

# Erasmus+

## Autjudo Project



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AUTJUDO

Adaptive Judo Best Practice

# HANDBOOK

# AUTJUDO

**A Handbook on how to teach Judo to people  
with Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

Version 1.0, 2022



## 1. Preface

This Autjudo Best Practice Handbook introduces the reader to the world of adapted judo practices for people with autism (ASD). Autjudo combines two very important passions for the authors of this handbook, Autism and Judo.

The handbook aims to inform, educate and enlighten people who are professionally or personally interested in adapted judo for people with ASD, including judo coaches and teachers, students and researchers, physical and special education professionals, parents and volunteers.

This handbook comprises of eleven chapters which are packed with informative and exciting information in relation to how to start an adaptive judo programme, assess new students, develop class plans, teaching techniques and styles, learning through play, adaptive kata practice, autism awareness and much more...

This handbook has been written by a team of experienced and passionate adaptive judo specialists who have come together to share their extensive knowledge and experience with you, the reader. This handbook will outline the necessary actions and requirements needed in order to establish and develop an adaptive judo program.

But first, we will present a small overview of our two related topics, Autism and Judo.

### Autism (ASD)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder with symptoms that appear within the first three years of life. Most children with autism look like other kids but they act and interact in ways that feel different from the behaviours of other children. When interacting with others, they may respond in unexpected ways, or they may not interact at all.

Autism is a spectrum disorder, which means that it appears in a range of forms and levels of severity. Some individuals develop typical capabilities in terms of speech and language and develop exceptional skills, but struggle with lifelong social and behavioural differences. Others may have challenges in communication, sensory sensitivities, and behavioural issues, such as excessive tantrums, repetitive behaviours and aggression. The good news is that appropriate interventions and programs can improve outcomes for many, if not most, people diagnosed with ASD.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), ASD now affects 0.62% of the global population, as the prevalence of the disorder has increased at a rapid pace in recent years.

It is also worth noting that in some developed countries and areas (such as Hong Kong, South Korea and the US), the disorder is diagnosed at a much higher rate, while the lack of resources in many less developed countries means that the disorder tends to be underdiagnosed. All of this indicates that ASD is a growing global public health concern.

It has been shown that physical exercise and participation in athletic programs can lead to substantial improvements in the lives of people with ASD. Researchers have found that people with ASD who take part in these programs, achieve physical health benefits such as weight control, improved physical skills and enhanced cardiovascular health. Other studies have focused on the psychosocial benefits that these athletics programs offer, finding improvements in social and communication skills.

People with ASD are often not very physically active, in part because of their tendency to engage in highly sedentary activities that do not involve significant energy expenditure. Meanwhile, members of this population frequently have fewer opportunities to take part in sports programs due to their social behaviours and to the lack of sports activities aimed at them. All of these factors point to an urgent need to create adapted sporting programs for children with ASD.

In chapter eleven we will cover autism in more detail.

## Judo

Judo is a sport with an ancient Japanese culture and rituals. It has its own culture, systems, heritage, customs, and traditions. Moreover, the principle of gentleness is carried from the practice mats and into most students' lives, in their interactions with their friends, family, work colleagues, and even strangers.

Judo is a sport where interaction with others is essential. Judo, like most martial art type sports, has a “code of conduct”. This helps people to learn how to respect rules, how to respect others and most importantly how to respect themselves.

Adaptive judo is defined as *“normal where possible, adapted where necessary”*. Adapted judo programs for people with intellectual disabilities including ASD are well established in many countries in Europe and around the world. The spread of these programs has led to continuous growth in the number of participants in this activity. Thanks to this growing popularity, a number of adapted judo competitions are now held in various places. A number of international organisations have led the way in organising a growing number of competitive opportunities for people with ASD, intellectual disabilities and physical challenges.



Judo is an Olympic sport, Paralympic sport, Special Olympic sport and a fully inclusive Adaptive Judo sport, making it an incredibly diverse and inclusive activity, suitable for all ages, genders, abilities and disabilities.

The characteristics of judo activities make them well suited to the population with ASD because of their moderate to strenuous intensity and the added mental components of concentration and self-control. Judo can also be appealing to young people with ASD because of the repetitive nature of the exercises involved. Recent research into the effects of judo participation on children with ASD has yielded promising initial results, pointing to psychosocial benefits such as increasing both social skills and self-esteem. Participants in these programs have also tended to increase the overall time spent on moderate to strenuous physical activity and reduced the time they spend on sedentary behaviour.

We hope you enjoy reading this handbook as much as we enjoyed writing it!



## 2. Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we would like to thank the European Union Erasmus+ programme for giving us the opportunity and funding to develop our Autjudo project and create this handbook.

This Autjudo project has brought together six European countries, with participants from all six countries contributing to the creation of this Autjudo Judo Best Practice Handbook.

We would like to acknowledge their incredible work ethics, their extensive knowledge and expertise and their unwavering dedication to the success of this project and the development and creation of this publication.

We would like to introduce you to each of the participating organisations and educational institutions and to the individuals who have skilfully contributed to this handbook.

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### 3. Teaching Methods and Styles

This chapter aims to highlight the different teaching methods and styles that are used to assist in the participation of people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in judo. ASD is a collective term used to describe people who have difficulties with social communication, interaction and imagination. There are many different approaches to consider when teaching students with ASD. From our point of view, it makes sense that judo teachers have a broad repertoire of teaching methods and teaching styles in order to be able to best facilitate their students' needs and abilities. In this chapter we will explain different methods and styles and link them to possible needs of judoka with ASD.



## Chapter 3

## Theories

Currently, three important neuropsychological theories are mentioned in science to explain peculiarities of autistic information processing: Theory of Mind, Theory of Central Coherence, and Theory of Executive Functions. Usually, difficulties in more than one of these three areas are observed in individuals with ASD. Since knowledge of these theories increases understanding of autistic perception, thought and action facilitates everyday interaction with people with ASD, we will briefly review these theories.

### Theory of Mind

The term "Theory of Mind" refers to the ability to attribute mental states (feelings and thoughts) of other persons and oneself, i.e., the ability to recognize, understand, and predict one's own thoughts, feelings, desires, intentions, and ideas and those of others (Remschmidt et al. 2006).

Knowing that each person has thoughts and feelings and that these may differ from those of others forms the basis for understanding social situations (Colle et al. 2006). The Theory of Mind ability begins to develop around the age of four and subsequently becomes more differentiated. Prior to this, people consider their perceptions and thoughts to be the only truth. They function egocentrically. Antecedents of Theory of Mind in human development form the capacity for imitation, divided attention, and symbolic play (cf. Roeyers and Warreyn, 2010).

Studies have shown that deficits in Theory of Mind development exist in individuals with ASD. While the lack of Theory of Mind is obvious in people with severe autistic disorders, people with milder autistic disorders such as Asperger syndrome can often compensate well for this deficit in manageable social situations using their intelligence.

In everyday life and on the judo mat, the lack of Theory of Mind is often reflected in the fact that people with ASD do not understand ambiguities because they focus on the content of statements without including prosody and/or facial expressions in the interpretation. Therefore, they have difficulties in understanding jokes and irony, for example. When they seek friendships, they often get into situations where they are taken advantage of. They insufficiently understand that a friendship is based on reciprocity and built on trust and loyalty on both sides.



## Central Coherence

Central coherence is the ability to grasp overarching (social) patterns and the whole context (Happé et al., 2006). The capacity for central coherence is impaired in people with ASD. In contrast, the tendency to process stimuli in isolation and without context is strong. It is often said that people with ASD have a pronounced perception of detail. Studies have shown that people with a mild form of ASD are able to perceive holistically if they are explicitly asked to do so. Without appropriate guidance, however, they focus on details. Both styles of perception have their advantages or disadvantages in certain situations. In order to understand complex social situations, a holistic perception (central coherence) is indispensable. When analysing mistakes, however, a detail-oriented perception (local coherence) is more helpful.

This particularity is repeatedly demonstrated in everyday life by the ability of people with ASD to delve into a special field and acquire amazing knowledge and skills in this area. Specialised areas can be manifold. People with ASD, who are often forgetful about everyday things, show impressive memory skills in relation to their special field.

## Executive Functions

The executive functions are the ability to plan and act in a goal-oriented way. These functions are impaired in people with ASD. Impaired executive functions are also found in ADHD, Tourette's syndrome or social behaviour disorders (Pennington et al. 1996). These disorders have in common a lack of inhibition of reactions that are detrimental to goal-directed action. For example, people with ASD often tend to react impulsively and aggressively when angry. They seem unable to consider alternative behaviours. Fears of change, special interests and lack of forward thinking find their origin in deficient executive functions (Freitag, 2009).

In everyday life, this problem is very clearly reflected in the fact that procedures are often learned very laboriously and best with visual support. Unexpected changes of persons or sequences lead to strong uncertainty in people with ASD and subsequently, not infrequently, to aggressive behaviour.

## What does the theory look like in practice?

How exactly do people with ASD differ from neurotypical<sup>1</sup> (Brusie, 2021) people now in everyday life and on the judo mat?

Autistic symptoms can be divided into two main groups:

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<sup>1</sup> "Neurotypical" is a term that's used to describe individuals with typical neurological development or functioning. It is not specific to any particular group, including autism spectrum disorder.



Social symptoms: e.g. weak social motivation, limited verbal and non-verbal communication, problems empathizing with others and difficulties with social rules and concepts.

Non-social symptoms: e.g. restricted interests, repetitive behaviour, attention to detail, sensory hypersensitivities.

Characteristics:

- Difficulty understanding language and expressing themselves linguistically.
- Difficulty understanding typical social interactions and interacting with others.
- Atypical, sometimes repetitive movement patterns.
- Varying sensory experiences.
- Unusual learning and problem solving behaviour.
- Focused thinking and special interests.
- Need for consistency, routine and order.

From the Theory of Mind, it can be deduced that clear, short unambiguous instructions in judo lessons can be very helpful for people with ASD. We then also recommend the following pedagogical behaviour from a judo teacher:

- Remain factual and refrain from using figurative language or irony.
- Give short, clear "W" instructions (when, what, where, why).
- Speak in a calm, steady voice.
- Use few gestures.

From the weak central coherence theory, we can deduce that it can be difficult for people with ASD to see wholeness because they perceive many details. As judo teachers, we find it important to praise the attention to detail that people with ASD have and not to criticise any slowness that may result.

Due to the impairment in executive functions, we know that some people with ASD have difficulty with spontaneity and unexpected changes.

As a judo teacher, you can provide good support by creating high, binding structures. Announcing deviations as long as possible in advance, and clearly structuring processes, will greatly improve outcomes.



Due to the possible limited imitation abilities, we believe it is important to give repetitive instructions that are not only verbal and to address several senses. The isolated use of sensory instructions can support perception. For example, the judo instructor can physically demonstrate once with spoken instructions and once without speaking. Judo can also be learned by experiencing body sensations. For example, feeling how to lie down, feeling how to roll, etc.

### Teaching methods in judo with reference to ASD

Depending on the training group and the training goals, a judo instructor will design his training differently. As a rule, training groups with people with different needs, different impairments, including people with ASD, are very diverse in content. They all have different physical and mental conditions. This means that not only should the goals be chosen individually, but also the teaching method.

In theory, we speak of open versus structured learning methods.

### Structured Learning Method

In the structured learning method, the judo teacher is central. He/she structures the learning paths and determines what is done via a holistic or partial learning method. Often this learning method starts with a demonstration of a judo technique. There are instructions. There is time to practice. The judo teacher observes and advises individually. He/she chooses his/her position carefully, shows the judo technique holistically or divides it into partial steps. He/she tries to use different senses for the perception of the participants.

This method is often used in judo lessons. It gives the participants stability and structure. Our target group in particular can easily grasp this method.

### The Open Learning Method

The Open Learning Method, on the other hand, gives room for discovery and finding creative solutions. Here, for example, there is a judo task: "turn your partner on his back". There is time to try things out and look for solutions. The solutions are presented and then, possibly, practiced in a structured way.

This method, on the other hand, is suitable for participants who have difficulty in imitation and have a limited ability to imitate. The ability to focus may also be limited. This depends on individual development and maturation.

Whether a judo teacher chooses a structured or more open learning method depends not only on the target group, but also on the primary or secondary objective. Learning goals can be motor, cognitive, educational, social and health-related, and are pursued in the medium and long term. Methodological principles help to work towards the

goal in a structured way. Some of these are: from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the difficult, from the static to the dynamic, or from the floor to the standing position in a specific judo situation.

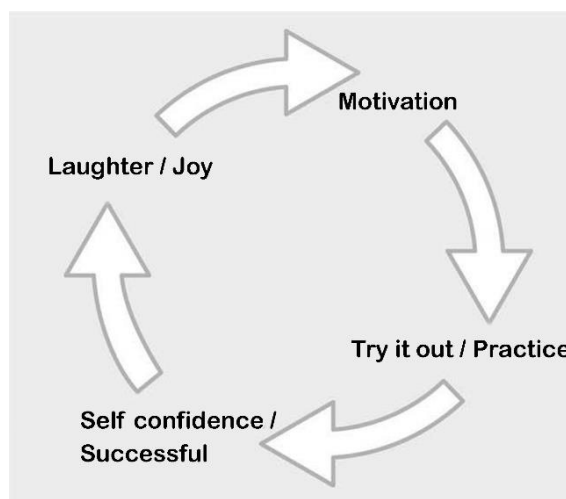
It is important that we, as judo teachers, facilitate a climate conducive to learning. Every learning process should be based on a pleasant, appreciative and fear-free learning climate. The judo teacher influences this with his/her motivation and attitude, which is transferred to the group. Those who feel comfortable can learn more easily and better.

Participants with ASD can rarely solve difficult tasks straight away. As a judo teacher, it is about setting attractive tasks and making them achievable with support, guidance and practice. A benevolent and honest guidance has an encouraging and motivating effect.

Clear procedures and rules contribute to a safe learning environment. The choice of tasks and achievable goals, as well as good guidance can also prevent excessive demands and thus emotional behaviour.

### Laugh, learn, perform

Participants want to laugh in judo lessons because it is simply nice, creates a good feeling and makes learning easier.



The cycle shows that joy can directly influence motivation, which in turn increases joy through practice and a sense of achievement.

Positive feeling states can be achieved in different ways, e.g. through belonging (social acceptance, positive self-worth, friendship), competence (curiosity, knowledge, success) and independence (self-confidence, co-determination). They can be self-motivated or externally motivated.



## Learning means: acquiring knowledge, a way of acting or a motor skill.

Learning comes about through the absorption of information from the environment via the various senses. This information can be perceived consciously or unconsciously.

The brain has a limited processing capacity for what is consciously perceived. Therefore, the information relevant to learning must be selected via intentional control. Information consolidated through frequent practice is further processed in the brain and finally stored in the long-term memory.

This is the reason for the success of the many judo games used on the judo mat. For all basic forms of moving (running/jumping, balancing, rolling, climbing, swinging, rhythm, throwing/catching, fighting, sliding), there are different games. Judo techniques can also be successfully acquired through play.

Participants with ASD also want to successfully master tasks or requirements. They are willing to perform and want to measure themselves against others in combat. Again, various judo games are used here, this time with a competitive element.

### Teaching styles

Regardless of which method we choose to achieve a goal, our teaching style can help achieve the set goal.

The method we use when teaching is personal and consists of verbal and non-verbal elements. How we talk, loudly, slowly, with a low pitch or high pitch etc., everything can have an impact on the learning climate. There is a direct interaction between us and the participants. If we are aware of our personal way of communicating and acting, one can also consciously omit or reinforce elements.

When we get to know the participants, the aim is to find out how they learn, and which stimuli overwhelms or stimulates them. With this knowledge we can build a learning climate in which all individual children feel comfortable and can learn.

For example, if we are aware of oversensitivity to auditory stimuli, it makes perfect sense to show something without speaking out loud or to interrupt the shouting of children playing prematurely. If we have noticed that someone's ability to imitate is very well developed, it makes perfect sense to give ourselves a great example with the posture and use of the body in relation to judo techniques as well as in language, through what we expect very clearly and repetitively to show.

Regardless of how we shape our teaching style with our voice and gesture, it should benefit the participants in a positive learning climate. That means it should be



different depending on the goal and participants, sometimes loud, sometimes quiet, sometimes funny, sometimes serious, etc. All participants should always feel valued, respected and safe in training despite different and personal silences.

Playful elements in a benevolent environment and mood make the children have fun and laugh, which in turn positively supports the unconscious learning and solving of possible difficult tasks.

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## 4. Activity Environment

In this chapter, we look at the various environmental factors that can influence the perception and enjoyment of people with ASD during training and competition. We offer solutions and ideas on how best to prepare and operate successful trainings for people with ASD and how to prepare and organise competitive opportunities. As adaptive judo practitioners, we try to create the best possible environment with the surroundings we have access to. Also in this chapter, we will advise the reader on the use of training aids and play equipment that we help with the development of and enjoyment of your students.



## Chapter 4

## 4. Activity Environment

### Autism-friendly venues

In order to have an environment that is truly suitable for people with ASD, certain adaptations may have to be adopted.

For a judoka with ASD, it is important to first have a safe and secure environment in which to train and socialize. In some cases, too much stimuli can lead to excessive demands, and too much distraction can lead to concentration issues and challenges. It is worth noting that around 80% of people with autism have some degree of sensory processing difficulties.

It is advisable to have a training room which is manageable both in size and accessibility. Where possible, parents should have a space where they are nearby to observe if they wish, but out of line of sight of the judoka so as not to cause any unnecessary distraction for them.

Changing rooms and toilet facilities should be located in the immediate vicinity of the training hall in order to avoid judoka having to negotiate long corridors and multiple doors, which for some, may prove difficult and confusing.

