



Dojo information

合気道



AIKIDO is NOT A SPORT, it is a unique non-aggressive martial art learnt through a traditional Japanese martial school.



It consists of a range of throwing techniques, both standing and kneeling, plus a series of wrist and shoulder locks. Some techniques use striking movements, but we use them to create a reaction from our training partner rather than specifically to hit them. In addition to the hand techniques we use a wooden sword (*bokken*), staff (*jo*) and short knife (*tanto*) to study various distances, timing of moving against weapons and the ability to use these weapons with precision and dexterity.

Also inherent in the training is *musubi*, the ability to blend with an opposing force so the two forces are going in the same direction.

Why is it a non-aggressive martial art?

Predominantly, with martial arts they are based on combative aggression with two forces clashing and one trying to get the better of the other. They are violent and often mutually destructive. The basic principle in Aikido is not to be in conflict with the opposing force, rather to agree with the force and then guide it to a situation where the person has no alternative but to fall down. This is why people unfamiliar with Aikido often mistakenly say "It looks like they are dancing". This is simply because there is a better way than clashing head on with a steam train! Broadly speaking when someone rushes in to attack us we think of not fighting with them but instantly moving behind them. All this is much easier said than done!

For beginners Aikido training involves one person making a set attack and giving the defender a chance to study the distance and timing of a set defensive technique to that attack. Over time the training develops so the attack is not set and neither is the defensive movement, until ultimately there may be multiple attackers of 5 or more people and any defensive move is applied. Once you get to that stage and people start attacking you with weapons as well then things really heat up and get lively! All our power comes from our centre core not the arms.

At no point through all this do we view the attacker as an enemy or someone who must be thrown down or destroyed, because to do that would immediately put us back into the old offensive/aggressive mind set and we would be competing against the person rather than finding a way to 'harmonise' with them. This is why women can train on an equal footing with men, as it's not based on strength.

The study of Aikido is not easy! There is intensive aerobic exercise in falling and standing constantly, not to mention moving quickly during kneeling techniques. There is the constant effort in the early days not to compete with the attacking person. And there is an enormous amount of brain power required to make a whole series of analytical decisions in an instant. Physical exertion combined with active use of the mind means all parts of the body are worked simultaneously.

How do I start?

The best thing is to go along to the dojo and watch an actual class, get a feel for the training and the people. You will be putting your safety in their hands (and they in yours) so you want to feel comfortable you can work with them. Ask questions, feel free to ask as many as you like and not just the instructor, ask some of the students.

Most dojos provide a quick introductory lesson or two, just so you get a feel for Aikido. We are a not-for-profit association, everyone across the country is a volunteer, including instructors. No-one in this group receives any financial benefit from teaching you Aikido. Any money you pay to us goes to funding the dojo and developing Aikido in Australia.

Once you are ready to start you need to become a financial member of Aiki Kai Australia, we have different memberships for students, families, concessions and working adults, with most categories offering a *once-only* Introductory Membership of 3 months, just to get you started.

<https://aikido.org.au/New-Membership-Application>

