

Weapons Program

Etiquette

1. Weapons should be placed on the floor (off the mat) at the edges of the mats. Weapons should always be placed such that the handle is toward O' Sensei's photograph, blades facing away from the mat. Place the smallest weapon closest to the mat, largest further away. Typically the weapon closest to the mat is the tanto, then bokken, then jo.
2. Avoid stepping on or over someone's weapons.
3. Do not borrow someone else's weapons (including club weapons) without asking permission.
4. Keep weapons away from the corners of the mats where students and instructors typically step onto the mat.
5. If you line up with one or more weapons, place them beside you for the bow, smallest closest to you, handle toward O'Sensei, blade facing away from you. Always take your weapons with you at the end of class.

Care and Maintenance of Aikido Weapons

Wooden Weapons – Bokken, Tanto, and Jo

- Regularly check weapons for splinters and cracks. Lightly sand out any rough spots. Sand with the grain of the wood. Apply finer grades of sandpaper to restore a smooth finish.
- Apply a light coat of oil at least three times a year or after sanding. When applying oil, rub in a thin coat. Wait 15 min. Remove excess oil and let this dry overnight. Buff with a cloth. Be sure that the weapon feels dry and smooth before using it. Oiling helps the wood to stay moist which will reduce splintering. Recommended oils are Teak, Tung or Mineral oils, although you can also use olive oil.
- As you use your weapon, sweat from your hands will react with the oil and wood, and the grain may rise slightly in places. Impact with other training weapons will cause dents and these spots should be sanded and oiled as needed. Inspect your weapons monthly for signs of wear.
- Do not expose your weapons repeatedly to extremes of heat or cold; e.g. do not store in the trunk of your car during very hot or cold weather. Extreme temperatures can cause the wood to dry out, splinter or warp.
- Do identify your weapon as your own. Many of our weapons look identical. Carve your initials or other recognizable symbol onto the end or handle.
- Bokkens made from tough but flexible wood such as hickory are best as it absorbs impact well, however maple and oak bokkens can last a long time if well cared for. When training with weapons, avoid head-on impact; instead, one weapon should glance off the other.

Care of metal swords

- To keep a blade rust free, apply oil on the blade. Recommended oils are mineral oil, camellia or clove oil. You can also use a silicone spray.
- To oil the blade, first clean it with cloth or a paper towel. Then apply the oil leaving only a thin film. This procedure should be repeated every 1 to 6 months depending on the storage area and humidity. A humid climate will require more frequent cleaning.
- Minimize touching the blade. Acids from the fingers etch carbon steel. For swords in wooden scabbards, leave them inside to prevent the scabbard from warping.