

# Ki & Aikido Testing

Students attending classes at Northern VA Ki Aikido are not required to test, but students are encouraged to take advantage of the testing program. It is a systematic method for improving your skills. The ranking system in ki-aikido is also a means of marking your progress and providing motivation for your continued training. Mastery and meaningful achievement in any discipline can only come with regular practice. *The ultimate goal of your training should be personal growth and the desire to improve your skills, rather than simply acquiring rank.*

**Who is eligible to test?** To be eligible to test, you must have the required number of class hours, and the recommendation of a regular VKS instructor. Ranks of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu, 1<sup>st</sup> Kyu, Chukyu and above, must have the approval of the head instructor. **Please note that the number of class hours required for each rank are a *minimum* only, and additional practice will be necessary to achieve the proficiency necessary for advancement.** For this reason, our dojo schedules regular periods of guided “**open mat**” time where skills learned in class can be polished. Since regular class time is targeted to the needs of many students, this extra practice time should be focused on the specific requirements of the level you are preparing for. Additional special training sessions are frequently scheduled for this purpose. Feel free to ask one of the senior instructors about this.

## **Tips for testing:**

1. Make sure you fully understand **all** of the requirements for each test level well in advance. Learn the names for each of the required **ki** and **hitori waza** exercises and the **aikido techniques**. This will help you to “perform with confidence” on test day. A list with the names of required techniques is available the dojo and for download from the dojo website: [www.novakiaikido.org](http://www.novakiaikido.org).
2. Do not overlook the importance of the **ki** and **hitori waza** test requirements. These are an important part of your test. Your understanding of ki principles should also be reflected in the aikido portion of the test. This is demonstrated by your use of: rhythm, ma-ai, largeness of ki, seshi, effective pins and all the other elements that come from practicing aikido with **mind and body unification**. If you don't know what these terms mean, please ask.
3. **Instructors recommend test candidates on the basis of who has already been practicing for their test, so don't wait to be asked to start preparing for your next test.** Test candidates are usually asked to perform one or more informal pre-tests, or mock exams as a means to refine your test preparation. This will give you an overview of what the test will be like. Again, feel free to discuss this with a senior instructor. They are there to help you with your training.
4. It is recommended that you find one or more training partners to work with you in getting yourself ready to test. This can be someone at your current level, or a more advanced student. Instructors and advanced students are also encouraged to “mentor” newer students. Do not hesitate to ask one of them if you have questions.
5. How well a student performs on an examination is ultimately *the responsibility of the student taking the exam*. Our instructional staff is there to support you with your training, but it's your commitment that will lead you to success in ki-aikido.