

NEW

The Communicator

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Jumping into Seidokan Aikido

A guide for people interested in trying Aikido

Our dojo welcomes new students year round. If you are not sure if you would like to train in Aikido but suggest you come to a class and observe, talk to the students and teachers and even try it out. Come in and sit to the side; usually a club officer or senior student will come to greet you and answer any questions you have. You are welcome to observe part of all of the class. If you would like to try a class, simply find an officer who can give you a waiver to sign. Please make sure to wear comfortable clothing (like sweatpants

and a t-shirt) if you are considering joining practice.

Although class format can vary, there is a standard pattern we follow most of the time. At the start of class, students line up on the mat sitting in seiza (on their knees) and the instructor (Sensei) bows in the class and begins it. After bowing in, the Sensei then leads the class through stretching. Then we practice the Aiki-Taiso; these are basic movements found in Aikido. If you come to a class at the beginning of the year, the Sensei will most likely do only a few of the Aiki-Taiso but explain them thoroughly. Next, there is a time to practice your rolls. Classes at the beginning of the year, or with new

BEGINNING • 2



Anthony Shearer demonstrates his amazing power



“Not C
Kara

Comment s
Erik Fra

Since the September

Seidokan Aikido is a non-violent, self-defense based martial art founded by Morihei Ueshiba. Aikido focuses on blending and redirecting an attack rather than directly opposing it. Seidokan is a system of Aikido founded by the late Kobayashi.



SEIDOKAN AIKIDO COMMUNICATOR

Harmony in Motion Since 1956

VOLUME I JANUARY 2013

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WHAT I LIKE ABOUT AIKIDO

There are a lot of cool things about Aikido.

The best part about Aikido is learning the techniques, and the way that teachers show you the examples with detail. I also like the rolls that we do. My favorite are back rolls. They help you with your landing, and they are very fun to do. They might hurt a little, but they're fun once you get used to them. Next, I like the Aiki Taiso. I like how the Aiki Taiso is sorted into groups, like wrist exercises and grab from behind exercises. Believe it or not, they have a bear hug exercise!!

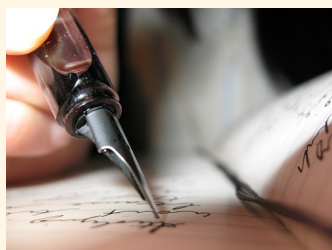
Lastly, the tests in Aikido are very important to see what you have learned. During the test, you have to sit on your knees, which is

called sitting seiza. You have to pay attention very well, and you have to make sure you know each technique correctly. To stay safe, you must always be ready. You can shift back and forth with your hips to keep balanced. Make sure you're ready for anybody, even if it's a surprise attack. To test somebody for if they're ready, you could do the Unbendable Arm test.

By Daniel Rabinovich



CALLING ALL AIKIDOKA WHO CAN WRITE!



The Communicator is in need of your articles! Articles may be one time, part of a series, or the beginning of a reoccurring column. Poetry, photography, art and comics are also welcomed. The deadline for submissions for the Spring Edition is April 12th at 5 pm. Submissions can be sent to communicatoreditor@yahoo.com or handed to Zoë Toth in person.

GREETINGS FROM YOUR NEW EDITOR



Step One: Nicely ask Aikidoka for articles. If this fails, begin a pin and ask again.

Ever had a hemp dogi? Did you like it more or less than cotton?



Dear Readers,

Greetings from South Carolina. For those of you who don't know me, I find people frequently call me a 'pistol' and a 'smiley Goth'. I am a BioChem junior and began Aikido when I was a freshman here at USC. Currently, I haunt both the club and the off campus dojo under the tutelage of Doug Wedell Sensei and his yudansha. I also have fun planning seminars, advertising and other events as the current President of the club.

Getting the Communicator has been an unexpected and welcomed surprise. To-

ward the beginning of the academic year, I got an e-mail from Janean asking if I was interested. After a short, aerobic session of jumping, I managed to reply yes before grabbing Erik (a poor schmuck who also does Aikido and has been suckered into living with me) and beginning to plot. Much like in dealing with our club, Erik is your man behind the scenes, making things happen and calmly listening to me rant.

