, and it flourishes and declines on *our* contributions collectively and individually. There are several simple and important ways in which you could serve the dojo:

### **Help out with cleaning and maintenance.**

Each and every training day the dojo needs to be swept and vacuumed at minimum. Some days there will be more to do. There may be some mopping, bathroom cleaning, dusting, organizing, etc. Please feel free to take initiative with it. If it looks like something needs to be done, announce it, solicit some help if it's needed, and just get on it. The bar for cleanliness in the dojo should be high.

### **Help out in children's classes.**

If you have at least a few months experience and you're ever available during children's class hours, assistance is needed and appreciated. Our children's program plays a big part in keeping the dojo vibrant and viable. In other words, we are able to keep our great facility for adult classes to be scheduled nearly every day *because* we have a successful youth program 3 days a week. It needs to be cultivated, and you can help with that. It's very helpful to me and the kids, and gives you the opportunity to practice clarity and sensitivity in your technique, and patience and understanding in your manner. It's also pretty fun.

### **Volunteer and participate in events.**

True to being a community, the dojo does all kinds of things apart from training. We host events, we have celebrations, we do service activities, and internal projects, etcetera. Please offer your help in supporting these things and making our activities successful.

### **Put the dojo out there.**

If you're excited about what you're doing at Aikido of San Diego, share it on social media. Both posting your own stuff and sharing our public posts (please "like" our public Facebook page) are sincerely appreciated. We have a presence on all the major social media platforms. Putting the dojo out there helps perpetuate our good work, and enhances our security as we move forward.

Another great thing to do is to invite a friend to come one evening. If they're interested, you can even invite them to train in a class with you. That must be scheduled in advance with me. It's a member's privilege not extended to the general public.

### **Keep yourself informed.**

We have a closed group on Facebook that is strictly for current members. It's used for all the inside communication and information that the public has no use for. It is the primary communication portal for the dojo community's activities. Please visit the following link to join the group: [www.facebook.com/groups/aikidosd](https://www.facebook.com/groups/aikidosd). Since it is exclusively for dojo members, you will be removed from the group should you ever decide to end your membership (unless requested otherwise). If you're not on Facebook, I encourage you to join it just for access to the group. We use it a lot, and hey, you can ignore everything else in FacebookLand.

## **SOME GUIDELINES FOR CLASS TIME**

### **Please mark the days you train on the roster.**

It's my only way of tracking your time on the mat. Mark an "X" for each day you train in a class, or a dojo-sponsored seminar. (no other marks please).

### **We use a simple bow to acknowledge simple and important things.**

Gratitude. Inclusion. Respect. Appreciation. Recognition. These are all things that are extended by a simple, heartfelt bow. If this is too challenging for your current belief system then please just use traditionally clear and considerate language with supportive body language until you get over it.

We recognize the founder and each other with a bow whenever we begin and finish a class. The words you hear associated with it are, "**Onegae-shimasu**," which means "Please" (as in "Please do me the favor of..."), and "**Domo-arigato-go-zai-masu**," which means "Thank you very much." If you're late for class, simply wait for the instructor to invite you on the mat. Bow towards the Shomen (the front of the dojo where O'Sensei's picture hangs), and join the class in progress.

Anytime you engage someone to partner with, please bow to one another. When you're finished practicing, bow again and thank your partner. Also, if/when you receive individual instruction during class, it's polite to bow and thank the instructor.

### **A plain white training uniform and appropriately designated belt is worn in class.**

Please keep your uniform clean—at least clean enough that it doesn't smell. Also, no jewelry should be worn, and long hair should be contained with a hair tie. Hakama are worn by those of Dan ranks (black belts). I consider it optional.

### **Please train with a clean, perfume-free body.**

It's respectful and it simply makes it more pleasant for everyone. Also make sure that your feet are clean before you get on the mat, and that your fingernails are short, and body is free of any perfumed products.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION, PROCEDURES, AND POLICIES**

**Current dojo information** having to do with class schedule and events is available on our website at [www.aikidosd.com](http://www.aikidosd.com). Our public Facebook page also is kept up-to-date with dojo community information. The current version of this handbook is also available on our website.