There can be many distractions within or surrounding your training area which should be given consideration. These include windows with a view of a street with a lot of traffic, mirrors or reflective windows or noise coming from other sporting groups within the venue.

It is important to familiarize any new participants with the environment they will be training in. Scheduling a full tour of the venue would be a good start to their first experience at your club and should include, the changing/shower room, toilet and if possible, a place where they can retire to for “calm time”. It should be noted that, depending on the participant with ASD, it can take several weeks for them to get used to their new environment. It is best practice to be guided by the judoka and progress at their pace, especially in the early weeks.

Depending on what, if any, hypersensitivity the participants may have, we should be prepared to make adjustments to accommodate their needs if it is at all possible. Some of these adjustments can be very simple. For example, if it is a visual stimulus that is distracting the judoka, we can try to contain or control this distraction. A mirror can be covered, curtains can be hung for windows and any electronics can be switched off or removed from the training area.



Non-essential items and training aids can be removed from the area until they are needed.

For auditory stimuli issues, a simple notice system can be introduced to reduce auditory stimuli by informing other venue users when it is not appropriate to enter the room, play loud music, or speak loudly in the corridors. A designated resting place, where ear protection can be worn, can also add real value to your training area and offer a safe calming environment for the judoka that needs it.

For those who think and learn more in pictures, wearing blue and white judogi helps the trainer. It should be noted that if all participants also wear different Judogi colours, this can again lead to excessive visual unrest. We therefore only recommend wearing judogi of a different colour than white for coaches and assistant coaches.

The judo mat is usually made up of two different colours. With these two colours of the tatami, a lot of structure can be brought into the room. Because of the colour, the participants know where to stand and where to move. A conscious shifting of the mats for various games is recommended only after the participants have got used to the basic layout.

The goal of all structures added, or the isolation of stimuli, is always to enable the participants as much independence as possible and return recognisability without additional challenges from unnecessary stimulation.

If we do not immediately recognize what leads to an over stimulation of one or more of our judoka, we must use our experience, knowledge and creative skill to identify the issue and offer some solution to resolve the matter. Some over stimulation or hypersensitivities can be caused by simple environmental issues such as the smell of perfume, the sound of running water or a barking dog outside. If we know what is causing the problem, we are 80% closer to resolving it.

A relaxed and happy judoka will be more energized with a higher level of concentration which will reflect positively on their strengths and their judo.

### Autism friendly competition venue

After getting used to regular judo structures, participating in judo competitions can be the next step in the development of a judoka.

For the competition organization, it is important that all judoka, regardless of the degree of disability, can participate with as great a feeling of security and independence as possible. For this to happen, again certain adaptations must be put

in place to minimize overstimulation, confusion and stress. There are a number of simple measures that can be taken by the organizers that will make your event a fully autism friendly experience.

These measures can include colour coding the contest areas and control tables. This works extremely well in conjunction with colour coded check in cards. For example, when a competitor checks in they are given a colour card with their name, pool number and category. This colour card will correspond with the colour coded control table and tatami that the competitor will be competing on. This works very well for single day events that don't require divisioning.

Display screens at each tatami indicating the running order and names of the next two to three contests is extremely helpful for judoka with ASD as it helps them to visualise when it is their turn. It also helps coaches to prepare their students in advance.

Markings can be added to the tatami to indicate where the competitors have to start from and a bean bag or soft toy thrown on to the tatami to indicate end of time can be used in place of a loud buzzer or bell.

The venue lighting can be reduced and the use of a public address system can be kept to a minimum.

All of these simple adaptations can ensure that all competitors with ASD can have a relaxed, enjoyable and positive experience at competitions.

A negative experience can have a long lasting effect on a competitor with ASD and may result in that student not attending competitions or judo again. A little bit of effort can go a long way and if we can change something for the better, then we should!



*Example of colour coded contest area tables*

## Play and training equipment



Support materials can be used during adapted judo training as a way to assist the students with their learning. It is undeniable that the use of materials and games is very effective in helping athletes in various situations, such as accepting contact, in understanding the dynamics of a movement, in the repetition of it, in training activities for strength and balance and much more. The right equipment and training aids can help athletes and coaches to achieve the physical and technical goals of learning and teaching judo in an effective manner.

During the introduction of new objects or training aids, coaches should be mindful that anything new, be it training aids or exercises, can lead to an increase in curiosity and anxiety in athletes, therefore it is advisable to always introduce new objects or exercises gradually and explain and demonstrate their use.

It should also be remembered that it is very important to adapt materials and activities to the level of the athletes, in order to obtain better results: the same activity proposed with different materials will have different results.

Below is a list of the most common usable objects that can be used and adapted for a wide variety of games and exercises. Most of them are readily available or obtained at minimal cost.

- **Colourful obi (belts)**

Suitable for a range of games and exercises such as skipping, jumping over, marking out play areas, pulling & pushing exercises, balance walking and resistance games.

- **Cut up pieces of old belts**

These can be used in sweeping and gripping exercises and a variety of fun games.

- **Balls (various sizes and materials)**

Balls are extremely versatile and can be used for a number of different purposes and games. Larger gym balls can be used successfully to encourage gradual contact for students with ASD.



- **Colourful socks**

Colourful socks are used as a great visual marker to help students to remember which foot goes where when matched with their other students. They are also the basis for a number of fun development games.

- **Plastic Hoops**

Plastic hoops have a wide range of uses, from basic exercises to creative and fun games to help develop agility, speed and coordination.



- **Circle floor markers/disks**

Floor disks have many uses in adaptive judo training, such as foot positioning for throwing techniques, positioning for kata practice, a range of break-fall type games and general exercise activities.

- **Safety mats**

A safety or crash mat is a very valuable and essential piece of equipment for any judo trainings but especially for people with ASD. Apart from the vast number of games that it can be used for, it also allows the students to explore and experiment with throwing and landing in safety.





- **Bean bags**

Bean bags are used mostly for sweeping type exercises, but can also be used for balance and coordination exercises and throwing/target games.

In a future chapter under the heading “Learning through play” we will explain the concepts of games and play and outline the benefits of learning through play. We will also share with the reader a selection of game and exercise ideas to get your creative juices flowing.





## 5. Teaching Judo to people with ASD

This is the core chapter for this handbook. It will offer proven and practical advice on how to start an adaptive judo program for people with ASD. It will cover all the necessary step by step information needed to develop a successful adaptive judo program from the initial preparation all the way through to coaching ASD athletes for contest judo.

The sections included are, Preparation for Adaptive Judo Program, Ability Assessments, Lesson Planning, Coaching Guidelines and Learning Through Play. Each of these sections have sub-sections that amount to a wealth of information and experience sharing for all potential adaptive judo coaches.



## Chapter 5

## 5. Teaching Judo to people with ASD

### Preparation for adaptive judo program

Starting a new category or group, especially an adapted group, needs a little more planning than an ordinary judo group.

Maybe the special needs school in your area has asked your club for some training sessions, maybe you already have athletes in your club that needs a little special attention. We all have the judoka that behave a little out of the group in our sessions. It's usually the judoka with ADHD or ADD. They can usually function in the mainstream group with the right guidance. In your judo group you may even find some athletes with high-functional ASD, as judo is a splendid sport for athletes with ASD. The training works almost the same way every time.

A judo session always starts and ends with a 'Rei' then you have the greeting, warming-up, some ne-waza, some tachi-waza, randori, cooling down and finally 'Rei' again. It is a routine that goes on in almost all judo clubs around the world.

In judo, we have strict rules about what to do and what not to do. Judo has routines and regulations from the point you enter the dojo, to when you leave. We can even expand it to the changing rooms and even everyday life outside the sport venue.

You must be on time for the lesson; you must bring the correct gear. There are rules how you behave in a locker-room, how and where to put your clothes. You learn to clean yourself and your training clothes that you have, and to cut your finger and toenails. These are a lot of things that you do every day. It's almost the same, in every club you enter.

This works for all athletes, especially those who need some kind of special care. Judo teaches us in a very hands-on way how we should behave to ourselves and to our friends, old or new.

Whatever reason, before you start to think about starting an adaptive judo program, you should ask yourself:

Do I want to do this for 'a long time'?

If the answer is 'Yes!' next question must be:

Will I do it alone?

If the answer is 'Yes!' again, then maybe you should think one more time.

To start an adaptive judo program, it will take time and you shouldn't do it alone. At the very least, it would be very difficult. Start to look for some partners/a partner to help you. You will need a good team to work together with.

Then you must think of: Who will I invite to take part in the program?

Do I already have some judoka or do I need to find them myself?

Do I have a good 'dojo' (training venue)?

And most important: Can I do it in a safe way?

No matter what, your answers should depend on your knowledge and previous experience. When you have good answers to these questions, then you can start the planning.

Reading this manual is of course a good start and it will give you a lot of hints and tips of what to do and what to think about. Remember: You must always put safety first!

To develop an adaptive judo program with a big group of athletes with different difficulties, by yourself, "being the only judo trainer", could be a little too much to start with.

So... what you have to think about is 'what do I know and what can I handle'.

It is a good thing to check if there are any other clubs in the region that offer adapted judo lessons. If so, you can ask them if you can join them for some lessons to observe how they are doing the lessons and how it works.

## Identify target participants

It is a good thing to ask your-self: What kind of judoka do I want to work with?

Some coaches have a good experience with kids and adults with a physical disability, and others work well with people with an intellectual variation.

It could be a good idea to think about how you want your group to be. In this handbook, we will talk about judo and ASD. Maybe you have had some contact with ASD before. ASD is a wide range syndrome. We could work with athletes with a high function ability, who with the right structure, can train in an almost mainstream way.

In this kind of group a lot of effort goes into making your students learn and get used to the way you teach. In this group the difficulties can be to understand why and when we do different things. Why the first thing we do is warming up and not 'wrestling'. We will tell you more about this later.

We can also have athletes with very low function ability who need help with almost everything such as, communication, activation and motivation. In this case it is good if you have someone that can join you on the tatami, to help you communicate with the athlete, to help him/her to understand what you want to achieve.

The lessons we cover in this handbook will start with different games or movements. You will soon learn how to communicate with your students. If not verbally then physically. You will of course learn a lot by yourself. Whatever you choose to start with, you will soon see your group grow.

If you contact a care-centre or a Special-Needs-school for children with ASD, you can maybe find a group that wants to try judo. You can offer them some sessions as a try out. If they are interested in more sessions, then you can start building your group.

You can contact other judo-clubs in your region and ask them if they have any information they can share, or if they have judoka that need a different kind of group. They can even have a group themselves or can maybe help you to find more athletes.

### Identify/contact relevant organizations

When you have decided on what kind of group you will start with, it is a good idea to contact an organization with an interest in your specific target group. They can provide you with information about what to look for and how to act with athletes with ASD or any other functional disorder.

When you talk to the parents or the school of the athletes, you can get more information about what organization they are connected to. There are usually some different organizations in your countries. It can be organizations that are focused on a specific disability, national or local sporting organizations, or parental organizations. Sometimes they arrange and offer information and education for people who are interested. Maybe you can find them if you search the internet in your respective country.

**NB:** Ask your national judo federation if they have any information about adapted judo or if they know any club or person that can help you. Sometimes they have co-operations with national organizations for disabled athletes.

## Suitable Venue and Equipment



You must always think 'Safety first!'

It's important that you can offer a safe and positive environment for your students.

If your club has a dojo of their own where you have regular trainings, that is great, because all of the safety checks are usually already made.

If you have a smaller hall/room, or even an old classroom, where you have to transport and put out mats by yourself every week, that's also ok, not ideal, but ok.

Regardless of the situation, you should always...

- Have a phone and contact-list to the athletes 'contact-persons' in case something happens.
- Have a first aid kit.
- Check the emergency exits, that they're not blocked in any way.
- Know where the fire extinguisher is located and how to use it.
- Check that there is nothing that can be dangerous or hurt anyone.

Remember: It is always your responsibility to provide a safe training environment.



You should always have a personal First Aid kit with you, containing nail-clippers, bandages, different kind of tape, cotton and disinfection-alcohol.



In your own dojo, you should have a bigger kit with some additional items, such as cooling-bags, scissors, compression bandages and hand sanitizer





The optimal venue is a dojo where you can have the tatami in place all the time, where everything looks the same every time, where you have changing-room, toilets and maybe a small kitchen. A dojo without pillars or places where athletes can be out of vision is preferable. Try to have the room as clean as possible and without anything that can distract or take the concentration away from the athlete. It's better to have a room where it is only you and the tatami.

The size of the tatami depends on the size of the group. The bigger the better is a good guide. There are some puzzle-mats in different colours that could be used, but try to keep the number of colours to a minimum, because even this can cause unnecessary distraction for the athletes.

If it is possible and if you can find some extra judogi to lend out to the new students, it would add to the complete experience for the student. It is always easier to motivate the athletes to participate in the training, if they are dressed as judoka.



You actually don't need any other equipment, but it can help you to emphasize some moments and exercises and of course, to make judo-games if you have items such as, bean-bags, hula hoop-rings, gym-balls or whatever you find useful. You can create your own materials with old judo-belts, you can make circles, squares, or lines with them, you can cut them in the length of about 50cm and use them as tails or snakes, and you can be as creative as your imagination allows. You can make a lot of different judo games with these types of materials. We will explore some ideas and examples later in this book.

What is important in the beginning is that, the training is in the same place every time and it looks the same way every time. It is of course important that you are there all the time.



## Recruit/Train/Educate Staff

As we have indicated previously, to start an adaptive judo program takes a lot of effort and dedication. You really should not do this all by yourself.

Once again: Think Safety first!

An assistant trainer helps you before the training. They can meet your students at the entrance and show them to the changing-room, while you can meet them in the dojo, do the registration of the students and learn their names. The assistant trainer helps you with the training.

They help you to visualize the exercises you are doing. They can help you if you need to focus on something or someone during the lesson.

It is the assistant trainer that supports you to make a safe lesson for everyone.

The best place to find someone to help you is in your own club or in the club next door. Someone, who wants to join you in this project and has the time and enthusiasm to dedicate to your vision, it is best with someone that already knows judo and understands the exercises that you do, someone that can take the session if you are not present or if you have to focus on something else during the lesson. They don't need to be 'black-belts', but they do need the understanding of adapted training. Sometimes in your own club there may be parents with experience in judo training. It doesn't matter if it was many years ago. Sometimes they just need that little extra push to come back to the mat.

If possible, you can invite assistants, parents or caretakers to take part in the training at the beginning until the judoka knows the routines and the way you work. Maybe they want to start with judo also.

When you have found the staff you need, then you need to know what they know and what they need to know more about. If they are judoka, then maybe they need information about the needs of the new judoka. Or if they are not, then they need to understand what judo is about and how we teach it.

The best way to learn is to take part in the sessions. In this way they learn what you do and what you expect them to do. This is a common approach in the development of tatami assistants. Before the lesson, explain what it is you are going to do, then explain how and why you are doing it. After the lesson you can explain why you made some changes or adjustments to the plan.



Use the 'Red Thread'. One thing leads to another. Like 1-2-3 or A-B-C. Do warming-up exercises that will be used in ne-waza or tachi-waza. Do ne-waza-exercises that will be used after a throw... Try to make everything connect. After a while you can of course use one technique and combine it with another, and build from movements that your students already know. Later in this book we will outline a number of lesson plan approaches and ideas.

When the group gets more used to the training, you can start to use some of your students as assistant trainers. Start by letting them show something that you have already shown them before. Give them more and more responsibility and tasks to do, and you will build up your available staff.

When it is possible, try to take part in other trainers' sessions or in camps where they offer time to talk and discuss different ways to train our judoka. This is a good way to find out more ways to teach. It is the best way to get a big 'tool-box'! Sometimes you must do or say the same thing one or two more times, but in a different way, so the judoka understand what you want.

We have written a lot about safety. That is really the most important aspect when you teach judo. Not only on the tatami, but everything connected to the training before, during and after the session.

Try to be prepared for everything. It is better to think 'What can go wrong?' one more time before you do your first lesson.

When everything is prepared and under control, it's time to start the lesson and have fun!



## Ability Assessment of new ASD students



Ability assessment of new students is a very important part of the process of welcoming new students into our clubs and into the world of adapted judo. This is because the more information we can collate about each student, the better the plan we can put together to ensure that each student has an individual and positive experience.

The assessment process starts from the very first contact from a parent or caregiver inquiring about their child that would like to try judo for the first time. Often at the first contact, it is necessary to gather some information about the child. For children with an ASD diagnosis, it is best to ask specific questions in relation to the child's understanding, behaviour and what the child reacts well to. It is also reasonable to ask which situations can trigger an overstimulation and how the overstimulation manifests itself. In some cases, parents or caregivers have specific expectations or even goals for their children. In part, the motivation comes from the children themselves.

### Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

It is rare for young aspiring judoka with ASD to have an intrinsic motivation to try judo. Intrinsic motivation comes from within. The aspiring judoka may have watched



older siblings or watched some videos on the internet. The potential new judoka is motivated to try judo by their own motivation.

Much more, the parents or caregivers think that judo would be a great sport to try. They can express their enthusiasm on the aspiring judoka in such a way that the child is ready to try judo. Parents or caregivers see many advantages in judo, such as learning to play together, belonging to a club and a meaningful leisure activity for their child.

The intrinsic motivation is considered to be a strong and good driving force. Judoka who are intrinsically motivated are more committed and more able to overcome difficult moments in judo or to seek creative solutions. They also have a greater willingness to learn.

Other aspects that promote intrinsic motivation include a good atmosphere in your judo groups, honest feedback about performances, clear exciting tasks that do not overwhelm, variety and recognisability in the training form, as well as possibilities to design elements of the training themselves and to take responsibility themselves.

From the first contact, it is up to the judo teacher to arouse an intrinsic motivation with the aspiring judoka. For this, the aspiring judoka must feel comfortable. Only when the judoka feels comfortable can he/she develop and experience pleasure and fun from within.

