



# Aikiskills

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#### **Why Aikido?**

I was first exposed to Aikido back in 2009, by one of my uncles who worked in law enforcement. Despite the fact that it helped me when I was assaulted 2 weeks later, I didn't pursue Aikido fully until later in 2016, when I formally joined an Aikido school and have been there ever since.

This 10 page pdf. is meant to give you a simple and quick view on how your fighting skills can evolve by doing Aikido.

## **Joshu (Beginner)**

There are some aikidokas which come from other martial arts and some who take their first steps in martial arts by entering Aikido.

Introduction to Tai Sabaki(Steps), Tsuki (striking), Ukemi (rolling) Randori (fighting multiple opponents)

## **Muku (Innocence)**

Any individual is seen as innocent as they begin their journey with Aikido, and they are encouraged and supported to forgo the full process to black belt as it can only benefit you in the long run.

Please know that all aikido sensei and shihans, regardless of their rank, began exactly where you are.

The roots you are planting now will grow into rich fruit one day, however it is your will which will water your effort into fruition.

The first stage aikidokas go through is innocence which is represented by the white belt.

During this phase you work on getting used to the circular movements and developing flexibility.

## **Raito (Light)**

Once this is done you make the change from innocence to light.  
This is the reason the belts are marked with white, then with yellow.

The yellow marks your willingness to bring light on your path and follow it further.

Tai Sabaki, Tsuki, Ukemi, Randori are practiced easier. Confidence is gained in the execution.

### **Chukai-Sha ( Intermediary)**

I like to see this stage as intermediary because many useful characteristics are developed for your combat skills.

### **Tora (Tiger)**

When you pass from yellow to orange I see this as passing from light to tiger. Now, the tiger isn't necessarily a representation of ferocity, but rather your commitment to the art.

You see, the animal is known for the fangs and claws, but in Aikido terms, it represents your attachment, how you've held on to the art, because usually it's awarded when you've made it through your first year.

This also marks how well you've sharpened your skills in combat.  
Your strikes, attacks, movements, shine after a year's worth of practice.

Tai Sabaki, Tsuki, Ukemi, Randori are done with enthusiasm. Orange belts become very eager to practice Aikido.

### **Doragon (Dragon)**

The next level which is green brings forth the dragon.

This is a process where you develop flexibility, a tolerance towards the weapons you've been growing and learning to use.

It is needless to say how a dragon overcomes a tiger using its flexibility, however the challenge the dragon faces in this stage is adapting to power.

The aikidoka more often helps the sensei in explaining the procedures and lessons and will be thrown much harder this time than ever before.

Tai Sabaki, Tsuki, Ukemi, Randori are adapted to a much drastical approach. Green belts are grabbed, struck and thrown much harder than before and higher tolerance is demanded.

### **Kodo (Advanced)**

This level mark the period where the usual kyu becomes a senpai (sensei's helper)

This stage is represented by the blue and brown levels.

### **Mizu(Water)**

The blue color is meant to represent water.

Water can easily defeat the previous stages of innocence, light, tiger and dragon.

This stage usually takes about a year to complete.

A senpai is the main helper of a sensei, the under teacher shall we say.

The blue senpai presents skills of fluid movement, clarification of lessons, and easy adaptability to the sensei demands.

Tai Sabaki, Tsuki, Ukemi, Randori are done fluidly, clearly and calmly.

### **Chikyu (Earth)**

The brown belt illustrates the element of earth.

The only element to overcome water, this stage requires a year and half to complete.

The skills this level brings focus on positioning both the senpai and aikidokas they teach.

During this level, the senpai is allowed, at least in my school, to wear the hakama. The black pants which sensei wear while teaching.

Not many schools allow this, however we permit this in order to have the senpai get used to fighting with the hakama.

Tai Sabaki, Tsuki, Ukemi, Randori are done with emphasis on positioning. Brown belts become the finest examples of Kyus in their practice and also gain the right to teach in the absence of the sensei.

### **Kyushi (Teacher)**

This brings us to the level black belt.

Here the senpai becomes a sensei to all the other students and your levels are marked by Dan instead of Kyu.

Only higher ranking Dans may call you senpai. Please keep in mind that this is just a formality, not a mandatory custom.

Many will argue that such grading systems are invalid and do not serve any purpose, however the grading serves a very vital purpose in the development of an aikidoka.

It is the process of bringing the white tomoi to the black tomoe as in the Ying-Yang symbol.

It is the balance between the white and black side of the human soul. One which represents the elegant, graceful, kind side and the other which is power, strength and violence.

Anyone who makes the change from innocence to darkness is mutilated one way or another.

### **Kusho (the void)**

The void is symbolized by the hakama.

All Dans must wear it showing they have stepped into the void, the darkness where anything is possible.

Within the void every Aikido sensei works to master the tomoe side of strength, violence and power.

It is only when the Aikido sensei reaches the 10th Dan when they shall start wearing the white hakama symbolizing them being freed from the void.

### **My closing thoughts**

Please keep in mind that this short book is based on my practical experience. I am not the kind of sensei who brings lessons on Buddhism, samurai or O-Sensei.



I sometimes include them, however I like to focus on the practical side of Aikido.

So many Aikido sensei simply can't get enough of showing how much they know about O-Sensei, Japanese philosophy, etc.

Aikido has to be put to the test as a practical martial art otherwise why even bother with it in the first place?

The levels and metaphors shown here are meant to encourage you to try it out.

I hope this pdf was a good influence to you.

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