



BRISTOL NORTH AIKIDO DOJO

BRISTOL SOUTH AIKIDO DOJO

Welcome Pack

# Bristol Aikido Dojos

Welcome to Bristol North and/or South Aikido! This welcome pack exists to give you some basic information about training with our club, and to help you get started on your aikido journey.

Bristol North Aikido Dojo (BNAD) was started in 2012 by Daren Sims, senior instructor with the National Aikido Federation, to make NAF aikido classes available in the north of the city. It was the second NAF dojo in Bristol after Templegate Aikido, one of Bristol's oldest aikido clubs. Daren then opened Bristol South Aikido Dojo (BSAD) in 2018, to build on the success of Bristol North Aikido Dojo and to provide a permanent dojo for the NAF.

Over time, the two dojos have developed a large membership with students ranging from complete beginners to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> dans, and have played host to a number of nationally- and internationally-renowned teachers. Both dojos are registered with the British Aikido Board, which is the UK's official governing body for aikido, and all instructors are certified by the BAB to at least club level.

You can train at either dojo, or both. There are a variety of classes available, covering all aspects of aikido. Beginners are welcome in any class; both the instructor and students will be more than happy to accommodate you. Private classes are also available, please contact Daren for details.

If you have any questions, do please ask! Senior members of the dojo are easy to spot (they're the ones wearing skirts) and will always be happy to help you, or to direct you to someone who can. More information about both dojos is available at their respective websites: [bristolnorthaikido.org](http://bristolnorthaikido.org) and [bristolsouthaikido.org](http://bristolsouthaikido.org).



Students and instructors from both dojos at BSAD's first Summer School

# Training etiquette

The training atmosphere in both dojos is fairly relaxed, and so it's not the end of the world if you accidentally breach dojo etiquette. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to be aware of the following pointers while training.

## Bowing:

We bow a lot in aikido as a sign of respect. Here's how the bows at the start and end of the class work:

1. Students line up facing the front of the dojo and sit in seiza (kneeling). The higher grades are on the right, the lower grades on the left – if it's your first night, you'll be on the far left, so that's easy.
2. The sensei acknowledges the class and turns to face the kamiza (the picture of aikido's founder at the front of the dojo). Together, the class and sensei perform:
  - a. Two bows
  - b. Two claps
  - c. One bow

Take your timing from the sensei and on the last bow, wait for the person on your right to come up before you do.

3. The sensei will usually then bow to the most senior student on the mat (at the far right)
4. The sensei will bow to the entire class; bow in response and say "Onegaishimasu" ("on-a-guy-she-mass") at the start of the class or "Domo arigato gozaimashita" ("dommo arry-ga-toe go-za-ee-mash-ta") at the end. Wait for the person on your right to rise from their bow before you do.



Bowing to the sensei at the start of a class

If it is the start of the class, the sensei will have you stand up and the class will begin. If it is the end of the class, the sensei will now stand and the senior student will give the order for the final bow. Bow once more towards the kamiza, again waiting until the person on your right has risen before you do. The class is now over, and you can stand up again (senior students stand first, so once more, wait for that person on your right to move before you do!)

In addition, you should also perform a rei (bow) in the following circumstances:

- When entering or leaving the dojo (towards the kamiza).
- When stepping onto or off the mats (towards the kamiza).
- When the teacher has demonstrated to the class or has given you personal instruction (towards the sensei).
- When you start training with a partner (towards your partner).
- When you and your partner switch roles (from uke to tori and *vice versa*) (towards your partner).
- When you bring a weapon onto the mat or take it off (towards the kamiza).

## Clothing and appearance:

Aikido practitioners wear a gi (white training uniform), however if you have only recently started it is perfectly acceptable to wear comfortable sports clothing. There is no club-branded uniform; any plain white gi can be worn. If you would like to obtain a gi, please speak to Daren.



Footwear belongs at the edge of the mat

- Training uniforms should be clean and tidy.
- Fingernails and toenails must be trimmed short.
- Jewellery must not be worn on the mat. If jewellery cannot for some reason be removed, it must be securely taped with sports tape.
- Shoes must never be worn on the mat, but should always be worn off the mat. It is a good idea to have slip-on footwear (zori, flip-flops, crocs etc.) which can be removed and put back on easily; these should be left at the side of the mat when training.