**If you ever need to contact me**, the number is 619-993-2454. My email address is [sensei@aikidosd.com](mailto:sensei@aikidosd.com), or just use any email link on our website.

### **Please be sure that I have an email address for you that is regularly checked.**

Email is used for all important membership, business, and community correspondence. Please use it for dojo matters, and reply to email when it's requested.

**Water is made available at the dojo for those who don't bring their own.** A \$1 donation is expected if you need bottled water. Place it in the container on top of the refrigerator. Payments for events and exam fees may also be left there when I'm not readily available.

**Please don't leave anything at the dojo after training.** That includes your uniform, water bottles, glasses, shoes, clothes, children, etc. Take everything home with you every day.

**Minors must be picked up by class ending times.** Please do not adjust your pick up time at all. Rides are expected to be there when class ends—no exceptions.

**It is each student's responsibility to know what material is on their exam for promotion and how much the fee is.** The up-to-date information is always available in our latest handbook (available on our website). It's also posted on the dojo bulletin board.

**Membership fees are not refundable.** When you pay for your initial membership or monthly membership fees, you are committing to those months no matter how often or seldom you choose to train. All policies regarding fees and billing are clearly outlined on the receipt in your membership folder and are administered "by the book." The policies are simple, transparent, and set up to protect each individual member and the dojo entity. They are not negotiable.

## **RANKING AND EMBODIMENT GUIDE**

Aikido of San Diego uses a traditional ranking system in a modernized, non-traditional way. Our ranking system is much more than a list of techniques that you pass or fail on from belt to belt. Process, content, and context is included for success in the most important way of all. It directly guides and supports your efforts in *becoming* a living expression of the art. You are here to embody Aikido and evolve. Our ranking system and training program is here to explicitly help facilitate that.

This guide is the most important accompaniment to your training time on the mat. It lays out everything you need to know in order to navigate the system level to level, and most importantly, frames the content so that you are mastering more than just techniques. You are mastering your Self. You are mastering Life. This guide is representative of who we are and what we do at Aikido of San Diego.

### **Structure**

In a nutshell, six levels precede black belt. Once you qualify for any level you will be scheduled to do your demonstration for promotion. Each level requires a period of dedicated preparation, an inquiry to be shared, and the actual demonstration itself. Qualification is based on:

1. Your number of training days (it's normal for minimum days to be surpassed).
2. Your current expression of the art.
3. Your history of participation in events.
4. Your spirit of participation, and contribution to the community.

6 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	5 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	4 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	3 <sup>rd</sup> Kyu	2 <sup>nd</sup> Kyu	1 <sup>st</sup> Kyu	1 <sup>st</sup> Dan
Minimum 15 days of training	Minimum 30 days of training	Minimum 50 days of training	Minimum 60 days of training	Minimum 80 days of training	Minimum 100 days of training	130 days + 8 months minimum
White Belt	White Belt	Blue Belt	Blue Belt	Brown Belt	Brown Belt	Black Belt
\$20 fee	\$40 fee	\$40 fee	\$50 fee	\$50 fee	\$50 fee	\$50 + Aikikai fees

This guide contains all the required content for each rank through 1<sup>st</sup> kyu, as well as commentary, context, and reference for much of what is asked of you. There are also embodied questions for your consideration and contemplation that correspond with certain skills and aspects of the art. You will not be asked for answers to these questions on your demo. The relationship between the questions and skills is intended to stimulate integration so that Aikido begins working for you in life right away.

## Process

Once your qualifications are clear, Sensei will approach you with an offer for a demo date, and it will be posted on our blackboard. Demonstrations for rank are administered every 3-4 months or so, and dates are announced well in advance. Sometimes 6<sup>th</sup> Kyu demos are scheduled in between regular exam dates, and it's possible they'll be administered by some of our most senior students.

