

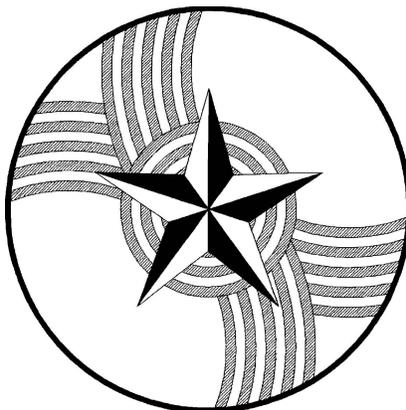
A GUIDE FOR BEGINNING KENDO

Dallas - Fort Worth Kendo & Iaido Kyokai

Welcome! As a new member of the dojo, we hope you find your time here enjoyable and worthy. We understand that as a new student, you may have a lot of questions, but class is not the time to ask questions. Class is the time to study, learn, and practice.

We have prepared this basic guide to help you start your study of Kendo and Iaido. It will answer some basic questions, set your expectations, and help you become familiar with the terminology and routine of our classes.

If you have questions, and you will, please feel free to ask any member before and after class, and always put Sensei's instruction first. As you will find, the more time you spend with us, the more you will find a bond that can be as strong as family.



**a UNIFIED SPIRIT
through the
MERGING of CULTURES**

The philosophy of the Dallas/Ft. Worth Kendo and Iaido Kyokai is represented by our mon or logo, which symbolizes a path to a unified spirit, growing strong through the diversity of cultures our group represents. The lines converging on the Lone Star represent the merging of our members' diverse backgrounds, while the Lone Star itself symbolizes the strong spirit and individual growth offered by the way of the sword. Every member contributes in his or her own way to our common goals. This philosophy grows strong by disciplining the human character through applying the principles of the katana. It is the mental and spiritual development of one's self which is as important, and perhaps more important, than the physical training.

ETIQUETTE (REI-GI)

Rei-Gi (manners) is perhaps the most important thing that kendo and iaido can teach us, and it coincides with traditions of old. Simply showing respect and courtesy in all you do will help you grow as person throughout your life. Learn it and live it.

THE DOJO:

When entering the dojo, remove your shoes and place them outside the door in an orderly fashion. After entering the dojo, politely bow to show respect. Generally, the bow can be directed at the front of the dojo or to Sensei.

After you bow, find your place along the outer portion of the dojo and place your gear in an orderly fashion. Generally, seating will follow a progression from highest rank to lowest rank or least tenure in the class. Remember to respect your gear and your swords; even the shinai should be considered a sword and placed carefully upon the ground and carried in an appropriate manner.

As a beginning student, you will often be asked to help with tasks such as cleaning the dojo, sweeping the floors, setting up chairs, etc. It is important to be on-time and ready to go at the scheduled class time, so these tasks should be performed in a manner to permit class to start on-time. Once these tasks are complete, all students should be dressed and ready to go.

PRACTICE (KEIKO):

Our classes typically begin with the study of iaido, the way of drawing the sword, and prior to kendo. As a member, you are not required to study both kendo and iaido, you may choose either. It is, however, recommended that you study both, as they will only enhance your learning and are complimentary in nature.

It is customary to join the lineup at the beginning and at the end of the practice, sitting on the left hand side of the person who has a higher grade or more tenure than you. The command Seiretsu (Line Up) will be given, followed by the commands to bow (Rei) and to start practice (Keiko). If you study iaido as well as kendo, we will lineup to perform stretching and basic warm-ups to begin the class. When in doubt, follow a student with experience in the progression of things.

After lining up, practice begins with Za-Rei and the following commands will be issued:

- Kyotsuke (Attention).
- Chakuza (Take seiza).
- Seiza (Sit in the formal position with good posture). Make sure you are lined up with your sempai (the person to your right in our dojo) and follow their “lead”. If you are standing in the second line, be sure to position yourself behind a senior student, beginning at the far right, and follow them.
- Mokuso (mediation-like breathing).
- Mokuso Yame (period is finished).
- Shomen-ni Rei (bow to front of the dojo or flag).
- Sensei-gata-ni Rei (or SENSEI'S NAME-Sensei-ni Rei) *.
- Otagai-ni Rei (bow to other participants) *.

* If you wish to thank Sensei(s) or other students at this point in class, you may say “onegaishimasu”, which roughly equates to “Thank you for what you are about to teach me”.

