



# GRADING SYLLABUS OVERVIEW

Aikido training integrates several martial systems, including empty-hand (*tai-jutsu*), wooden sword (*aiki-ken*), wooden staff (*aiki-jo*) and knife (*tanto*). Yoga training also integrates several practices, including *yama* (restraints), *niyama* (observances), *asana* (yoga-postures), *pranayama* (breath-control), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses), *dharana* (concentration) and *dhyana* (meditation). This integrated training program is consistent with traditional Aikido-Yoga practices worldwide.

Aikido-Yoga's integrated approach encompasses the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual elements of your personal development. The significant positive impact on your body, as well as the more subtle effects on your nervous system and psyche enable you to explore yogic breathing in order to gain and retain more of the body's life-force (*prāna*). Gradually but surely, you open to the spiritual aspects of your being as you begin to appreciate that the real power of Aikido-Yoga lies in the domain of meditation and self-transformation.

Initial instruction in Aikido-Yoga involves the practice of certain practical exercises, postures and breathing techniques that promote optimum health, and facilitate extraordinary command over your mind and body in order to prepare you for a productive, life-long journey of self-discovery. The training then focuses on pragmatic ways for you to improve your ability to concentrate, turn your attention "*inward*" and understanding how to use your mind, body and breath during the execution of Aikido's empty-hand, sword (*bokken*), knife (*tanto*) and staff (*jo*) techniques. Through the adoption of yogic concepts, you start to build a better understanding of human consciousness and begin the process of discovering your authentic, true nature.

Based on this structured curriculum, a formal certification process is held periodically to advance you through the five preliminary white-belt (*beginner grade*) levels and the ten subsequent black-belt (*advanced grade*) levels.

Safety, manners and etiquette are integral components of Aikido-Yoga training, and are pre-requisite requirements in order to be eligible for advancement through each successive grade. Important prerequisites for advancement in the art, in addition to the commitment you make to your training, your instructor, and your fellow students, is your ability to demonstrate:

- Correct technical form, initially performed slowly, then gradually progressing to a more spontaneous, free flowing and creative application based on your understanding of the underlying principles of Aikido-Yoga;
- A heightened sense of awareness that encompasses the safety and well-being of all the people you interact with as part of your training;
- A refined sense of etiquette that fosters right-minded training in both yourself as well as in your training partners;
- Humility, tolerance and a natural sense of respect and gratitude for all things;
- A mature attitude that promotes ethical values, principles and standards in yourself as well as in your training partners.



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**Kyu Grades** : Demonstrate aikido empty-hand (*tai-jitsu*) and weapons (*bukiwaza*) techniques as outlined in the kyu grade grading syllabus. Demonstrate basic yoga postures (*asana*) and progressive understanding of *yama*-restraints and *niyama*-observances. Note: All eight limbs of yoga, including breath-control and meditation, are practiced and concurrently developed at all levels / grades.

**1<sup>st</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate aikido empty-hand (*tai-jitsu*) against uncooperative *uke(s)* delivering realistic, committed attacks and execution of weapons (*bukiwaza*) techniques as outlined in the grading syllabus. Execution of specified *asana*-yoga postures and *pranayama*-breath control practices. Possess a good understanding and practice of *yama*-restraints & *niyama*-observances.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate flowing, controlled and effective empty-hand (*tai-jitsu*) against uncooperative *ukes* delivering realistic, committed attacks and execution of weapons (*bukiwaza*) techniques as outlined in the grading syllabus. Precise execution of specified *asana*-yoga postures and *pranayama*-breath control practices. Possess well developed *pranayama*-breath control skills.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate full curriculum of empty-hand (*tai-jitsu*) against uncooperative *uke(s)* delivering realistic, committed attacks and execution of weapons (*bukiwaza*) techniques as outlined in the grading syllabus. Conduct a formal class outlining the fundamental underlying principles common to all dynamic application of empty-hand and weapons techniques. Advanced execution of specified *asana*-yoga postures and *pranayama*-breath control practices. Possess well developed *pratyahara*-withdrawal of the senses skills.

**4<sup>th</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate creative execution of empty-hand (*tai-jitsu*) against uncooperative *uke(s)* delivering realistic, committed attacks and execution of weapons (*bukiwaza*) techniques as outlined in the grading syllabus. Conduct a formal seminar outlining the significance of Japanese Swordsmanship to the application of empty-hand techniques. Demonstrate and explain advanced execution of specified *asana*-yoga postures and *pranayama*-breath control practices. Possess well developed *dharana*-concentration skills.

**5<sup>th</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate spontaneous execution of empty-hand (*tai-jitsu*) against uncooperative *uke(s)* delivering realistic, committed attacks and execution of weapons (*bukiwaza*) techniques as outlined in the grading syllabus. Conduct a formal seminar outlining the significance of Aikido-Yoga principles to the dynamic application of empty-hand techniques. Be able to effectively teach advanced execution of specified *asana*-yoga postures and *pranayama*-breath control practices. Possess well developed *dhyana*-meditation skills.

**6<sup>th</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate *takemusu* empty-hand (*tai-jitsu*) against uncooperative *uke(s)* delivering realistic, committed attacks and execution of weapons (*bukiwaza*) techniques as outlined in the grading syllabus. Conduct a seminar outlining the significance of Aikido-Yoga principles to the dynamic application of weapons techniques. Be able to effectively mentor other instructors in *yama*-restraints, *niyama*-observances, as well as advanced execution of specified *asana*-yoga postures, *pranayama*-breath control, *pratyahara*-withdrawal of the senses, *dharana*-concentration, and *dhyana*-meditation practices. Possess qualities that enable clear progression towards *samadhi*-realisation.

**7<sup>th</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate clear contribution, authentic compassion and selfless service in any field of endeavour. Conduct workshops in and/or teach in any field of endeavour and draw parallels Aikido-Yoga principles. Actively support the dissemination of Aikido-Yoga.

**8<sup>th</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate strong contribution, wisdom, compassion and selfless service in any field of endeavour over a number of years while dedicating oneself to the dissemination of essence to support the evolution of humanity based on an enlightened viewpoint. Actively support the dissemination of Aikido-Yoga.

**9<sup>th</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate outstanding contribution, wisdom, compassion and selfless service in any field of endeavour over a number of years together with clearly outstanding dissemination of essence to support the evolution of humanity based on an enlightened viewpoint. Actively support the dissemination of Aikido-Yoga.

**10<sup>th</sup> Dan** : Demonstrate exceptional contribution, wisdom, compassion and selfless service in any field of endeavour over a number of years with clearly exceptional dissemination of essence to support the evolution of humanity based on an enlightened viewpoint. Actively support the dissemination of Aikido-Yoga.

**Beyond 10<sup>th</sup> Dan** : “A simple, compassionate, free thinking human being, without badge or title, living a life of true authenticity and integrity” -- Quote by Julius Aib, founder Aikido-Yoga.