After receiving a date, you must ask someone senior to you to mentor you through the process of preparing. They will also be your primary partner (uke) on your exam. Mentors share responsibility for your preparedness and success, and likewise, also have the responsibility of informing Sensei of any issues that might warrant a postponement. A mentor normally works with only one person per test period. Sometimes he/she may mentor a small group of people who are doing the same demo. A mentor should be secured at least one month prior to demo date, and generally be two ranks senior to the examinee (sometimes one is fine). Please do not procrastinate on securing a mentor. It practically guarantees a postponement. In the weeks prior to your demo date, you are expected to attend classes as frequently and consistently as possible. Your exam fee, paid by cash or check, is also due before your demo date, please.

## Demonstration Content

All of the requirements for each level through 1<sup>st</sup> kyu are listed on the following pages. The technical content represents only a basic core of what is practiced in regular classes, and doesn't represent our entire vast body of technique. They are there because they're considered fundamental to the art form, and provide excellent context for demonstration of principle. When it comes to technical requirements, the techniques you demonstrate are expected to be "classic" variations. Please leave any interpretive form to the sections of your exam that call for it. There's plenty of opportunities for it as you progress level to level.



## **6<sup>th</sup> Kyu: Minimum 15 training days**

### WRITTEN INQUIRY

Please post your response on our group page the week before your exam. If you're not connected to our Facebook group then email it to Sensei and he will post it on your behalf:

Reflect on your training so far and share as you like... (1) Describe any "ah-ha!" or "yes!" moments you've had, and (2) What has challenged you the most?

### DEMONSTRATION

#### 1. Taking a Fall

**Stand squarely in a balanced and neutral posture. Your partner will push on your front side. Let the energy in. Like a wave, fall back, down, and up again in one flowing movement.**

Consider the challenges of "taking a fall" and "getting back on your feet." Where/how in life has this cycle or sequence of events been a net positive?

#### 2. Stability and Wholeness

**Demonstrate in both square and triangular stances a body that remains stable and integrated under pressure. Your partner will be directed to put pressure on you as you align to receive the pressure and remain whole.**

Where in life can I use more stability, grounding, or wholeness? Where or in what ways can I "hold my ground" a little more or better?

#### 3. Blending & The Two Fundamental Embodied Perspectives (Uke and Nage)

<b>Uke's fundamental role is...</b>	<b>Nage's fundamental role is...</b>
To give energy/unbalance Nage, receive the information from his/her response, align to it, participate with it, and fall safely and better informed.	To frame the engagement. Nage receives Uke's attack, participates with it, activates into it, and guides the engagement to a solution protecting self and other.
Uke means "One who receives." Or maybe better stated, "One who is receptive."	Nage literally means "One who throws," but it's intended more like "One who frames."
Relatively Yin (actively receptive)	Relatively Yang (appropriately active)

Practicing aikido *fully* means to accept and embody multiple perspectives—the two most fundamental being Uke and Nage (embodied yin and yang). Both are practicing Aikido.

**Demonstrate blending, first as nage then as uke, in the forms “Tai-no-henko” and “Kokyu-dosa.” Show both variations (tenkan & irimi) of tai-no-henko, please.**

How do I blend with life? Do I have tendencies/preferences to be more receptive/allowing/passive, or active/assertive/aggressive? What might a healthier balance look like for me?

#### 4. Frame & Flow: The 2 Basic Elements of Functionality

<b>Frame</b>	<b>Flow</b>
support, stability, alignment, form, direction, regulation, structure, boundaries, discipline	movement, energy, action, exploration, power, expression, aliveness, freedom

These two qualities operate in the context of each other. Both are functioning in the system no matter which perspective (uke/nage) you take. Their appropriate partnership is fundamental to how you function. Demonstrate a functional balance of frame and flow through the techniques:

**Katate-dori Sumi-otoshi**  
**Gyakute-dori Ikkyo Omote-waza**

Do I identify more with qualities of Frame, or qualities of Flow? Which qualities, from either column, light me up with “Yes”? Which ones trigger me in some way, or say “No, thanks”?

