



Downtown Shotokan Karate

Dojo Etiquette

When practicing Karate or any martial art, it is important to follow and commit to the imposed dojo etiquette. Not only this is a key part of your training, but also represents your commitment to uphold tradition, and learn Karate the way it was taught in Japan. When following proper dojo etiquette, you are not only showing respect to the place you train in, but appreciation as well to the various instructors, and fellow students who are teaching and training alongside you.

Please read and respect the following dojo etiquette:

Arriving, Entering, and Leaving the Dojo:

Arriving at the dojo must be done on time, please respect your instructors and fellow students by arriving early. Arriving early means you have some time to stretch, and time to ask questions to your instructor. When you enter or exit the dojo or training area you must 'bow'. When bowing, place both hands to your sides, feet together, and bow your torso and head, eyes looking at the ground. This shows respect to the place you train in as well as thanking your senior instructors for the training received.

Always 'bow' to any Sensei or senior black belt when greeting, or entering a dojo.

If you arrive late for a class, after your bow in, you must kneel down and wait until one of the instructors invites you to the training session. Do not bow, and join class unless an instructor invites you in, this shows poor dojo etiquette and lack of respect.

Code of Conduct in the Dojo:

At the beginning and end of every class, when Sensei calls for 'line up' or 'seiretsu', all students must run to the end of line from senior to beginner by color belt rank. Stand next to each other shoulder to shoulder, without talking, and looking straight ahead.

When asked to 'kneel down' or 'seiza', place left knee on the floor followed by right knee sitting on your feet with your hands placed on each thigh. Make sure all knees line up to your senior belt student.

When asked to 'close your eyes' or 'mokosu', close your eyes and concentrate on you breathing, empty your mind of any daily thoughts, and concentrate or reflect on the class session you just had or are about to have.

When asked to 'open your eyes' or 'mokosu yame', open your eyes. At the end of class you will be asked to repeat the 'Dojo Kun', this is what you look to achieve though Karate training.

After the Dojo Kun you will be asked to bow to 'Shomen ni rei' (bow to the front of dojo), to 'Sensei ni rei' (bow to Sensei), and to 'otagani rei' (bow to fellow students).

Dojo Etiquette...cont'd

During class all students must demonstrate attention and enthusiasm in learning, showing strong spirit when executing techniques. A loud 'kiai' is a good way of showing spirit and power.

Students must remain focused and silent. No talking is permitted during class. Do not ask any questions during class unless the instructor specifically asks you or any other student if you have questions. All questions can be asked at the end of class, and will be answered.

When an instructor directly issues a command to a student, the student should acknowledge the command by answering 'osu Sensei' (yes Sensei), and performing the command issued.

Water breaks are usually at the end of class, or whenever the instructor stops class for a water break. Refrain from using the washroom during class. Everyone should have used the facilities prior to class. If you feel sick and must use the washroom, please put your hand up discreetly. If you are an adult, please bow and excuse yourself from the dojo floor.

When on a brief water break please take the opportunity to ask any questions or review the techniques you just learned. Do not run around or play or perform any other sport other than Karate. Feel free to stretch or practice your 'kata' or 'forms' during the break.

Clothing and Personal Hygiene:

Students must wear a clean ironed white Gi. New students will be allowed to wear gym clothing for the first week of class until the purchase a white karate Gi. Please do not come to class with a stained or dirty Gi, this shows lack of respect to your instructors, fellow students and yourself.

Students are required to have toes and finger nails clipped short at all times, this reduces the risk of injury to themselves and their fellow students.

Students are not allowed to wear jewellery of any sort including watches, earrings, rings, necklaces, and bracelets that could possibly harm their fellow students and themselves.

Personal Injuries

During the course of your Karate training there will be times when you might sustain an injury.

Remember always listen to your body. Do not make unnecessary displays of discomfort, fatigue or pain during class. If you have a severe injury, please do not train. If your injury is mild, discuss with your instructor and get approval prior to training.

Always cover up any exposed cuts that you may have, especially if they are bleeding seek first aid right away.

If you are training with a mild injury let your instructor and your fellow opponent know ahead of time, and again listen to your body, don't push yourself to the point of re-injury.

If you are in perfect physical shape, always try and push the limits and see how far you can go. This will definitely help you improve your Karate training.