

BEGINNERS GUIDE - SEIDO KARATE DEVONPORT

“In the beginner s mind there are many possibilities; in the expert s there are very few.”

Shunryo Suzuki

We provide provide a safe and supportive training environment for members to learn, and develop to their full potential, through the values, philosophies and physical practice of Seido Karate. Whatever reasons prompted you to join, please remember that only time and dedication will enable you to achieve your personal goals - so the more you put into your training, the more you will get out of it.

Karate students train in bare feet. You do not need expensive clothes or gear to train in. Wear comfortable clothes that will enable you to stretch, kick and punch. After two or three classes, if you decide to train seriously, then you should purchase a ‘gi’ (karate uniform).

What is Seido Juku Karate?

The World Seido Karate Organisation has its headquarters in New York, USA, with branches worldwide. Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura is the head of the organisation.

Seido Juku karate was formed on 15 October 1976 in New York. This followed Kaicho Nakamura’s respectful resignation from Kyokushinkai karate. Kaicho wanted to recover the ‘original face’ of karate, and underpin physical training in the art with a strong philosophical foundation.

The meaning of the words SEIDO JUKU reflect this desire. *Sei* means truth, honesty or sincerity. *Do* means the way, road, or path to follow. *Juku* means special or unique place. Therefore a Seido *dojo* (training hall) is seen by students as a special place where we go to learn the sincere way of karate.

The word KARATE itself is made up of two Japanese characters - *kara* which means ‘empty’ and *te* which means ‘hand’. This suggests an openness of attitude and spirit that karate students should aspire to. As you train with us, the philosophical meaning of the word karate will be more apparent and significant to your everyday life.

Kaicho Nakamura’s philosophy is also represented by the plum blossom badge that is worn on the left sleeve of the *dogi* (training uniform) of every Seido student. This is Kaicho Nakamura’s family emblem. The three circles enclosed by the petals stand for the values of love, respect and obedience. These are the three underlying values of Seido Juku karate.

Love: unselfish, loyal and generous concern for the wellbeing of others.

Respect: the process of giving particular attention, consideration and esteem to others. Respect for others is paramount in developing a caring and generous attitude.

Obedience: adherence to the values (eg. love, respect, sincerity) that enable

everyone in society to flourish. As citizens of society we have duties and responsibilities to other members of society.

This means that when you come to Seido Karate you will find a friendly and open atmosphere, but nonetheless a seriousness of purpose about the training. Seido Karate is for people of all ages, irrespective of ability. All you need to be is willing to come and give 100% effort at each class.

Seido Karate provides a variety of strenuous exercises designed to teach you the skills of karate, while at the same time progressively increasing your fitness and strength. Initially the focus is on karate basics - hand and arm techniques, kicking, and blocking. As you become more experienced, you will be expected to cope with more complex combinations, pre-arranged sparring techniques with partners, self defence exercises, the various kata (forms), and finally free sparring. These activities are regularly interspersed with exercises such as pushups, situps and bagwork, which are designed to increase muscle strength and stamina, but also to build a strong spirit.

Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura

Kaicho Nakamura is a ninth dan (degree) black belt with fifty years of experience in practising and teaching in the martial arts.

Kaicho was born on 22 February 1942, and began his karate training at age eleven. His first experiences were in the Goju style under the instruction of Kei Miyagi Sensei, the son of the founder of the style. In 1956, Kaicho began studying with Masutatsu Oyama, the founder of Kyokushin Karate, and in 1959, he earned his shodan rank. At the time, he was the youngest Kyokushin student in Japan to receive a black belt.

In 1961, at age nineteen, Kaicho Nakamura debuted on the tournament scene with a first place in the All-Japan Student Open Karate Championship. The following year, he became a Japanese national hero by knocking out a Thai kickboxing champion in a match to determine which nation had the superior martial art.

Around this time, Nakamura also began teaching karate to others. He served as the chief instructor at Camp Zama, a U.S. military base near Tokyo, from 1961 to 1965 and coached the Toho Medical University karate team for 3 years. Nakamura also served as the chief instructor at the Kyokushin Karate Honbu in Tokyo. In 1966, Nakamura was personally selected by Masutatsu Oyama to bring Kyokushin karate to America. He moved to New York City and began teaching Kyokushin Karate at a small dojo in Brooklyn. In 1971, Kaicho established the North American Kyokushin Karate headquarters. He served as the American head of Kyokushin Karate for a decade and trained and developed many skilled students in that period. In 1976, Nakamura respectfully withdrew from Kyokushin Karate. The same year, he established the World Seido Karate Organization.

