

# JAPANESE SPORTS IN ICELAND



Japanese Embassy in  
Iceland

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## AIKIDO

Aikido (合気道) is a modern Japanese martial art developed by Morihei Ueshiba as a synthesis of his martial studies, philosophy and religious beliefs. Ueshiba's goal was to create an art that practitioners could use to defend themselves while also protecting their attackers from injury.

Aikido is often translated as "the way of unifying (with) life energy" or as "the way of harmonious spirit". According to the founder's philosophy, the primary goal in the practice of aikido is to overcome oneself instead of accelerating violence or aggressiveness.

## Aikikai Reykjavík

Aikikai Reykjavik is located in the centre of Reykjavik, Ármúla 19, and have been introducing aikido to Icelandic society since 1996. Currently total of 22 students are training in Aikikai with a teacher from Italy, Mr. Marco. (Interview with Mr. Marco on P. 2)

Aikikai offers training for both children and adults a few times a week, kids class starts at 5PM and adults at 6PM.

Beginners are welcome on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays Saturdays are for basic technique or general training classes. Experienced aikidoka will also find these basic training classes challenging. Adults classes are held in English.

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Photo credit: Aikikai reykjavik Facebook



## Interview with the teacher Mr. MARCO



Mr. Marco Solimene, is a senior instructor at Aikikai Reykjavík with aikido 3-dan (3rd grad). Mr. Marco has been practising aikido for 16 years and contributing to Icelandic martial arts society through teaching this amazing sport for many years. He used to practise Karate before, however after he was introduced to aikido, he immediately got connected to it and fell in love with the concept and philosophy of aikido. "The difference I found between aikido and other martial arts are that aikido requires more of mind of peace and spirit of harmony. I would say aikido is very good for people's soul and their body as an exercise, and it will defiantly help you balance mentally and physically when you are tired or stressed out." he said. Mr. Marco also said everyone is welcome to join the class anytime even if you are completely a beginner.



AIKIDO IS A SPORT  
OF PEOPLES SPIRIT.  
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AND PHYSICALLY.

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## FATHER AND SON

### Practising Aikido Together

Mr. Stjepan (Picture on the right) has been practising aikido for 10 years, 9 years in Croatia and 1 year in Iceland. First, he started practising Judo in Croatia when he was a little boy. After some years, he wanted to try some other martial arts that is more gentle and spiritual. "I was very inspired by the philosophy of Morihei Ueshiba, Japanese martial artist and founder of the martial art of aikido. I was taught we can always find a way to solve things peacefully with aikido and it's mind" he said. Mr. Stjepan's son also enjoys aikido with his dad, and he is now practising hard for next grading test.

“Peace and harmony are to be desired over violence. If so, how should we deal with violence directed at us in the form of a physical attack? Ueshiba felt that the answer didn't lie in a violent response (if you hit me, I will hit you back). Instead, we should seek to avoid conflict. Bearing that, neutralise an attack by seizing control of the situation and directing it towards a resolution in which no one is harmed.”  
philosophy of Morihei Ueshiba



Mr. Johannes and his son, Fjalar (Picture on the left) have been members of Aikikai for a few years. After trying some other sports, Mr. Johannes found aikido the most beneficial sport for a physical exercise. "I had some previous experience of aikido 25 years ago, and now me and my son are practising it together." he said.

Aikido training offers an excellent program for all-around physical fitness, flexibility, and relaxation.

If you are looking for a sport or an exercise that suits you best, you can surely give it a try in this wonderful Aikikai!