

INTRODUCTION TO SEIDO KARATE

Seido Karate is a traditional martial art style, founded in 1976 in New York by Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura (after he respectfully withdrew from Kyokushin Karate). He continues today as the head of the World Seido Karate Organisation, which now has over 150 branches across 6 continents, including over 30 dojos in New Zealand.

Auckland Seido Karate Club has been practicing in Auckland for over 20 years. The Club has its own dojo (training hall), with over 150 training members, ranging from beginners to 5th dan black belts (who each have over 25 years karate experience). The club is a non-profit organisation with no paid employees.

We welcome anyone who wants to give karate a go. Students can begin from the age of 5, and can be any shape, size or level of fitness. Training is about attitude, not about any particular capabilities.

We seek to provide a safe training environment that encourages individuals to strive to develop their full potential, through the values, philosophies of Seido Karate, and physical practice by challenging themselves beyond their own perceived limitations. Whatever reason prompts someone to join, it is only time and dedication that will enable them to achieve their personal goals - so the more you put into your training, the more you will get out of it.

Typically, a beginner will train twice per week for 2 to 3 months before their first grading. In that time they will learn basic punches, blocks, kicks, stances, some self-defence techniques, basic strength and fitness, as well as the etiquette of Seido and Japanese terminology. At Seido Karate we believe a student should learn to walk before they can run, so there is no sparring ("*kumite*"), until they reach 4th kyu (which takes about 2 years of training).

Because of movies, television and magazines, karate is widely perceived as a purely physical fighting art. Seido chooses to follow a different path, one that connects its students to the origins of karate and the bushido spirit of the samurai.

Seido philosophy aims not only to develop students with the highest level of physical skills but also strives to cultivate an individual's moral character so they can then make positive contributions to their family life, the workplace, and to society at large.

We seek to develop in each student a 'non-quitting' spirit. No matter what the difficulty (emotional, physical, financial) we want students to feel that there is no problem they can't overcome. The sincere practice of Seido Karate seeks to impress this into one's spirit.

Meaning 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. The plum blossom badge that is worn on the left sleeve of the gi (training uniform) represents the values of love, respect and obedience, the three underlying values of Seido Karate.

- Love: unselfish, loyal and generous concern for the wellbeing of others.
- Respect: the process of giving particular attention, consideration and esteem to both yourself and others. Respect for others is paramount in developing a caring and generous attitude.
- Obedience: adherence to the values (e.g. love, respect, sincerity) that enable everyone in society to flourish.

As members 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. Students of any age and ability are welcome, all you need is willingness to give 100% effort at each class.

Seido Karate provides a variety of 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 push ups, sit ups and bag work, which are designed to increase muscle strength and stamina, but also to build a strong spirit.

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. To be a student of karate, you must have strong patience, for this is how you overcome difficulties - through a strong spirit expressed by a strong Osu. Within the dojo, the word “Osu” 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 recognition of their knowledge, ability, and dedication to karate. Saying it loud and clear also reaffirms your commitment to train hard and improve yourself.

Whenever the instructor directly gives you an individual instruction, you should further indicate your awareness of this by responding with the title of the instructor. For example, "Osu Sensei!" or "Osu Kyoshi!"

Dojo

This is a name given to a training hall where karate is practised. It is a special place where we learn and grow through our training. The dojo has a shinzen at the front. It has the kanji (Japanese characters) of the words Seido Juku. 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

A kiai is the loud yell that we make when we do our techniques. In karate, we kiai to enhance the strength of our karate & to frighten a potential opponent. A kiai at the right moment also helps to tense the whole body, thereby adding power to your technique. 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.

Gradings

Gradings are opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learnt. Upon successful completion of gradings, students are awarded their new belts. Up to green belt, students who have learnt the required syllabus, and trained regularly will be eligible to be considered to grade every three months. From green belt, a student needs to train regularly for a minimum of six months to be considered eligible to grade.

In practice, it generally takes a minimum of three and a half years before attaining black tab (1st kyu). Then after another 15 months, a student who has trained sufficiently hard and developed their skills satisfactorily will be considered to be invited to prepare for the demanding first degree (shodan) black belt grading.

Training frequency

When first starting karate students will be focused on learning the basic techniques, getting fitter and becoming accustomed to a new way of working your body. We encourage our students to train at least twice a week.

ETIQUETTE AND FORMALITIES

Etiquette plays an important part in our training. It helps develop our awareness of what is going on around us. As Seido Karate is a Japanese martial art, the dojo formalities and etiquette are also based on traditional Japanese customs. Etiquette should not be seen or interpreted as an act of subservience. You cannot respect others unless you respect yourself first.

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

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. Ensure your mobile phone is on silent.

Respect to Kaicho (Head of Seido), Hanshi, Shihan, Kyoshi, 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 an Osu.

Lining up

When asked to line up, do it quickly and quietly. Line up in order of grade. If there is more than one at the same grade, then line up in the order of date graded. Ensure that you are not standing (or kneeling) forward of your senior grade. This means the lines will be straight, or 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.

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 dojo floor 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! Kyoshi/Sensei/Senpai" 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 acknowledging that the other students have already been training and that you are here now to train hard. When joining in, go to your normal place in the line-up.