## **5<sup>th</sup> Kyu: Minimum 30 training days**

### WRITTEN INQUIRY

Please post your response on our group page the week before your exam. If you're not connected to our Facebook group then email it to Sensei and he will post it on your behalf:

### DEMONSTRATION

#### 1. Rolling Forward and Back

**Demonstrate rolls that are as straight as possible, and easy on the body.**

What in life can I “roll with” better? What, if anything, needs to be fine-tuned or finished?

#### 2. Asserting Yourself in Balance and Facing Fire

**Demonstrate the 1<sup>st</sup> suburi for both bokken and jo.**

**Do so with a kiai, and an embodiment that accentuates both earth and fire energies.**

THE EARTH ELEMENT	THE FIRE ELEMENT
stable, grounded, control, practical, correctness, solid, reliable, supportive, steady, balanced, discipline	drive, doing, action, energized, results, achievement, courage, purpose, power, intensity, passion
down	forward / out
What are the facts? In what ways am I supportive? What supports me?	What needs to be done? How do I move forward from here? What “lights” me up?

**Face a bokken strike from your partner and blend (1) back, (2) irimi, and (3) tenkan.**

Where/when/how can I assert myself more clearly and confidently? What do I need to face?

#### 3. The Fluid Receptive Body

**From katate-dori, demonstrate your ability to fluidly receive and engage nage's lead.**

Keep the point of connection complete and alive, remain in relational alignment, and engage the “water element” throughout your body. Nage should not experience you in resistance.

THE WATER ELEMENT	fluid, relational, receptive, including, flow, relaxation, empathy, acceptance	Generally a downward and inward flow of energy.
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What do I need to accept? What do I need to let go of? How can I care for myself/others?

#### 4. Systemic Connection

**Shomen-uchi Ikkyo** (omote & ura)

**Katate-dori Kokyu-ho**

**Katate-dori Shiho-nage** (omote and ura)

Engage uke's body as a system by connecting through it, and with a non-violent sense of contact/touch. If ikkyo (for instance) seems to be something that you're *doing to* an arm, then there is a dis-connect. Include the whole body, from the point of contact to the center line.

As uke, if ikkyo (for example) feels like something *happening to* your arm, then there is also a dis-connect. Can you align yourself into the movement systemically, and allow your fluid, receptive body to help you participate?

How do I touch/contact/participate with others and the world? What's the attitude of my contact, or level of participation? What do I attract and/or invite as a result?

#### 6. Continuous Connection

**Jiyu-waza** (freestyle) with inward grabs as both nage and uke.

The expectation is that you maintain an attentive connection throughout, and apply yourself appropriately. It's not necessarily to perform a wide variety of techniques.

How am I under pressure, or in situations with great uncertainty? What are my patterns, what do I do well, what are my hang-ups?

## **4<sup>th</sup> Kyu: Minimum 50 training days**

### WRITTEN INQUIRY

Please post your response on our group page the week before your exam. If you're not connected to our Facebook group then email it to Sensei and he will post it on your behalf:

What top 5 things do you appreciate about Aikido and/or training? What do you get out of it? What have been the benefits? How has it informed or impacted you?

### DEMONSTRATION

#### 1. Dimensions of Balance

##### **Bokken Suburi 1-3 Jo Suburi 1-5**

There are many doorways into a better balance. Some you've experienced so far include: (1) the spacial aspects of top-bottom, front-back, right-left, (2) the functional aspects of frame and flow, and (3) the energetic aspects of earth and fire.

Play with them all in your suburi practice. How do you experience them differently? Any observations and/or preferences? On your exam, demonstrate suburi using the doorway you feel works best for you in order to access a better embodied balance.

Where in life can I be in better balance? What would that look like? How has my sense of balance shifted in any aspect of life since starting Aikido?

#### 2. Systemic Connection

##### **Kata-dori Nikkyo (omote & ura)**

Causing pain, or forcing compliance is not the goal. The goal is to effectively, and with great attention, touch uke through their system using the format of nikkyo. As uke, attend to the movement of energy in nage's lead and align *into* it, not away from it.

