

Dojo Etiquette

Lining up

At the beginning of each class, the instructor will ask everyone to line-up. Upon hearing this, please move quickly and quietly to stand in *heisoku dachi* or "informal stance" at your appropriate place of rank within that particular class. The lineup is done in rank order from right to left facing the *shomen* or the "front" of the dojo. Stand in a straight line as set be those to your right.

Standing Informal Bow

Stand with heels together, feet pointing slightly outward. Keep knees straight; elbows straight and relaxed; hands open with fingers together and at the outside of your legs. Bend at the waist, about 20 degrees forward. Unbend. The whole bow takes about a breath's length.

Kneeling Formal Bow (*seiza*)

Place left knee on the floor; then right knee. Sit down on feet. Keep back straight, shoulders relaxed, and chest out. Rest left hand (hand open, fingers together) on left thigh and right hand on right thigh, so that fingers point inward.

Bowing in *seiza*

Slide the left hand from the thigh to the floor immediately in front of the left knee, do the same with the right hand, so that the right hand motion is slightly behind (in time) the left hand motion, hands should form a triangle shape. Palms should touch the floor to show deep respect. Bow at the waist, taking a little longer than for a standing bow (forehead comes close to the floor, but does not touch it). Slide your hands back up to their initial position on the thighs, this time with the left hand slightly behind the right hand.

Closing Protocol

Same as the above opening sequence, except that after *mokuso*, there is a recitation of the *dojo kun*. Repeat after the senior student. At the end, the instructor will get up. Wait until the person on your left bows and gets up before you do the same. If *senpai(s)* is/are present, wait until they get up before you do.

Entering and Exiting the Dojo

Bow, standing at the entrance, facing the dojo or towards the front of the dojo, whether you are entering or exiting the dojo. To enter matted floor, first bow, then step onto the floor. To exit matted floor, first bow to the *shomen*, then step off the floor.

Arriving Late

If you are late, quietly kneel near at the right side of matted area near the makiwara. Wait until the instructor acknowledges you. Then bow kneeling, get up, and if instructed to do so, quietly complete 100 jumping jacks next to the heavy bags, then join the group.

General Etiquette During Class

- When class starts, your mind should be on karate and improving your own technique. Concentrate, give spirited kiai, don't talk unnecessarily, and practice hard.
- Don't wear jewelry, watches, etc. Do not chew gum.
- Whenever you're told to move from one part of the room to another, do it quickly (i.e., run, trot, or fast-walk).
- Don't pass in front of anyone, go behind and around them.
- When asked to stand back or sit back and watch, do so in a normal standing or kneeling position, silently, and without leaning on walls or legs protruding out.
- If you need to leave a class early, let the instructor know beforehand.
- Every time you get a new partner for any exercise, bow first. Every time you're about to switch partners, bow to your old partner before moving on to the next.
- Don't make overt displays of how tired or in pain you are, no matter how tired or in pain you are. Stay calm, relax your face, breathe deeply through the nose and out through the mouth.
- If you are injured or can't continue training because of illness, ask to be excused and inform the instructor of your situation.
- When asked to count, do so in whatever language you feel comfortable with, but make the counts short, sharp, and spirited. Keep the same pace as the one set by the instructor.
- Don't say any words when you *kiai*. "*Kia*" itself, being a Japanese word should not be a *kiai*. Common kiai include 'Ya!', 'Ei!', 'Hai!'. The kiai originates from the lower abdomen and not the throat. It is not a yell in the normal sense.
- Stay fully focused when Sensei or Senpai is giving instructions and do not ask irrelevant questions at that time.
- Do not come to the dojo if you are sick with something contagious like a cold or flu. Don't bring children to class if they are sick; their recovery is the most important thing.
- When coughing, sneezing or yawning, be sure to cover your mouth.
- Be sure to wear a clean uniform to every class and to observe common good hygiene.
- Keep finger and toenails trim so as not to scratch or cut training partners.
- Do not use strong perfumes or too much fragrance; some people are allergic to them.