Further information

You will find your fellow students a great source of information about Seido Karate, karate and martial arts generally. However, further *written* information about Seido Karate is available in Kaicho's books. If you are interested in these, please ask around students at the club and they will be able to help you either borrow or purchase copies of these.

The books are:

The Human Face of Karate - an autobiography which covers Kaicho's life through until Seido Karate was about ten years old.

Technique and Spirit - a general text book on the history and philosophy of Seido, and an overview of karate technique.

One Day, One Lifetime - a collection of Kaicho's meditation lectures.

Karate Kyohan - an illustrated text book of karate basics.

Important Concepts

OSU

The word OSU is a shortened form of the Japanese word Oshi Shinobu which means Keep Patience. This concept is very important for martial artists to understand. Most people who study karate give up very easily and quickly, and will find all kinds of reasons why they should not train. This is not the way to study the martial arts. You must have strong patience, for this is how you overcome difficulties - through a strong spirit and a strong osu. Within the dojo, it can be used as a greeting or as a way to recognise that 'I am here. I am trying hard, and I won't give up'. When you see a senior student, particularly a black belt, acknowledge them by saying osu. This is not an act of subservience, but a recognition of their knowledge, ability, and dedication to the particular martial art. Saying it loud and clear also reaffirms your commitment to train hard and improve yourself.

DOJO

This is a name given to a training hall where karate (or any other martial art) is practised. It is a special place where we learn and grow through our training. The dojo has a shinzen at the front. This is the symbolic centre of the training hall and when entering or leaving the dojo, face the shinzen, bow and say osu. This has no religious implication whatsoever, but is based on a Japanese custom of respect - respect to a place where people from all-walks-of-life, regardless of age, sex, capability or background come together to learn a martial art.

KIAI

This is the loud yell we produce as we do our basic techniques hard and fast. One of the most common questions a person asks when coming into contact with karate for the first time is "Why do they shout when they kick or punch?" The same person would probably not ask the same question when a discus thrower shouts as he/she throws the discus or when a weight-lifter yells as he lifts his weight. A roar-like shout is utilized in many sports today. In karate, it is the expression of a person's

“ki” - their inner energy or spirit.

KIME (Focus)

To obtain maximum power, one must focus all one's power at the moment of impact. This is done by first relaxing the body, then only the muscles required to perform the technique are brought into play, so that maximum acceleration can be obtained. If any other muscles are tensed, they will have a braking effect and the power in the technique will be reduced. At the moment of impact, one exhales, tenses the whole body and concentrates the mind so that they are one. The body is then immediately relaxed in preparation for the next technique.

Terminology

Seido Karate uses Japanese terms and commands. Below is a selection of the most important ones, as used in Seido, with their meanings.

SHUSEKI SHIHAN - Title means 'Head or Chief' of Regional Area.

SHIHAN - Title means 'Master' and is given to sixth degree black belts.

KYOSHI - Title means 'Senior Teacher' and is given to fifth degree black belts.

SENSEI - Title means 'Teacher' and is given to fourth degree black belts.

SENPAI - Title means 'Senior' and is given to first, second and third degree black belts. It may also be used less formally between kyu grades, to address someone more senior than them, even if the other student is not a black belt.

Basic Terms

Gi - Karate Uniform

Obi - Belt

Kata - Form

Kumite - Sparring

Uke - Block

Tsuki - Strike

Geri - Kick

Gyaku - Reverse

Kiai - Yell

Migi - Right

Hidari - Left

Mae - Front

Ushiro - Back

Soto - Outside

Uchi - Inside

Dachi - Stance

Ibuki - Exhaling strongly

Shinzen - Focal point of the dojo

Basic Stances

Heisoku dachi - Parallel closed stance

Musubi dachi - Open-toes Stance
Heiko dachi - Parallel Open Stance
Fudo dachi - Normal/Ready Stance
Shiko dachi - Sumo Stance
Kiba dachi - Horse riding Stance
Zenkutsu dachi - Forward Leaning Stance
Kokutsu dachi - Back Leaning Stance
Tsuruashi dachi - Crane Stance
Sanchin dachi - Pigeon-toe Stance
Nekoashi dachi - Cat Stance
Take dachi - Hooked Stance

