



Karate Etiquette (Reigi-Saho) at KimNik Shotokan Karate Academy

A dojo is a building in which Japanese martial arts training occurs. The word “**Do**” means way, road, or path. The word “**Jo**” means place. Therefore, “**Do Jo**” means the place of the way and that is why as a karate-ka we respect our dojo.

Following are some karate etiquettes in our dojo:

- Be in the Dojo before class starts.
- Please leave your shoes in the lobby. We train with bare feet. Exceptions would be for medical reasons, but permission needs to be obtained from sensei in advance. If permission was given, only proper dojo shoes can be worn. Please tell your parents, guests to remove shoes at the door. Shoes should be put neatly away from the dojo entrance.
- Be sure your gi and obi are in proper order before entering the dojo. You should also check your gi and obi frequently during class to make sure they are in proper order.
- Bow before coming inside the dojo and say Osu!
- Come and say “Hi or Osu” to the sensei if he/she is not teaching a class or not busy. He will be happy to see you and it is a sign of respect.
- Greet your fellow students quietly.
- Respect must be given to all Instructors and any other high-grade student which Sensei has appointed to teach
- SENIORS must always be respected
- Seniority does not always mean having a higher grade. Seniority comes with years of training, age, and a higher grade.
- Sweep the Dojo floor, if it has not already been done. Lower ranks should relieve higher ranks.
- You are welcome to do your warm up, practice your Kihon (Techniques) or your kata; but do Kumite (Sparring).
- Class commences and finishes with **Seiretsu** (lineup) followed by meditation. All students line up in order of Seniority, facing the **Shomen** (front of the dojo). Students line up in one row



(space permitting) in order of rank! Within each rank, students also line up in order of seniority. The line should be centered behind the Instructor.

- After lining up; first Instructor will kneel, then the **Senpai** or the most senior student will announce Seiza (kneeling) then students kneel down together, the **Mokuso** will be announced for meditation. This is a brief period of meditation. During the meditation; close your eyes and focus on your breathing. This is a very important part of your training. Meditation at the beginning of the class helps you to get ready for a great training of mind and body. Meditation at the end of the class helps you cool down and relax before leaving the dojo. **Mokuso Yame** is announced for finishing the meditation. At the end of the class, Dojo Kun will be repeated by all the students. Following Dojo Kun there will be three salutes (Etiquette):
 1. **Shomen-ni-rei**; the shomen is the front wall of the dojo. The word “**Sho**” means true while “**men**” means face. The shomen is to be a sacred zone in the dojo for Japanese, but may not be felt the same by some none-Japanese to be a sacred zone in the dojo. However, it is simply the wall that everyone faces during class. Some clubs will hang the country’s flag together with some pictures of instructors. This salutation is to the front of the dojo and there is no Osu during this salutation. Only a silent bow is done.
 2. **Sensei-ni-rei**; salutation to the instructor
 3. **Otagani-ni-rei**; salutation to each other

At the end of the salutes, Sensei stands up for training to commence or to finish.

- After sensei stands up for training or to finish; students then stand, one at a time, from right to left, in order of seniority. This should proceed quickly and appear like a wave rolling from higher degree to lower ones.
- Members arriving late must take a **Seiza** (kneeling) position at the back of the Dojo and wait for the instructor’s permission before joining the class. On receiving permission, bow and say **Osu** from a seated position; and join in once directed.
- If you have to leave the dojo before class is over, it is best to inform the instructor in advance.
- No one is to leave the class without first obtaining permission from Sensei or Senpai.
- Referring to senior ranks by their title is required
- Noise prior to and after classes is to be kept to the minimum level.
- If you have a question during a class raise your hand. After hearing the information, say “OSU”.



- Osu is a sign of respect and is used generally in Karate, especially in the following situations:
 - Upon receiving any advice or command from sensei
 - When bowing at the start and finish of class
 - When bowing to your partner during Kumite
 - In any other appropriate situation
- Always wear clean Karate-Gi. Make sure your **Obi** (Belt) is correctly tied. When you secure the knot in your Obi, this symbolizes that you are willing to train with your heart as well as your body.
- Hair must be neat and away from the face.
- For safety reason jewelry; rings, bracelets, neck chains, watches or similar things must not be worn during training; if you cannot remove jewelry then it must be covered with tape.
- No chewing gum during the class
- It is considered very disrespectful to stand with crossed arms, lean against walls, yawn during class. A big part of your training is learning to stay focused regardless of distractions.
- For health and safety reasons, finger and toenails must be kept clean and short
- If you have any medical problems or are not able to attend the class, please make sure your instructor is aware of this. The best way is by emailing your sensei in advance.
- Talking without sensei's permission during the class is not acceptable from anyone with any rank
- Note that **Rei** is not a religious bow; it is a sign of respect
- A Karate-ka must never lose sight of what karate is. It has no place for arrogance or ignorance.
- Bullying of any kind (physical/verbal/emotional) by anyone will not be tolerated.
- Sensei is here to help you succeed and achieve your individual potential.