

A Guide for New & Prospective Students

This text is intended for use by new or prospective students of the Kingston Kendo Club.



Kingston Kendo Club

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The Concept & Purpose of Kendo

Concept . To discipline the human character through the application of the principles of the Katana (sword).

Purpose . To mold the mind and body, to cultivate a vigorous spirit and through correct and rigid training, to strive for improvement in the art of Kendo, to hold in esteem human courtesy and honour, to associate with others with sincerity and forever pursue the cultivation of oneself.

This will make one be able to love his/her country and society, to contribute to the development of culture and to promote peace and prosperity among all peoples.

The Mindset of Kendo Instruction

Significance of the Shinai . For the correct transmission and development of Kendo, efforts should be made to teach the correct way of handling the shinai in accordance with the principles of the sword.

Kendo is a way where the individual cultivates one's mind (the self) by aiming for shin-ki-ryoku-ichi¹ utilizing the shinai. The “*shinai-sword*” should be not only directed at one's opponent but also at the self. Thus, the primary aim of instruction is to encourage the unification of mind, body and shinai through training in this discipline.

Reiho - Etiquette . Emphasis should be placed on etiquette to encourage respect for partners, and nurture people with a dignified and humane character.

Even in competitive matches, importance is placed on upholding etiquette in Kendo. The primary emphasis should thus be placed on instruction in the spirit and forms of reiho (etiquette) so that the practitioner can develop a modest attitude to life, and realize the ideal of koken-chiai².

Lifelong Kendo . Students should be encouraged to apply the full measure of care to issues of safety and health, and to devote themselves to the development of their character throughout their lives.

Kendo is a “*way of life*” that successive generations can learn together. The prime objective of instructing Kendo is to encourage the practitioner to discover and define their way in life through training in the techniques of Kendo. Thus, the practitioner will be able to develop a rich outlook on life and be able to put the culture of Kendo into use, thereby benefitting from its value in their daily lives through increased social vigour.



Figure 1: The AJKF's *concept and purpose* and the *mindset of instruction* embodies “do”.

The Concept and Purpose of Kendo and the Mindset of Kendo Instruction were established by the All Japan Kendo Federation in 1975 and 2007 respectively.

¹ Unification of mind, spirit and technique.

² The desire to achieve mutual understanding and betterment of humanity through Kendo.

Introduction

Welcome to the Kingston Kendo Club and congratulations on deciding to take an interest in the study of Kendo. Kendo is a rigorous and demanding martial art with emphasis on both physical and mental discipline. This guide is meant to give you information on some of the very basics of Kendo such as the equipment used by a beginner, rules and formalities of the dojo, and the terms used in a Kendo class. If you have any further questions which are not answered in this booklet, please be sure to ask!



Rules and Formalities

Classes are located in the gymnasium of Ecole Catholique Cathedrale, 301 Johnson St., Kingston, Ontario.

Please enter the building through the side door on Barrie St. just beside the small teacher's parking lot, not the double doors nearest to Brock St. This door will be opened prior to class time.

Parking is available in front of the school on Johnson St. as well as in the small teacher's parking lot on the western side of the school on Barrie St.

Facility Rules

There are a few rules regarding the use of the gymnasium at Ecole Catholique Cathedrale.

- Please do not bring food into the gym.
- All students must be accompanied by one or more of the Kingston Kendo Club (KKC) instructors while in the school.
- All members of the KKC must be in "Good Standing" (registered and fees up to date) with the Canadian Kendo Federation. The CKF provides liability insurance to it's members. No groups may use the school gym without this coverage.
- The KKC is responsible financially for any damage to the building. If damage is caused by a student's misbehavior, that person will be billed with the amount owing to the facility and thereafter removed from classes.
- The KKC is not responsible for any personal belongings or equipment which is lost, stolen, or damaged while within the school or during practice.



Figure 2: Ecole Catholique Cathedrale. "P" indicates parking and "E" is the entrance.

Dojo Formality

The following rules are centred around general dojo etiquette. In this context, dojo specifically refers to the practice area.

- Please arrive 15-20 minutes before class to allow time to change.
- Shoes are never to be worn inside the dojo; please remove them before you enter.
- Always bow before entering and leaving the dojo.
- Practice equipment such as a shinai or bokuto ought to be treated as though they are live weapons while in the dojo.
- Do not step over shinai or bokuto; go around.
- Horseplay or roughhousing is unacceptable in the dojo.
- If possible always walk behind other kendoka who are lined up, standing or seated, adjusting their gear. If this is not possible, please make a small bow as you walk in front of them with your right hand extended slightly.
- When the command is given to line up, please do so quickly. Students line up in descending order according to dan ranks. If equal rank then according to bogu, uniform, non-uniform, and age.
- When the command to sit (seiza) is given, students sit from most to least senior in a “domino” effect, e.g., one assumes seiza following the more senior person beside them.
- A series of commands will be given in order to conduct the opening (and closing) formalities of the class.

