

Aikido - Frequently Asked Questions

- **What class can I start in?**

You can begin with the Basic training class, Monday, Wednesday and Friday until you are confident enough (usually after six month of training) to join the advanced class.

- **What will happen the first time I come along**

Everyone is nervous the first time they join a club. Don't worry to much about it. After the warmup a senior grade will take you to a section of the mat and teach you how to do your breakfalls and your basic movements. These are an important part of the Aikido and will therefore take up a large portion of your first lesson.

- **I am afraid of looking silly?**

Everyone feels like this when they first start. Don't worry, we all felt like this the first time. Just relax and enjoy yourself, with regular practice you will soon pick it up

- **What do I need to wear?**

Please wear loose fitting clothes - tracksuit bottoms and a t-shirt are suitable for beginners. No jewellery should be worn at any time.

- **Do I need to be fit before I start?**

The Beginners class is purposely designed to ease people into Aikido and therefore it does not matter what level of fitness you are at.

- **How often do I need to train?**

Once you're confidence and fitness have developed you should try and train two to three times a week. Having said that this is simply a guideline and not something we will enforce, everyone is different and therefore you can choose your own frequency of training.

- **How much does it cost?**

Training fee is DDK 150 per month.

- **How do I sign up for classes?**

If you are interested in being considered for membership - the first thing to do would be to drop-by our dojo whenever we have a class. Once accepted to join, a person in charge will give you required forms for you to sign-up. The fees mentioned above are required to pay at sign-up.

- **Do I need to buy a gi before I join?**

No you don't. As we mentioned above it is advisable to train in loose fitting clothes until you are happy that Aikido is what you want to do. It is no good going out and buying a gi to wear before hand only to find that you don't like it.

- **Once I am happy that I like Aikido, where do I get the clothing and weapons from?**

The club has a number of contacts for purchasing these. Speak to our Senseis or Sempais they will be able to help you.

- **I am worried about being the only beginner?**

This is usually not the case as we have a number of beginners, however if you do happen to be the only one, you will be pleased to know that we are a friendly relaxed club who enjoy passing on our knowledge and enthusiasm to anyone who is willing to learn.

- **Is Aikido dangerous?**

Aikido is a martial art, and like all the fighting arts, there is a risk of injury. However, the injury rate in Aikido is low compared to other disciplines, and the philosophy and style of practice reduces this risk even further. We take great pride in the care shown to new students, and want everyone to enjoy their training with the minimum of risk.

- **Is aikido realistic for self-defense?**

Yes, aikido is a very effective form of self-defense, however being defensive does not mean being passive, aikido techniques require an active attack. It can take considerable time and effort to gain street effectiveness in aikido or any other martial art.

- **There is a lot of bowing, is this a martial art or a religion?**

This is a Japanese martial art and is taught in a traditional manner, bowing is part of the proper etiquette. The rituals are a way of expressing respect towards aikido, your partners, your teacher and yourself. There is no religion involved, just as a cast bowing to an audience at the end of a performance has no religious connotations.

- **Aikido looks choreographed, why doesn't the attacker fight more?**

As aikido students progress and both nage, the thrower and uke, the one being thrown, learn to protect themselves. With experience, the attacks become faster and the resistance greater, creating a realistic scenario. Many of the techniques are dangerous if someone resists. If uke does not fight the movement nage is able to put considerable power into the technique without fear of injuring uke. To reach this level of proficiency takes time, in the mean time, partners cooperate with each other as they practice towards that goal.

- **Do I need any experience of other martial arts?**

No experience is necessary; indeed, some people find previous training in striking styles like Karate and Tai Kwon Do can be a hindrance, as it can sometimes make it difficult to achieve the relaxed, flowing movements necessary in Aikido.

- **How long will I have to train to get black belt?**

This really depends on how often you train and how quickly you can learn the technical syllabus. In the beginning, gradings are held every 6 months within the Frederiksberg Aikido Club and if you were to pass every grading it could take as little as 6 to 7 years.

- **Is there a problem with religion and Aikido?**

Many of the traditions we practice today derive not from religion but from basic oriental culture and are hundreds of years old. We keep them to stay close to the martial arts roots of our styles, and to provide an additional level of structure and control in class.

Bowing to each other falls into the "its just a different kind of handshake" department. We need to put aside our attitudes (for this at least) and understand that there is no other meaning. We bow before

practicing together, and before sparring, for the same reason boxers are told to 'shake hands and come out fighting'.

Bowing to Shomen, or the place of honor, originally had spiritual roots. However, with the passage of time the religious implications have dropped away, and it now serves to connect us with the history of our style. In the dojo you wear an oriental culture, and you bow to show respect.

We know that devoted Muslims will not bow to the front altar or to each other as is regularly done in Aikido dojos. We know that this is not due to lack of courtesy but is a reflection of their religious beliefs.

However we cannot consent to any religious restrictions in a religious free environment.

- **Cleanliness**

Come to practice with a clean body and clean gi (uniform). There is a lot of contact in aikido, which is more pleasant when we and our partners are clean. Pay special attention to your hands, which make a lot of contact with your partners, and your feet, which make a lot of contact with the mat.

To prevent tracking on the mat, please wear zori (sandals or thongs) from the dressing room to the mat. If you don't have zori, wear shoes. Because our faces touch the mat during practice, it is especially important that we keep the mat clean. If possible, do not wear heavy perfume or cologne when practicing. Some people are allergic; others simply don't like it. Also, do not wear makeup on the mat. If you wear makeup during practice, you will soon find it all over the mat and other people.

- **Safety**

Please take jewelry off before practicing. This includes earrings, necklaces, watches, scarf's, etc. All foreign objects have the potential of hurting you or someone else.

Please keep your fingernails and toenails trimmed. Long nails are dangerous, because they can easily cut other people. They've also been known to break or bend backwards.

Always strive to avoid accidents. When you practice aikido, pay attention to your surroundings so you can avoid colliding with other students. If you or your partner accidentally collides with another student during practice, bow to the student and his or her partner and say "excuse me." Then resolve to pay better attention next time. Even if you didn't cause the accident, chances are you could have prevented it.