What can I feel into a little more, or a little better? Where would it benefit myself and others to be more empathetic? Where in life could I use a more nuanced or clearer touch?

#### 3. Strikes and the Developmental Relationship

Yin and yang are only understood in relation to each other. In life, mature and/or appropriate action-response will express each (yin and yang) in balance with the other. Uke and nage, which are like embodied yin and yang, are very much like that. Uke and nage are here to give each other what they need in order to develop, integrate, and evolve. Strikes offer us a way to explore this with more intensity.

As uke (one who is receptive), first *give* yourself to nage's development. Offer a clear strike that reaches through nage, challenges his/her sense of balance, and honors your own relative alignment. Blend into and participate with nage's response. Demonstrate a timely and appropriate fall.

As Nage, blend into the strike with a sense of center that speaks to being awake and aligned with the circumstances. Apply yourself with clarity, and fullness of body and movement.

When you practice from this perspective, Aikido becomes a feedback loop. Meet each other in "developmental relationship" through the following techniques :

**Yokomen-uchi Shiho-nage Omote-waza**  
**Shomen-uchi Irimi-nage**  
**Tsuki Kote-gaeshi**

How do I, or how can I offer myself up in a useful and meaningful way? How do I respond or react when life "strikes"?

4. **Jiyu-waza** from any attack as directed by Sensei.

Expect several rounds with at least one as uke.

How am I under pressure, or in situations with great uncertainty? What are my patterns, what do I do well, what are my hang-ups?

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Kyu: Minimum 60 training days**

### WRITTEN INQUIRY

Please post your response on our group page the week before your exam. If you're not connected to our Facebook group then email it to Sensei and he will post it on your behalf:

You are now considered an intermediate-level student of Aikido. Most people who begin never get to this point, so congratulations! What does it *mean* to you to be a student of the art?

### DEMONSTRATION

#### 1. Integration

##### **Bokken Suburi 1-5 & Jo Suburi 1-10**

By "integrated" we mean that all aspects function seamlessly in one system. Does your bokken or jo come across as a natural extension of an integrated you?

What more could I let in, include, or express? Where/how would it benefit me to include/express more?

#### 2. Whole-Bodied Movement, Management, and Position

Aim for each movement of each technique to be clear, integrated pieces of a complete form:

##### **Yokomen-uchi Shiho-nage Ura-waza (2 ways)**

1. Enter and extend deeply into the back side of the strike.
2. Blend into the front side of the strike (omote), then turn back the other way (1-2, 1-2).

##### **Ushiro-ryote-dori Kokyu-nage (2 ways)**

1. Slide your feet out your back-foot side so that your center line is behind uke's.
2. Turn your hips, expanding into uke with a full, forward posture.

##### **Morote-dori Kokyu-ho (static grab)**

Blend irimi, with 3 clear movements.

##### **Morote-dori Kokyu-nage (static grab)**

Blend tenkan, with 2 clear movements.

##### **Katate-dori Kaiten-nage (static grabs / inward & outward)**

Demonstrate each variation in 4 clear movements.

##### **Ryote-dori Tenshi-nage (static grab)**

Demonstrate with 2 clear movements, and a balance in the up-down, front-back, and right-left.

How/Where in life can I position myself better, manage myself better, be more disciplined?  
 What does it feel like when I ask that of myself? What's my relationship to things like position, management, organization, and discipline?

### 3. Systemic Connection

#### **Shomen-uchi Nikkyo—Sankyo (omote & ura)**

Engage your heart-center at this new level, and aim beyond a mechanical interpretation of “systemic connection.” Can you include more? Can your techniques be like embodied statements that are pointedly clear, heartfelt, and meaningful. Demonstrate as both nage/uke.

As a complete system that includes a sense of heart, how do I effectively touch the other?  
 What does “heart” mean in the context of martial arts, conflict, pressure, or aggression?

### 4. Energy Qualities

**Choose a base technique (ikkyo, irimi-nage, etc). Use the spectrum of that form to help you embody each of the four basic elements.**

Declare the element and then show your clearest expression of it through the technique.  
 Really go for it!