I look forward to receiving and reading your thoughts about Aikido.

SEE SUE SEW

Hemp is one of the fastest growing plants, with high yields per acre and requires few pesticides and no herbicides to grow readily; its production requires half the amount of water as cotton. Pure hemp has a texture similar to linen. Hemp fabric has natural antimildew and antimicrobial properties. It is rated high for absorbency, strength and breathability. Growing hemp is currently banned in the United States; however hemp cloth may be imported into the United States.

Let me tell you about a hobby of mine: I like to sew. I find it relaxing, most of the time, very frustrating some of the time, but I enjoy the whole process of creating something, even the 'challenges'.

One of the biggest challenges that I have had was in making hemp gi's for people. When I made my first gi (for my Sensei no less), I had never made anything like it. There were seams that I had never done. The instructions assumed that anyone trying to make one of these was totally familiar with all of the terminology. The directions did not tell me if the ties went on the inside or the outside, and on which

side (I'm really glad I had my own gi to go by). It told me where to put the knee pads, but did not say that they would shift once the pants were worn and to adjust for that. And did I say that it was for my Sensei, so I wanted it to be really good.

Well, after much frustration, and many seams that were taken apart and redone, I finally got it done. Sensei was pleased with it and I have done several since then. Some of the things are still a challenge as I do not make many gi's so I have to remember the 'fixes' that I have developed. But I keep on going. Each one is a step towards a smoother process.

I have found that making the gi's is very much like my Aikido practice. Totally unknown at first, more familiar as I continue to practice. A lot of challenges, some conquered, some still a work in progress. A lot of rethinking how something is done. But I still enjoy it. I don't think I will stop either for a very long time.

By Sue Deese

FRIENDSHIP FESTIVAL 2012



This semester's Aikido Friendship Festival was, as always, phenomenal. It is always a treat to see the varied ways in which different Sensei teach techniques - I can definitely name four or five throws that I have never seen done in that manner, and several which I have never seen done at all. Among them were techniques that were intended for use against everything from static attacks, such as a lapel grab, to the much more fluid attacks with bokken.

I would say that my favorite technique of the festival, however, was Sensei Jackson's version of Ikkyo Irimi Sayu against a lapel grab. This particular throw was a very fluid, dynamic one, that I felt showcased

Aikido's ability to use extremely effective and efficient techniques in a very graceful and non-damaging way. In all of these techniques taught at the festival, however, we preserved the idea of Aikido: protecting first ourselves, then our attacker, and rather than competing with them, power against power, to harmonize with them, and thereby control their energy.

The Sensei, however, were not the only excellent part of the festival: the various students that participated alongside me were attentive and interested, but also accommodating and willing to help. It was a pleasure to work with so many others of skill levels both above and below my own, and to see in each of them the

same passion for Aikido that I feel. In addition, it was very much a learning experience to work with people of all shapes and sizes, as it allowed me to test my techniques against people of different heights, strengths, and flexibilities.

All in all, I would say that the festival was an excellent experience, and absolutely one that was worth the three-hour drive.

By Gavin Borg



From left to right, beginning with the bottom row:

Kyle Giovannoni, Alex Rabinovich, Allen Jackson, Darell Tangman, Lamar Sanders, Doug Wedell, Phil Cornelius, Suzanne Burgess, Wade Hasty, Ramona Agnus, Bea Bonnin, Kevin Rabinovich, Brett Yardley, Jennifer Alama-dae, Erik Frankforter, Chris Garcia, Zoë Toth, Jarod Whitaker, Gavin Borg, Oliver Hartner, Unknown, Jay Butterfield, Mikal Drye

GRABMYWRIST.COM



While there is a long list of Aikido blogs on Aikiweb.com, I had to feature Linda Eskin's first. Linda is a late forties woman who started Aikido in 2009 to improve her horsemanship. Since then, she has ditched serious riding in favor of more mat time with Dave Goldberg Sensei at Aikido of San Diego.