## Training:

- Arrive at the dojo with enough time to spare – fifteen minutes before class is due to start is a good rule of thumb. If you know you will be late in advance, please let the sensei know if possible.
- If, due to unforeseen circumstances, you are unavoidably late for class, wait at the side of the mat to be called on by the sensei.
- If you need to leave the mat for any reason, tell the sensei before doing so. When you are ready to return, wait for the sensei to notice you and beckon you back on to the mat.
- If you are training with an injury, let the sensei know before the start of the class.
- If you or your training partner are injured during class, make sure that the sensei knows immediately.
- Do not fold your arms or stand with your hands behind your back whilst on the mat.
- Treat weapons as weapons – do not casually swing them around, leave them lying where someone could stand on them, or lean on them.

## Aikido's Training Precepts

When asked by his students for some training principles, aikido's founder Morihei Ueshiba came up with these precepts on the spot:

- Aikido decides life and death in a single strike, so students must carefully follow the instructor's teaching and not compete to see who is the strongest.
- Aikido is the way that teaches how one can deal with several enemies. Students must train themselves to be alert not just to the front, but to all sides and the back.
- Training should always be conducted in a pleasant and joyful atmosphere.
- The instructor teaches only one small aspect of the art. Its versatile applications must be discovered by each student through incessant practice and training.
- In daily practice first begin by moving your body and then progress to more intensive practice. Never force anything unnaturally or unreasonably.
- The purpose of aikido is to train mind and body and to produce sincere, earnest people. Since all the techniques are to be transmitted person-to-person, do not randomly reveal them to others, for this might lead to their being used by hoodlums.

# Vocabulary

These are some of the most common terms you'll encounter in the dojo. This isn't an exhaustive list by any means, but should serve to help you recognise some of the Japanese phrases that we toss around. If you don't recognise one of the terms used, please just ask.

## Aikido's Nine Principles

- **Irimi/Tenkan** – Entering/Turning. Directly entering into an attack, or absorbing and avoiding an attack by turning the body.
- **Ura/Omote** – Behind/In front. The position in relation to the opponent where a technique is applied.
- **Tai sabaki** – Body management. The organisation, connection and movement of the body.
- **Maai** – Spacing. The distance, timing and targeting used in a technique.
- **Atemi** – Striking. The use of strikes and other techniques to disrupt the opponent's attack.
- **Shisei** – Posture. Extension in all directions to create a stable physical structure.
- **Kamae** – Stance. Martial attitude, expressed through body position, gaze and spirit.
- **Kokyu** – Breath. The conscious use of the breath to supplement movement.
- **Kokyu-ryoku** – Breath power. The power of a connected body moving as a single unit.

## Training:



Gi and obi

- **Dojo** – Place of the Way (training venue)
- **Onegaishimasu** – Please [teach me]
- **Domo arigato gozaimashita** - Thank you
- **Yame** – Stop
- **Rei** – Bow
- **Sensei** – Teacher
- **Gi or dogi** – Training uniform
- **Hakama** – Divided skirt
- **Obi** – Belt
- **Zori** – Straw sandals
- **Tatami** – Mats
- **Tori** – One who takes (partner who performs the technique)

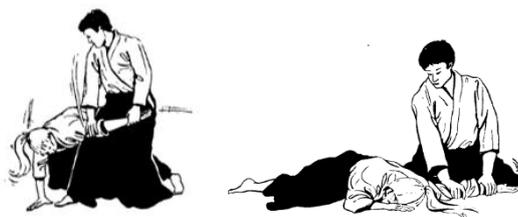


Kamiza

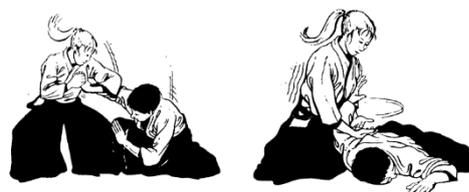
- **Uke** – One who receives (partner who attacks and is thrown)
- **Kamiza** – Upper seat (picture of O-Sensei at the front of the class)
- **Kyu** – White belt grade (lower number indicates seniority: a 3<sup>rd</sup> kyu is senior to a 5<sup>th</sup> kyu)
- **Dan** – Black belt grade (higher number indicates seniority: a 4<sup>th</sup> dan is senior to a 2<sup>nd</sup> dan)
- **Shodan** – 1<sup>st</sup> dan, grade at which practitioners wear a black belt