Commands

Shinzen ni rei - Bow to the shinzen
Mokuso - Close eyes
Hajime - Begin
Kaicho ni rei - Bow to Kaicho
Mokuso yame - Open eyes
Kiai-te - Do techniques with a shout
Shihan ni rei - Bow to the Masters
Mawatte - Turn around
Naore - Return to ready position
Sensei ni rei - Bow to the Teacher
Seiza - Go into the kneeling position
Yame - Return to relaxed position
Senpai ni rei - Bow to the Senior
Yoi - Ready to begin
Kametae - Move into the stance
Otogai ni rei - Bow to each other
Rei - Standing Bow

Counting

Ichi - One
Ni - Two
San - Three
Shi/Yon - Four
Go - Five
Roku - Six
Shichi - Seven
Hachi - Eight
Ku - Nine
Ju - Ten
Ni-ju - Twenty
San-ju - Thirty
Yon-ju - Forty
Go-ju - Fifty
Roku-ju - Sixty
Nanna-ju - Seventy
Hachi-ju - Eighty

Ku-ju - Ninety
Hyaku - One hundred

Parts of the Body

Ago - Jaw
Ganmen - Face
Ken - Fist
Koken - Wrist
Hiji - Elbow
Atama - Head
Ashi - Leg
Goshi - Hip
Hiza - Knee
Uraken - Inverted Fist
Kin - Groin
Tai - Body
Jodan - Head Level
Chudan - Solar Plexus/Abdomen Level
Gedan - Groin Level
Chusoku - Ball of Foot
Haisoku - Instep
Kaka - Heel
Sokuto - Foot Edge
Teisoku - Arch of Foot
Seiken - Forefist
Tettsui - Edge of fist
Shuto - Knifehand
HaitoInner - Knifehand
Shotei - Palm Heel

Basic Strikes

Seiken chudan tsuki - Forefist Middle Thrust
Seiken Jodan tsuki - Forefist Upper Thrust
Seiken ago uchi - Forefist Jaw Strike
Seiken mawashi uchi - Forefist Roundhouse Strike
Uraken shomen uchi - Inverted Fist Strike
Uraken sayu uchi - Inverted Fist Side Strike
Uraken hizo uchi - Inverted Fist Spleen Strike
Uraken shita tsuki - Inverted Fist Low Strike
Uraken mawashi uchi - Inverted Fist Roundhouse Strike
Shuto ganmen uchi - Knife Hand Temple Strike
Shuto sakotsu uchi - Knife Hand Collarbone Strike
Shuto sakotsu uchi komi - Knife Hand Driving Strike
Shuto hizo uchi - Knife Hand Spleen Strike
Hiji jodan ate - Upper Elbow Strike
Hiji chudan ate - Middle Elbow Strike
Hiji age uchi - Rising Elbow Strike
Hiji oroshi uchi - Descending Elbow Strike
Gyaku tsuki - Reverse Punch

Basic Kicks

Mae geri - Front snap kick
Yoko geri - Side kick above the waist
Kansetsu geri - Side kick to the knee
Mawashi geri - Roundhouse kick
Ushiro geri - Back kick
Hiza geri - Knee kick
Kin geri - Groin kick
Mae keage - Front Straight-leg kick
Yoko keage - Side Straight-leg kick
Kake geri - Hook Kick *Soto*
Mawashi Geri - Outside crescent kick
Uchi Mawashi Geri - Inside crescent kick

The Grading System in Seido Karate

The grading system in Seido Karate has ten grades (kyu) of belts that one must attain before going for a black belt rank (dan).

The ten kyu are:

COMMON TERM KYU GRADE BELT COLOR
White Belt/Beginner 10th Kyu White Belt
Advanced White 9th Kyu White Belt with Tip
Blue 8th Kyu Blue Belt
Advanced Blue 7th Kyu Blue Belt with Tip
Yellow 6th Kyu Yellow Belt
Advanced Yellow 5th Kyu Yellow Belt with Tip
Green 4th Kyu Green Belt
Advanced Green 3rd Kyu Green Belt with Tip
Brown 2nd Kyu Brown Belt
Advanced Brown 1st Kyu Brown Belt with Tip

Gradings take place several times a year, and are opportunities for students to demonstrate in a more pressurized situation what they have learnt. Upon successful completion of gradings, students are awarded their new belts.

At levels up to green belt, students need to have learnt the required syllabus, and trained regularly for three months to be eligible to grade. From green belt on, students need to train regularly for a minimum of six months, including sparring sessions. In practice, this means it is likely to take a *minimum* of 3 and half years before reaching 1st kyu. After spending at least another year and a half at first kyu, a student who has trained sufficiently hard and developed their skills satisfactorily may be invited to prepare for the demanding first degree (shodan) black belt grading.