Linda's blog is focused on her own journey through Aikido, so unlike many of Aikido blogs, hers has a smaller scope. She admits blatantly (on the front page of her blog no less) that she is a student and makes mistakes explaining Aikido. Young students especially will be able to identify with some of the troubling

posts centering on questions such as figuring out an elevator pitch for Aikido, dealing with the post-test period, and experiencing double classes. Linda also posts frequent amounts of western poetry as well as haikus from time to time instead of blog posts- giving the site a quirky, flavor-of-the -day feel.

Frequently, Linda does not keep to a regular posting cycle. However, before seminars and testing, the site explodes with new posts! She also bravely posts her own test videos online for the world to see. So while the content can be sparse, it never comes as contrived.

"I feel like bread dough that's been left in a warm, quiet place to rise. The ingredients are all there...There's nothing to do but let them expand and mature. Just train." Linda Eskin on Being between Two Ranks

ai ki do

[ahy-keedoh;

Japanese *ahy-kee-daw*]

noun

A Japanese form of self-defense utilizing wrist, joint, and elbows grips to immobilize or throw one's opponents.

From dictionary.com

DEFINING AIKIDO: WEEK ONE

Aikido, comprised of the Japanese kanji 合気道, translates to 'the way of harmonizing with nature' is a non-violent self defense. It is designed to take the attacker's momentum and change it so it's not dangerous to them or you. The art itself was developed from the movements of the Samurai, giving it very fluid movements.

Weaponry is still practiced within Aikido. The bokken, for example, is a wooden form of the katana, the jō, a wooden staff, and the tantō the wooden daggers. Each has their own

'forms' or sets of moves.

The combination of precision, fluidity, and concentration needed to perform well in Aikido is truly impressive. To master the art would take a lifetime of devotion. Aikido in its gace, can easily off put anyone watching it to thinking that nothing is actually happening, when really, the subtle motions and movements can make even the strongest and biggest of men pin themselves under their own arm.

By Andrew Johnson

"To master the art would take a lifetime of devotion."

ONE HOUR MARTIZING THE SEIDOKAN WAY

The One Hour Martinizing process was patented by Henry Martin in 1949. Prior to this, dry-cleaning was done with dangerous, flammable solvents at off-site processing plants. A customer would have to drop off their cleaning "in town"; then, the garments would travel out of town to be cleaned and pressed before being shipped back for pickup. Through his work, Martin discovered a non-flammable solvent to replace the old chemical. His discovery allowed dry cleaning to become on-site and carried out in a much timelier manner.

Is it just me, or can anyone else see a similarity in the tenets of Seidokan?

Kobayashi Sensei set out to clean up the techniques making them more efficient – “carried out in a much timelier manner”.

“Non-flammable solvent” became the ways to do the techniques for a modern way of life: so not to cause undo harm to our attacker and keep us from being sued in our modern times.

No need to only use Aikido ‘out of town’. He taught a set of principles that could be used by everyone in every place for everything they do in their daily life. With Seidokan, it now became something that could

be practiced every waking moment.

So, while this might be an interesting philosophical analogy, how can we use it for our physical practice?

When practicing a technique, do you:

1. **Make sure every step of the way is done with purpose?** If any movement you do doesn't affect or maintain an effect on your partner, there is no need to do that movement. Play around with how efficient you can become.

2. **Are any of your actions or thoughts unduly harmful or potentially harmful to you or your partner?** Approach your practice with the concept of Loving Protection for All Things. See how you can work to avoid injury and still maintain control.

3. **Can you be tested at every step while static and maintain balance, range of effectiveness, good posture?** Are you following the principles to unify mind and body during every step, between every step, as well as after the technique or practice is complete? Are you practicing Zanshin?