## Techniques:

- **Tai no henka** – Body variation
- **Kote gaeshi** – Wrist reversal
- **Sumi otoshi** – Corner drop
- **Irimi nage** – Entering throw
- **Tenchi nage** – Heaven-and-Earth throw
- **Shiho nage** – Four directions throw
- **Ude kime nage** – Arm-breaking throw
- **Uchi kaiten nage** – Inside turning throw
- **Soto kaiten nage** – Outside turning throw
- **Koshi nage** – Hip throw
- **Juji nage** – Figure ten (cross-shaped) throw
- **Kiri otoshi** – Cutting drop
- **Aiki otoshi** – Blending drop
- **Ikkyo** – First [joint lock] teaching
- **Nikkyo** – Second teaching
- **Sankyo** – Third teaching
- **Yonkyo** – Fourth teaching
- **Gokkyo** – Fifth teaching
- **Hiji kime osae** or **Rokkyo** – Elbow-breaking pin or Sixth teaching
- **Kokyu nage** – Breath throw
- **Kokyu ho** – Breath technique



Ikkyo



Nikkyo



Sankyo

## Attacks:

- **Ai hanmi** – Mutual stance
- **Gyaku hanmi** – Reverse stance
- **Katate dori** – Single wrist grab
- **Ryote dori** – Double wrist grab
- **Katate ryote dori** – Two-handed single wrist grab
- **Hiji dori** – Elbow grab
- **Kata dori** – Shoulder grab
- **Mune dori** – Lapel grab
- **Eri dori** – Collar grab



Ai hanmi katate dori



Ushiro katate dori kubi shimi

- **Kubi shimi** – Neck hold
- **Ushiro** – From the rear
- **Shomen uchi** – Strike to the top of the head
- **Yokumen uchi** – Strike to the side of the head
- **Chudan tsuki** – Mid-level straight punch
- **Jodan tsuki** – High-level straight punch
- **Mai geri** – Front kick
- **Yoko geri** – Side kick
- **Futari gake** – Two-person hold

## Movement

- **Ayumi ashi** – Walking step
- **Suri ashi** – Sliding step
- **Seiza** – Kneeling posture
- **Shikko** – Knee walking
- **Suwari waza** – Kneeling techniques
- **Tachi waza** – Standing techniques
- **Hanmi handachi waza** – Half-upright [one kneeling, one standing] techniques
- **Jiyu waza** – Free techniques
- **Randori** – Multiple partner practice
- **Ukemi** – Breakfall/roll
- **Happo giri** – Eight directions cut/step



Hanmi handachi waza



Jo, bokken and tanto

## Weapons:

- **Bokken/bokuto** – Wooden sword
- **Jo** – Short staff
- **Tanto** – Knife
- **Naginata** – Bladed polearm
- **Suburi** – Solo exercise
- **Awase** – Paired technique
- **Kata** – Form
- **Kumi tachi** – Meeting of swords (bokken partner form)
- **Kumi jo** – Meeting of staves (jo partner form)
- **Ki musubi no tachi** – Sword of united energy (advanced partner exercise)
- **Ken tai jo** – Sword against staff

## Counting:

- **Ichi** – One
- **Ni** – Two
- **San** – Three
- **Shi/Yon** – Four
- **Go** – Five
- **Roku** – Six
- **Shichi** – Seven
- **Hachi** – Eight
- **Kyu** – Nine
- **Ju** – Ten

一 二 三 四 五  
六 七 八 九 十

Kanji for 1 – 10

## Aikido's history

The history of aikido, despite being fairly short (the art is still less than a hundred years old) is quite convoluted, and beyond the scope of a short welcome pack like this. However, to give you a rough idea of where the art comes from, here is a potted history. There are many books and documents available online (try investigating Stanley Pranin's articles for [aikidojournal.com](http://aikidojournal.com) or Chris Li's writings at [aikidosangenkai.org](http://aikidosangenkai.org)) which can provide more comprehensive information, if you are interested.

