

Getting started in Judo – Understanding the Big Ideas

Judo includes a lot of big ideas that we practice and implement across all these things we do. Sometimes it is hard to see these ideas in the midst of class. This document is for Judo beginners who want to understand Judo ideas as they prepare for Green belt and beyond.

Judo was founded in 1882 in Tokyo Japan by Jigoro Kano. Kano had studied from several different jujitsu teachers and struggled to find a unifying principle that could tie together all the separate techniques he was learning. Finally it dawned on him that all the throws, pins, chokes, and joint locks he studied were tied together by one Big Idea or Principle:

Maximum Efficiency with Minimum Effort

To practice Judo, you need other people. Track stars can run alone to improve their time; batters can use a pitching machine. Judo requires partners. For you to learn, you must also help others learn. That observation led Kano to the second Big Idea (Principle):

Mutual Benefit and Welfare

Our Judo club, the broader Judo community, and all the things we do as Judoka come from these two principles – even submission holds! You can begin your practice of Judo off the mat by observing the things you do and say and considering how these two principles might apply to you.

When we get on the mat, there is still a lot more to know. The rest of this document serves as an outline of Judo big ideas that you should learn as you prepare for Green Belt. It is broken down into three sections to help you organize the terms and concepts:

- **Judo Basics**
- **Technical Judo**
- **Competition Judo**

Judo has become an international sport. The Judo community has found that sticking to the original Japanese terms for things works well across the many languages spoken by Judo practitioners. In this document, we will introduce both an English term and the Japanese term together. You will hear the Japanese terms more often.

Judo has a lot of ideas that occur in threes. We are going to present these sets to help you remember them and to help you get the big picture quickly. Since Judo is complex and real, no one presentation method will be perfect. As you grow in Judo, you may find more complex ways to hang on to the Judo concepts. That's part of your growth in Judo. In fact, each set will also have a "Don't forget..." idea that will extend the three main ideas.

Judo Basics

Judo's History

1. Founder – Jigoro Kano
2. Place – Tokyo Japan
3. Time – 1882

Don't forget: Judo became an Olympic Sport in the 1964 Olympics

Judo Uniform

1. Pants -- Shitabaki
2. Jacket -- Uwagi
3. Belt – Obi

Don't forget: Your sandals (zori) are part of your Judo uniform too even if you don't wear them on the mat!

Where Judo is Done

1. Practice Hall – Dojo
2. Competition Hall – Shiaijo
3. Mats – Tatami

Don't forget: Judo can be done anywhere and sometimes you'll practice Judo outside of the traditional spaces. Some people consider the weight training room or their yoga class part of their Judo training.

Bowing Etiquette

1. Bow on to the Mat
2. Bow at the beginning and end of Class
3. Bow to your Practice Partner

Don't forget: In traditional Dojo, one also bows on entrance into the Dojo itself before even getting on the mat.

Levels of Judo Organization

1. Club Level – DC Judo Club
2. Yudanshakai (Regional Level Black Belt Association) – Shufu (National Capital Region)
3. National Level Organizations – USJF (or USJA or USA Judo)

Don't forget: You practice Judo at a club and different clubs have different membership requirements. Rank promotion and competition opportunities are organized by the higher level organizations.

National Judo Organization

1. USA Judo – recognized by the US Olympic Committee as the National Governing Body for Judo
2. United States Judo Federation (USJF) – Organized from the military Judo yudanshakai in the 1950s
3. United States Judo Association (USJA) – Organized to support the development of Judo in the 1950s

Don't forget: DC Judo is a member club of the United States Judo Federation. You will need to join one of the National Organizations to advance to Green belt. Senseis Leah and Terence each belong to both USA Judo and USJF. In all cases, membership in a National Organization provides supplemental medical insurance coverage for your practices and your competition events.

Judo Ranks (oops – not in threes!)

1. Rokkyu – White Belt, beginner
2. Gokkyu – Green Belt, advanced beginner
3. Yonkyu – Blue Belt, intermediate student
4. Sankyū, Nikkyū, Ikkyū – Brown Belt, Three levels of advanced student
5. Shodan, Nidan, Sandan, Yodan, Godan – Black Belt, first five levels
6. Rokudan, Shichidan, Hachidan – Red and White Striped Belt, three levels of advanced black belts
7. Kudan, Judan – Red Belt, highest levels of black belt

Don't forget: At any given time, you only need to focus on what is coming next. We advance in rank one at a time.

Technical Judo

Judo Techniques

1. Throwing Techniques – Nagewaza
2. Matwork Techniques – Katamewaza
3. Striking Techniques – Atemiwaza (not practiced in sport Judo)

Don't forget: Judo also contains other very specialized techniques that don't fall into these categories like those to restrain someone under arrest or to stop a nose bleed!

Throwing Techniques

1. Hand Techniques – Te Waza (like Ippon Seionage)
2. Hip Techniques – Koshi Waza (like O Goshi)
3. Foot Techniques – Ashi Waza (like O Soto Gari)

Don't forget: As you advance in Judo, you will learn sacrifice techniques (Sutemi Waza) that involve throwing yourself on the ground to throw your opponent.

Matwork Techniques

1. Pinning Techniques – Osae Waza
2. Chokes – Shime Waza
3. Joint Locks – Kansetsu Waza

Don't forget: Transitioning into and between these techniques is an art in itself. Your judo practice will include these transitions into and out of the basic techniques

Using Your Body in Judo

1. Posture – Shisei including natural posture (shizentai) and defensive posture (jigotai)
2. Advancing and Retreating – Shintai including normal walk (ayumi ashi) and following feet (tsugi ashi)
3. Body Turning – Tai Sabaki

Don't forget: Judo also has a set of ground based movements like the Shrimp or Ebi

Judo Match Action

1. Grip – Kumikata
2. Move
3. Attack

Don't forget: Once a match starts, the pace of your Judo attack should be no slower than one attack in 15 seconds. If you fail to attack at that pace, you may receive a penalty.