Just as Henry Martin revolutionized the dry cleaning business, Kobayashi revolutionized the practice of Aikido. If we approach our practice with these ideas in mind, how can we help but grow in the art and in our life? I believe our practice and how we approach it is the embodiment of the Hundred Pillars Sensei talked about. This is how we support Seidokan and why it remains the living, ever changing art Sensei designed it to be.

By Janean Crapo





PROMOTIONS

Shichidan 六段

Mario Fonda-Bonardi	Aikido Institute of America	6-17-2012
Andreas Hessing	Aikido Institute of America	6-17-2012

Sandan 三段

Stephen Sargur	Aikido Institute of America	11-11-2012
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Nidan 二段

Mariko Kage	Lillooet Seidokan Aikido	7-22-2012
Prentice Hall	Aikido Institute of America	11-11-2012
Jim Crinklaw	Seiwa Dojo	10-21-2012

Shodan 初段

Steve Morris	Aikido Institute of America	6-3-2012
Dana Wylie	Aikido Institute of America	6-3-2012
Wade Hasty	Seidokan Aikido of S Carolina	8-3-2012
Paul Shearer	Seidokan Aikido of S Carolina	9-7-2012
Jeff Lee	Seiwa Dojo	12-1-2012



STUBBORN UKE REFLEXES

Last week I was working with a newly minted white belt. Every time he'd attempt a koho tento he'd scrunch his face up in concentration and either tuck the wrong leg or not fall at all. This is a common experience with beginners. I've heard explanations that new people are afraid of falling and will fight past practicality to stay on their feet. Some of this difficulty can be attributed to learning a new and complex set of movements. But, the compulsion to stay on one's feet is not just a sign of a stubborn uke – it occurs at the spinal level with the same overriding authority as withdrawing your hand from a hot stove.

It's called the crossed extensor reflex, and you can give yourself a practical demonstration of it. Stand up and pick one leg off the ground. Then try to pick up your other leg. Even with a concerted effort your second leg will remain on the floor.

This spinal reflex overrides the brain's command by keeping your quadriceps contracted and your hamstrings relaxed. This reflex is an adaptive trait. It's what allows us to keep our balance when we yank our foot back from a sharp pain – the other leg compensates immediately to support the body's weight. But on the Aikido mat, this reflex contradicts our ukemi by forcing us to stand when we

should roll to defend ourselves. This is particularly true when we allow ourselves to lose our one point.

Take the example of a beginning delivering an attack on the mat. Many beginners overbalance themselves by leaning too far into the attack. They lose their center, and sometimes even let their back foot lift partially off the ground. The front leg, the one they are supposed to roll on, is supporting their entire weight and is inhibited from relaxing for a roll. At this point most experienced Aikidoka correct the problem by sliding their feet together or otherwise regaining their center. In the case of a beginning student who can't do that yet, they're left with the options of either tucking the wrong leg for the roll or struggling like crazy. When you're off balance, your body literally won't let you fall correctly. The solution to this problem is simple. When delivering an attack, keep your one point. By maintaining your posture and balance during an attack, you are free to shift your weight to either leg before executing a koho tento. Because of this, falling correctly depends not only on the successfully execution of a roll, but proper balance and posture while delivering an attack.

By Erik Frankforter



“But, the compulsion to stay on one's feet is not just a sign of a stubborn uke – it occurs at the spinal level...”

A CHINESE PROVERB

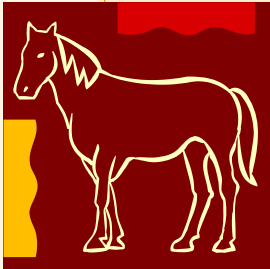
This one was told to me by a wise dojomate of mine.

One day, a farmer and his son woke to find the largest stallion they had ever seen grazing in their fields. When he was in the barn, the son exclaimed, "What luck, life shall be easy now!" The farmer replied, "We'll see."

The next day, the stallion ran fast into the neighboring forests. The son looked at his father and bemoaned, "What terrible luck!" The father only replied, "We'll see."