However, the extrinsic motivation is also an integral part of judo lessons. Some examples of this are: if aspiring judoka participate well in judo lessons, they make their parents proud, or they are allowed to choose a game, or after diligently practicing, a belt test.

The extrinsic motivation is therefore not a bad thing and can form an important part of the overall success of a happy judoka.

## How to assess new students

Following on from the initial information gathering from parents or caregivers, there are two main methods of how we assess our new budding judoka. These two methods depend on the size of the club and the number of available level groups that operate within that club. For instance, if a club has a small group/class dedicated to children with additional needs, then the choice of which class the new student will take part in is therefore limited.

However if you have a bigger club with a large number of adaptive judoka that exercise and train in separate classes, according to their age and ability levels, you may have the option to determine which class the new student is best suited to joining.

*The two main ability assessment methods are outlined below:*

**Method one** involves integrating the new student directly into your inclusive/adapted judo group and simply observing his/her existing skills. From these observations we can determine the new students' ability to adapt to their new environment, how they can physically move, and what their range of movements are, how they integrate with other students and how socially competent they are. All this information will give us a good understanding of what we can do to ensure a positive and progressive experience within that group.

**Method two** involves taking the new student individually through a pre-arranged structured ability checklist. This structured workout may include elements designed to check for motor, social and emotional skills and should comprise of a series of fun exercises that would be carried out fully aided, partial aided and completely un-aided. To assess physical ability, some of these fun exercises may include agility, strength, coordination and balance type games/exercises.

It is of course possible to use a combination of both methods. No matter what form we choose, we observe skills in the following areas: Motor skills, Social skills and Emotional skills. We do this in a manner that will not overwhelm our new judoka, but instead will capture individual learning goals and aid the smooth integration in a group. This then leads to an intrinsic motivation and the openness to learn new things.

## Motor Skills

The motor skills of a new judoka should already be noticeable at the first introduction. Is the new judoka capable of getting on their knees and bowing? Or do they need help? After that, many judo instructors are likely to continue with a game to determine more skills. Some examples of this are: go and run independently, jump, roll, bounce and hop.

What is important at this stage is for the new judoka to have the ability to watch and observe. To have the ability to observe is to have the possibility to copy or imitate. Targeted watching can also be a learning goal.



After an initial observation, we look at how the new judoka reacts to simple instructions, whether they can follow simple instruction independently or whether they need to be guided. Here we can use verbal and non-verbal feedback to the new judoka. We also test whether it is easier for them to react to spoken feedback or if non-verbal communication works better. Also, a combination of both can help and lead to improvements.

## Social Skills



It is difficult to judge a new judoka's social skills directly with a game, because often there are several elements at play. Maybe the new judoka can run, but is/are afraid or nervous of the other judoka who are also running around. A period of acclimatisation therefore would make good sense. It is also important to be aware that several elements can play a role. Here, the creativity of a judo teacher is also required to find out what skills the new judoka has and how best to develop those skills. It may take several trainings to discover the various skills of the new judoka.

Body contact is normal in judo, but sometimes it takes some time to get used to for some new judoka. This is important to take into account when planning your session. Judo is an individual sport, but social skills are very important. We will stress this

from the outset. Judoka are responsible for each other and even a small game requires a certain level of social and physical contact.

Through various judo games you can practice these social skills to apply afterwards both on and beside the mat. Here, there is a big potential for judoka with ASD and judo.

A conscious build-up can relieve inhibitions and stress for the new judoka. An example would be to build body contact through games and props such as play balls, gym balls etc. It is easier to fight for a ball than to go directly to a partner.

## Emotional Skills

A judoka with ASD may already be dealing with a high level of stress and anxiety in their new environment, being surrounded by new people and coming to terms with new experiences. Developing emotional skills is very important to ensure the health and wellbeing of all judoka in our care, especially new judoka.

The judo mat is only intended for the judoka and not for the parents, however in certain circumstances exceptions can be made. It may be that separation from parents is difficult because the new judoka is trying something unfamiliar for the first time in unfamiliar surroundings.

Sometimes it is good to take this into account; sometimes you can also let the parents of the new judoka leave them alone with the judo group for a short time to start with and then gradually leave for longer periods each time. This will certainly help with separation anxiety. This can help the new judoka to accept certain assignments from his judo teachers without the distraction of their parents.

It is important that we create an environment that makes the new student feel comfortable and safe. This could take several trainings and is different for every individual.

As soon as a student has gained emotional security within the training group, they may also start to further develop their motor and social skills.

Other emotional skills include dealing with winning and losing, turn taking and following simple instructions. Knowing how a new student with ASD reacts to anxiety and stressful situations is also very important for the coaches to know. Having this information in advance will help the coach to manage the situation much better should an issue arise.

This can be a big challenge for the judo teacher, because as soon as the new judoka becomes confident and more active on the judo mat, this could lead to



overstimulation. For ASD students' overstimulation can lead to emotional behaviours such as crying, stimming or aggression.

It can be a challenge to stop or prevent this behaviour, because it is not always immediately clear what triggered this overload of stimuli. Here you will need good observations from the judo teacher and cooperation with the parents.

### What class is most suited

After we have observed our new student with ASD and have formed an impression, we can design our interaction and the environment in such a way that an optimal learning environment is created. This should be an optimal learning climate in which the aspiring judoka feels comfortable and can develop an intrinsic motivation for judo.

With a large judo club, different groups may be offered on several days in the same place. Here you can choose the best group. Other judo clubs work in different locations each day.

Still other judo clubs only have the separation between children and adults on the basis of school hours and working hours.

If we don't have the facility or opportunity to place a new judoka in a group that suits them the best, it is up to the judo teacher to design his group and training in such a way that it fits. One option would be to include assistant trainers. It is also sometimes possible to customize some sequences in training.

As a judo teacher for judoka with ASD, we will always be creative and always look for solutions to give every judoka who is interested in judo the best possible experience on the mat. It is a challenge in a diverse group not to overwhelm the individual judoka and also not to underwhelm. Because both have an influence on motivation and motivation has an influence on the fun factor. Without fun, aspiring judoka will not get involved in judo. It is the beautiful task of a judo teacher to teach fun at judo.



## Lesson Planning

### Lesson Plan Overview

Lesson planning is an essential skill that all sports coaches should adopt and develop. This is particularly important for adapted judo coaches teaching people with ASD. Pre-planning your training sessions makes best use of your time and resources and ensures that you can achieve the best possible outcome for yourself and your students.

In addition to lesson planning, it is also helpful to reflect and make notes after each lesson so you can determine what went well and what you might consider changing, to improve delivery or engagement. Although lesson planning can be a little time consuming at first, you can reuse these lesson plans when teaching similar groups or individuals in the future.

Lesson planning should be created in 4 to 5 lesson blocks in order to develop a progressive plan which is Specific – Measured – Achievable - Relevant - Time-scaled (SMART Plan).

SMART planning is used the world over in all kinds of businesses, organizations, educational institutions and sports environments. However, we could expand the SMART concept with the SMART(ER) approach which means we can add “Evaluate” and “Re-adjust”. By Evaluating we can identify what worked well for the group and what do not. This feedback can allow us to Re-adjust our goals, adapt to suit our athletes and improve the lesson plans for the next block. Although SMART planning is very popular, you may also opt to use a more relaxed approach to your lesson planning. This is where the focus is more on socialization and having fun; in this instance setting achievable goals and time-scaling your progression is less important. Here are some of the advantages of lesson planning regardless of which approach you chose.

The advantages of lesson planning for coaches can include:

- Allows for assistant/replacement coaches to be consistent when head coach is absent
- Tailoring your lessons to best suit the needs of your students
- Building confidence in your ability as a coach to adapt your approach
- Create structure and consistency in your lessons
- Develop a progressive plan for your students

The advantages of lesson planning for ASD students include:

- Structure and consistency
  - Measured and achievable progression
  - Creating a social environment
  - Improving interaction and contact in a controlled manner

For the purpose of this section we will explore two different types of lesson plans. For the first lesson plan we will be using a more casual, fun, game based approach and the second a more structured approach. Bearing in mind in the previous section of this handbook, we have already assessed the ability and skill levels of our new students and now we will create our lesson plan based on a group of beginners just starting out on their judo journey.

### Sample Lesson Plan 1 – *the casual approach*

For the casual approach we will aim to introduce all the judo elements, such as warm-ups, break-falls, movement patterns, ground techniques, throwing techniques, and flexibility exercises in a playful, fun and relaxed manner.

### Five Week Lesson Plan

Each lesson plan is scheduled for approximately 50mins which gives 10mins for any overruns or unplanned activity. The class plans are just a basic guide and can be added to or reduced as necessary. The structure of each of the lessons will include some of the following elements: Bowing, warm up, basic gymnastic movements, push & pull exercises, balance and coordination games, ukemi (break-falls), safety mat activities, ground play activities and throwing games/activities.

It is important to note, that some people with ASD require structure and repetition and may have difficulty with sudden change. For this reason it may be necessary or advisable to repeat week one lesson plan for a number of weeks before introducing week two. It might also be necessary to only replace a small number of week one's elements or exercises with elements or exercises from week two. This practice can be applied to all the lessons moving forward. Remember to always move at the students pace and be guided by their progress. Judo is a lifelong sport, a steady progression pace will make the journey a more sustainable, enjoyable and memorable experience.

## Lesson 1

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

It's important to introduce the art of judo bowing correctly at this very early stage and how to properly address the coach. It is a personal preference of some experienced adapted judo coaches with ASD students, to start their lesson and bowing in a circle (in a circle, everyone is equal). Of course you can start your lesson in a line if you so choose. During the bowing and introduction stage, it is an ideal time to introduce some Japanese terminology such as Rei (bow) and Matte (stop).

### Warm Up Games (10mins)

Warming up is an essential part of any training or physical activity. How coaches choose to carry out their warm ups will vary greatly, but for these lesson plans we will warm-up using a variety of games that are low impact and will warm the students and promote basic movement patterns. Try and be creative & have fun. Tag games are ideal for warm ups, coordination, balance and agility.

#### Warm-up Game 1 - Worm Tag

Moving around on the floor on your front, avoid or catch the other players. When caught the player rolls over twice and in a press up position makes a bridge. To get free someone must crawl under the bridge.



#### Warm-up Game 2 – Line Tag

Using the lines in the joins of the mats, players skip sideways up, down and across the lines in all directions to tag each other. This is a good game for the fundamentals of movement.



### Gymnastic Elements (5mins)

Basic Gymnastic games are essential for mobility, flexibility, fundamentals of movement and are very relevant for a lot of natural judo movements.



### Gymnastic Element 1 – Twin Rolling

Lying front down on the mat facing your partner, hold hands at arm's length and roll together down the length of mat.



### Break-falls (5mins)

Break-fall games are an essential part of good judo practice. It is very important for everyone to learn how to fall correctly to avoid injury. Falling occurs even in basic play situations so knowing the basics will help.

#### Break-fall Game 1 - Clap Clap Bang

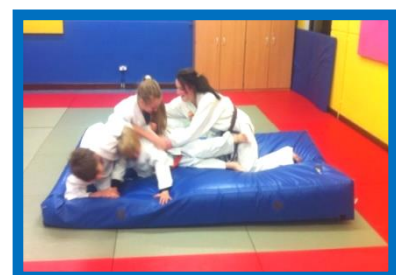
In pairs sit opposite each other with knees bent, first clap your own hands then clap your partner's hands and then roll back and bang the mat. You can start off this game by simply rolling on the curve of the back without banging the hands and then building it up. You can also expand this exercise by adding a backward roll after the bang or a body spin before the bang.



### Safety Mat Games (5mins)

#### Safety Mat Game 1 – Smelly River Raft

Using the safety mat as a raft, place a number of players on the raft. The players should be encouraged to wrestle their opponents off the raft and into the imaginary smelly river. This is a great game to encourage contact, imagination and fun.



## Ground Based Games (10mins)

### Ground Game 1 – Wrestle Ball

In groups of two or three in a ground position, one player holds onto a small /sensory ball. The other player(s) have to turn them over and wrestle the ball from them. Whoever retrieves the ball is now the keeper of the ball and the game continues. This game is ideal to encourage rough & tumble interaction and helps with turnovers.



### Ground Game 2 – Socks

Socks, is a creative way to encourage friendly grappling and interaction. Using colour socks each player has one sock, which they wear on their foot, the object of the game is to remove the other players' sock before they remove yours.



## Throwing Games (10mins)

Sweeping type games are always a good place to start when introducing judo throwing techniques for the first time. They are safe and easy to execute and they are a nice build up for more dynamic throwing techniques later in the lesson plans.

### Throwing Game 1 – Road Sweeper

Using tails and corresponding colour belts the player has to sweep the corresponding colour tail to the correct colour side. This develops coordination, balance and left & right sweeping skills and is great fun.



### Throwing Game 2 – Skip and Fall

In pairs and in a standing position both players take judo grips, they then skip sideways together towards the mat and then just fall over. This is a nice way to finish your first session and helps the students with any fear of falling.



## End of Lesson Bow

It is nice to say goodbye in the same way we said hello. You can line up your students or as we prefer gather in a circle and always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement.

## Lesson 2

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

As repetition is important, use the same starting position as previous week and recap on the Judo/Japanese terminology Rei (bow) and Matte (stop). At this stage you can introduce Hajime (begin) to list of judo words.

### Warm Up Games (10mins)

#### Warm-up Game 1 - Dog Tag

Moving around on the floor on their hand and knees, the players have to avoid or catch the other players. When caught the player moves into a press up position and makes a bridge. To get free someone must crawl under the bridge.



#### Warm-up Game 2 - Jelly Tag

Starting with two people holding hands in a circle, the players must move around and try and catch other players by looping over their head, so the jelly net can be expanded. Once caught the player then forms part of the jelly. This is a nice group warm up game that encourages students to work together.



### Warm-up Game 3 - Caterpillar

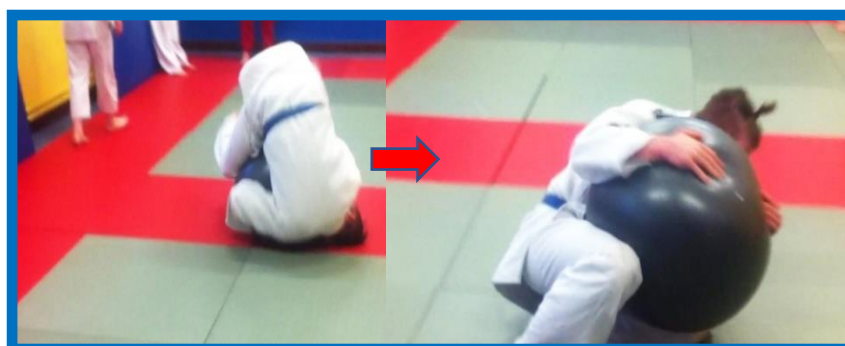
Starting in a line with feet apart, the person at the back climbs belly first under everyone's legs and when they get to the top they will stand up and resume standing pose. This game helps to develop ground movement skills and teamwork. Later it can be expanded to include an uchi-komi when you stand up at the front.



### Gymnastic Elements (5mins)

#### Gymnastic Element 1 – Boulder Ball

Using a large gym ball, the player hugs the ball and turning their head/ear to the ball completes a roll holding onto the ball as they roll. This is a great exercise for people who have difficulty with tumbling freestyle. The roll also simulates a judo throw land and is a great tool for teaching break-falls later.

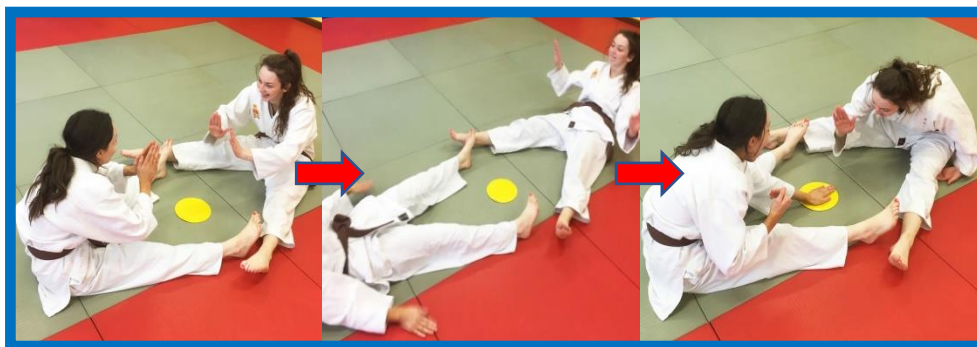


### Break-falls (5mins)

#### Break-fall Game 1 – Golden Buzzer

Following on from the break-fall game in lesson one; add a target/floor disc in between the two players. After completing their backward break fall they have to sit back up as quickly as possible and hit the target. First to hit the target wins and the other player has to do three backward break-falls as their reward.





## Push & Pull Games (5mins)

### Push & Pull Game 1 – Smelly Pool in and Out

Group Game: Make a circle out of a number of belts, with all players holding on to sleeves make a circle of players inside the belt circle. The object of the game is to make the other players step out of the circle by pulling/pushing on the sleeves. Reverse the game by standing outside the circle and try to make the other players step in the circle. This game encourages interaction and develops gripping and directional pulling skills.