The man who created aikido was a Japanese martial artist named Morihei Ueshiba ("morry-hay oo-esh-eeba"), who is also often referred to by aikido practitioners by the honorific O-Sensei ("Great Teacher"). He developed aikido primarily from a jujutsu tradition called Daito Ryu, which he learned from Daito Ryu's headmaster, Takeda Sokaku, in the early 1920s. Ueshiba also incorporated other martial traditions into the art he eventually created.



Morihei Ueshiba

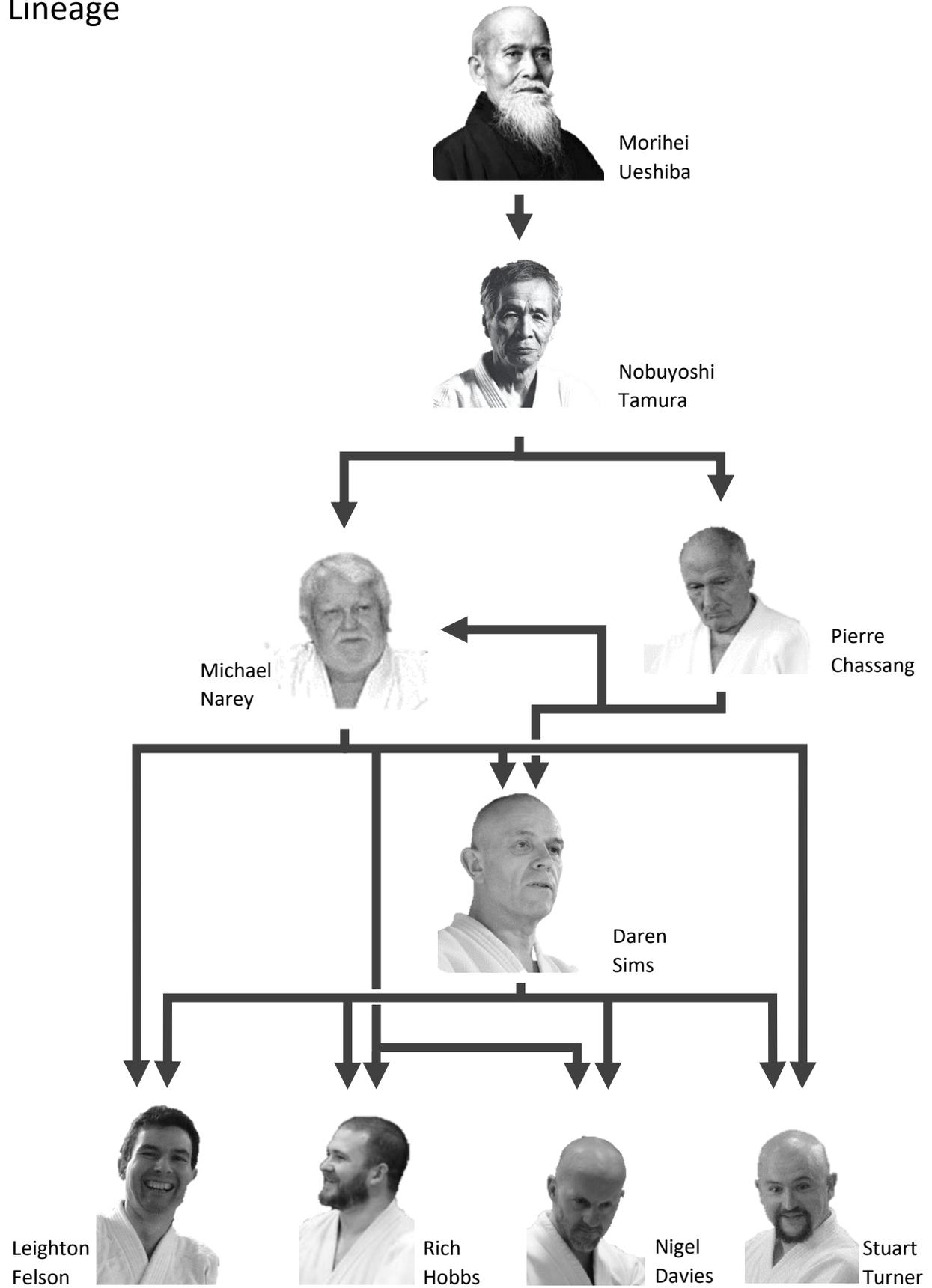
Besides Sokaku, Ueshiba's main influence was a religious leader named Onisaburo Deguchi, who was the head of a Shinto cult called Omoto-kyo (Shinto is Japan's indigenous belief system, distinct from later imports like Buddhism and Christianity). Ueshiba was a follower of the Omoto-kyo religion, and often used Shinto concepts in his lectures to aikido students. His development of aikido as a martial art was inspired by several spiritual experiences that he underwent as a result of his Omoto-kyo ascetic practices.