This will be followed by standing, forming a large circle in the dojo, and the beginning of basic warm-up exercises (Suburi). After basics, students will once again line-up, and the command Men-o Tsuke will be given to place the full armor (Bogu) on, and class will continue.

When class ends, students once again lineup for To-Rei, and the following commands will be issued:

- Kyotsuke (Attention).
- Chakuza (Take seiza).
- Seiza (Sit in the formal position with good posture).
- Men-o Tare (Remove the head armor).
- Mokuso (mediation-like breathing).
- Mokuso Yame (period is finished).
- Sensei-Gata-ni Rei (or SENSEI'S NAME-Sensei-ni Rei).*
- Shomen-ni Rei (bow to front of the dojo or flag).
- Otagai-ni Rei (bow to other participants).*
- Keiko Owari (practice is over).

* If you wish to thank Sensei(s) or other students at this point in class, you may say “arigato gozaimashita”, which roughly equates to “Thank you for what you taught me today”.

Sensei will then discuss practice or announcements are made (while in seiza), followed by a command signaling the end of class (dismissed). If you would like to thank someone who was particularly helpful to you during the class, please do so after finishing the session.

During Sunday’s class, Kendo Kata will commence after iaido. Kendo kata is a fundamental study of the basics of kendo and is an important part of learning the way of the sword.

Your advancement in kendo and iaido is shown by your movement, behavior, appearance, and attitude, and this begins before you enter the dojo. Other students, both higher and lower in rank or grade, will judge you on these principles and learn from your example.

GENERAL DO’S AND DON’TS:

- Be committed and come to class regularly. If not, you not only waste your time, but you waste your instructor’s time and you may keep class progression at a slower pace.
- Be on-time if not early to class. If late, enter quietly without distracting others. Dress, prepare, and warm up before joining the session. Wait until an exercise is complete, step into the group, and bow. Similarly if you have to be excused before the end of the practice, let sensei or a senior know.
- Never sit or rest without permission unless you feel ill during class. If ill or injured, bow out and get well. Only you know your body.
- Make the most of every practice. Come prepared mentally and physically.
- It is customary to walk behind a kendoka wearing armor and standing or sitting in position. If it is unavoidable, stretch your right arm in front of you, bow slightly, and excuse yourself while passing.
- While instruction is being given by the sensei, sempai, or visiting teacher, do not interrupt, contradict, or be uncooperative. Do not allow your attention to wander during instruction.
- Do not lean against the wall or on a shinai, using it as a cane.
- Do not wear a hat, speak loudly, or use abusive language in the dojo.
- Always place your shinai or sword out of the way, where others cannot stumble over or step on it. Do not rest it against the wall in an upright position.
- Never step on or over a shinai, iaito, bokuto, or any representation of a sword.

- Never kick, step on, or move someone's bogu; treat them with respect.
- Always bow to your opponent before and after a keiko. Show respect by saying loud and clear, "onegaishimasu" while bowing before engaging and "arigato gozaimashita" after engaging.
- If your armor becomes loose or untied, raise your right arm to signal you need to stop, step back, correct the problem, then start again with a standing bow.
- Always place safety first.
- Always take the opportunity to practice with higher ranks, and never allow a sensei or senior student to stand idle.
- Always show your best reigi (etiquette), shisei (attitude), and kigurai (pride) wherever you practice. Not only do you represent yourself, you represent your dojo, your sensei, and your sempai.

ADDITIONAL COMMANDS & TERMINOLOGY:

Kiritsu - Stand up

Kamae te - assume a chudan no kamae position.

Sonkyo - squat down facing the sempai.

Taito - Bring your shinai to your hip as if it was a sword in a scabbard.

Osame to - return your sword to the sheathed position

Reigi-saho - etiquette in the dojo, courtesy, discipline and manners on the whole.

Shisei – attitude.

Kigurai – pride.

Ohki – large motion.

Tobi-komi – practical motion.

Kihon-Waza (basic or promise practice)

Kiri-kaeshi – a basic exercise utilizing a series of men strikes forward and backward.

Kakari-geiko – an exercise that incorporates continuous attacking by creating your own opening.

Uchi-komi-keiko – an exercise that incorporates continuous attacking with motodachi showing openings.

