

ミシガン大学 剣道部

What to Expect as a Beginner and What is Expected (ver. 2.00)

Be early to practice, because life happens. If you are early, then you will always have time to adapt to challenges and comfortably progress without undue stress.

GENERAL SCHEDULED TOPICS

Rei, etiquette and Mitori Geiko.....	First session
Ashisabaki / Learning to walk correctly	1 st - 4 th week
Suburi / Cutting for the first time	2 rd - 6 th week
Receiving / Uchikomi.....	4 th - 8 th week
Tying it all together / Fumikomi, Maai, Kiri Keishi...8 th - ongoing	
Bogu	As directed

These are approximations of the time required, some people progress more rapidly than others. Do not gauge your success in Kendo by the speed that you cover the material. This is not necessarily an inverse proportion.

PRELIMINARY STEPS AND PREMISES

If you are the first one to the practice, that is fantastic, get the broom or find a broom to sweep the floor clear of any debris or dust. A clean dojo makes for a much more successful practice and reduces the chance for injury. If there is more than one person, then take turns running the broom up and down the floor then pass it along to the next person. This lets everyone pitch in and still have time to get ready/changed. No one person should ever be cleaning the floor while others stand by and watch. Cleaning our practice space should always be a team effort. This is common courtesy and a part of Rei.

Wearing the Keiko-gi and Hakama properly; in the beginning training in comfortable clothes that allow freedom of movement is encouraged, but you are also welcome to begin wearing uniform as soon as you feel comfortable. We will help you to get the correct size uniform and also how to wear and care for it. Remember that the practice of Kendo is done bare foot, so maintain good hygiene and short toe nails for everyone's benefit. This is common courtesy and a part of Rei.

Check equipment for damage before each and every practice, especially the Shinai. A splintered Shinai is dangerous, especially to your opponent. If it is damaged or you are not certain, ask someone senior to check it with you. It is always a good idea to have a spare Shinai with you so you don't have to miss out on practice while making repairs you missed spotting earlier.

Always keep your equipment and yourself neat and tidy. Check your physical condition and health regularly. We can't reinforce this enough, but maintain your proper hygiene. Learn how to wash Keiko-gi and Hakama. When you are in bogu, take care of it - so it can take care of you. If there is something you don't know or understand, be in charge of your success and ask. This is common courtesy and a part of Rei.

The Shinai represents a sword (Katana, Ken); treat it with respect, do not step over it, when picking it up from the floor or placing it on the floor - lower your left knee and carefully handle or retrieve it. Do not bend over at the waist to reach down for it, especially if your butt is facing the people you are hoping to practice with. If you need to lean the shinai on the wall to free up floor space, always place the tip end up. No one wants to catch a shinai tip full of dust or something worse picked up from the floor. The shinai is the tool you will use to practice the techniques of how, where, and when to cut. It is also the weapon you wield to make successful strikes with and to fluster your opponent with – treat it well as it is not a toy.

Even before we begin practice, perform adequate stretching and warm up. Everybody is different and changes in the weather effect all of us differently too. Be aware of these small differences and keep yourself in a safe limber state for practice.

If you are unable to practice, but still able to attend - it is equally valuable to observe others practice (Mitori Geiko). Pay careful attention to compare what you see between different level players. Always show quiet consideration when watching practice. Banging around on the sidelines may cause a distraction and be dangerous to the practice participants. If you are watching from the side of the practice, always stay off of the wall. Leaning against a wall is considered very rude.

If you are late, quietly prepare and stretch on your own. Be mindful of the restricted space to stretch under and join the practice for foot work drills or once line up is called. Jumping into the middle of stretching or subari is disruptive. If sensei or a senior member waves for you to join, then quickly join in.

ABOUT THE DOJO

The term Dojo comes from Buddhism meaning "place to study," which originally referred to the platform Buddha meditated on.

