

Falling and Ukemi



Uke – the person who is attacking and about to receive the throw or counter attack

Tori- the person who throws or counters the attack

Ukemi is the art of receiving a throw or restraint with minimal impact. The idea is to escape personal harm and to maintain the ability to defend oneself.

Ukemi skills are developed by cultivating awareness. In this way, one learns to feel what the tori is doing and may then respond accordingly. Ukemi is about feeling your opponents' actions and responding as the technique unfolds. Ukemi is not submitting. **It is about being in control of your response to your partners' technique.**

Ukemi demonstrates a great deal about ones understanding of the role they have with their partner as well as ones understanding of technique. It also reveals quite a lot about ones character.

A skilled uke attacks with spirit and strong accurate technique. Since the uke often knows the counter attack that is about to unfold he must receive it honestly and without prejudice and instantly switch to the defensive art of ukemi.

Developing into a good uke requires more than good technique. Humility, an ability to work harmoniously with others, an open and fluid mind, and the discipline to work at a level that is appropriate for ones partner is essential.

“There are various defensive methods, but the principle is to evade the opponent's strength or by changing one's position, to reduce the effect of the strength applied. Another method is by pushing or pulling, to weaken the force the opponent intends to apply. To be able to affect any of these defensive actions, one must acquire a free and quick movement of the body.

As I have often said if one hates to be thrown, one cannot expect to become a master of the art. By taking throws time after time, one must learn how to take falls and overcome the fear of being thrown. Then one will become unafraid of being attacked and be able to take the initiative in attack.”

--- Jigoro Kano, Founder of Judo