## Ground Based Games (10mins)

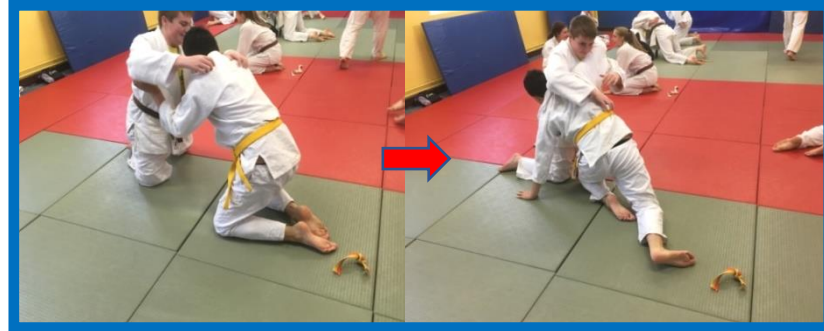
### Ground Based Game 1 – Tractor Wheel

Tractor Wheel is an ideal game to help develop simple turn overs from the knees. Holding the hoop/wheel and lifting one leg to act as the power pedal/driving leg, simply turn the wheel and push with the driving leg to turn the other player over. This game can be extended later by exchanging the hoop for judo grips and following up with a hug/hold.



### Ground Based Game 2 – Dog & Bone

Using a belt tail/socks/beanbag (the bone), player one (the dog) has to protect the bone from the player two (other dog). The object of the game is for player two to try and retrieve the bone from player one. This game encourages friendly grappling and interaction and a range of ground movement skills.



### Throwing Games (10mins)

Following on from our sweeping type games in lesson one, we start lesson two with a group sweeping game and then move on to other throw based games.

#### Throwing Game 1 – Sweeping Circle

Group exercise: The players gather in a circle holding onto each other sleeves. On the start command each player tries to sweep their adjoining partner to the ground using sweeping motion from previous game. This game encourages interaction, gripping skills, sweeping skills and gives the opportunity to practice break-fall skills.



#### Throwing Game 2 – Heel Ball O Soto

Heel Ball O Soto is designed to introduce O Soto Gari in a movement target scenario. Player one stands with legs apart and places a ball on a cone in between their legs. Player two will approach by hopping on one leg, out to the side and in a leg swinging motion; heel the ball off the cone. This develops a perfect O Soto Gari leg movement and backward drive.





## End of Lesson Bow

As before, say goodbye in the same way we said hello. You can line up your students or as we prefer gather in a circle and always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement. There is also an opportunity here to recap on the terminology covered at the beginning of the lesson.

## Lesson 3

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

As repetition is important, use the same starting position as previous week and recap on the Judo/Japanese terminology Rei (bow), Matte (stop) and Hajime (begin). You can now add Sensei to the list of judo words.

### Warm Up Games (10mins)

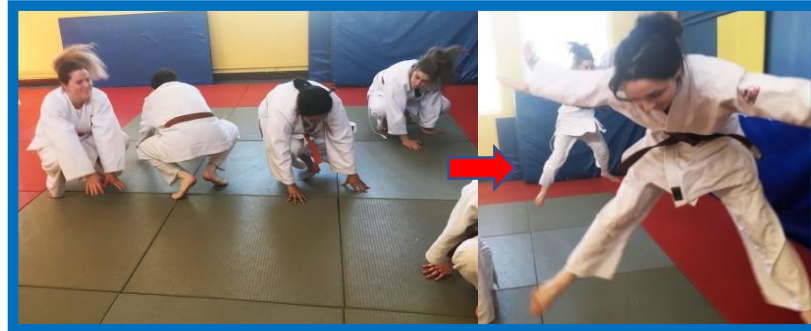
#### Warm-up Game 1 – Scoot Tag

Starting in a sitting position with hands and feet on the ground each player has to avoid or catch the other players by moving around the mat in a sitting position. When caught the player must perform a number of egg rolls (holding the knees tight with your arms and rolling back on the curve of the back). This exercise can be extended by adding a backward break fall each time the player is tagged.



### Warm-up Game 2 – Frog Tag

Moving around on the floor in a frog squat, the players must avoid or catch the other players. When tagged, the player can execute a frog star jump. This is a fun and explosive exercise that promotes explosive power, agility and strength.



### Warm-up Game 3 – Bull-Dozer (back)

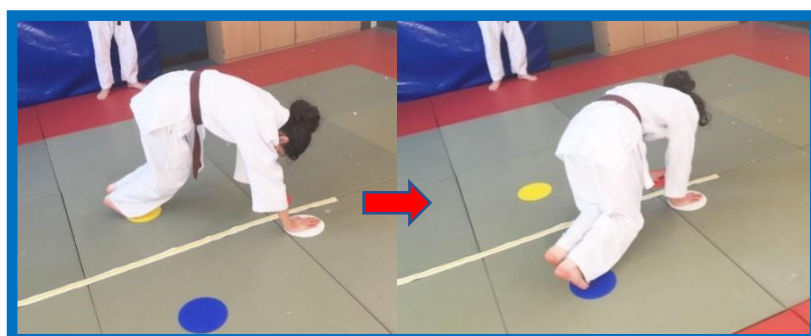
In pairs sit in the centre of the mat back to back, on the start command, you must try and push the other player to the opposite side of the mat using just your legs and back. This exercise encourages interaction and develops leg and arm strength.



## Gymnastic Elements (5mins)

### Gymnastic Element 1 – Cartwheel Jump

Learning how to do cartwheels can be made fun and simple by using items you already have in your dojo. Using a belt for a centre line, some floor discs for feet and hand positioning you can create a very simple exercise for developing cart-wheels.



## Break-falls (5mins)

### Break-fall Game 1 – Flip & Bang

This game/exercise is designed to assist with break-falling as it simulates a perfect landing position from a judo throw in a safe and controlled manner.



## Push & Pull Games (5mins)

### Push & Pull Game 1 – Star Fish Pull

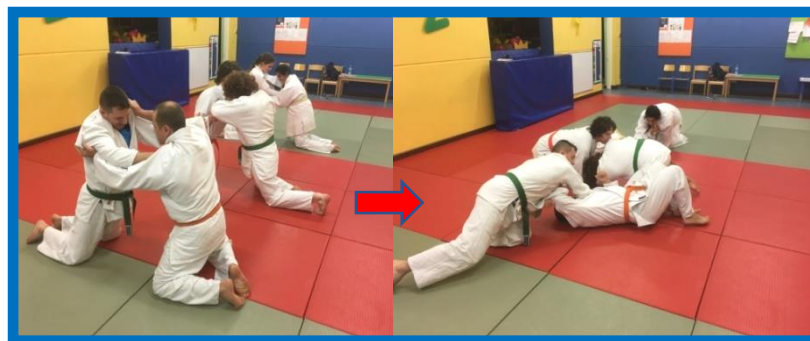
In groups of varied sizes, players grip both ends of a belt connected by a centre hoop or tied belt and try and pull their fellow players off their spot. You can play this game with or without floor markers; both of these methods use and require different skill bases. This is a great group exercise that helps to develop grip strength and breaking of the balance.



## Ground Based Games (10mins)

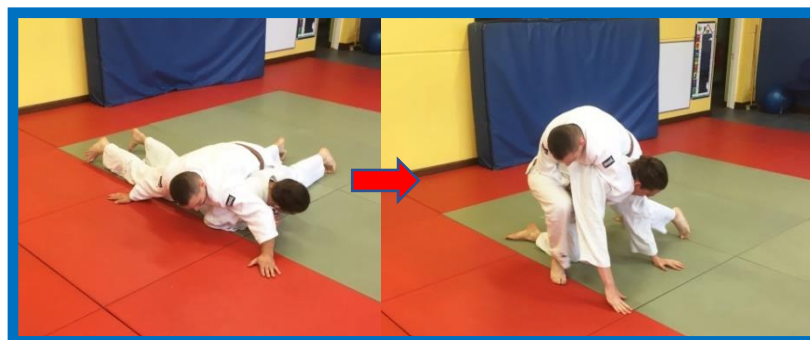
### Ground Based Game 1 – Bull-Dozer (front)

Facing each other and taking basic judo grips, you must try and push the other player to the opposite side of the mat using just your arms and knees. To expand the exercise the players, on command, must pull sharply forward/downward on the sleeve grip to try roll the other player over.



### Ground Based Game 2 – Rise and Stand

Starting with one player lying on their front and the other lying over them, on the start command the person on the bottom must manoeuvre out from under and stand up. This is then expanded by lying on their backs and repeating. You can then add holding using arms only, legs only and then full body pin-downs. This exercise encourages interaction, physical contact and will soon develop into holding and escaping techniques.



## Throwing Games (10mins)

### Throwing Game 1 – Tail Grab

In pairs and using cut up pieces of old belts (tails) one player tucks a tail into the rear of their belt, holding one sleeve the other player tries to retrieve the tail from his/her opponent. This exercise/game encourages the fundamentals of judo movement plus the reaching around the waist to retrieve the tail is a nice movement build up to O Goshi.





### Throwing Game 1 – Shoulder Tap

In pairs, one player grips the sleeve of the other player; with the free hand they must try to tap the underside of the other players shoulder. Like the previous exercise, this game encourages the fundamentals of judo movement plus the action of a nice movement build up to Ippon Seoi-nage.



### End of Lesson Bow

It is nice to say goodbye in the same way we said hello. You can line up your students or as we prefer gather in a circle and always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement.

## Lesson 4

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

As repetition is important, use the same starting position as previous week and recap on the Judo/Japanese terminology Rei (bow), Matte (stop) Hajime (begin) and Sensei. You can now add Dojo to the list of judo words.

### Warm Up Games (10mins)

#### Warm-up Game 1 – Monkey Tag

Moving around on hands and feet like a monkey, players must avoid or catch the other players. When caught the player must complete 5 jumping jacks and then in a press up position makes a bridge. To get free someone must crawl under the bridge.



#### Warm-up Game 2 – Tail Tag

Using cut up old judo belts make tails approx. 50cm long. Place the belt tail either in the judo belt or hanging from the back of training bottoms. This is a group game and the object is for each player to collect as many other people's tails as possible in a specified time - 10/15 seconds while moving around the tatami.





### Warm-up Game 3 – Shoulder Ball

In pairs, everyone has a small ball; the object of the game is to tap the other players shoulder with the ball, each tap is worth a point. You can also change the tap target to the hips. This exercise/game is designed to help with grip reach and the fundamentals of movement.



### Balance and Coordination (5mins)

#### Balance and Coordination 1 – Mine Field

Using dots or cones on the floor, the players must skip around, avoiding stepping on dots and bumping into each other, this game can be done singular or in pairs and is a great way of developing the fundamental of movement and movement patterns. To expand the game you can call out a colour and each player has to stand on the corresponding colour.



## Break-falls (5mins)

### Break-fall Game 1 – Crouching Tiger

Squatting down, using the palms of your hands only for contact, the players must try and push their opponent backwards. If pushed backward they must perform a backward break-fall.



## Push & Pull Games (5mins)

### Push & Pull Game 1 – Swamp Pull

Using two pieces of belt tails, player one lays on their back and player two stands near their head. Each player holds tight onto opposite ends of the belt tails. The standing player slowly pulls his opponent along the mat using only the tails for grips. Repeat for both players to have a turn pulling. Great exercise/game for improving grip, arm and leg strength.



## Ground Based Games (10mins)

### Ground Based Game 1 – Scorpion Tail

Lying down head to foot in a line, the object of the game is to pass the ball down the line using only feet. This is a great team game that helps promote teamwork and flexibility on the ground.



## Ground Based Game 2 – Kesa Challenge

Starting lying head to toe, on the start command each player has to sit up as quickly as possible and try and to pin the other player down. As this is a natural movement the players will automatically end up in kesa gatame. Please encourage the players to grip under the arm and not around the head as this is a prohibited action in adaptive judo.



## Throwing Games (10mins)

### Throwing Game 1 – Heel Ball O Uchi

Heel Ball O Uchi is designed to introduce O Uchi Gari in a movement target scenario. Practiced in pairs, one player stands with legs apart and a ball is placed on a cone to the side of them. The other player has to approach and place their leg in-between the legs and heel the ball off the cone. This develops O Uchi Gari leg movement and backward drive.



### Throwing Game 2 – Buddy Block

In groups of three, player one turns their belt around to the rear and takes grips with the second player. Player three has to try and grip player ones belt, while player one uses player two to block. This is a great exercise for gripping, breaking balance and general movement of your opponent. It's also great fun!



## End of Lesson Bow

As before, say goodbye in the same way we said hello. You can line up your students or as we prefer gather in a circle and always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement. There is also an opportunity here to recap on the terminology covered at the beginning of the lesson.

## Lesson 5

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

As repetition is important, use the same starting position as previous week and recap on the Judo/Japanese terminology Rei (bow), Matte (stop) Hajime (begin) Sensei and Dojo. You can now add Judoka to the list of judo words.

### Warm Up Games (10mins)

#### Warm-up Game 1 – Twin Jump Tag

In pairs, each player places their arms around the waists to support each other. They then jump around to avoid or catch the other players. When caught they can form a bridge with their arms and other players can release them by hopping under the bridge. This game can be expanded to include hop tag which involves the players hopping on one leg instead of jumping. Great warm up to encourage interaction, contact and teamwork.



#### Warm-up Game 2 – Hot Spot

Still in pairs, the two players move around the mat with judo grips, avoiding stepping on the floor disks, when the coach gives the command, each player has to try and manoeuvre their opponent on to a hot spot. If either player steps on a hot spot they must carry out a task, such as getting thrown or doing an exercise. This exercise/game help develop the fundamentals of moving, gripping and breaking of balance.





### Warm-up Game 3 – Chain Tag

Starting with two people holding hands/sleeves, players have to move around and try and catch the other players. Once caught, they then form part of the chain, which keeps getting longer. This is a great group activity that requires teamwork and coordination.



## Balance and Coordination (5mins)

### Balance and Coordination 1 – Mine Field Sweep

Scatter a selection of soft objects (such as cut up belts, bean bags, cones) around the play area and divide the players in to pairs. Taking judo grips the players must move around the objects without touching them until the command is given at which point the players have to sweep the objects off the play area as they are moving. This exercise creates a great foot sweeping / movement exercise that is great fun and practical.





## Break-falls (5mins)

### Break-fall Game 1 – Jump Circle

In a circle each player holds the sleeves of the person next to them. Altogether each player will jump and rotate until the count of five after which everyone falls to the ground using basic two handed break falls. This game can be expanded by counting in different languages (including Japanese).



## Push & Pull Games (5mins)

### Push & Pull Game 1 – Monkey Run

One person lays on their back and the other stands over them with hands and feet on the floor in a monkey stance. The person lying on the floor takes a grip of the lapels and the monkey runner starts to monkey walk/run down the mat dragging them along. Great leg exercise and great fun!



## Ground Based Games (10mins)

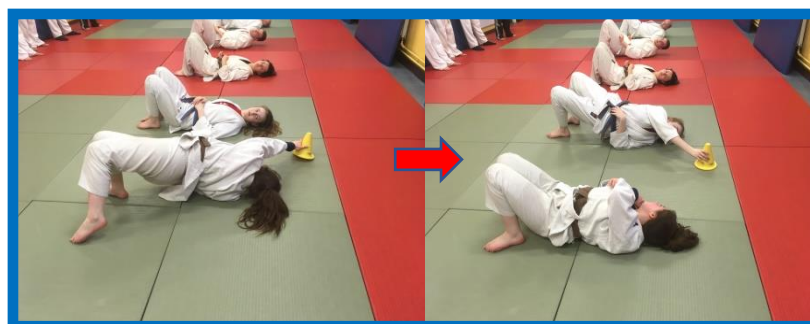
### Ground Based Game 1 – Roll & Catch

One player rolls down the mat while the other player (on hand & knees) tries to catch them before they reach the end. The catcher should be encouraged to catch using their body rather than just the hands. This encourages body contact and hold advantage.



### Ground Based Game 2 – Arch Escape

Lying in small groups, place an object above and to the side of the first person in the group. Arching their back and reaching over their shoulder retrieve object and replace above opposite shoulder for the next person to retrieve - repeat all down the line. This game/exercise is great for practicing hold escape movements.



### Throwing Games (10mins)

#### Throwing Game 1 – Knee Tag

Straight game of tag, when caught you must kneel in various poses, two knees down, right knee up or left knee up. To get free, one of the other players must perform a simple throw movement depending on your pose. Two knees down Tai Otoshi movement, right knee down Uchi Mata movement and left knee down O Soto Gari movement. This is a great opportunity to try different throw movements and for the other player to practice break-falls.



### Throwing Game 3 – Battle Belts

Using the players own belts, the players can start by waving the belts to help warm up and loosen shoulders, arms, wrists and fingers. Then the exercise can be expanded by introducing uchi-komi. The pace and intensity can be increased according to the target group.



### End of Lesson Bow

As before, say goodbye in the same way we said hello. You can line up your students or as we prefer gather in a circle and always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement. There is also an opportunity here to recap on the terminology covered at the beginning of the lesson.

**This ends our 5 week lesson plan 1 – the casual approach**



## Sample Lesson Plan 2 – *the structured approach*

For the structured approach we will aim to introduce the judo elements, such as break-falls, ground techniques and throwing techniques in a more direct manner. We will still use some playful activities for warmups, movement patterns and flexibility elements and will aim to link these elements to the techniques being covered in each lesson.

### Five Week Lesson Plan

#### Lesson 1

##### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

It's important to introduce the art of judo bowing correctly at this very early stage and how to properly address the coach. It is a personal preference of some experienced adapted judo coaches with ASD students, to start their lesson and bowing in a circle (in a circle, everyone is equal). Of course you can start your lesson in a line if you so choose. During the bowing and introduction stage, it is an ideal time to introduce some Japanese terminology such as Rei (bow) and Matte (stop).

##### Warm Up Games (15mins)

For the structured approach, it is advisable to use the warm up as a building block for the techniques you are planning to introduce in lesson one. For lesson one, we will be introducing break-falls, O Soto Gari and Mune Gatame.

##### **Warm-up Game 1 – Scoot Tag**

Starting in a sitting position with hands and feet on the ground each player has to avoid or catch the other players by moving around the mat in a sitting position. When caught the player must perform a number of egg rolls (holding the knees tight with your arms and rolling back on the curve of the back). This exercise can be extended by adding a backward break fall each time the player is tagged. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 lesson 3).