Later that day, the stallion returned with several wild

mares. Happily the son exclaimed, "We are rich!" Again, the father replied, "We'll see."



The next day, the son brought the stallion out to break him; he fell, breaking one of his legs. The boy limped and cried, "Our family will be ruined!" Helping his son into the house, the father simply replied, "We'll see."

A few weeks later, the imperial army marched through the town and took all the able-bodied boys to war. When the army left, the boy cried out, "Father, what luck!" and again the man replied, "We'll see."

And so on and so on.

OUTSIDE VIEWS: STUDENTS AND TEACHING

This article was written by Rocky Izumi, current Chief Instructor of Kuwait Kendo, for Aikiweb.com in 1997 and has been reformatted below. The original spelling and grammar have been preserved.

Someone on Aikido-L wrote:

I will agree here that more rank = more responsibility, but that does not mean you need to teach. A person can help out the dojo just fine without teaching. Mandatory teaching? Does that mean if Sensei starts a new dojo I might HAVE to teach there if he is "Promoting The Style".

Perhaps it does not mean teaching a formal class, but we are all teachers as well as students. When we are uke, we are helping in the instructing of nage as long as we attack honestly. When we are nage, we are helping in the instructing of uke as long as we defend honestly. If we agree to practice Aikido at all, we are agreeing to teach as well as learn for we have accepted some responsibility for our partner's well-being.

That's how dojos and the sempai/kohai relationship also work. Dojos are built up on a hierarchy of responsibility (NOT authority) wherein we are accepting the responsibility for newer people just as our sempai accepted responsibility for us. We have a debt that must be paid back to our sempai who helped us. We do not pay it back to our sempai by doing things for them anymore (at least in most Western dojos). However, we must pay it back through

our kohai by helping them to advance.

Without such a system of responsibility and duty, the dojo will fail to remain vibrant, alive, and growing. A dojo that does not grow and stabilize out will soon begin to die a slow death as competitors for student's time, such as T.V., other friends, family, other interests, and other dojos take them away. If you want to keep your place of practice, you have to teach your kohai as you have been taught before.

Someone on Aikido-L wrote:

What about the students who don't have any intention of teaching? I can give back to my Sensei, and my dojo just fine without teaching. Who says being technically proficient without becoming a good teacher is a bad thing? I think it's great that some students don't want to become teachers! Maybe they will be able to keep their minds open and learn, instead of getting inflated fathead egos.

I would argue that students who refuse to teach are actually the ones with "inflated fathead egos." They are saying to everyone that they don't have to help others since they themselves don't need any help. They are also saying that they have the right to take from everyone and not give back but that the same does not hold for everyone else who must participate in the social learning experience. selfish person?

If that permanent student person....



.... refuses to help me learn, why should I bow to such a selfish person?

I actually doubt that any such person even exists. Someone may say that they don't want to teach formal classes, that they only want to practice, but I notice that most of those people make the best one-on-one instructors of beginners and the kohai. They either just don't have the time

will forever just remain an exercise for you.

Someone on Aikido-L wrote:

Sensei is Sensei cause he wants to be. Students are students cause they want to be. If a student is forced to be something they don't want to be, you are asking them to quit.

I don't think I know of one sensei who really wants to be the chief



“You have a life-long debt to them that can't be repaid directly so you will have to repay it by helping your kohai along the same path as you are taking, clearing the way a bit for them.”

they can commit, are unsure of their technique so they don't want to screw up everyone else, or feel that there are better formal instructors around so they decide that it is better that the best instructor take the formal class.

However, these same people are the ones that tend to come in the off hours to help their kohai deal with an upcoming test, or help teach kohai about etiquette, or help teach kohai about dojo responsibilities by providing a good behavioural model in cleaning, donating materials, and working on committees to upgrade the dojo. Aikido learning and teaching do not occur only on the mat but all around it.

If your Aikido stops when you get off the mat, then you would need to look at your motivation in learning Aikido because you will never be able to take it into the street--Aikido

instructor.

