



Aikido Center of Jacksonville

Guide To Training

1. *Sink with every movement.* Martial arts proficiency depends on a solid base from which to direct energy. Postures should have a continuous structural connection between the base, the waist, and the extension of the arms/hands.
2. *Maintain good posture.* This connection depends on the back being straight and the elbows and shoulders being sunk.
3. *Maintain center alignment.* Keep the hands and arms in front of the body and direct the movement from the waist. When turning, also turn the hands in toward the center of the body to maintain the alignment. Head and eyes should be facing in the same direction as the hands.
4. *Move from your center.* Do not try to execute techniques solely with the hands and arms. They are only energetic extensions of your hara, or physical center of gravity. If your posture is good, your hands and arms are in correct alignment, and you move from your center, then the technique will unfold.
5. *Breathe.* Kokyu, or breath, is one of the fundamental tools of the Aikidoka. Ki is also sometimes translated as breath. Breathe energy into your hands as you execute techniques and take ukemi, and your arms and body will be filled with that energy.
6. *Extend your idea beyond the target.* Visualize your movement extending beyond your opponent's body. Extend out and gather in as if your partner is not there.
7. *Maintain your balance, take your opponent's.* Aikido works because we sequentially and progressively take our opponent's balance without compromising our own. The best uke is one who attempts to maintain his/her own balance as long as possible.
8. *Do not rely on strength or speed.* Internal martial arts such as Aikido develop the ability to direct energy with the mind in order to take an opponent's balance without the use of strength or speed. If a technique is not working, examine your movement with respect to the principles; do not use more strength or speed. Aikido techniques are very effective and safe for your partner when done correctly, but can be injurious when done incorrectly, too strong, or too fast.
9. *Face your opponent.* Move in such a way that you do not turn your back on your opponent when he/she has his/her balance, as nage or as uke.
10. *Relax and enjoy.* Aikido is a path, a journey. Don't be hard on yourself. Take your time. Continuity of training with good intentions is more important than exertion. Focus first on the principles, then on technique, and last of all on throwing or being thrown. In this way your practice will be more meaningful, more rewarding, and safer.