ETIQUETTE AND FORMALITIES

As Seido Karate is a Japanese martial art, the dojo formalities and etiquette are

also based on Japanese customs, though much of our etiquette is simply common courtesy. Bowing in the dojo is not an act of subservience and has no religious implications either. Karate is a disciplined art so bowing is like saluting an officer in the army or navy in western culture. It is important also to remember that we have etiquette because Seido Karate is a martial art, and not a health club or gym. It is important when training in potentially dangerous techniques that we are very aware of the others that we train with, and exercise control and self control. Our etiquette reminds us of this.

Using the etiquette may feel strange at first. However, as you train with us, you will become more comfortable with it. You will begin to understand how the formalities help to provide a framework within which we can train with freedom, and you will also learn the more specific historical roots of some of these points of etiquette. Like much of karate, the best way to learn etiquette is by copying more senior students.

Entering and exiting the dojo

Get changed into your gi, or if you do not have one yet, your training clothes. Turn your mobile phone off.

Bow and say “osu” when entering and exiting the dojo. If higher graded people enter the dojo with you, you should let them go first. Respect to Kaicho (Head of Seido), a Shihan, Sensei or Senpai is paramount. Therefore, as you come in, check to see if grades senior to you are already inside the room. If they are, acknowledge them also with the word osu.

Being late

Always try to be at class on time, because it disrupts the class when someone is late. However, there are times when being late is unavoidable for genuine reasons, so being late to class is better than not being there at all. If you are late, get changed, come into the room and sit in seiza by the door. Ensure that you are facing away from the shinzen, but that your back is not facing it, and wait to be acknowledged to join the class by the instructor. When the instructor asks you to join the class, answer by saying “osu senpai/sensei” as appropriate. Sometimes, you may be asked to do few press-ups or some other exercise before you join the class. This is not a punishment, but a way of saying to the rest of the class “I’m sorry I’m late, but I’m here now to train hard with you”. When joining in, go to your normal place in the line up.

Lining up

When asked to line up, *do it quickly and quietly.*

Line up in order of grade. If someone is the same grade then line up in the order of date graded. If you graded on the same date, then line up by age (eldest first).

When lining up ensure that you are not standing (or kneeling) forward of your senior grade. This means the lines will be straight, but on a very slight diagonal.

When kneeling for the greet always go onto the left knee first then right. Kyu grades

should not kneel before the black belts.

Etiquette during class

First and foremost: karate classes are not like classes at a gym or health club. Therefore, you cannot just take a break or leave when you are tired. You should not just grab water or a towel to wipe yourself down whenever you feel like it. Instructors are sensitive to the fact that during particularly tough classes some students may struggle, and will build in breaks if appropriate. However, if you genuinely need something such as water, follow the first point of etiquette in the list below.

- If you wish to ask a question during class, wait for an appropriate moment and say *osu* to attract attention.
- Before and after you do an activity with a partner in class, you both bow and say *'osu'* as a mark of respect to each other.
- Always *'osu'* when a black belt enters the dojo or walks past you. This is an acknowledgement of their experience and dedication.
- If you cannot train for the whole duration of the class, then arrange ahead of time with the instructor of that class to be excused at the requested time. The instructor will then ask you to leave the class at an appropriate time so that you do not disrupt the class when doing so.
- Don't chat in class unless asked, especially not when the instructor is speaking. However, it is perfectly OK to provide encouragement to your partners and other students during training.
- When moving to your place during the class always go around the class, never cut through the middle of a line. Always go behind seniors, rather than in front.
- When told to partner up always partner your senior grade first. If they have a partner then partner your nearest junior grade.
- When in partners the junior partner should always be the one to collect and return the equipment e.g. punching bags. When joining or leaving your partner always greet and shake hands as a way of thanking them for the opportunity to work out together.
- When told to sit down in class sit *seiza* unless told to sit relaxed.
- When watching other students, stand in *fudo dachi* stance - ie. ready to be called into action if necessary. Do not lean on the walls.
- When addressed in class personally acknowledge that you have heard by answering "*osu senpai/sensei*". This is also a way of appreciating the fact that your instructor has taken interest in seeing that you do the techniques properly. There is nothing worse than being ignored in class, especially when you have been doing the techniques incorrectly.
- If you need to tidy up your *gi*, preferably wait until told to by the instructor. When tidying up go down onto your left knee and ensure that you are facing away from the *shinzen* but that your back is not facing the *shinzen*.
- When another class is to follow, grab your bags and any equipment as quickly as possible so you do not have to interrupt that class after it has begun.