The art became popular in Japan as a result of Ueshiba's undoubted martial prowess. He put on impressive demonstrations and defeated a large number of challengers; he was invited to Tokyo to teach at top military schools and performed aikido before the Emperor of Japan. Many of the students he took on were already competent martial artists in their own right when they began studying with him. By the time he died in 1969, Ueshiba had taught thousands of students, including around fifty uchideshi (students who lived with him or in his dojo for protracted periods).

Ueshiba's ideas around aikido changed throughout his life; although his art was very much orientated towards combat and self-defence in his early years, he became more focused on the spiritual aspects of aikido as he grew older. As a result, students who trained with him at different times in his life have ended up teaching aikido in very different ways, and a number of different styles of aikido have thus developed. Some focus primarily on martial competence, others on spiritual development, others on internal power, others on a mixture of different elements. In virtually all styles, however, the fundamental focus is on controlling one's opponent and minimising harm to all parties involved in an altercation.

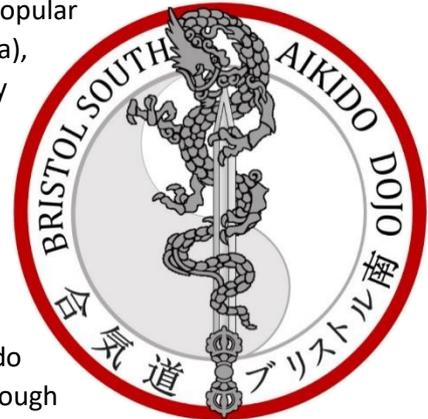
In the second half of the twentieth century aikido spread to the West and is now practiced all around the world. The international aikido community numbers literally millions – you are joining a very large, very diverse family when you step onto the mat.

# Lineage



## The BNAD and BSAD logos

The symbol of a dragon winding around a sword (kurikara) is a popular motif in Eastern art. It is an emblem of Fudo-Myo (Acala Vidyaraja), the Immovable Wisdom King, who represents immovability through esoteric training. The imagery is derived from a story in which Fudo fought with a demon – both combatants transformed into swords, but were evenly matched, until Fudo transformed into the Dragon King Kurikara, wound around the other sword, and swallowed it. In his dragon form, Fudo represents internal energy, in both a physical and a spiritual sense. The dragon/sword combination also represents the rope and sword carried by Fudo himself, which he uses in order to restrain evildoers and cut through illusions.



The hilt of the sword is a kongosho (vajra), a stylised representation of a thunderbolt that represents both indestructible stability and irresistible force. Both of these qualities are strongly associated with Fudo.

The taijizu (taijitu or yin-yang) is an ancient Chinese symbol representing the interplay of yin (negative) and yang (positive) energies. In internal power terms this symbol represents the balancing of opposing forces within the body – up and down, forwards and backwards, entering and retreating, opening and closing and so on – in order to create stability and mobility in all directions.

Thus, our logos represent the ability to be both immovable and irresistible using internal power created by balancing forces via esoteric training methods – or, in other words, aikido.

## Contact details

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[www.bristolnorthaikido.org](http://www.bristolnorthaikido.org)

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