BASIC STRIKES OR CUTS:

Men (head)

Kote (wrist)

Do (body)

Tsuki (throat)

COUNTING IN JAPANESE:

1. Ichi (eech)

2. Ni (nee)

3. San (sahn)

4. Shi (she)

5. Go (go)

6. Roku (rook)

7. Shichi (sheech)

8. Hachi (hach)

9. Kyu (koo)

10. Ju (joo)

The concept of kendo is:

to discipline the human character through the application of the principles of the katana.

The purpose of practicing kendo is:

to mold the mind and body, to cultivate a vigorous spirit, and through correct and rigid training, to strive for the improvement in the art of Kendo, to hold in esteem human courtesy and honor, to associate with others with sincerity, and to forever pursue the cultivation of ones self.

Thus one will be able:

to love his/her country and society, to contribute to the development of culture, and to promote peace and prosperity among all peoples.

All Japan Kendo Federation



Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei – Seitei Iaido

The way of drawing the Japanese Sword according to the All Japan Kendo Federation.

Prepared for members of the Dallas/Fort Worth Kendo and Iaido Kyokai.

For members of the dojo wishing to study Iaido, we have prepared this guide as a supplement to the DFWKIK's Beginner's Guide and to help you with your study of Iaido. It will answer some basic questions pertaining to Iaido, and help you become familiar with the terminology and the study of Iaido as a complimentary study to kendo.

If you have questions, and you will, please feel free to ask any member before and after class, and always put Sensei's instruction first. We understand that new students may have a lot of questions, but class is not the time to ask questions. Class is the time to study, learn, and practice.

The Dallas/Fort Worth Kendo & Iaido Kyokai (DFWKIK) studies Iaido as developed by the All Japan Kendo Federation (Seitei). The first seven forms of Seitei Iai were established in 1969, three more followed in 1980, and two more new forms were added in 2000, making a total of 12. Advanced members also study Muso Shinden-Ryu, a Koryu or old school set of kata dating back to 1869.

THE SEITEI KATA

1. Ipponme – “Mae” (To the front)
2. Nihonme – “Ushiro” (To the rear)
3. Sanponme – “Ukenagashi” (Take and give back) or (Receive, Parry and Cut)
4. Yonhonme – “Tsuka-ate” (Strike with the tsuka/hilt)
5. Gohonme – “Kesa giri” (Diagonal cuts)
6. Ropponme – “Morote tsuki” (2 handed thrust)
7. Shichihonme – “Sanpo giri” (3 direction cuts)
8. Hachihonme – “Ganmen-ate” (Strike to the face)
9. Kyuhonme – “Soete tsuki” (Companion hand thrust)
10. Jupponme – “Shiho giri” (4 direction cuts)
11. Juipponme – “Sou giri” (Many/complete cuts)
12. Ju Nihonme – “Nukiuchi” (Sudden draw and cut down)

KEY CONCEPTS

Chiburi: cleansing of the blade. Chiburi also has a spiritual meaning of cleaning one's soul.

Iaito – literally sword for Iai, practice sword – unsharpened, typically made of alloy.

Jo-ha-kyu – the rhythm within a kata as slow-to-fast-to-slow movement.

Kesa-giri – the diagonal cut that follows the keiko-gi line. Named after the kesa/lapel that monks wore.

Keito – holding the sword at the hip while in attention.

Ki-ken-tai-itchi - Ki is spirit, ken refers to the sword, and tai refers to body. Spirit, sword, and body as one.

Kiri-oroshi - cutting down. Usually it is a 2-handed cut down from over the head.

Kokyuu - The act of inhaling and exhaling.

Metsuke – one's gaze or look.

Mono-uchi - The “cutting” part of the sword.

Notto – returning the sword to the sheath or saya.

Nukitsuke - the cut made, in one continuous motion, from drawing the sword.

Obi – the belt wrapped around the waist/keiko-gi, in which the sword is placed.

Seitei – basic, fundamental. Seitei Gata is fundamental techniques kata.

Seiza – formal kneeling/sitting position.

Shibori – the wringing motion of one's hands when performing a cut.

Shinken – literally “live sword” – used to describe sharp swords made in the Japanese style.

Tate-hiza – raised-knee position when kneeling/sitting.

Teito – holding the sword loose by the left side.

Torei - bow to the sword.

Zanshin – remaining spirit/heart.

Za rei – kneeling bow.