Keeping the dojo clean

Dojo comes from a word meaning "place of enlightenment". We respect it by keeping it clean

and tidy.

- If the dojo floor is particularly dirty from previous classes held during the day in our room, it is the responsibility of senior kyu grades to take responsibility for either sweeping the floor or else arranging for everyone to wipe the floor with rags, as is done at the end of class (see below).
- As soon as an instructor with a key to the cupboard has arrived, students should get all the equipment and set it up as quickly as possible. At the end of class, all equipment and gear should be removed from the dojo floor after the class and put away.
- It is a tradition that the dojo floor is wiped with rags after class. Class has not finished until this task has been completed. It is the responsibility of the senior kyu grade in the class to start the cleaning of the floor.

Personal etiquette

Always keep your gi washed and tidy. A gi that smells of stale sweat is not pleasant for other students, especially if the class ends up practising grappling or ground wrestling techniques. Your gi must be washed if it has blood on it. It is not necessary to iron your uniform, but if it is particularly crumpled then this might be a good idea. Repair any rips or tears in the gi as soon as possible.

No jewellery is to be worn during class as it may injure you or another person. Fingernails and toenails should always be kept short.

Personal hygiene must be maintained. Remember that in karate we are often in very close contact with other people, and therefore that normal social etiquette is particularly important.

Ensure your hands are washed before class, that you have deoderant on, and if your lunch was particularly smelly, that you've brushed your teeth!

Sparring etiquette

In Seido, students do not generally spar until they have reached green belt (4th kyu).

Dojo sparring is not about who is the best. Instead it is an opportunity to exchange techniques so that everyone can learn and develop. It is the responsibility of the senior grade/stronger student in the pairing to spar at the level of their partner, or sometimes just above it so that the partner's level is raised.

If you do not have all the correct sparring gear then you will not be allowed to spar. Sparring gear consists of headgear, mouthguard, gloves, breast protectors (women), groin cup (men), and foot protectors. Groin protectors are worn on the inside of the gi pants. Try to borrow some gear from the box in the cupboard upstairs if you have forgotten a piece of equipment.

When putting your sparring gear on, do so as quickly and quietly as possible, and then stand ready for the command to line up.

Other sparring etiquette includes:

- In sparring class it is very important to ensure black belts and senior grades have a partner when told to partner up. When partnering a grade senior to yourself, you run over to them, rather than waiting for them to come to you.
- When joining or leaving your partner always greet and shake hands to acknowledge their help during that session.
- Should you be tagged with an effective technique it is courtesy to acknowledge your partner with either the word *maaita* or *mairi mashita* at the end of the combination in which that technique was landed. These were the words used years ago in Japanese sword fights to indicate “I give up” to the opponent. Seido Karate uses them to acknowledge both your opponent’s good technique, and as a reminder to defend oneself better next time that technique is used against you.
- In general terms, you should always try to participate in the class prior to sparring rather than just turning up just for the fighting.
- It is also important to ensure that when there are children in the class, that they do not always fight each other. When sparring with children, an adult student must find a balance between respecting the fact that they are much smaller and less mentally and physically mature, but also not patronising them with lazy fighting - they will not learn anything.

Social etiquette

Just as etiquette plays an important part of our training, it is also important outside the dojo.

The principles and values of Seido Karate such as love, respect, obedience, patience and courtesy are all transferable. Seido Karate is a Japanese style and that is why we practise these traditions today. An example of this is when offering or receiving any object. This could be a weapon or, in a more social environment, a glass of beer. It is Japanese tradition to offer or accept using two hands, which demonstrates trust and openness.

When addressing a Black Belt outside the dojo you should call them Senpai/Sensei unless otherwise told by that person to refer to them on a first name basis.

When sitting for a meal or having drinks, it is usual to wait until Kaicho, Shihan or your head instructor (whoever is present at the time) has started first.

Absence from the dojo

If you are going to be unable to train for a long period of time (such as three months) you should let the instructor know so that he/she is not left wondering what the problem is.

In this situation, if you are intending to come back to training at some point, please make a point of speaking to our fees officer and letting them know. We are usually happy for students to negotiate not to pay fees when they are on long absences. However, if you are only away for a month or so (say, on holiday), you should continue to pay your fees.

If you stop training for three months or more, it is a sign of courtesy to wear a white

belt upon your return. You will still maintain your position in the line up. By wearing your white belt you acknowledge your absence from the dojo and at the same time demonstrate your respect to your fellow karateka who have continued to train during your absence. Sensei will inform you at the appropriate time when to begin wearing your coloured belt again.

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