Don't worry, you will be shown the correct procedure for all formalities used during practice.

Ranking System in Kendo	
Unranked	New students
Kyu Grades	
6th Kyu	
5th Kyu	
4th Kyu	Begin bogu practice
3rd Kyu	
2nd Kyu	
1st Kyu	~1 year (minimum)
Dan Level	
1st Dan	Beginner phase
2nd Dan	
3rd Dan	
4th Dan	Intermediate phase
5th Dan	Sensei, ~15 years
6th Dan	
7th Dan	Advanced phase
8th Dan	

Table 1: Summary of ranks in Kendo. Belts are not worn to indicate rank however the system does follow the familiar “belt system”; kyu ranks are a series of “white belts” and dan ranks are equivalent to “black belts”.

Beginning and Ending Formalities	
Japanese	English
Seiretsu	Line up
Seiza	Assume seiza, the seated position
Ki o tsuke	Sit up straight (while in seiza)
Mokuso	Begin short meditation
Mokuso yame	Finish/end mokuso
Shomen ni rei	Bow to the shomen (symbolic dojo head)
Sensei ni rei	Bow to the sensei
Otagai ni rei	Bow to your peers

Table 2: Beginning and ending formalities observed in a Kendo practice.

Terminology

This section is intended to familiarize new students with enough terms and commands to get you through your first few practices.

Counting

Counting		Enumerations	
English	Japanese	English	Japanese
One	Ichi	First	Ipponme
Two	Ni	Second	Nihonme
Three	San	Third	Sanbonme
Four	Shi	Fourth	Yonhonme
Five	Go	Fifth	Gohonme
Six	Roku	Sixth	Ropponme
Seven	Shichi	Seventh	Nanahonme
Eight	Hachi	Eighth	Happonme
Nine	Kyu	Ninth	Kyuhonme
Ten	Ju	Tenth	Juponme

Table 3: Counting and enumerations.

Class Commands

Class Commands	
Japanese	English
Hajime	Begin
Yame	Stop
Kamae-to	Assume your stance
Osame-to	Put away your weapon
Sonkyo	Assume sonkyo, the formal crouching position
Yasume	Break/rest period

Table 4: Common commands used during a Kendo practice.

Names and Locations of the Shinai

You should familiarize yourself with the names and components of the shinai (bamboo practice sword).