##### **Warm-up Game 2 – Roll & Catch**

One player rolls down the mat while the other player (on hand & knees) tries to catch them before they reach the end. The catcher should be encouraged to catch using their body rather than just the hands. This encourages body contact and hold advantage. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 lesson 5).



### Warm-up Game 3 – Heel Ball O Soto

Heel Ball O Soto is designed to introduce O Soto Gari in a movement target scenario. Player one stands with legs apart and place a ball on a cone in between their legs. Player two will approach by hopping on one leg out to the side and in a leg swinging motion; heel the ball off the cone. This develops a perfect O Soto Gari leg movement and backward drive. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 lesson 2).

### Gymnastic Elements (5mins)

#### Gymnastic elements 1 - Tumbles

Forward and backward tumbles – assess ability and assist where needed

### Ukemi (break-falls) (5mins)

#### Ukemi exercise 1 – Backward break-falls

In simple terms, explain the function and importance of break-falls in Judo. Demonstrate a simple backward break-fall from a sitting position. Pay particular attention to tucking the chin into chest to avoid banging head on the tatami. Allow the new students to try this exercise by themselves while you observe. Positively make any corrections that need to be made to the student's efforts.

### Safety Mat Exercise (5mins)

#### Safety Mat Exercise 1 – Skip & Fall

In pairs and in a standing position both players take good judo grips and at the same time skip sideways towards the mat and then just fall over. This is a nice safe exercise to help the students with any fear of falling; it also introduces gripping to the lesson. (for visual see Lesson Plan 1 lesson 1).

### Ground Techniques (10mins)

#### Ground Technique 1 – Mune Gatame (chest hold)

Referring back to the warm up exercise at the start of the lesson, the coach can explain the importance of using the body to control the hold. Every coach has their own way of showing Mune Gatame. For the purpose of this lesson and our target group it is recommended that the hold is introduced in small parts to begin and put together to finish. This part of the lesson could include a little ground wrestling in order to practice the new hold.



## Throwing Technique (10mins)

### Throwing Technique 1 – O Soto Gari

Referring back to the earlier warm up exercise “Heel Ball” the coach will now demonstrate O Soto Gari and then break it down into small parts. It is important to stress each element starting with grips, leaning over the shoulder to view the gap and break the balance and sweeping the leg through (as if heeling the ball). This part of the lesson can end with the new student’s practicing and throwing the coach(s) in static or moving positions.

### End of Lesson Bow

End the lesson the same way you started it, either in a circle or in a line. Always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement. There is also an opportunity here to recap on the terminology covered at the beginning of the lesson.

## Lesson 2

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

As repetition is important, use the same starting position as previous week and recap on the Judo/Japanese terminology Rei (bow) and Matte (stop). At this stage you can introduce Hajime (begin) to list of judo words.

### Warm Up Games (15mins)

For lesson two, we will be introducing, O Uchi Gari and Yoko Shiho Gatame.

#### Warm-up Game 1 – Roll and Bang Tag

A simple tag game where each player must avoid or catch the other players by moving around the tatami in a skipping/judo style motion. When caught the player must go down on their hand and knees. To be released, one other player must roll the other player over into a break-fall (for a visual see in lesson plan 1 lesson 3).

#### Warm-up Game 2 – Dog & Bone

Using a belt tail/socks/beanbag (the bone), player one (the dog) has to protect the bone from the player two (other dog). The object of the game is for player two to try and retrieve the bone from player one. This game encourages friendly grappling and interaction and a range of ground movement skills (for a visual see in lesson plan 1 lesson 2).

### Warm-up Game 3 – Heel Ball O Uchi

Heel Ball O Uchi is designed to introduce O Uchi Gari in a movement target scenario. Practiced in pairs, one player stands with legs apart and a ball is placed on a cone to the side of them. The other player has to approach and place their leg in-between the legs and heel the ball off the cone. This develops O Uchi Gari leg movement and backward drive. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 lesson 4)

### Gymnastic Elements (5mins)

#### Gymnastic elements 1 – Forward Rolls

Forward rolls are an essential skill for judo players to learn and master. However, for some they can be a little difficult. Practice of these rolls can be started on a tumble mat or a thicker safety/crash mat until the skill level is safe enough to perform on the tatami. A gym ball can be a useful tool to assist in the learning and practice of rolling. As always, assess ability and assist where needed.

### Ukemi (breakfalls) (5mins)

#### Ukemi exercise 1 – Backward break-falls

Recap and practice the same backward break-fall movements from lesson 1. Sometimes learning break-falls can be a little boring and arduous. There is always an opportunity to make this exercise a bit more enjoyable, fun and at the same time add some other learning's to the procedure. For example, while practicing break-falls as a group the coach can add counting out loud to the exercise. This is an opportunity to teach counting in Japanese up to five to start. Other students in the group may also know a different language in which to teach the group. This makes the whole exercise a much more enjoyable experience and interaction.

### Safety Mat Exercise (5mins)

#### Safety Mat Exercise 1 – Hop and throw

To help recap on the throwing technique O Soto Gari, that was introduced in lesson 1. Player one will stand with their back to the safety mat, the next player in line will hop to their side and execute an O Soto Gari. Player two will then stand at the safety mat for the next player to take their turn at throwing. This exercise will allow each player to recap the throwing technique from last lesson and practice being thrown / landing in safety.



## Ground Techniques (10mins)

### Ground Technique 1 – Yoko Shiho Gatame (side four corner hold)

Recap on last lesson hold, Mune Gatame, before introducing the new hold Yoko Shiho Gatame. The transition between these two holds is quite small, making it ideal to work from one position to the next. If you over emphasizes the holding of the leg in Yoko Shiho Gatame it will make it easier for the students to remember next time. For example, if you tell the students that Yoko Shiho Gatame (hold 2) is the same as Mune Gatame (hold 1) except “for the leg” they will remember “the leg” part easier, especially if you make a big gesture of holding the leg. This part of the lesson could include a little ground wrestling in order to practice the new hold.

## Throwing Technique (10mins)

### Throwing Technique 1 – O Uchi Gari

Referring back to the earlier warm up exercise “Heel Ball” the coach will now demonstrate O Uchi Gari and then break it down into small parts. It is important to stress each element starting with grips, breaking of balance and hooking the leg through and around (as if heeling the ball). This part of the lesson can end with the new student’s practicing and throwing the coach(s) in static or moving positions.

## End of Lesson Bow

End the lesson the same way you started it, either in a circle or in a line. Always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement. There is also an opportunity here to recap on the terminology covered at the beginning of the lesson.

## Lesson 3

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

As repetition is important, use the same starting position as previous week and recap on the Judo/Japanese terminology Rei, Matte and Hajime. At this stage you can introduce Sensei to list of judo words.

### Warm Up Games (15mins)

For lesson three, we will be introducing, De Ashi Barai and Kesa Gatame (Kuzure)



### Warm-up Game 1 – Line Tag

Using the lines in the joins of the mats, players have to skip sideways up, down and across the lines in all directions to tag each other. This is a good movement exercise in preparation for the sweeping practice later in this lesson. (for a visual see Lesson Plan 1 lesson 1)

### Warm-up Game 2 – Kesa Challenge

Starting lying head to toe, on the start command each player has to sit up as quickly as possible and try and to pin the other player down. As this is a natural movement the players will automatically end up in kesa gatame. Please encourage the players to grip under the arm and not around the head. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 lesson 4)

### Warm-up Game 3 – Road Sweeper

Using tails and corresponding colour belts the player has to sweep the corresponding colour tail to the correct colour side. This develops coordination, balance and left & right sweeping skills. This is a great fun exercise to help with De Ashi Barai movements. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 lesson 1)

## Gymnastic/Ukemi (10mins)

### Gymnastic elements 1 – Rolling Break-falls

Introducing break-falls into your gymnastic elements is a very easy transition for new students because they have already completed some break-fall practice and some tumbles and rolls. Demonstrate tumbles and rolls with the added break-falls. At this early stage the coach may opt to use tumble mats or the safety mat for this practice – as always, assess and assist where needed.

## Ground Techniques (10mins)

### Ground Technique 1 – Kuzure Kesa Gatame (modified scarf hold)

Referring back to the earlier warm up game (Kesa Challenge) demonstrate the hold Kuzure Kesa Gatame. Always remember to break it down into small parts to start and then put them together to finish. As before, this part of the lesson could include a little ground wrestling in order to practice the new hold.

**Please Note:** Hon Kesa Gatame is a prohibited action in adapted judo as it may apply undue pressure to the neck of the player being held.



## Throwing Technique (10mins)

### Throwing Technique 1 – De Ashi Barai

Using the earlier warm up exercise “Road sweeper” for reference, demonstrate the movements of De Ashi Barai. Remember to show it in full and then break it down into small parts. It is important to stress each element starting with grips, breaking of balance and sweeping the leg across (as if sweeping the belt bits). This part of the lesson can end with the new student’s practicing and throwing the coach(s) in static or moving positions.

### End of Lesson Bow

End the lesson the same way you started it, either in a circle or in a line. Always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement. There is also an opportunity here to recap on the terminology covered at the beginning of the lesson.

## Lesson 4

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

Using the same starting position as previous weeks, recap on the Judo/Japanese terminology Rei, Matte, Hajime and Sensei. At this stage you can introduce Dojo to list of judo words.

### Warm Up Games (15mins)

For lesson four, we will be introducing, O Goshi and Tate Shiho Gatame

#### Warm-up Game 1 – Tail Tag

Using cut up old judo belts make tails approx. 50cm long. Place the belt tail either in the judo belt or hanging from the back of training bottoms. This is a group game and the object is for each player to collect as many other people’s tails as possible in a specified time - 10/15 seconds. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 lesson 4)

#### Warm-up Game 2 – Bull Dozer

Facing each other, taking basic judo grips, the players must try and push each other to the opposite side of the mat using just your arms and knees. To expand the exercise, the players, on command, must pull sharply forward/down on the sleeve grip to try to roll the other player over. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 week 3)





### Warm-up Game 3 – Tail Grab

In pairs and using cut up piece of old belts (tails) one player tucks a tail into the back of their belt, holding one sleeve the other player tries to retrieve the tail from his/her opponent. This exercise/game encourages the fundamentals of judo movement plus the reaching around the waist to retrieve the tail is a nice build up movement to O Goshi. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 week 3)

### Gymnastic/Ukemi (10mins)

#### Gymnastic elements 1 – Rolling Break-falls

Re-cap and practice of break-falls into gymnastic elements from last lesson. Demonstrate tumbles and rolls with the added break-falls as before. At this early stage the coach may opt to use tumble mats or the safety may for this practice – as always, assess and assist where needed.

### Ground Techniques (10mins)

#### Ground Technique 1 – Tate Shiho Gatame

Demonstrate the hold Tate Shiho Gatame. Always remember to break it down into small parts to start and then put them together to finish. For safety, a sample way of demonstrating this hold is to ask tori to stand over uke with one foot on either side of their body and at belt level, then kneel down and assume hold. This method prevents tori applying too much weight on uke in this learning stage. As before, this part of the lesson could include a little ground wrestling in order to practice the new hold.

### Throwing Technique (10mins)

#### Throwing Technique 1 – O Goshi

Using the earlier warm up exercise “Tail Grab” for reference, demonstrate the movements of O Goshi. Remember to show it in full and then break it down into small parts. It is important to stress each element starting with grips, breaking of balance and bending the knees for the lift. This part of the lesson can end with the new student’s practicing and throwing the coach(s) in static or moving positions.

### End of Lesson Bow

End the lesson the same way you started it, either in a circle or in a line. Always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement. There is also an opportunity here to recap on the terminology covered at the beginning of the lesson.



## Lesson 5

### Bow & Introduction (5mins)

Using the same starting position as previous weeks, recap on the Judo/Japanese terminology Rei, Matte, Hajime, Sensei and Dojo. As this is the final lesson in the set you may consider doing a small terminology test or exercise.

### Warm Up Games (15mins)

For lesson five, we will be introducing, Ippon Seoi-nage and basic hold escape

#### Warm-up Exercise 1 – Battle Belts

Using your own belts, you can start by waving the belts to help warm up and loosen shoulders, arms, wrists and fingers. Then you can expand by introducing uchi-komi. The pace and intensity can be increased according to the target group. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 week 5)

#### Warm-up Exercise 2 – Arch Escape

Lying in small groups, place an object above and to the side of the first person in the group. Arching their back and reaching over their shoulder retrieve object and replace above opposite shoulder for the next person to retrieve - repeat all down the line. This game/exercise is great for practicing hold escape moves. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 week 5)

#### Warm-up Exercise 3 – Shoulder Tap

In pairs, one player grips the sleeve of the other player; with the free hand they try to tap the underside of the other players shoulder. This exercise/game encourages the fundamentals of judo movement plus the reaching under the arm to tap the shoulder is a nice build up to Ippon Seoi-nage. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 week 3)

### Ukemi Practice (10mins)

#### Throwing and Ukemi Practice 1 – Kneel Tag

Using a simple game of tag to develop new throw movements and ukemi practice is a nice way to get the group working together on this final lesson in the plan schedule. The students move around the tatami and must avoid being caught by the designated catcher.

When caught you must kneel in various poses, two knees down, right knee up or left



knee up. To get free, one of the other players must perform a simple throw movement depending on your pose. Two knees down Tai Otoshi throw, right knee down Uchi Mata throw and left knee down O Soto Gari throw. This is a great opportunity to try different throw movements and for the other player to practice break-falls. (for a visual see lesson plan 1 week 5)

## Ground Techniques (10mins)

### Ground Technique 1 – Basic Hold Escape

From previous lessons, the group now knows a number of judo holds. For this lesson the coach will introduce a basic “bridge & twist” escape movement. Referring back to the earlier warm up exercise of “Arch Escape” and the previously learnt judo holds, the coach will demonstrate a previously learnt judo hold and their partner will demonstrate the bridge and twist escape. Always remember to break it down into small parts to start and then put them together to finish. As before, this part of the lesson could include a little ground wrestling in order to practice hold and escape movements.

## Throwing Technique (10mins)

### Throwing Technique 1 – Ippon Seoi-nage

Using the earlier warm up exercise “Shoulder Tap” for reference, demonstrate the movements of Ippon Seoi-nage. Remember to show it in full and then break it down into small parts. It is important to stress each element starting with grips, breaking of balance and bending the knees for the lift. This part of the lesson can end with the new student’s practicing and throwing the coach(s) in static or moving positions.

## End of Lesson Bow

End the lesson the same way you started it, either in a circle or in a line. Always end the lesson with lots of positive encouragement. There is also an opportunity here to recap on the terminology covered at the beginning of the lesson.

**This ends our 5 week lesson plan 2 – the structured approach**



## Coaching Guidelines for people with ASD

In previous sections of this chapter we have looked at the preparation of the venue & equipment, we have looked at the assessment of our new ASD student group and some sample lesson plans based on student's needs. Now we will look at some practical adaptive coaching advice and guidelines that will help you develop yourself and your students.

### The Coach

What is required to be a successful adaptive judo coach?

A part from the obvious of having a personal background in Judo, it makes sense that an adaptive judo coach would have basic knowledge of a range of different abilities and disabilities. It would also make sense that adaptive judo coaches would know and practice a broad range of teaching methods and teaching styles.

These skills and knowledge ensure that the coach can best serve the needs and aspirations of their students. This coupled with enthusiasm and passion is the recipe for a successful adaptive judo coach and for happy and motivated students.

### The Student

How can an ASD judo student benefit from judo and a successful adaptive judo coach?

A well trained, skilled and knowledgeable adaptive judo coach can make a huge difference to the life of an ASD judo student, not only in the dojo but in everyday life.

Judo, like most martial art type sports, has a "code of conduct". This will help people with or without ASD to learn how to respect rules, how to respect others and themselves. These rules bring with them, structure and consistency, which is essential for people with ASD.

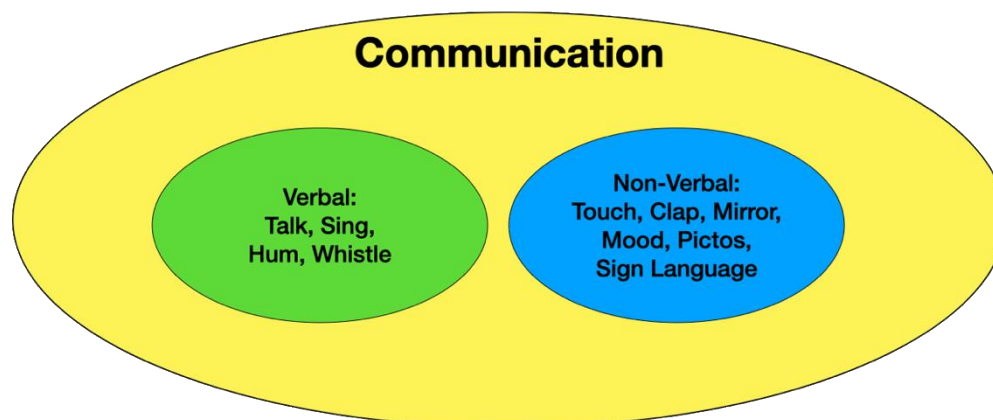
There are the obvious physical health benefits associated with any physical activity which includes improved cardiovascular fitness, muscle tone and flexibility. There are also judo specific physical health benefits such as, improved balance, coordination and orientation in space. We cannot forget the mental health benefits which includes improved Self-esteem, personal confidence, communication skills and most importantly, social interaction, integration and inclusion.



## Communication Styles

Communication is the main factor to the success of any interaction; however the manner in which we communicate can vary greatly from student to student depending on their ability and mode of communication.