During class

- Karate classes are not like classes at a gym or health club, and as such 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 Kyoshi/Sensei/Senpai' 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. If you do not know each other, introduce yourselves (and try to remember the name of your partner).
- Always 'Osu' when a black belt enters the dojo or walks past you. This is an acknowledgement of their experience and dedication.
- If you know before the class begins that you will not be able to train for the whole duration of the class, advise the class instructor of the time you wish to be excused.
- 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 grades first. If they have a partner then pair up with 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 proud in fudo dachi stance - i.e. ready to be called into action if necessary. Do not lean on the wall.
- When addressed in class personally acknowledge that you have heard by answering "Osu Kyoshi/Sensei/Senpai". This is also a way of appreciating the fact that your instructor has taken interest in seeing that you do the techniques properly.
- 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.

Personal etiquette

Always keep your gi washed and tidy. A gi that smells of stale sweat is not pleasant for other students. Repair any rips or tears in the gi as soon as possible. All jewellery is to be removed (or cover it up) as it may injure you or another person. Fingernails and toenails should always be kept short. Personal hygiene must be maintained.

Sparring etiquette

- In Seido, students do not 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 a mouth guard, gloves, breast protectors (women), groin cup (men), and foot protectors. Head gear may also be worn.
- 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.

Keeping the dojo clean

Dojo comes from a word meaning "place of enlightenment". We respect it by keeping it clean and tidy. 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 organise the students to participate in cleaning of the floor.

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 reflective of Japanese culture. An example of this is when offering or receiving any object. This could be a weapon or, in a more social environment, a drink. 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 by their title unless otherwise told by that person.

Absence from the dojo

If you know you are unable to train for a long period of time (say, three months) please let the instructor know. Also, please discuss your fees as these may be adjusted to account for your prolonged absence. However, if you are only away for a month or so (say, on holiday), you should continue to pay your fees (as the cost of running the dojo has not diminished). If you stop training for six months or more, it is a sign of courtesy to wear a white belt upon your return, but you 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. The instructor will inform you at the appropriate time when to begin wearing your coloured belt again.

HISTORY OF SEIDO KARATE

Kaicho Tadashi Nakamura is a ninth dan (degree) black belt with a lifetime of experience in practising and teaching martial arts. Kaicho was born on 22 February 1942 in northern Japan, and began his karate training at age eleven. His first experiences were in the Goju style under the instruction of Miyagi Sensei, the son of the founder of the style. In 1956 Kaicho began studying with Masutatsu Oyama (the founder of Kyokushin Karate), earning his 1st dan black belt ("shodan") rank in 1959. At the time, he was the youngest Kyokushin student in Japan to receive a black belt. In 1961, at age nineteen, Kaicho won first place in the All-Japan Student Open Karate Championship. The following year, he was a member of the victorious Japanese national team defeating Thailand (in the first ever match up between the two countries) to determine which nation had the superior martial art.

Around this time, Kaicho also began teaching karate and served as the chief instructor at Camp Zama, a U.S. military base near Tokyo. From 1961 to 1965 he coached the Toho Medical University Karate team for 3 years. Kaicho also served as the chief instructor at the Kyokushin Karate Honbu in Tokyo.

In 1966, the head of Kyokushin Karate, Masutatsu Oyama, asked Kaicho to go to the U.S.A. and spread the spirit of karate. Aged 24 (just one year after he graduated university) he moved to New York to begin teaching Kyokushin Karate. As the Kyokushin style became more popular, Kaicho started to feel the quality of the instruction was slipping and the philosophy starting to take a differing path from that of his own. In 1976 he respectfully withdrew from Kyokushin Karate and established his own style, Seido juku.

Kaicho wanted to recover the 'original face' of karate, and underpin physical training in the art with a strong philosophical foundation. The meaning of "Seido" reflects 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.

Despite now being in this seventies, Kaicho continues to this day to run the World Seido Karate organisation and instruct at the New York dojo.

Further information

Further written information about Seido Karate is available in Kaicho's books.

- *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.

COMMON TERMINOLGY

Seido Karate uses many Japanese terms. Below is a selection of the most important ones, with their meanings.

Belt grades

Kyu grade	Belt colour		Dan grade	Title
10 th	White/Beginner		1 st	Senpai* (Senior)
9 th	Blue tab		2 nd	Senpai
8 th	Blue		3 rd	Senpai
7 th	Yellow tab		4 th	Sensei (Teacher)
6 th	Yellow		5 th	Kyoshi (Senior Teacher)
5 th	Green tab		6 th	Shihan (Master)
4 th	Green		7 th	Shuseki Shihan (Senior Master)
3 rd	Brown tab		8 th	Hanshi (Head or Chief)
2 nd	Brown			
1 st	Black tab			

*Is also used less formally between kyu grades, to address someone more senior than them, even if the other student is not a black belt.