They don't do it because it is going to make them lots of money (it never will). They don't do it because it boosts their ego--someone is going to come around to deflate it or the person will not be able to keep students.

You do it because you have an obligation to your own sempai who helped you along the way. You have a life-long debt to them that can't be repaid directly so you will have to repay it by helping your kohai along the same path as you are taking, clearing the way a bit for them.

Someone on Aikido-L wrote:

Having a senior help out a beginner is one thing, but if an instructor insist that his students teach his classes he is abusing the loyalty of his students.

Continued on the next page.



Therefore, if the students haven't learned that lesson that they owe their sempai to become teachers, either of individuals or of formal classes, then the instructor must insist that the students teach classes. The students, on the other hand, shouldn't be teaching the classes out of loyalty to the chief instructor. They should be doing it out of loyalty to their kohai for whom they have responsibility.

It is like being parents. Yes, there may be some responsibility and loyalty to your ancestors to be good parents. But, that is greatly overshadowed by the need for responsibility and loyalty to your children and their progeny. If you want to maintain family honour, it is not to respect your ancestors so much as to bequeath a good family reputation to your progeny so that they can continue to live well in the community--that people will trust them as members of a good family and continue to do business with them or associate with them.

It is a teacher's duty to teach his/her students. Part of that lesson in Aikido is the matrix of responsibilities and social duties. Part of that lesson is the sempai/kohai relationship that is most strongly defined in the teaching/learning relationship. Part of that lesson is the difficulty of being an instructor and the need to develop the spirit that will allow you to teach 12 lessons a week as a dojo gets off the ground.

Only by teaching and getting feed-

back from the chief instructor will you learn enough to ensure that the first place you go with no place to practice, the first place you go where you have no choice but to be the chief instructor, you will not make such a bad go of it that people, Aikido itself, and yourself get hurt.

The world changes so much and so often that it is difficult to predict when someone will have to move on for one reason or another. I might have to change jobs tomorrow or get killed in an accident tomorrow. If I do not have enough backups -- If I haven't trained about seven or eight people to take over from me -- If I haven't ensured that about seven or eight people know how to run the dojo, seminars, scheduling, dojo finances, and introduced them the "right" people -- If I haven't had some sort of kenshusei program where some of the students are learning to become chief instructors -- I am abrogating my responsibilities to the dojo and the people who support it, my students.

Rock



Hey YOU!

What do you think about Rocky's article?

Should higher ranked students have to teach?

Should students, as dues paying customers, be given a choice?

Post a comment on Seidokan's Facebook page

OR

Send a comment via email to communicatoreditor@yahoo.com



CUTTING AND GOING AWAY

The katana was not only one of the finest hand-to-hand weapons ever created; it was also a distinguishing class marker in premodern Japan. Among samurai “privileges” was the right to use force against the lower classes at the warrior’s discretion, sometimes even going as far as the notorious “crossroad cuttings” – cutting down a peasant simply to test a new sword or to exercise the right to violence for its own sake. *Kirisute-gomen* (“cutting and going away”) was a privilege that went far beyond James Bond’s fictional license; there could be few more dramatic examples of “the sword that kills”.

Seidokan Aikido builds on a rich tradition of effective technique, but directs our training efforts towards the “sword that gives life”. This involves variations in method, but more importantly a different outlook and set of priorities. One way to illustrate this is by relating modern unarmed defenses to historical applications.

Ryotemochi does not seem to be the most practical attack in “uke’s” formal arsenal for practice on the mat; what good does it do him, to restrain one of nage’s arm?!? While there are indeed practical reasons that an attacker might do this in some situations today, a historical reason suggests itself immediately: controlling the wrist of a samurai would most likely represent an attempt to keep him from drawing his sword. (Figure 1)

Of course, the samurai who is able to approach the situation with detachment will not feel compelled to fight his opponent’s strong grip, stable posture and desperate determination to prevent the draw. The swordsman need not try to pull his hand towards the hilt of his katana at all. Rather, an *enkei choyaku* movement will carry the “sword-that-kills” towards his restrained hand, without disturbing the attacker. (Fig. 2.) The hilt is carried to his waiting grip.