We can make a distinction in verbal and non-verbal communication. In other words:



It is important for all coaches to utilise the widest-possible range of communication methods.

Every human being wants to:

- Communicate
- Learn
- Help
- Play

ASD judoka need help with this. It is necessary for the Judo teacher to adapt the communication level to the situation. This can be done by using various styles of communication. For example: if a judoka is unable to make contact or talk, then try to make contact by mirroring and making happy, soft sounds. Then, try to make physical contact, still making quiet sounds. As soon as that works, move to talking in combination with visuals/pictographs and physical guidance.

This is all described in one paragraph but may take weeks, months, or even years to achieve.



## Communication Level, intellectual and social

This paragraph discusses the communication level of the ASD judoka. We can distinguish two levels:

- Intellectual age
- Social age

(note that the *actual* age of the judoka is not really a parameter here)

### Intellectual age

ASD judoka with an intellectual disability can in general be classified by their intellectual age. In the case of a 24-year old judoka with an intellectual age of 7, you will therefore communicate with them on the level of a 7-year old. But there is a trap here: even though the judoka may have an *intellectual* age of 7, they may be *socially* on par with their real age because various abilities often develop asynchronously. This is called a “disharmonious profile” and it can lead to all sorts of confusion, for example when the person engages in a pleasant session of small talk, but then suddenly panics when the subject switches to how he will travel to the next event.

We must therefore take care to communicate with the judoka on the proper level. Nothing is worse than being talked down to because you do not understand something (yet) or worse: because people *think* you do not understand something.

Everyone wants to communicate, however sometimes the ASD judoka does not know how to communicate yet. The Judo teacher must make sure to utilise the same level of communication as the judoka. At the same time, the judo teacher must encourage and challenge the judoka to improve, to climb the communication ladder together: from not talking to making sounds to full conversations.

### In a group

So- how can all this be done whilst also trying to teach the rest of your Judo class? Obviously, that is not really straightforward, or easy. You may need to have a one-on-one session with the ASD judoka while the class rages on behind you.

In an ideal situation you will have multiple (but at least two) judo teachers and some assistants. One of the teachers can handle the 1-on-1 sessions, while the assistants handle the remainder of the class, directed by the other teacher. Doing all this on your own is a challenge at best (although it can be done, with good assistants).

For some ASD students it is not necessary to work with them for the entire lesson. Depending on the individual students, a full lesson time is too much and for others it's not enough. What you can do is, first instruct the judoka and then continue with the lesson, and leave the judoka to process the information. First of all, this gives them some time to absorb what just happened, and second it will allow them to watch what the other judoka in the class are doing and when ready, to join the assignment.

Try to use other judoka to encourage them into the play. This may not work immediately but if it does, see how they perform and, if necessary, adjust the rules of the play.

Enlisting the help of another judoka to help you demonstrate a technique, exercise or game, helps you, but also helps build confidence and self-esteem for that judoka. It may also lead to the use of a buddy system which encourages the pairing of the ASD judoka with another judoka who is eager to help.

### Behaviour during lessons

Sometimes we see people with ASD act in a repetitive manner, for example sitting down and moving the body back and forth, humming or flapping hands. There are many variations to this but it usually means the judoka is overstimulated and tries to block external input. This behaviour is called *stimming*.

Look at it this way: The input that people with ASD receive is often unreliable or distorted because the regular input filtering that a neuro-typical brain does on a routine basis is not working properly. A lot of input that is unconsciously ignored by a neuro-typical person arrives unfiltered into the brain of a person with ASD and therefore must be processed. There may be many issues with this information:

- Some information does not come in at all
- Some information comes in too strong
- Some information comes in disturbed
- ..and it can also be that *any* information is too much

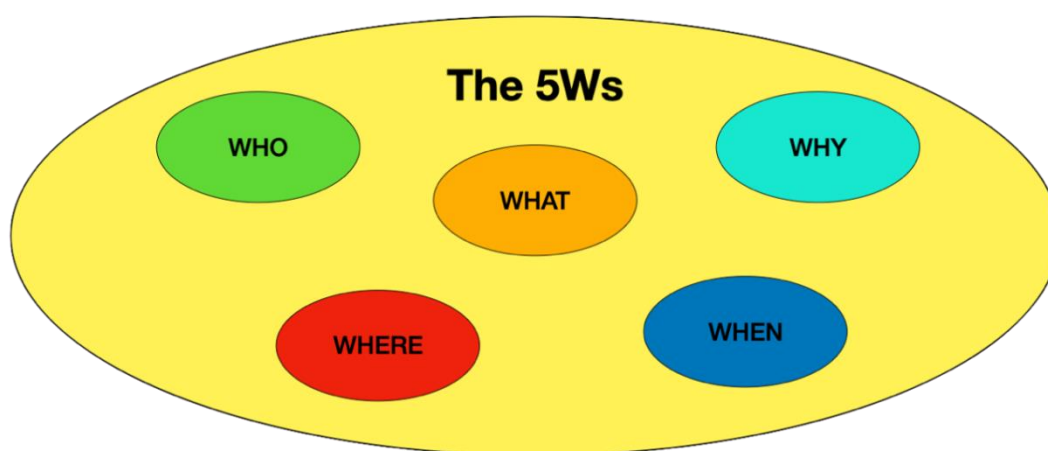
All this makes it very hard to interpret the world, especially if you also have a brain that doesn't put two and two together and is suspicious of whatever comes in. In fact, a person with ASD is constantly busy putting an incomplete puzzle together.

So when a judoka is stimming, please let them continue. If their stimming is distracting the rest of the group, just explain what is happening and how they can help you not to be distracted.

### Providing structure to judoka with ASD

Most people with ASD like structure, because this makes solving puzzles, described earlier, easier.

Here we use the 5 Ws:



#### The 5Ws are like a recipe

In fact, there are 5Ws but there is also an H: *How*.

When all the 5 Ws are covered, the recipe is complete and this makes life for the judoka much easier. For example, when you give an instruction: “George and Jim (*who*) must practice *ippon seoi nage* (*what*), by making *kuzushi* and putting his bicep under the armpit of Jim and turning his back against Jim’s stomach and then make *gake* (*how*) in the middle of the *tatami* (*where*) after *hajime* (*when*).

Note that the *why* is implicit- you clearly came to the dojo to learn Judo, and it is not really necessary to explain this. However- sometimes the student still needs to be reminded of the fact.

Only when the relationship between teacher and student is solid and the student feels safe and at ease, it is time to try and loosen up some structure. For instance, one can intentionally forget to mention one or two of the 5 Ws and see what happens. In many cases the Judoka with ASD is so used to the structure during your lessons that he will now fill in the blanks for himself. So actually now he is capable of creating his own structure and it becomes unnecessary to cover all 5 Ws.

### Breaking it down

Often, explaining the whole process of a specific technique is too much for an ASD-judoka. Breaking the technique down into easy to understand parts is a common approach among judo teachers for all judoka but work particularly well for students with ASD.

### Open door approach

It is possible that sometimes a judoka enters the dojo in a sad mood. People with ASD can easily get stuck in such a mood and become unable to do anything else. What we all want is to help that judoka improve their mood and start enjoying their experience taking part in the lesson. In this instance, you can then use the metaphor: "You are sad, but we now close the door on your sadness, and we will open the door to judo where it is happiness".

You will find that sometimes, you can help to close the first door, but the second door will not open. If that happens, you can gain the assistance of one of your other students or one of your assistants to open that second door and help the judoka into the lesson. In 99% of the cases this approach will work.

## Teaching Styles

There are many different kinds of teaching styles that are used in everyday life. Not all of them are suitable for teaching judo, but there are traits in each style that can be adapted or used depending on the needs of the students. In a lot of cases the teaching style adopted by some judo teachers are very closely related to their character, and we should certainly not attempt to move too far away from this.

### Role and attitude of the teacher

The task of a teacher is much more than guiding the judoka towards competition. It is a difficult and complicated job. The true task is to help the judoka to reach their true potential and perform better in their personal life.

A teacher has to deal with several aspects:

- The wishes and expectations of the athletes, parents and teacher
- The possibilities of the athletes, the environment, the organisation

### Leadership insights

A Judo leader is someone who can direct, motivate, guide, manage not only a group, but also the individual. Great leaders can develop social growth and motivate judoka to reach high goals in Judo, social, motoric and cognitive skills.

The term "leadership styles" refers to a leader's manner of behaviour in a working relationship. According to Professor Fiedler, one's leadership style depends on one's personality and is therefore relatively fixed.

The leadership adopted should therefore be the one with which the leader is most comfortable. We will discuss some leadership styles in this section.

### Authoritarian Style

This Leadership Style is characterised by a leader who makes all the decisions and passes the directives to subordinates who are expected to carry these out under very close supervision.

#### Pros:

- It provides direction, and no decisions have to be made. They simply have to be carried out. "George please sit down now" is an easy, simple and direct instruction. Many people with ASD like this, because it is simple and clear.
- It relieves pressure, because it is an easy assignment, a person with ASD can just focus on the task, instead of worrying about other things.
- It covers structure, and a lot of people with ASD are in need of structure, foremost.

#### Cons:

- It discourages the individual input. People are not encouraged to grow in their social skills and think for themselves.
- It hurts moral, because a person does not have the chance to decide for themselves, they may lose interest in becoming better.

### Democratic Style

The Democratic style is characterised by a structured but cooperative approach to decision making. It focuses on group relationships and sensitivity to the people in the organisation. This type of leadership style fosters professional competence. Supervision is minimal as individuals take the responsibility for their behaviour.



#### Pros:

- It encourages people to share their thoughts and in doing so are getting more involved in the process.
- A person with ASD can take more charge in their development. But note that this is not what some judoka may be looking for.

#### Cons:

- Opinions can clash; this can provoke unnecessary friction and frustration for people with ASD. Often, choosing a side under group pressure can invoke stress in a judoka.

### Coaching Style

This Leadership Style is characterised by a leader who frees the potential capacity of judoka to the best possible result. The leader encourages learning of the clients during their tasks. Note that one needs a strong-willed and extremely flexible teacher to run a class this way.

#### Pros:

- Feeling secure and positive. People feel involved and taken care for, so they will give their best, if so inclined.
- Empowerment, a person with ASD gets the possibility to evolve and grow.

#### Cons:

- The empowerment can backfire. The lack of structure can lead to failure. Especially immature or undeveloped judoka may be unable to handle the lack of guidance.
- The emotional impact from the teacher can be too much to handle and can make a person with ASD cocoon himself.
- Looking from an observer's standpoint, lessons like this may look incredibly disorganised. Note that, even though it may work with a particular group, it doesn't "sell" well, especially to onlookers (i.e. parents).

### Laissez-Faire Style

This leadership style is quite the opposite of the authoritarian style. There seems to be an absence of any real leadership. Everyone seems to be free to do as they please. This style distinguishes itself from other styles by the presence of a natural leader.

Natural leaders earn their respect by the group through knowledge, insight and behaviour. Natural leaders are not appointed, responsible or even fixed in one person.

#### Pros:

- It encourages personal growth and innovation. People with ASD who are able to be in control of structure can train self-sufficient to get better.

#### Cons:

- Because of the lack of structure and guidance, training may stand still and there will be no growth. This can lead to stress.

### So- which one to choose?

As we can see, there are many different leadership styles. When reading this, one may have noticed that every style will have its own merits.

Being autocratic or democratic is the common way of thinking about leadership.

Autocratic leaders depend on their authority and the power that comes from occupying a high position (degree). Democratic leaders depend on abilities, participative problem solving and decision-making. Being only autocratic or democratic usually limits one's effectiveness as a leader. However, there is an alternative style, that which is adopted by a *situational leader*.

### Situational Style

Situational leaders are able to adapt their leadership style to fit their followers and situations in which they are working.

This means that a teacher may teach three judoka in three completely different styles.

Each situation presents its own operational definition and description. Coaching provides many different scenarios in which leaders emerge in various situations and positions.

#### Pros:

- Every judoka receives teaching in the style that suits him most, so results are maximised.

#### Cons:

- It takes a lot of energy, flexibility, experience and insight from the teacher to make this a success.
- It may be confusing for the judoka: "why can he do this and not me?"

#### Situational style needs three basic skills:

**Flexibility:** Using a variety of leadership styles comfortably

**Observation:** To determine and recognise others' needs for direction and support.

**Communication:** Opening up communication and reaching agreements about the best way to work together.

#### Help made to measure

Look at how you can help the judoka, look to see in what areas you can make your judoka grow: physically, standing up for oneself, conquering fears, physical condition, losing weight, being more social, learning humour, recognising boundaries and many other things.

The difficult question is: How do you do this? In fact, there is no clear-cut way, method or manual for this. We can only give some examples:

A good start is that the judoka trusts you and you are on the same communicative level. For all the things mentioned above, you need to test the limits of the judoka. Push beyond them, not too much of course.

Be bold, dare to push your students. Apologise if you went too far and have upset the judoka, explain what you were doing and why, but keep pushing those boundaries. This is a slow process that sometimes can take years, after which you can start working on other things:

- **Physical condition and/or losing weight:** Many different types of play and Judo games like randori will make the body stronger and fitter. Keep your lessons active and fun, so that the judoka remains busy at all times, and make him move from intrinsic motivation.

- **Standing up for oneself and recognising boundaries:** There are many ways to do randori, apart from ne-waza and tachi-waza. You can play “King of the Tatami”, or “Golden Egg” or “This is my Tatami”, or play a reaction game. There is always one game that a particular judoka is good at and if it is really necessary to give the judoka some self-esteem at a certain moment, then you can always act as uke during a randori to give the judoka some success, and boost his self-esteem.
- **Becoming more social:** Be interactive with the group, share things that happened in the lesson and discuss them. Give judoka exercises to help with other judoka and make compliments when they do well, or adjust in a positive way if it threatens to go wrong. Never approach them negatively, because this already happens too much.
- **Tournaments,** especially the ones that span more days and in which they have to sleep in an unknown environment, traveling together are a great way to boost the social behaviour. These types of large tournaments abroad gives judoka a sense of belonging to a special group of people, allows them to make friends from other countries and cultures and experience how Judo is done elsewhere.
- **Teaching humour:** Interact with the judoka, make jokes with and about him and explain the meaning of your joke. Guide them in such a way that the judoka eventually starts joking themselves.
- **Competition training:** At some point your judoka will approach the point where they will be competing in tournaments. That is the moment to start competition training. And when they come to this level, you will find that their previous experience makes them mature enough to actually perform in a competition in an honourable way.

## Training Levels

Training levels can be game based, structure based and inclusive based. We can use the cognitive/communication level of the judoka to plan the lesson's structure.

### Game-based lessons

Game based training is suitable for judoka who also have a severe intellectual disability. These judoka may appear to function in their own world or have an intellectual communication level of a child from about 2 to 12 years old.

Children learn better by games, so you must use a lot of games and randori type games and go with the flow of the play.

### Structured-based lessons

In all adaptive judo classes, there will be ASD judoka that can take part in mainstream lessons. Even while a judoka may have a low IQ or severe ASD, they may still possess that mysterious property we call "judo feeling" which resides mainly on a subconscious level and in muscle memory. They may be unable to remember all those Japanese names but can show you a perfect uchi-mata, and in shiai they are unbeatable. These judokas are the ones that can be taught in a mainstream group.

On the other hand: be aware that some older judoka can still be on a lower intellectual level, so adjust your groups carefully. Structure of 5Ws is still important, but can be adjusted and/or relaxed as desired.

These judoka only need a bit of guidance on their motor, social, communication and emotional skills. Beware that these judoka sometimes still need more processing time than others. These judoka walk a fine line between getting the assignment at hand and having a meltdown because it suddenly becomes too much. So you can play with the structure of the 5Ws but keep adjusting when necessary.

### Inclusive-based

These are judoka where the intellectual age does not deviate too much from their real age, and are able to train with mainstream judoka, varying from club level to high level competition judoka.

## Some helpful information

### Adjust your teaching style and approach to suit the judoka

We all know the Judo teachers that declare *"we teach everyone the same, no special treatment"*. What they forget to tell is that the judoka probably does not stay for very long, and in the meantime does not learn a lot. ASD requires adaptations and must be treated as such. This will ensure that judokas with ASD are given the same



opportunities as all other judoka: "Normal where possible, adjusted when necessary".

### Are all judoka with ASD the same?

All people are unique, no person is the same as another, and this of course applies to people with ASD and other life challenges. Every person with ASD has a unique character, with incredible ability and talent ranging from playing music, doing sport, painting, doing Judo or computer gaming, the same as everyone else. Some people with ASD become particularly skilled in tasks or jobs that require repetition and an eye for extreme detail such as computer coding.

### Can a judoka with ASD grow in the spectrum?

Absolutely, by early intervention and guidance it is possible to grow. This has been experienced and reported time and time again. Judo is an excellent means to stimulate the autistic brain, especially in young children with ASD. Judo helps to improve physical fitness and ability, social interaction, emotional challenges and teaches structure and routine.

### Be aware of the need of structure

Structure and routine is important. Children like repetition; this is the way we learn. For people with ASD, this is even more important. Use the structure Who, What, When, Where and Why (5Ws). Try to use the persons own pattern and work with that.

### Allow Stimming

Stimming is a self-regulating way for a person with ASD to come at ease and find comfort. It has been discussed before but it is important enough to expand on it a bit. People with ASD often engage in:

- Hand-flapping
- Walking around
- Making noises
- Rocking back and forth
- Staring
- Clapping
- Jumping up and down
- Sitting silent in a secluded place

If this happens and if nobody gets hurt: *leave the judoka alone*. The judoka needs time to process the information and experiences they have just experienced.

Of course this can be distracting for you and for the group, but if you tell the group what and why the judoka stims, the group will soon ignore the stimming. You will notice that as soon as the judoka gets more familiar in the group, the stimming will decrease. But it will never go away, as it is part of this judoka's behaviour.