Counting in Japanese

One	Ichi		Eleven	Ju-ichi		Twenty	Ni-ju
Two	Ni		Twelve	Ju-ni		Thirty	San-ju
Three	San		Thirteen	Ju-san		Forty	Yon-ju
Four	Shi		Fourteen	Ju-shi		Fifty	Go-ju
Five	Go		Fifteen	Ju-go		Sixty	Roku-ju
Six	Roku		Sixteen	Ju-roku		Seventy	Nanna-ju
Seven	Shichi		Seventeen	Ju-shichi		Eighty	Hachi-ju
Eight	Hachi		Eighteen	Ju-hachi		Ninety	Ku-ju
Nine	Ku		Nineteen	Ju-ku		Hundred	Hyaku
Ten	Ju						

Parts of the Body

Jodan	Head Level	Kin	Groin
Chudan	Solar Plexus/Abdomen Level	Hiza	Knee
Gedan	Groin Level	Sokuto	Foot Edge
Ago	Jaw	Haisoku	Instep
Hiji	Elbow	Kaka	Heel
Koken	Wrist	Teisoku	Arch of Foot
Seiken	Forefist	Chusoku	Ball of Foot
Uraken	Inverted Fist		
Tettsui	Edge of fist		
Shuto	Outside knife edge of hand		
Haito	Inside knife edge of hand		
Shotei	Palm Heel		

Punches

Seiken jodan tsuki	Forefist punch to the head area
Seiken chudan tsuki	Forefist punch to the chest/stomach area
Seiken gedan tsuki	Forefist punch to the groin area
Seiken sanbon tsuki	Forefist three times punch (jodan/gedan/chudan)
Seiken ago tsuki (ago uchi)	Forefist punch to jaw/chin
Seiken oi tsuki	Lunge punch (in zenkutsu dachi)
Seiken jodan morote tsuki	Double fist face punch
Seiken chudan morote tsuki	Double fist middle punch
Seiken gedan morote tsuki	Double fist groin punch
Seiken sanbon morote tsuki	Forefist three times double punch (jodan/gedan/chudan)
Seiken gyaku tsuki	Reverse punch (in zenkutsu dachi)
Seiken shita tsuki	Inverted punch

Strikes

Uraken shomen uchi	Backfist strike to face
Uraken sayu uchi	Backfist strike to the side
Uraken furi uchi	Backfist strike to kidney/spleen area to the side
Uraken mawashi uchi	Backfist roundhouse strike
Shuto gammen uchi	Knife-hand roundhouse strike to the temple
Shuto sakotsu uchi	Downward knife-hand strike to the collar bone
Shuto sakotsu uchi komi	Driving knife-edge strike to the collarbone
Shuto hizo uchi	Knife edge strike to the spleen
Shuto uchi uchi	Knife-hand inner strike
Haito	Inner knife hand strike
Nukite	Spear hand
Shotei	Palm heel

Blocks

Gedan barai	Downward parry block for groin area
Chudan soto uke	Outside block for stomach/chest (middle) area
Chudan uchi uke	Inside block for stomach/chest (middle) area
Jodan uke	Upward block for head area
Chudan uchi uke/gedan barai	Middle inside block/Downward block
Kake uke	Circular downward forearm block
Kote uke	Circular upward forearm block
Shuto enkei uke	Circular knife hand block
Shuto mawashi uke	Knife hands roundhouse block (in kokutsu dachi)
Kakiwake uke	Double downward circular block
Tensho	Rotating palm / rolling / fluid hand blocks
Koken uke	Wrist block
Chudan soete uchi uke	Middle reinforced inside forearm block
Seiken juji uke	Cross block
Shuto juji uke	Open hand upward cross block

Kicks

Hiza geri	Knee kick to the front
Kin geri	Snap kick to the groin
Mae geri	Front kick to the stomach area
Mae keage	Front straight leg kick
Mawashi geri	Roundhouse kick
Yoko keage	Side straight-leg kick
Kensetsu geri	Side kick to the knee
Yoko geri	Side thrust kick
Kakato geri	Heel kick
Soto mawashi geri	Outside circular straight-leg kick
Uchi mawashi geri	Inside circular straight-leg kick
Ushiro geri	Back kick
Kakato ushiro keage	Rising heel kick
Tobi mae geri	Jumping front kick
Kake geri	Hook kick
Tobi mawashi geri	Jumping roundhouse kick
Tobi yoko geri	Jumping side kick
Ushiro mawashi geri	Spinning back kick
Ushiro mawashi ashi barai	Back spinning foot sweep
Kakato otoshi geri	Axe kick with downward heel
Tobi ushiro geri	Jumping back kick
Abise geri	Rolling axe kick

Stances

Fudo dachi	Normal stance
Heiko dachi	Parallel stance
Sanchin dachi	Pigeon-toe stance
Zenkutsu dachi	Forward leaning stance
Kiba dachi	Horse riding stance
Musubi dachi	Open toes stance with heels together
Kokutsu dachi	Back leaning stance

Commands

Shinzen ni rei	Bow to the shinzen
Mokuso	Close eyes
Hajime	Begin
Mokuso yame	Open eyes
Kiai-te	Do techniques with a shout
Mawatte	Turn around
Naore	Return to ready position
Seiza	Go into the kneeling position
Yame	Return to relaxed position
Yoi	Ready to begin
Kametae	Move into the stance