Parts of a Throw

1. Off-balancing – Kuzushi
2. Fitting in – Tsukuri
3. Throw – Kake

Don't forget: Follow through when throwing so that you can control your opponent's body on the way down. This control avoids any bad landings and keeps your opponent from spinning out. Sometimes this follow through is called Kime (decision.)

Competition Judo

Judo Scoring

1. Ippon – Full point; match ending score achieved by throwing the opponent on their back with force, speed and control, by pinning for 25 seconds, or forcing the opponent to submit (tap out)
2. Wazari – Half point; two wazari add up to end the match
3. Yuko – Quarter Point; do not accumulate but break ties

Don't forget: Since the 1970's Judo used an eighth point score, Koka, which was recently eliminated from Judo scoring.

Getting Ippon

1. Throwing opponent onto his back with force, control and speed
2. Holding down opponent in pin for 25 seconds
3. Opponent submits (taps out)

Don't forget: If your opponent passes out from a choke or their arm breaks, they also lose the match by ippon.

Common Match Lengths

1. Senior (18+) competition – 5 minutes
2. Junior (17-) competition – 3 mins
3. Masters (30+) competition – 4 minutes

Don't forget: Match times may vary depending on the level of event. High level competition is usually 5 minutes but may be shorter in local tournaments. Golden score (overtime) is usually approximately half the match time.

Ending a Judo Match

1. Ippon scored – Scoring player wins
2. Time ends with scoring advantage – Advantaged player wins
3. Time ends with no scoring advantage – Golden score (overtime) continues until one player scores

Don't forget: If Golden Score ends without a scoring advantage, referee and judges uses flags to decide winning player.

Judo Penalties

1. Shido – Infraction; first one is free, second and subsequent score points against you
2. Progressive Hansokumake – Disqualification for four shidos in one match; lose match
3. Direct Hansokumake – Disqualification for dangerous or unsportsmanlike action; lose match and eliminated from completion

Don't forget: Judo rules continue to change with the demands of international competition and televised sports. Earlier judo rules had two other penalties, chui (scored as a yuko against the player) and keikoku (scored as a wazari against the player.)

Judo Refereeing

1. Referee – Runs the match and awards scores
2. Line Judges – Support the referee and may overrule his score
3. Jury – Senior referees observing from off mat to provide technical assistance and quality control to on mat personnel.

Don't forget: Each match also had a time keeper, score keeper and match keeper that directly support the referees.

Types of Judo Competitors

1. Shiai Competitor – fights matches and competes in local, regional, national or international competitions
2. Kata Competitor – practices and demonstrates traditional, formal Judo katas containing techniques used by shiai competitors as well as dangerous techniques preserved in these prearranged practice forms that are not allowed in shiai.
3. Non-Competitor – Judo practitioners who choose to practice within the club only and do not compete in either shiai or kata.

Don't forget: Many people change the type of competition they prefer. Promotion comes fastest for shiai competitors and slowest for non-competitors. In advancing to Green belt, all types of competitors are the same. Once you have achieved Green belt, you will have to choose which path you will follow within the limited practice time available.

Green Belt Promotional Requirements

Promotional requirements for members of DC Judo are set by the Shufu Yudanshakai, our regional black belt association. We do not promote anyone within the club. Promotions are done by the Shufu Board of Examiners at Promotional Events held in April and November.

The requirements for each rank are set down in a lengthy promotional requirements document which is summarized below. Only the Green belt requirements are listed. Subsequent ranks increase the number of techniques and/or the test scores.

Gokyu (Green Belt)

1. Time in Grade: 3 months
2. Competition Points: None required before examination
3. Written test: minimum passing score 60%
4. passing score - average of 5 out of 10 .
 - Basics (all of these)
 - Ukemi
 - Kumikata
 - Shisei
 - Shintai
 - Kuzushi
 - Taisabaki
 - Throwing (Nage-waza)
 - Two throws from the Dai-Ikkyo (must know all 8)*
 - De-ashi-harai (Foot sweep)
 - Hiza-guruma (Knee Wheel)
 - Sasae-tsurikomi-ashi (Lifting Blocking Foot)
 - Uki-goshi (Floating Hip)
 - Osoto-gari (Major Outer Reap)
 - O-goshi (Major Hip)
 - Ouchi-gari (Major Inner Reap)
 - Seoi-nage (Shoulder Throw)
 - Pins (Osae-waza)
 - Two pins for among the following*
 - Kesa Gatame (Scarf Hold)
 - Kata Gatame (Shoulder Hold)
 - Yoko Shiho Gatame (Side Quarter Hold)
 - Kami Shiho Gatame (Upper Quarter Hold)

- Chokes (Shime-waza)
One Mae Shime Waza (Front choke) like
Nami Juji Jime (Normal Cross Choke)
Gyaku Juji Jime (Reversed Cross Choke)
Kata Juji Jime (Mixed Cross Choke)

One Ushiro Shime Waza (Rear choke) like
Hadaka Jime (Naked Choke)
Okuri Eri Jime (Sliding Choke)
Kataha Jime (Single Wing Choke)

- Joint locks (Kansetsu Waza)
One Arm Lock like
Juji Gatame [or Ude-Hishigi-Juji Gatame] (Cross armlock)
Ude Gatame [or Ude-Hishigi-Ude Gatame] (Straight armlock)
Ude Garami (Arm Entanglement)