



Lakewood Budo Kai

Fujitsu, Karate, and Women's Self Defense

Bowing in the Martial Arts

You learn how to bow your very first class. You do it because it is one of the rules of the Dojo, but do you know what it really means?

You probably think you spend a lot of time bowing. You bow when you enter the Dojo, you bow when you step onto the mats, you bow to your instructor at the beginning and end of class, you bow when you work out with a partner, and you bow when you use martial arts weapons.

In our traditional school, learning the martial arts means more than just learning physical techniques, you also learn traditions and protocols. The Bow is a very important part of those traditions.

A bow is a sign of respect, if performed correctly. Bowing incorrectly looks disrespectful and shows to the other person that you do not understand the meaning behind the gesture or the importance of etiquette.

There are some simple steps you can follow to make sure your bow is performed correctly:

- When we bow, we bow with our eyes lowered slightly and our body bent at the waist. This helps us remember that we are learning not only self defense techniques, but also respect, humility, discipline, and concentration.
- It is always better to be more respectful. So, when in doubt, bow. On the other hand, don't bow so often that your act appears meaningless.
- When bowing, make sure your hands, feet, and body are in the proper position before you start the bow. A shallow or brief bow is considered an insult so a junior rank should bow lower and longer to someone with a senior (higher level) rank.