It is then a simple and natural action for the swordsman to lift his weapon up along his own centerline (Fig. 3), then pivot and cut down (Fig. 4). The result, of course, is likely lethal.

The application of the same efficient movement, however, gives us “katsujinken” options, also. Doing the same technique, but without drawing the sword at all, allows the aikidoka to cut down the attack without cutting apart the attacker! In fact, cutting through the attack (without the sword!) and then “going away” presents a defensive strategy which seems to me to make a lot of sense in our non-feudal environment.

By Joe Long



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK: INJURY RATES OF AIKIDO

A few weeks ago, amongst the first year students trying out the club, was a girl. She wasn't practically out of the ordinary- a little taller and perhaps a bit more athletic than the average USC student. About a minute into rolling, the normal amount of chatter in the dojo dropped. A trip to the sports medicine clinic later, someone brought me back the news: she had severely hurt her shoulder. I e-mailed her the next day, wishing her the best on healing and telling her our doors were always open if she wanted to come back to try Aikido again.

I haven't heard from her since.

A lot of the students who come to the USC Aikido Club aren't very athletic. It takes a bit to coax them on the mat- usually an officer calmly saying, "Aikido has a very low injury rate. Just listen to the Sensei and don't resist." Now, we are trying to do what's best for the club: getting as many people to try the art as possible. But even for someone who wants to be a lawyer, there gets

to be a point where you wonder if you are flat out lying. Is Seidokan Aikido a safe hobby? After all, I never saw anyone come out in a sling after the first day of Archery or Soccer.

In 2005, four students of the Pediatric Sports Program collected data from students of multiple dojos about their injury rate. Five distinct martial arts were included: Karate, Aikido, Tae Kwon Do, Kung Fu and Tai Chi. Students were asked to self-assess each month if they had a minor or major injury during practice. Major injuries were defined as requiring a minimum of a week or surgery to fully recover from and minor injuries were anything less. They asked for the student's age, rank, number of years of training, average number of hours training weekly and gender. While all 47 Aikido students came from the same dojo, they had an incredible amount of injuries. In one year, 51% occurred an injury that they had to take time off training to heal. Only the Karate students had a higher injury

rate at 59%.

Then, 43 of our own sent in replies to my e-mail and Facebook posting asking the same question. A whopping 76.74% replied that they hadn't been injured this year during Aikido. Most of the students who replied were in the 2005's report 'high risk' group: Shodan ranking or above, training 3+ hours a week on average and above 18. Only 3 people reported major injuries, one of which fell into the multiple injuries category – just under 7%. In contrast, the 2005 study's Aikido dojo had a whopping 28% of students with major injuries.

But it didn't seem to kill the question. Lots of college students would simply respond to that by saying we aren't a very active style so of course our rates would be low. After some searching, I found Janet Rosen's rather large survey of knee injuries in Aikido, with data from over 100 dojos and 3,253 individuals. 11 of those dojos accounted for over 30% of the total

INJURIES IN SEIDOKAN AIKIDO FROM 2011-2012



.... Knee injuries. Only 6 of the high injury rate dojos spent much time in suwariwaza or hamni handachi, ruling that out as a clear cause. Breakfalls also escaped from clear blame as the high injury rate dojos actually have a quite lower use rate of them than the mean of all dojos in the study. The only highly noticeable difference was dojo size: the 11 dojos with high injury

rates had only an average of 14 members in each. To me (and Janet) this suggests that these dojos are filled with people who create a high injury environment despite the activity. Although this study looked only at knee injuries - one of the most common injuries in Aikido according to the 2005 study- it still helped provide a snapshot of the safety of Aikido.

The question of a safety of any activity is hard to answer at its core. Most martial arts are practiced by multiple dojos separated by Sensei and geographic space. As such, individual cultures develop in each dojo. Looking at the results of Seidokan's answers, it is easy to conclude that we are a relatively safe style of Aikido.