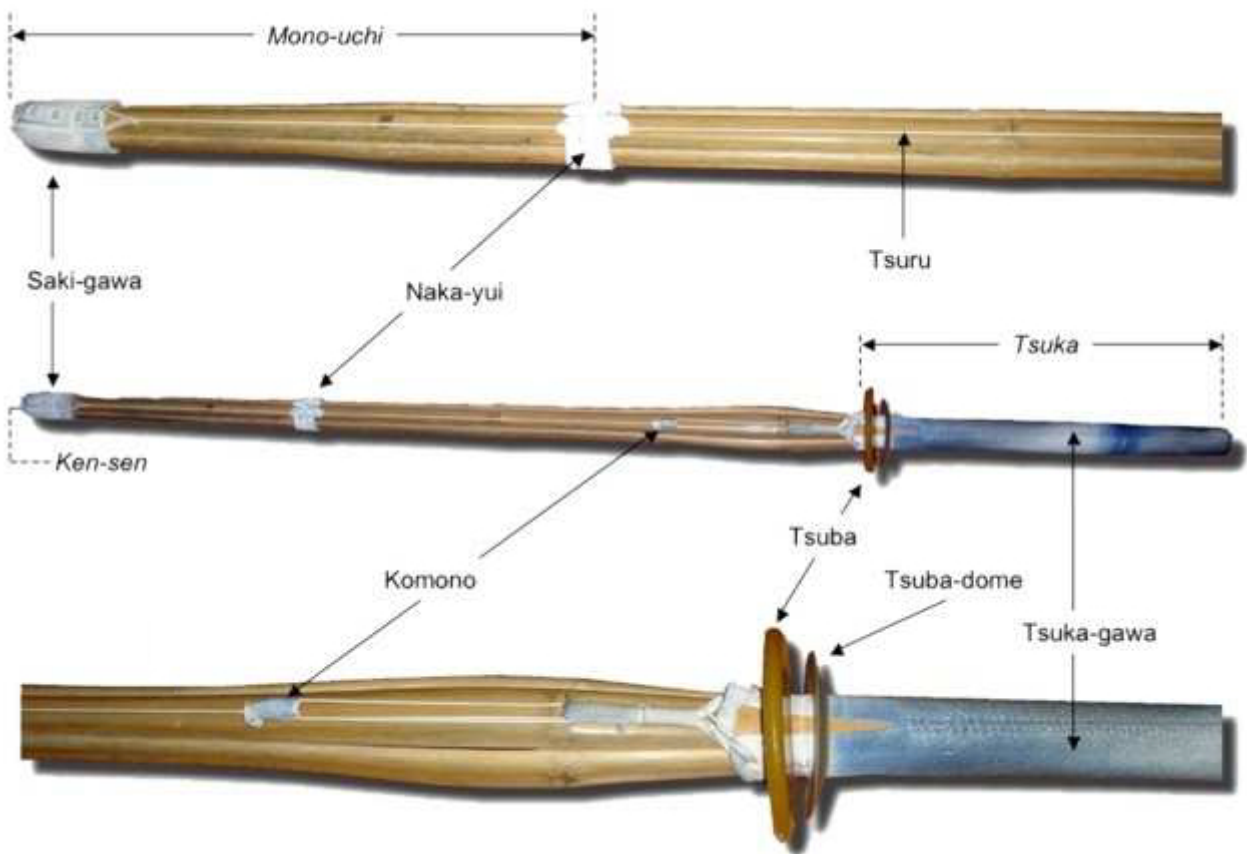


Figure 3: Components of the shinai

What's Next?

Trying a Class?

Your first week of classes is free and is considered your trial period to see if Kendo is what you are looking for. During this time you do not need to purchase any equipment or pay any fees. However upon joining, students will be required to purchase some equipment and pay the required club fees.

What to Wear?

If participating, please bring a change of clothes with you that you are comfortable wearing in a group, can move easily in, and don't mind sweating a bit in. A sweat suit, track suit, shorts and a T-shirt, or equivalent is recommended. If you wish to wear a martial arts uniform that you have from previous training, please do so.

If you have long hair it is recommended that you have it pulled back into a pony-tail (or equivalent) to keep it out of your way. If you do, please do so with an elastic. .

Fees

New members. All members are required to be registered with and pay their Canadian Kendo Federation (CKF) membership fee of \$35. The CKF provides, among many other things, liability insurance to it's members, which is required by the building we use for our practices. This fee is annual and paid to the CKF via their website. (<http://www.kendo-canada.com>)

The first months club membership fee, \$30 for students or military and \$35 for everyone else, is also required upon joining. Membership fees are due at the beginning of each month or can be paid in advance.

Please contact the club before hand to let us know you are coming. Interested students are welcome to watch any practice, but may participate only in beginner or mixed classe

Start-up Fees at a Glance	
Mandatory	
CKF membership	
–youth	\$15
–adult	\$35
First Month	\$30-\$35
Shinai	approx. \$30
Recommended	
Bokuto	approx. \$15-\$30
Total (adult)	\$110-\$130

Table 5: Summary of the “start-up” fees for new members of the KKC.

Club Fees & Equipment Costs	
Club Fees	
CKF membership	
–youth	\$15 (annual)
–adult	\$35 (annual)
Monthly membership	
–student/military	\$30
–adult	\$35
Equipment Fees	
Shinai	\$30+
Bokuto	
–tachi	\$15-\$30+
–kodachi	\$15-\$30+
Uniform	\$50-\$150+
Bogu	\$300+

Table 6: Summary of the various club and equipment fees. Equipment costs are approximate.

Equipment

Shinai and bokuto. New members are required to purchase a shinai. Beginners are also encouraged to purchase a bokuto (wooden sword). Shinai and bokuto are both generally around \$30+ each.

Uniform. Uniforms may be purchased by the student whenever they wish to invest in one, but are not required for the first few months of practice. Uniforms range from \$50-\$150+.

Bogu. Bogu (sparring armour) may be purchased after the KKC instructors have decided the student has attained a firm grasp on the fundamentals of Kendo. This usually takes between 6 to 12 months of regular practice. Bogu will usually cost a minimum of \$300+.

Bokuto come in two sizes. The long-sword (tachi) and the short-sword (kodachi). Both tachi and kodachi will eventually need to be invested in for learning kata, however beginners will use only the tachi.



Questions?

For further information please feel free to e-mail the club at kendokingston@gmail.com. Also be sure to check out the information sections of the KKC website:

- Kendo information: www.kingstonkendo.org/kendo_info.html
- Club information: www.kingstonkendo.org/club_info.html
- KKC calendar: www.kingstonkendo.org/calendar.html