

What is an *Aikido* Class Like?

Aikido is the Japanese "martial art of peace." By this we mean it is primarily a defensive art. We are NOT in the business of punching and kicking and damaging people. Rather, we are in the business of resolving conflict through simple movement principles such as blending, turning, and allowing. We learn to use our bodies very well, making the tasks, challenges, and conflicts of everyday life more effortless, less stressful, more joyous.

Aikido can be translated as "The Way of Harmony with Energy." We learn to read others' movement intentions and blend with whatever is happening. Blending is joining & moving WITH whatever attack or conflict may be underway.

We learn many very practical body skills, such as balance, graceful movement, effective body use, movement awareness, healthy posture, and how to fall safely. Students are not in danger. We are not fighting. We mostly train in slow motion, so our bodies learn to move more perfectly. More advanced students work closely and carefully with beginners. Everyone respects the current skill & comfort level of their training partners. Aikido is not about winning and losing.

Aikido classes are actually fun. My promise is that everybody goes home grinning. Moving well feels great and gradually becomes effortless. You will feel really good after aikido class.

In our aikido classes, sensei (instructor) leads the class through 10 minutes of yoga-like stretches and warm-ups. Sensei asks a senior student to join him as he demonstrates an aikido movement or technique. The student is given an attack type (from a variety of grabs & strikes) and an intention. Intention can be a direction of movement, a state of mind, or the strategic aspect of their attack.

After a few demonstrations, explanations, and pointers, the students quickly pair up and begin working with the demonstrated technique. They take turns being the attacker. Sensei makes individual corrections and answers questions as needed. After a few minutes, sensei calls a halt and demonstrates another level or additional details about the technique. Students pair up again and continue.

Class goes for 90 minutes. In most classes, we practice a variety of aikido techniques and principles. Over time, everyone gradually transforms how they move, the impressions they make on others, and the confidence and presence they embody.

If you've always wanted to do a martial art, but fighting with people is not your idea of fun, this may be the art you've been looking for. Our aikido practice is extremely safety oriented. Over my 30 years in aikido, I've never seen a serious injury. In fact, I've seen and experienced occasions where serious injuries were avoided because our aikido training saved us from a bad fall or some other accident.

After class, we sit around for a few minutes (grinning), discussing anything sensei or students want to ask about or comment on. Please join us for a free class.

Aikido of Floyd

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June Bug Center, Floyd VA

6:45 – 8:15 every Wednesday night

See the recent half-page Floyd Press article about us at poolclinics.com/aikido.jpg.