Commit yourself to sincere training when entering the Dojo; really appreciate having a place to practice and people to practice with; maintain cleanliness; take care of your own belongings neatly (eg, shoes in a neat row outside of the practice area, clothes put away neatly and never laying in a pile).

Feel obliged to leave your shoes in a neat row with the other members, far enough away from the entrance to allow easy entrance and exit from the practice room. There should never be a mountain or jumble of shoes right at the door entrance.

Know the location of the shoumen. In other schools/dojos with a religious tradition, this may be referred to as the “kamiza” (Shinto) or “shizen” (Buddhist). Often times this was the location of a shrine. As we are a secular institution, we bow to the “shoumen” as a way of showing respect towards our practice and the tradition of Kendo. It has no religious significance. We have chosen specifically not to use “kamiza” or “shizen” so that our members may feel free to bring whatever religious tradition they choose to observe.

ABOUT REI

Rei is a way to show common courtesy, acknowledgement of others, and clearly convey that you are prepared to safely participate.

Upon entry to the Dojo, enter then Rei. This is the way to pay respect to the Dojo and to mentally commit yourself to a sincere practice.

There are other appropriate times to use Rei, and these will be discussed during your training and occasionally revisited in practice.

When entering the practice space, we announce “Shitsurei shimasu”, and at leaving “Shitsurei shimashita”. This should be in a regular conversation voice as we are not looking to interrupt the harmony of the practice.

BASIC UNDERSTANDINGS

Make it a habit to Seiza quietly at the beginning and the end.

Always do warming up and stretching before you do Kendo.

Be punctual and also prepared to lead – you never know when you will be given the chance to.

Always value the basics.

Be prepared to practice and understand you will repeat everything many, many, many times to develop muscle memory and grace.

Practice with someone formidable

Practice with proper attitude, courtesy and respect.

Grasp the value of watching; humbly learn merits of others by observing.

Make a commitment to Kendo and practice with initiative and determination.

Value graceful, elegant, and dignified Kendo.

Be prepared physically and mentally, then practice with eagerness

Know your capabilities and practice accordingly

Everything you see and do can be insightful teaching, always consider ways to improve.

Bring a fresh attitude into each practice, while being conscious of safety.

Be conscious of health and hygiene.

Do not overextend unreasonably, but always seek to push your boundaries.

Winning in a match is a good thing, but it is not the most important thing in Kendo.

Instead consistently practice with the desire to learn to better understand yourself.

For students, consider how school work and Kendo can be balanced

Short List of Helpful Japanese Vocabulary

Ya-me.....	Stop what you are doing.
Haji-me.....	Start
Men, Kote, Do, Tsu-ki.....	Head, Right forearm, Lower right abdomen, Throat.
Suburi.....	To cut, or a type of cut: Men suburi, cutting the head
Joge suburi.....	Giant stretching cut, used in warm ups
Oni-gai-shimasu.....	Let's begin
Domo arigatou gozaimashita.....	Thank you for what we just did.
Chyak-sa, Seiza.....	Sit in seiza position
Kyot skay.....	Attention or straighten up your posture
Chudan no kamae (Chudan).....	Center stance, typically used in most practices
Rei.....	Said as a command, signifies when to bow
Kamae.....	Be ready
Tai toe.....	Sword ready to draw at the hip
Nuk toe.....	Draw the sword
Osame toe.....	Put the sword away

Counting to ten...

Ich.....	1
Ni.....	2
San.....	3
Shi.....	4
Go.....	5
Rok.....	6
Shich.....	7
Hach.....	8
Kyu.....	9
Ju.....	10

BENEFITS OF KENDO TRAINING

- Physical conditioning and maturity of mind.
- Etiquette, courtesy, morality, ethos, respect, and empathy.
- Concentration, focus, attentiveness, and cultivation of an eagerness to learn.
- Agility, dexterity, coordination.
- Endurance, strength, perseverance.
- Promptness, reliability, and accountability.
- Orderliness and neatness.
- Care of equipment and tools.