SEIDOKAN AIKIDO OF SOUTH CAROLINA SUMMER CAMP 2013



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5 REASONS AIKIDO WILL HELP YOU SURVIVE THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

If you're reading this, chances are you already survived last December's apocalypse, but since December 21st came about with a distinct lack of zombies, you may be wondering how you can protect yourself in case the next apocalypse comes around accompanied by hordes of shuffling, brain-eating undead. Well, look no further than your nearest dojo, because here are the top five reasons aikido will help you survive the zombie apocalypse.

1. You'll Already Have Practice Defending Against Multiple Attackers

If you've been doing aikido for a while, you probably already have practice defending against multiple people ganging up on you and trying to eat your brains. Wait, what? Your ukes don't go straight for the brains? Huh...clearly you're not practicing at USC. Regardless, a good foundation in Randori will have you dodging and moving through those zombie crowds in no time. Remember, it's not about throwing them; it's about getting out of the way.

Bonus: Thanks to a bunch of Randoris, you already know you suck at group fighting and will try to avoid it at all costs.

2. You'll Get Tired Less Quickly

Your average zombie will keep moving as long as its head is still attached to its body, regardless of the integrity or function of any of its limbs. This obviously poses a problem for your traditional fighter, who is normally not trained to fight an enemy

without a nervous system. Zombies can take whatever you dish out, and they usually come in number, so when it comes to a test of endurance, the zombies will always win. Hmm...if only there was a fighting style that focused on ending the conflict as quickly as possible while using the minimal amount of force needed to contain a situation. Oh, wait.

Bonus: Long seminars have probably taught you the value of being hydrated and how poorly you can attack, run, and defend when dehydrated.

3. You'll Actually Know How to Use Some of the Weapons You Find

And as anyone who has played cooperate zombie video games knows, the most dangerous thing in the game is a teammate who has never touched a sword before and just found a katana. But you, smart Aikidoka, have been practicing for years. Those 1,000 sword cut practices suddenly are going to be helpful when you are trying to cut a zombie in two. And then another. And another. And another. And of course, while swords are amazing they are also kind of rare. Now, jo-like objects, those are common. And you can swing a stick with the best of them!

Bonus: Tanto-dori is very useful in stopping the large amount of looters one expects a proper zombie apocalypse to have.

Continued on the next page.



4. You'll Be More Alert

Aikido teaches us to be constantly aware, to be in a state of controlled relaxation, where we aren't obviously tense, but at the same time, ready to act in case a crazed axe-murderer jumps out from the next dark alley. It's not hard to figure out how this will help when the world's overrun by face-eating zombies. Considering zombies usually only need to bite you to turn into one of them, you're going to need to be constantly aware of every dark corner, every shaded street, every suspicious movement out of the corner of your eye. This would overwhelm most people, but just think about it as if at any moment, your favorite uke is about to come rushing at you, and you need to defend or you'll fail your rank test.

Bonus: Trying to pin a small child in Aikido has taught you that human shaped objects can more flexible than you ever thought. You'll be ready for bites to come from odd angles.

5. You'll Have A Lot More Fun

Let's be honest, it takes a specific kind of crazy to dedicate yourself to an art where you are thrown across the room on a regular basis, and nothing brings crazy people together better than taking turns throwing each other to the ground in close quarters. Chances are, if you get lucky enough in a zombie apocalypse and get to pick the team you survive with, you're probably going to end up going for your aikido dojo (well, besides your family, of course). After all, you probably like spending time with them,

trust them and know how fast they run.

And that's when things really get interesting. Imagine having four or five people with similar skills as you cutting through the zombie hordes (and making wise-cracks and jokes all the way). Not to mention a phalanx formation combined with sword katas.

Bonus: For years people laughed at you for all the grab attacks you learned to defend from. Finally, you'll get the last laugh when all those people who know how only to defend from punches and kicks will be surprised at the distinct lack of punching zombies.

By Bea Bonnin



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