EARTH	WATER	FIRE	AIR
stability, grounded, controlled, practical, steady, solid, reliable, supportive	fluid, relational, receptive, taking in, relaxed, empathetic, accepting, flows	drive, doing, action, energized, results, achievement, courage, purpose	vision, creativity, lightness, joy, flexibility, change, dynamic, unattached
down	down / in	forward / out	up / out
What are the facts? How/where do I offer support, and what supports me?	What do I need to accept? How can I care for myself and/ or others?	What “lights” me up? What needs to be done? How do I/we move forward?	What is possible? What's changing? How/where can I lighten up?

Which energy qualities am I more at ease with? Which ones am I more challenged by?

### **5. Jiyu-waza** from any attack as directed by Sensei.

Expect several rounds with at least one as uke.

How am I doing under pressure these days, or with situations of uncertainty?



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu: Minimum 80 training days**

### WRITTEN INQUIRY

Please post your response on our group page the week before your exam. If you're not connected to our Facebook group then email it to Sensei and he will post it on your behalf:

Be in your body? What is Aikido?

Be in your mind? What is Aikido?

Be in your heart? What is Aikido?

### DEMONSTRATION

#### 1. Integration

##### **11-20 Jo Suburi → Jo-nage Jiyu-waza**

Uke will be sent in as you are completing the suburi series. Can you include the stick naturally like it's part of your body? What does that look like? What does it feel like? Aim to express that at this new level.

#### 2. Embodied Technique

Is your body, mind, and heart alive, and do these innate aspects of yourself complement one another? Are they informing one another? Do you notice it, let it in, express it? That's basically what it means to be embodied. There is a confluence of those aspects expressing itself as *you*. Here's some other specific ways of viewing the integration of body, mind, and heart:

Action -- Meaning -- Purpose

Form -- Principle -- Energy

Doing -- Being -- Feeling

Touching -- Perceiving -- Relating

Power -- Wisdom -- Beauty

Aim to embody this integration in each technique below. Does your expression of each one "walk the aiki talk"? Does each technique demonstrate clear form, an alive principle, and a desire/willingness to relate?

**Shomen-uchi Yonkyo** (omote & ura)

**Shomen-uchi Kokyu-nage**

**Shomen-uchi Kote-gaeshi**

**Tsuki Irimi-nage**

**Tsuki Kaiten-nage**

**Tsuki Kokyu-ho**

**Yokomen-uchi Irimi-nage**

**Yokomen-uchi Kote-gaeshi**

**Ryote-dori Tenshi-nage**  
**Ryote-dori Kokyu-ho**

**Gyakute-dori Shiho-nage** (omote & ura)

**Ushiro-ryote-dori Kokyu-nage** (blend around)

**Ushiro-ryokata-dori Kokyu-nage** (blend around)

4. Energy Qualities

**You will be given, in the moment, a general technique to work with (ikkyo, kokyu-ho, etc). Use that format to demonstrate each of the four elements as Sensei requests them.**

You are free to request from uke what you need in terms of attacks, energy, etc. Aim for each one to articulate your most authentic embodiment of that particular element. Enjoy it!

EARTH	WATER	FIRE	AIR
stable, grounded, control, practical, correctness, solid, reliable, supportive, steadiness	fluidity, relational, receptivity, taking in, relaxation, empathy, acceptance, flow	drive, doing, action, energized, results, achievement, courage, purpose	vision, creativity, lightness, joy, flexibility, change, dynamic, unattached
down	down / in	forward / out	up / out
What are the facts? How do I give support? What supports me?	What do I need to accept? How can I care for myself and/ or others?	What “lights” me up? What needs to be done? How do I/we move forward?	What is possible? What’s changing? How/where can I lighten up?

Which energy qualities am I more at ease with? Which ones am I more challenged by? Are any of those strengths or challenges consistent with how I am with life off the mat?

**5. Jiyu-waza** from any attack as directed by Sensei.

Expect several rounds with at least one as uke. Multiple attackers are likely.