### **Social Interaction is difficult for judoka with ASD. Spend time teaching social rules and skills.**

Luckily Judo is a social happening and as previously mentioned, when you have a bond with the judoka, you can help them work towards a higher level of social interaction. But it will take time and effort from everyone to make this happen. Spend time to find out how a judoka feels and how they think the other person feels and why. When you win or lose in randori, always high five and congratulate your Uke.

Doing Rei means *"I will take care of you, and you will take care of me"* and *"Judo is a game without any pain"* This is the simplest explanation of respect.

The lack of social skills could mean that sometimes children with ASD react inappropriate and hurtful to you and others. When the judoka develops a tantrum do not get mad, because that will only make the tantrum worse. Stay calm and guide the judoka out of the situation. Lead by example with positive behaviour. When the judoka has calmed down, that is the right time to explain the situation and give the necessary advice. If you do not do this, you take away the structure that the judoka asks for: complete the procedure.

But- remember that unacceptable behaviour remains exactly that: unacceptable. If a judoka is for example in the habit of grabbing others in inappropriate places, you have to make it clear, *very* clear, that this is unacceptable and must *never* be repeated. Never try to explain unacceptable behaviour away just because of the disability.

### **Surprise changes should also be offered steadily.**

It is a positive thing that Judo has its own basic structure which is appealing to Judoka with ASD, but still with enough surprises to keep the lessons interesting.

Basic structure of a Judo lesson: Making *rei*, warming-up, *ukemi*, technique, *randori*, end game, making *rei*.

The little surprises are: Warming-up, will it be a new game or the same game as last week? What will be the technique today be? Randori: the outcome is unknown. What will the end game be?

Be mindful not to change too many things all at once. Big changes can have a very negative effect on the judoka with ASD.

### **Use exaggeration in your expressions and sounds and take time to explain.**

When you make a joke or have fun, use your facial expression to emphasise this and explain what the joke is or why you are having fun. This is a form of giving structure, and it should be repeated every time you say something funny, or make a joke.

### **Judoka with ASD often experience slower progress in motor skills**

Make sure you give achievable motor assignments to judoka that experience slower progress in motor skills. Work slowly from low to high, from easy to difficult. Give the students an easier alternative: Judoka with ASD need more time to process. It takes more time for some judoka with ASD to process instructions. Therefore, use the same explanation visual and verbal, and multiple times. Changing your explanation will just lead to confusion, because you keep changing the 5Ws in your explanation. Explain it right the first time. This requires thoughtful explanation.

### **Judoka with ASD react better to positive reinforcement than to punishment.**

Because some judoka with ASD have more difficulties in understanding others and their behaviour, try to guide them into good behaviour instead of emphasizing the bad. Point out what is good, and make them act on it. But again, unacceptable behaviour remains unacceptable.

### **Use a Time-in spot as a positive reinforcement to self-regulate.**

A “time-in spot works as a positive alternative to the “time-out” spot where a person is asked to leave the area of play to cool off following a negative incident. A “time-in” spot is a place where a Judoka with ASD can take a break from all the sensory inputs they are experiencing. This approach will hopefully prevent an overload and meltdown scenario occurring. This time-in spot is a positive thing and can be used when you see a build-up occurring and somewhere for the judoka to relax and calm down. Everyone needs one of these places sometime.

For the positive time out area you can use a certain place on the tatami, a chair, pillow, safety mat or bench. This is a place where you and the judoka have agreed to go whenever they need a time-out whether on their own initiative or in the teacher's opinion.

When the judoka goes there on their own, you let them know that you can see them and that you will get back to them after a set time (like 2 minutes). If in that time the judoka has self-regulated and relaxed enough, then they can join the group again on their own. When after 2 minutes they are still in the time-in zone, you can go over and ask if you can help, and if not you set a new time and repeat the procedure.

Of course your goal is to reduce the moments and duration that this area is necessary.

Be mindful that people with ASD have a lot of struggles in their lives, so when it looks like they need the positive area again, use it.

### ASD and physical contact

The general opinion is that people with ASD do not like to be touched. This is actually not true, at least, not entirely. There are some aspects to this:

First of all, physical contact may load additional sensory input on an already overworked ASD brain. When you get physical without preparation, a judoka may simply shy away or worse, avoid future physical contact. This is not very useful when you want to do Judo.

The other reason is that the development of the judoka did not yet reach the phase where physical contact is a means of communication. Judo is the ideal way to teach the judoka this way to communicate.

### So how do we do that?

Start your lesson with a fun ukemi game like “clap, clap bang” (see visual in the lesson plan section). This game forms the first physical contact which will lead to the second and so on.

There are a number of different game ideas that encourage partial and full contact that are specifically designed to encourage gradual contact leading to full contact when the judoka is ready. Some of these games can be found in the lesson plan section of this manual.

Remember: Patience is key!

### Use the Judoka’s interest in your lesson

Using the judoka’s interest in your lessons can be a huge advantage for you and the judoka. For example, if the judoka has an interest in trains, maybe you can make train games by using the lines in the tatami as rails. Or make gatame waza where the train is stuck under a bridge and has to get out.

### Stay calm during a meltdown or even very bad behaviour

A meltdown even with bad behaviour is because the judoka is overloaded. What the judoka now needs from you is to stay calm and be supportive. The world at this moment is terrifying enough for them. They do not need you to be angry or shouting or panicking during this time.

Important is also to train your assistants, to take over the lesson and distract the rest of the group, and not let the situation escalate into a spectacle.

### Explain, explain, explain

People learn by repetition. So please *do* use jokes and phrases when the judoka with ASD has reached this level of communication. And explain every time what the joke or phrases are about.

At a certain moment the judoka will ask you if you are making a joke. And after a while they will come up with jokes of their own.

### How to present choices, clear or open?

Try to encourage the answering of questions. Example,

“George the ippon seoi nage, do you want to train it with Jim or with Sacha?” If this is already too difficult, you can let them make the choice between Jim or Jim. Of course this is an instruction, but for some judoka with ASD, this is making a choice.

When they are able to make a choice between 2 judoka, then you can build and let them make a choice between 3, 4, or the whole group.

### Always use “Show it, tell it, do it”

This means you always show and explain the technique, game or exercise before you let the judoka do it. You can show it yourself or ask someone if he knows the technique and wants to demonstrate it. By doing this, you will empower that judoka too: double result.

### Undesirable behaviour

Always try to bend the undesirable behaviour into positive behaviour.

- If a judoka hurts another one, have them apologise.
- Be *very* clear in “this is not allowed”, have the judoka apologise and then praise them for it. Also, explain what *is* allowed:
- It sometimes happens that a judoka hurts you or another judoka on purpose. Very often this is tolerated because of the disability. *This is wrong*. Explain, show (act!) that you are in pain, and ask what should happen now. In 99%, the response will be to apologise and the remaining 1% needs more explanation. *Never, ever let a judoka get away with bad behaviour because of their disability.*

### Use the other judoka

One of the most important phrases in Judo is Jita Kioey. “Achieve personal growth by getting other people to grow with you”. This says it all.

Be honest to all your judoka and let everybody tell who they are and guide them in it. Everybody can learn so much from one another. Give all your judoka the chance to grow emotionally and socially, helping you and each other.



## Learning through Play

### Introduction

Judo is a sport in which contact and interaction with each other is essential. Like many other martial arts, judo also has its own code of conduct; also for this reason, it has proved very useful in helping people with ASD and other disabilities to learn respect for the rules, respect for themselves and for others.

With many years' experience, it has been noted that it is possible to integrate this discipline into fun activities and exercises. This increases both the degree of involvement of the athlete during the training sessions, and the quality of movement and also the ability to retain memory.

However, it is always necessary to keep in mind the composition of the group present during training, taking care to vary, adapt and evolve each activity proposed to the real possibilities and abilities of the group.

Within this section we have included some judo game and exercise videos to give the reader a visual of sample ideas to help train basic movements and techniques of judo. It must be reiterated that each of these suggestions must then be adapted specifically to the group participating in the training session, in response to the motor skills of each and the psychophysical state of the athlete at that precise moment.

Using fun judo games and exercises (or preparation to judo techniques) helps first of all to create and maintain a positive environment, in which socialization between training partners is favored. This atmosphere has a positive and stimulating impact both on the learning of movements, sequences and techniques, and on the memorization of the same.<sup>2</sup> (Bruner, 1981)

A serene, relaxed and fun environment, in which it is possible to feel at ease and have fun, can also influence the frequency in training (both in terms of consistency in participating in activities and in terms of greater commitment and dedication).

<sup>2</sup> J. Bruner, "Il gioco" (ed. Armando 1981)

*"It can be mathematically demonstrated that, in a relaxed field (a situation of safety and satisfaction of basic needs), a behavior formally similar to animal play is optimal for generic learning through experimentation, while innovative play can also develop in a population of animals capable of learning by observation."*

Playing together in a safe and fun way can encourage everyone, in a more or less conscious way, to overcome their limits and improve their skills, both motor and relational. The game, in fact, represents one of the most instinctive ways of socializing between people.

We have covered lessons planning in a previous section; however, we believe it is essential to reiterate the importance of presenting well-structured training sessions. This structure decreases the possibility that the session turns into a chaotic moment, during which the opportunities for distraction and injury can increase.

Having a general and repetitive structure also increases the general sense of safety felt by athletes, since, being aware of what very presumably could happen, they feel less anxiety in the face of the unexpected and consequently greater stability and confidence.<sup>3</sup> (Winkler, 1983)

In the following pages and sections, we will present a number of play based movements and techniques that can be grouped together, based on the goal that can be achieved. We will also present some judo games in video form to give the reader a visual of play in action.

These games samples will be in addition to the ones described in the lesson plans section and as such will expand the number of play/game ideas presented in this handbook.

As always we will start with the all-important warm-up.

Before starting any form of physical or sporting activity, a moment of muscle warm-up is highly recommended, in order to prepare the body and mind for the subsequent physical activity, and at the same time reduce the risk of contracting an injury.

The main purposes of warming-up are:

- Gradual increase in body temperature, heart rate and respiratory rate
- Gradual increase in blood flow to the muscles
- Mental preparation

<sup>3</sup> Manfred Eigen e Ruthild Winkler, "Laws of the Game: How the Principles of Nature Govern Chance"

*"Case and rule are the constitutive elements of the game: the subtitle of the book indicates their reciprocal relationship but it would be more exact and complete if it were specified that the consequences of the case are governed by the rules and laws. Only with a large number of single events do we lose the random and fall under the control of statistical laws; this is what happens, for example, in the self-regulation of random fluctuations at equilibrium or in their self-reinforcement in the evolutionary process. The formation of the genetic code, the development of the languages with which we transmit our thoughts, the play of ideas in the artist's imagination are all based on the same fundamental principles of evolution, even if individually the results of the game are subjected to whim and to the variability of the case."* (p.14)

A good warm-up phase prepares the muscles, tendons and the entire body of the athletes in relation to the movements they will then have to perform during the session and as a result, reduces the risk of injury. Generally, it is recommended to propose games and warm-up exercises lasting a total of about 15 minutes.

During this phase, it is advisable to propose exercises and games that

1. Stimulate aerobic activity, in order to increase the heart rate, such as running, walking, jumping.
2. Improve stretching, through controlled movements
3. Stimulate the acquisition and training of movements and instructions specific to the practice of judo

Similarly, at the end of a training session, it is advisable to allocate a time for cooling down and relaxation. This will help the body return to the physiological state of rest. In this way, it is possible to decrease the heart rate, the respiratory rate and the temperature of the body and muscles, and improve the flexibility of the limbs.

## Game Concepts

### Movement and Music

Developing simple stop and start games that involve moving freely around the mat helps the students to (a) focus on the fundamentals of movement (b) practice listening skills (c) develop action/reaction skills. It is possible to add some rhythm to the process with the addition of music ids. Using musical instruments which are suitable for the sensory sensitive children, such as ukulele, guitar or wooden sticks will help to harmonize the activity. Music helps kids to internalize the coach's voice and gesture commands and can help to change the pace of the activity gradually, by increasing or decreasing the pace of the music.

The game/activity is incredibly functional because it can be easily graduated according to the skills of each member of the group: athletes with more developed motor skills, or who have the physical need to vent energy, will be able to move faster, and will be a motivator for the whole group.

In addition, the game is easily expandable, adding variations, such as running sideways or backwards, or you can add basic movements for ukemi to be performed after the matte signal, or you can use circles or other tools to circumscribe the space of the tatami. Another variant can be obtained by adding to the free run the gesture of clapping a partner's hand (and saying your name) when you cross them.

### Imagination Activities

There are many games and activities to train basic motor skills, coordination, muscle strengthening and balance using different movements. These types of games are very versatile and adaptable to the abilities of each member of the group: in the event that the motor skills of the group are particularly elementary, it is possible to propose simple movements such as rolling, while pretending to be logs or pencils, or imitating animals such as cats, dogs or shrimp. In the case of groups with more developed motor skills, it is possible to develop games and activities with more complex movements, which also train balance and coordination, such as squat jumps, imitating frogs or kangaroos, or walking on one leg, imitating the heron bird.

### Circuits

These types of games are easily adaptable according to the abilities of each group of athletes. They allow you to train coordination, balance, muscle strength, speed and much more, depending on the stations proposed. In addition, it helps athletes to improve understanding and processing of multiple deliveries to be made in succession. Circuits are also a good way to help athletes with ASD manage the waiting for their turn, the respect of the times of the other teammates and the anxiety that could derive from it.

Within a circuit course, it is possible to develop warm-up exercises, or to vary the sequence and add basic exercises for some judo techniques (such as ukemi, or tachi waza techniques, for example). A possible strategy is to set up a route with multiple stations where each single element can be introduced to the whole group, and then present the game in its entirety. In this way, each athlete will be able to carry out the activity respecting their own times, internalizing every single element<sup>4</sup>. (Dr Eric Schopler, 2010)

### Basic movements and movements of judo

Many games can be proposed in order to favor the acquisition of some basic movements and movements of judo, such as movements of *tai sabaki* (whole body movement).

An effective game to achieve this is the mime game. Other proposals may include the use of other materials, such as belts and colored dots.

These activities can be easily upgraded and adapted to the athletes of each individual group; with athletes with lesser abilities, it is possible to present these games first individually, then in pairs by interacting with another partner to improve the movements that are useful for a *randori*.

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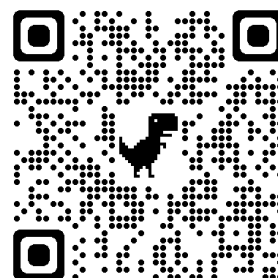
<sup>4</sup> Dr Eric Schopler, Gary B. Mesibov, Victoria Shea, "The TEACCH approach to Autism Spectrum Disorder", Springer Science & Business Media, 2010

For the athletes with more developed skills, it is possible to add elements that favor competitiveness and it is important to stimulate the imagination of children and young people with ASD by introducing games and exercises with funny names, telling rules and situations in a fun way, as much as possible: all this, in fact, increases the involvement, shifts the attention of children to the imaginary situation, and helps them imitate movement in a more natural and instinctive way.

In the following pages we will present some videos of games that encourage the acquisition of these movements.

Please click on the video picture to view or scan QR code

### Sample Warm-Up Games



**Line Tag / PACMAN:** Using the joins of the tatamis, players have to skip sideways up, down and across the lines in all directions to tag each other. This is a good game for the fundamentals of movement.



**Scorpion Tail:** Lying down head to foot, the object of the game is to pass the ball down the line using only your feet. This is a great warm-up game to improve movement and flexibility.





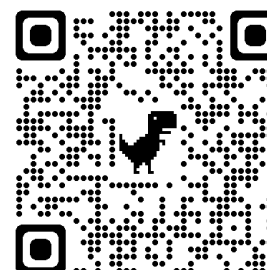
**Star Fish:** In groups each player grips both ends of a belt which is looped through a central ring/belt. The object of the game is to pull their fellow players off their spot/marker. You can play this game with or without floor markers/hoops. It can also be expanded to include uchikomi exercises.

## Ukemi

The learning and constant training of break falls (ukemi) is essential for the safe practice of judo. It is fundamental to learn how to fall correctly in order to avoid injuries. Learning/teaching ukemi in a playful game based manner allows athletes to become confident, without danger or risk of injury. This will increase their willingness to practice more and their enjoyment of the practice.

Furthermore, learning and perfecting ukemi techniques allows athletes to improve their proprioception and awareness of their body with respect to the space around them. Not least, the constant training of the ukemi increases the feeling of confidence in oneself and in one's companions.

## Sample Ukemi Games



**Ball & Fall:** Sitting in a circle each player throws a ball to one of the other player and immediately after, rolls back for a backward break-fall. Great fun and good hand eye coordination exercise.





**Pull & Fall:** Sitting in a circle each player takes turns in helping others fall over. Falling players deliver a backward break-fall. This game is great as a warm-up and break-fall exercise.



**Run the Gauntlet:** Each player is posed in a squatting position while one player runs down the centre of the group knocking them over into a backward break-fall. This game is great for flexibility, balance and break-fall practice.



**Ball drop:** This exercise brings break-falls up level and helps reduce the fear of falling. This game could be expanded by using space hoppers and introducing a tag element, when caught you have to roll off the hopper into a break-fall.

## NE WAZA

The ground fight game allows you to develop motor and cognitive skills and helps to develop reactivity and creative thinking: faced with a specific situation in the game, it is necessary that each athlete, consciously or instinctively, find and apply a solution.

Furthermore, the game of wrestling on the ground helps to acquire and perfect the control of one's own strength and movements. On a motor level it is a complete exercise, which allows you to train most of the body muscles almost simultaneously.

