

Etiquette

Good manners and respect are part of your martial arts training.

Traditional customs help to teach us about aikido and are a special part of our training.

Seiza (formal sitting posture)

Remember “Left Down/Right Up”

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|  | <p>From Standing</p> |  | <p>Left leg back. Toes up.</p> |  | <p>Right leg back. Toes up.</p> |
|  | <p>Toes down. Sit on heels</p> |  | <p>Hands on thighs</p> | <p>To stand up – reverse this i.e. Toes up Right foot forward Stand</p> | |

Historical background

Historically in Japan, samurai made sure that regardless of what they were doing, they were always offering no opening for attack.

The reason that we pull the left leg back first and keep our right knee up is to allow access to the sword on the left hip. Also, we can move forward easily from this position, if we need to. The toes are tucked under to allow us to move quickly and freely. When you settle in seiza, transfer your hands away from where your sword would be, to your thighs, indicating that you have no aggressive intentions.

Zarei (sitting bow)

To bow bend forward from your hips and slide your hands forward on your thighs. Your left hand first comes off the left thigh and is placed onto the ground at a 45 degree angle toward your center line. All five fingers and the palm touch the ground. Then, the same with the right hand. Keep an even speed for these actions.




The position of the hands on the floor should be with the thumbs and index fingers touching, a triangle formed by their shape in between.

To finish the bow, return to the regular seiza position first right hand goes onto right thigh then left hand onto left thigh.

Back and neck should be in line and the bow is done by bending your elbows not hunching the spine. Your bottom should not lift up in the air.

Rei (standing bow)

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|  | Feet together Hands at your sides Bend from your hips (not your back) so back and neck is in line. |
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Entering and Leaving the Mat

A standing bow is made to the shomen (front) wall of the dojo on entering and leaving the mat.

This bow acknowledges that you recognize you are on the training area and that you show respect for all the traditional rules that apply while you remain on the training area. It does not refer to the people present.

Entering and Leaving the Dojo

Upon entering the dojo building (at the door), do a standing bow towards the Shomen (front) wall.

Remove your shoes and place them in the shoe rack. Leaving them lying around is untidy and disrespectful

Removing the shoes was done in Japan mainly because they used Tatami mats made of woven grasses. Shoes caused a lot of wear on the mats and brought in dirt as well. So taking of the shoes was to protect the mats and keep the floor cleaner.

Some comments on bowing in general












Bowing is about respect but is more involved than just that. When entering or leaving a dojo, it is a show of respect to bow towards the front of the dojo. Many times dojo will have pictures of the founder of the style or other famous students of the founder. When leaving it is proper to bow to the front again for the same reason. The bow to the instructor should be one of respect. The respect is for his/her many years of training, and the fact that they are willing to share their knowledge. It is not meant to show that one person is better than another. The instructor bows to the student out of respect also. A good instructor remembers how hard it was to learn and to reach where they are now and respects the student for taking the long and often confusing path to knowledge and self-defense skill.

How deeply to bow is another difficult area. Traditionally when two Japanese met on the street they would do this and the deeper the bow the more respectful. In the martial arts the bow is only deep enough so that you can no longer see the other person's eyes. To keep eye contact is to show distrust. You should only bow to someone you respect. So when bowing to them, you should not keep eye contact.

Correctly tie your Obi

The belt and how it is tied can be representative of the owners attitudes (applies to the whole uniform actually).

The belt should be centred and balanced just as we strive to be and this requires that it be tied correctly.

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|  <p>Close your gi front left side on top</p> |  |  <p>Lay one end of the belt across your middle and wrap it around twice.</p> |
|  <p>Even up the ends. The end coming around your left side is on top. The belt should not be tight.</p> | <p>When you wrap your belt around your waist take care not to have it crossed at the back. It is untidy and may dig into your back when you roll.</p> |  <p>Left (top) end folds under both layers</p> |
|  <p>And emerges on your right side pointing upward</p> |  <p>The end in your right hand folds over top of the other end</p> |  <p>And up through the loop formed</p> |
|  <p>Pull the knot tight</p> |  <p>It should look like this. It is a reef knot.</p> |  <p>The ends of your belt should be even</p> |