How am I under pressure, or in situations with great uncertainty? What are my patterns, what do I do well, what are my hang-ups?

## **1<sup>st</sup> Kyu: Minimum 100 training days**

Before you are formally asked to prepare for a black belt (sho-dan) exam, you must first demonstrate an appropriate spectrum of both the art form and your embodied expression of it. This is the purpose of the 1<sup>st</sup> kyu demo.

### WRITTEN INQUIRY

Please post your response on our group page the week before your exam:  
Describe the effect Aikido has had on your life, or how it has facilitated change for you?

### DEMONSTRATION

#### 1. Weapons Work

31 Jo Kata

3 Jo-dori, 3 Tachi-dori

Tanto-dori: Tsuki Kote-gaeshi, Yokomen-uchi Gokyo

#### 2. Empty-Handed Technique

Ikkyo: Shomen-uchi, Yokomen-uchi, Ushiro-ryote-dori, Kata-dori-menuchi

Nikkyo: 2 variations (chosen from shomen, yokomen, ushiro-ryote, kata-menuchi)

Sankyo: 2 variations (chosen from shomen, yokomen, ushiro-ryote, kata-menuchi)

Yonkyo: 2 variations (chosen from shomen, yokomen, ushiro-ryote, kata-menuchi)

Shiho-nage: 3 variations\*

Irimi-nage: 3 variations\*

Kote-gaeshi: 3 variations\*

Kaiten-nage: 3 variations\*

Kokyu-nage: 3 variations\*

Kokyu-ho: 3 variations\*

\*Variations may be chosen from:

Shomen-uchi, Tsuki, Yokomen-uchi, Katate-dori, Gyakute-dori, Morote-dori, Ryote-dori, Kata-dori, Ryokata-dori, Kata-dori-menuchi

Ushiro-ryote-dori: 2 techniques

Ushiro-ryokata-dori: 2 techniques

#### 3. Freestyles

Demonstrate a jiyu-waza for each of the 4 energy elements.

Each one will begin as a solo movement. Remain aligned with the quality to include uke. You may use a soundtrack if you wish. Enjoy it!

Randori with 2-3 attackers

## REFERENCE

It should be understood that no one at Aikido of San Diego is expected to perfect the use of Japanese language in their training. With that said, they're just names, as good as any English names, and we do use them. "Aikido-ese" is widely understood worldwide. People seem to pick it up quite easily simply by being around. The following is not meant to be something memorized. It is simply available for your reference.

### Names of Basic Techniques

Gokkyo: 5th pinning technique.

Ikkyo: 1st pinning technique.

Irimi-nage: Entering throw.

Kaiten-nage: Rotary throw.

Kokyu-ho: Breath power technique (executed from uke's front side).

Kokyu-nage: Breath throw (executed from uke's back side).

Koshi-nage: Hip throw.

Kote-gaeshi: Wrist turning technique.

Nikkyo: 2nd pinning technique.

Sankyo: 3rd pinning technique.

Shiho-nage: Four direction throw.

Tenshi-nage: Heaven and earth throw.

Yonkyo: 4th pinning technique.

### Understanding Technique Names

Techniques are named in the following way:

ATTACK + TECHNIQUE + DIRECTION (if it's relevant) = Full Technique Name

For instance: "Shomen-uchi, Ikkyo, Omote-waza" means... Frontal strike, 1st pinning technique, to the front side.

### Names of Basic Attacks

Gyakute-dori: Cross-hand grab (right to right, left to left).

Kata-dori: Shoulder grab.

Kata-dori-menuchi: One shoulder held with a frontal strike.

Katate-dori: Wrist grab (mirror image).

Morote-dori: Forearm/wrist held with both hands.

Mune-tsuki: Chest or stomach thrusting strike (punch).

Ryokata-dori: Both shoulders held.

Ryote-dori: Both wrists are held.

Shomen-uchi: Strike to the top of the head.

Ushiro-ryokata-dori: Both shoulders grabbed from behind.

Ushiro-ryote-dori: Both wrists grabbed from behind.

Yokomen-uchi: Strike to the side of the head.

## Counting in Japanese

Sometimes you'll hear technical work counted in Japanese. You're not expected to do it yourself, but it's nice to understand it. It's quite simple actually. Just memorize one through ten and the rest will fall in place:

1	2	3	4	5	5	7	8	9	10
ICHI	NI	SAN	SHI	GO	ROKU	SHICHI	HACHI	KYU	JYU

Ten through nineteen becomes 10+1, etc. Therefore, 11 is jyu-ichi, 12 is jyu-ni, etc... Twenty through twenty-nine becomes 2x10+... Therefore, 20 is ni-jyu, 21 is ni-jyu-ichi, 22 is ni-jyu-ni, etc...

## Names of the 20 Jo Suburi

- |                                |                               |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Choku-tsuki                 | 11. Katate-gedan-gaeshi       | 19. Hidari-nagare-gaeshi-uchi |
| 2. Kaeshi-tsuki                | 12. Katate-toma-uchi          | 20. Migi-nagare-gaeshi-tsuki  |
| 3. Ushiro-tsuki                | 13. Katate-hachi-noji-gaeshi  |                               |
| 4. Tsuki-gedan-gaeshi          |                               |                               |
| 5. Tsuki-jodan-gaeshi-uchi     |                               |                               |
| 6. Shomen-uchi-komi            | 14. Hasso-gaeshi-uchi         |                               |
| 7. Renzoku-uchi-komi           | 15. Hasso-gaeshi-tsuki        |                               |
| 8. Menuchi-gedan-gaeshi        | 16. Hasso-gaeshi-ushiro-tsuki |                               |
| 9. Menuchi-ushiro-tsuki        | 17. Hasso-gaeshi-ushiro-uchi  |                               |
| 10. Gyaku-yokomen-ushiro-tsuki | 18. Hasso-gaeshi-ushiro-barai |                               |

## Glossary of Common Aikido Terms

**Ai-hanmi:** Mutual stance. Partners stand facing one another with the same foot forward.

**Atemi:** A strike to unbalance or fill space.

**Bokken:** Wooden sword.

**Budo:** Warrior way. The group of arts that teach martial arts and spiritual development.

**Dan:** Black belt rank.

**Deshi:** Student, pupil, disciple.

**Dojo:** Training hall

**Gi** (short for Do-gi): Training uniform.

**Gyaku-hanmi:** Opposite stance. Partners stand with opposite feet forward like a mirror image.

**Hakama:** A divided, pant-like skirt. It's worn by those of Dan rank.

**Hanmi:** Bisecting stance.

**Hanmi-handachi:** Nage is kneeling and Uke is standing.

**Irimi:** Entry.

**Jiyu-waza:** Freestyle practice.

**Jo:** Wooden staff

**Kamae:** Stance.

**Kata:** Shoulder

**Kata:** Form (different kanji character from "Kata" meaning shoulder).

Keiko: Practice or training session.  
Ken: Japanese sword.  
Kiai: A piercing scream.  
Kihon: Basic form of a technique, usually static.  
Ki-no-nagare: Fluid form of a technique.  
Kohai: Junior student.  
Kumi-jo: Partner practices with jo.  
Kumi-tachi: Partner practices with swords.  
Nage: To throw, or the person who throws.  
Omote: Front  
Randori: Multiple person freestyle practice.  
Rei: Bow.  
Sempai: Senior student.  
Seiza: Formal sitting posture. Knees underside.  
Shomen: Front. Head of the dojo where a picture of the founder is kept.  
Suburi: A basic ken or jo strike.  
Suwari-waza: Sitting techniques.  
Tachi-dori: Sword take-aways.  
Tai-jutsu: Body arts. Techniques done without weapons.  
Tanto: Knife.  
Tsuki: Thrust, punch.  
Uchi: To strike.  
Uke: To receive. The person who attacks, receives a technique, and falls.  
Ukemi: The art of falling and receiving.  
Ura: Rear direction.  
Ushiro: Back, behind, rear.  
Waza: Technique.  
Yudansha: Person holding a Dan rank.