We believe it is important to reiterate that, like any other game and activity proposed, it is important to propose these exercises in a safe and secure place, to avoid inadvertently getting hurt. It is also advisable to choose a specific and / or delimited space, in order to help athletes to better contextualize the game of wrestling.

From playing on the ground you pass naturally, almost instinctively, to fighting on the ground, seeking and accepting contact with your partner. In such a safe and peaceful environment, those bonds of trust and acceptance between training partners can be enhanced.

### Sample Ground Games



**Grab and Grapple:** Great group activity, with players on opposite sides of the tatami and a belt or belt piece in the centre, on the go command each player has to grab the centre belt and bring it back to their side. The game can be expanded by encouraging the players to grapple the belt from their opponent.



**Octopus:** A great newaza game that get both players working hard. One player lying on their back waves their arms and legs around like an Octopus, the second player tries to avoid the moving arms and legs and secure a hold.



**Socks:** This game is a creative way to encourage friendly grappling and interaction. Using colour socks each player has one sock each, which they wear on their foot. The object of the game is to remove the other player's sock before they remove yours.



**Wrestle Ball:** In groups of two or three in a ground position, one of the players holds onto a small ball. The other player(s) have to turn them over and wrestle the ball from them. This game encourages a rough and tumble interaction and helps with turnovers.

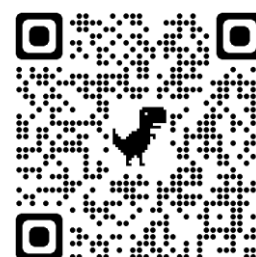


## Tachi Waza

The standing wrestling represents a great possibility for any athlete to combine movements and techniques. Through standing wrestling, it is possible to improve the acceptance of contact and skills such as balance, muscle tone, strength, control and reaction time.

Furthermore, as a direct consequence of the behavioral code in force in the practice of the judo discipline, through the fight it is possible to improve the control of one's body in space and the respect and complicity with one's partner.

## Sample Throwing Games



**Hop and Throw:** Using floor discs as targets to improve footwork and coordination the player approaches on the disks and executes a judo throw.



**Heel Ball:** This game is designed to introduce O Soto Gari in a movement target scenario. Have a number of players stand with legs apart and place a ball on a cone in between their legs. The player has to approach by hopping on one leg out to the side and heel (backward kick) the ball off the cone. This develops a perfect O Soto Gari leg movement and backward drive.



**Hiza Challenge:** Simple exercise to help with Ashi and Hiza type throws.



**Sweeping Circle:** This is a group exercise; gather in a circle holding onto each other's sleeves. On the start command each player has to try and sweep their adjoining partner to the ground.

That concludes Chapter 5 "Teaching Judo to People with ASD". We hope you enjoyed it and have absorbed some valuable information.

Our next chapter "Adapted Traditional Judo" will look at Adapted Kata and Graduation for people with ASD.

## 6. Adapted Traditional Judo

In this chapter, we talk about the different adaptations possible for judo kata. We outline the benefits of kata for people with ASD and the progress that has been made in this area in recent times.

We also cover the subject of adapted graduations for people with ASD, what is possible, skills assessments, exams and dan grades.



## Chapter 6





## Kata

Kata" literally means form, style, and pattern. Especially in the Japanese martial arts, fixed "forms" are important tools for practicing the traditional techniques and principles of the respective martial art and for archiving them in the memory of movement.

Kata can be very beneficial for judoka with ASD because it meets their needs for structure and repetition. Also, the challenge of alternate practice is no longer central, because in kata everyone has a role that suits them and this is not changed over and over again.

The regular repetition of the techniques, the steps and the sequences is a source of joy for the judoka with ASD. Judoka with ASD sometimes find it difficult to get involved with new things. In an average training session, new techniques are learned again and again. When kata is practiced in a part of the training, and much of it is recognizable, this can lead to relaxation and joy.

There are several forms of the traditional kata, e.g. Nage No Kata, Katame No Kata, Juno Kata and Itsutsu No Kata that are very suitable for adaptation. There are also a number of non-traditional Kata like Kodomo No Kata and Go No Sen Kata that are very suitable for kata training.

Adaptations are of course dependent on the level of the judoka with ASD. So one should consider which phase needs an adjustment so that a kata can be performed safely, without danger to tori and uke and without mental confusion.

As kata is about archiving movements in the memory through many repetitions, it is advisable for lower level judoka with ASD not to practise techniques that are not allowed in adapted competitions. If a judoka with ASD of higher level is able to differentiate this, one can stay close to the original form.

### Adjusted, Inclusive, Unified Kata, what does it all mean?

Unified, Inclusive, Adjusted Kata, what does it all mean? In fact, it just means 'kata', labelled to signify that people with a disability are participating.

In general, it is easier to learn new things in Judo if the partner already knows how to do it. This is true in Judo when learning new techniques because the partner is aware of how to move, in which direction or how to use their balance.

We take advantage of this in Unified Kata. The unified partner can support the judoka with ASD with their knowledge to learn new techniques and sequences. In



the beginning, a unified partner can provide a lot of assistance and later less and less. This of course depends on the level of the Tori. Some examples are the support in the steps or the body turns, where the Unified Partner can control the Tori with his body. Also the unified partner adjusts his power and speed.

All attacks or reactions from uke in all kata should be adapted in strength and speed to the ability of the athlete.

If we look more closely at these labels, we see the following meanings:

### Adjusted kata

Adjusted kata is a kata type where the kata is adjusted for the specific judoka for the sake of safety or ability. We will discuss this later in this document.

### Inclusive kata

In inclusive kata, the object is to include judoka in a regular event. This means that either both tori and uke are disabled, or only tori. Those teams are allowed in major regular championships like the EJU European Championships, or the World Judo Games in the Netherlands, where both mainstream and disabled judoka strive to demonstrate their best kata.

### Unified kata

Unified is the term mainly used in Special Olympics (SO) to express that an athlete with a disability (Tori) trains, practices and competes together with an athlete without a disability. The Unified Partner has the role of Uke.

Although Special Olympics specifically caters for athletes with an intellectually disability there is also a large number of SO athletes with comorbidity which includes ASD.

### Kata means 'FORM'

In kata, the judoka show fundamental principles of the judo techniques.

- In nage-no-kata this is *kuzushi* (unbalance opponent), *tsukuri* (placement) and *kake* (execute);
- In katame-no-kata the control over uke is demonstrated;
- Ju-no-kata demonstrates the fundamental principles of judo, especially gentleness.

In kata, SEIRYOKU ZENYO and JITA KIOEY are the guiding principles. The kata must be shown in a natural way, fitting and safe for both uke and tori.

### What does this mean for adapted kata?

Normal where possible, adapted where necessary. A technique must be adapted *only* when there is no other way. So, only when the disability jeopardises correct execution of the technique or when the safety of one of the judoka is in danger, the technique may be altered.

While adapting, the essence of the FORM must be preserved. For example, replacing a *tsuri komi goshi* with *tai otoshi* is not allowed, as both techniques are in a completely different family of throws.

Adaptations are of course dependent on the level of the judoka with ASD. So one should consider which phase needs an adjustment so that a kata can be performed safely, without danger to tori and uke and without confusion.

The technique must be natural and not forced. For example, if tori is unstable then this must be considered in the adaptation of the technique.

If a judoka also takes part in *shiai* then care must be taken to make it clear that some kata techniques are not allowed in shiai, and if the judoka cannot cope with this a change to the kata should be considered.



Suggestions for adaptations - click on the picture or scan QR to view video

With any kata it is very important to keep the essence and intention of the original kata. Kata is about judo principles, so only 'controlled' techniques are shown. For example, katame-no-kata is about controlling uke. But what is seen quite often is that shime-waza and kansetsu-waza are taught as if it were to be used for shiai. So, execute a real choke, or really try to over-extend a joint, which has no relation at all to proper control.

But katame-no-kata is all about control. The osae-komi-waza series is about *controlling* uke using an osae-komi. Shime-waza is about *controlling* uke using a neck hold. There is a clear difference in *controlling* someone through the neck and trying to choke someone or block their jugular. The same is true for kansetsu-waza: uke is *controlled* on arm or leg, but overextension is not what the purpose of the kata is!

Therefore, in katame-no-kata tori and uke must work together for the benefit of both (Jita-Kioey) and make sure where the control point is with uke, and tori must be very much aware of where these points are.

### When a kata gets a different name

If the disability is too severe, or the trainer or organisation thinks that the techniques must be replaced or removed completely then this is possible but the new kata must get a new name because the essence of the original kata does not hold anymore. A good example is seen below, the *agura-no-kata* (*agura* being the Japanese term for sitting cross-legged). This is a kata developed for the *possibilities* of the judoka where *kuzushi*, *tsukuri* and *kake* are shown for a judoka with Multiple Sclerosis who cannot stand safely.



Agura-no-kata - click on the picture or scan QR to view video

In addition to this, if techniques in a kata are replaced by another technique then the kata should be named differently. This is in contrast to adaptations to the technique to make it more suitable.

### Evolution of kata into mainstream championships

During the European Championships Kata in 2019 EJU, for the first time in history, invited disabled judoka in their championship. Thomas Schepen and Sanne Simons, Cees Roest and Janienke Roelfsema performed their nage-no-kata on the competition tatami. This first time was a demonstration, but it was planned to invite disabled judoka to compete in the tournament from 2020 onwards. Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic crashed all these plans but the EJU plan still stands and future championships will include disabled judoka.

Like all European Championships, only the "best of the best" can participate. As it stands now (2021), the scoring will not be modified; the athletes will be scored exactly like their mainstream colleagues. Although this seems unfair, it is not: the SN-athletes will be in a separate poule and their scores will all be in the same bandwidth, so that in the end the scores will measure up inside that poule. EJU will

regard this as an evolving experiment and so rules may change in the future, but EJU have decided to start in a simple way, with minimal changes and only nage-no-kata.

## Graduations

### Kyu graduations

Every country has its own interpretation of kyu degrees, and some countries even use the *mon* system, in which degrees have their own sub-degrees. This is not so different from the *slip* system, where one or two *slips* of the next belt colour are added to the belt, dependant on ability. Also, there is a wide variety in the number of kyu grades, from six in most of Europe to 13 in Israel, 8 in Brazil and in the USA it is even dependant on both age and which federation you are part of and it can vary from 4 to 10.

For the sake of clarity, we will discuss grades based on the *kyu* system, without looking at the number of *kyu*.

Every country has requirements that have to be met for the grading to a certain *kyu*: You have to be able to perform such-and-such technique, this many holds, this many escapes, et cetera. Note: there does not seem to be a true, unified system throughout the countries. Also, in most countries these requirements are guidelines and these do not necessarily have to be followed, i.e. the sensei is mostly free to assign whatever grade (except black) is to be assigned to a judoka.

Having guidelines seems a good thing because it makes the assessment of a particular judoka easier: he can do X, Y and Z so he can upgrade to the next belt.

### Skills assessment

But- a judoka having ASD may have a different path of accomplishments to follow. In parallel with teaching judo skills, it may be necessary to teach the judoka some skills that may be useful in daily life, and skills that may be helpful during the judo lessons, for example not to make noises while things are being explained, raise your finger when you have a question, and other things like that.

So together with judo skills, those social accomplishments can also be rewarded. Skills like compassion, working together, asking questions. The *jita-kioey* philosophy of judo does not only reward judo skills, it encourages personal growth. Looking at it from that point of view, those 'other' skills are just as much a part of judo as it is to make a perfect *seoi-nage* or tying your *obi* in the proper way.

It is a good thing to plan these accomplishments, in the sense of: This season I want X to be more compassionate, more helpful, alongside with: I want X also to master



ippon-seoi-nage and o-soto-gari, migi and hidari. If that is accomplished, I will reward his next belt.

### About exams

Another consideration is that an exam, executed in the regular way (i.e. Putting the judoka before the sensei and making him show various throws and techniques and what have you in order to graduate) seems to be extremely stressful for some judoka with ASD. Instead, it is also possible; following the plan discussed in the previous paragraph, to simply tick off all accomplishments planned for the season and then at the end of the season do a little ceremony where all judoka will get their new colours earned during the season.

### Dan graduations

Not every country allows disabled judoka to perform a dan graduation and then receive a black belt. This part, therefore, is meant for the countries that are open to dan graduations for disabled judoka.

Starting assumption is that every well-trained and experienced judoka, disabled or not, must be able to do a Dan graduation, given sufficient time for training. Some judoka with a disability cannot be expected to perform each and every requirement of an examination- both for the sake of safety, and because they simply cannot do it.

The purpose of an examination however, is to prove beyond any doubt that a judoka masters all requirements stipulated for a certain Dan degree, because a Dan grading cannot and should never be issued easily.

Obviously, there is a discrepancy between the two previous statements. The solution to this discrepancy is to replace parts of the examination which are too demanding for the judoka in question or his uke with a technique which is equally difficult, and of the same type.

There is a great variety in the disabilities that a judoka can have, and in the degree to which the disability influences the judoka's Judo performance. From the above, it should be clear that this fact requires a different examination for each and every judoka.

Just like their neuro-typical colleagues, ASD judoka should be able to do a proper examination with all the rights and obligations attached to it, and are rewarded with a real black belt, approved and endorsed by the national organisation- if the examination is up to par with the official standards.

## 7. Training and Contest Rules & Regulations

In this chapter we will outline the training and contest rules and adaptations for adaptive/ASD judo. We will also outline the current classification levels for adaptive judo

These rules and regulations were developed by a number of very experienced and dedicated adaptive judo coaches, referees and practitioners from around the world. The main focus during the development of these rules was the “Absolute Safety of the Judoka”



## Chapter 7

## Training and Contest Rules & Regulations

### General

1. Matches under these regulations are directed by a referee with the required experience and qualifications.
2. A distinction is made between Tachi-waza matches, and Ne-waza matches.
3. Divisioning is conducted according to the stipulations in later section.
4. In all cases during the match where the referee is of the opinion that the safety of either judoka is at stake, the referee will interrupt the match and take any corrective measurement he/she deems necessary.
5. The referee is also allowed to take punitive action but should always keep in mind the intention of the offending judoka.
6. Using Golden Score in a tournament is at the discretion of the tournament's organisation. Where golden score is used, a maximum duration of 1 minute is recommended.

### Scope of these Rules

These rules are in effect for all Adaptive Judo tournaments. They augment the Judo rules stipulated by the International Judo Federation (IJF) which can be found on <http://www.ijf.org>. (International Judo Federation, 2021)

- Where this document lacks a clear rule, the IJF rules prevail.
- Footnotes are supportive of the text and intended as a clarification for the main text.
- Rules with the mark (\*\*) are optional and can be modified at the discretion of the organiser of an event. Note that these must be conveyed to the participants, for example in the invitation.

### Restrictions

A small proportion of people with Down syndrome (around 10% to 15%) suffer from instability between the C1 cervical vertebra and C2 cervical vertebrae which in non-medical speak, is the neck. If the cervical vertebrae are subjected to extension or flexion, this instability, also known as atlanto-axial instability, can lead to accidents or injuries. Athletes who have Down syndrome and AAI or who have a spinal cord compression must therefore undergo a corresponding medical examination to establish whether their cervical vertebrae are at risk of compression and it is safe for them to participate in the sport of Judo.

## Disciplines

The following is a list of various disciplines that can be announced and offered at adaptive judo tournaments. The overview is neither exhaustive nor binding; organisers are free to offer further or less disciplines depending on the event.

1. Single competition – Shiai
2. Team competition
3. Kata – Tori with disability, Uke with or without disability

## Divisioning

Divisioning is one of the more important parts of a competition; this is where we start to make sure that the event will be a fun and safe experience for all. The initial divisioning is done already through the registration to the event where each coach fills out, among other things:

- Gender
- Judo skills/ability level (levels/skills range from 1-5)
- Weight
- Age

With the registration information the organizer establishes the first set of pools to be evaluated during divisioning. The lower the level of skill/ability the more important the divisioning will be.

**Weight-** The classes described in the IJF rules are only observed with levels 1 and 2, but can be relaxed at the discretion of the tournament organisers, especially in the case of smaller tournaments and low entries. The other levels have a much more relaxed weight pooling so as to make it easier to combine the various classes and weights, and make the matches more equal and fair.

## Contest Rules

The competition rules apply to both the Shiai Single competition and the Team competition. Athletes are allocated to the pools based on their age, gender, level and weight.

## Starting Positions

### Tachi-waza

In Tachi-waza, there are two possible starting positions:

1. In the usual way, according to the IJF Tournament Regulations;

2. In the case where one or both of the judoka has a visual impairment or is blind, or has a disability that impairs the execution of a correct kumi-kata, the judoka will bow at about four metres of distance. The attendant, coach or referee is allowed to support the judoka. At the command of the referee, the judoka approach mat center and perform basic kumi-kata (sleeve, lapel). They will not change position from that moment until the referee announces Ha-jime.

### Ne-waza

In Ne-waza, starting position can be different depending on the following procedure:

- The judoka enter the contest area, where necessary supported by attendant, coach or referee. The judoka bow at about two metres of distance, after which referee announces Ha-jime. If either judoka has a visual impairment or is blind, the match starts in basic Kumi-kata (Sleeve-Lapel). In this starting position both players knees must be level, so no unfair advantage is given.
- If either judoka cannot use one leg for support, this is also not allowed for the opponent. The referee will agree this before the match with the table jury.
- If either judoka cannot perform the match in kneeling position, the judoka will start the match in a sitting position. In this case, the opponents sit next to each other, facing opposite directions, and kumi-kata is basic sleeve-lapel.
- If either judoka cannot perform in a sitting position, both judoka will start lying down, facing each other, in basic Kumi-kata (sleeve-lapel).



### Ne-waza Contest

1. Ne-waza matches are performed exclusively in Ne-waza posture because either judoka, because of a disability, cannot perform safely in Tachi-waza.



2. When applying for a tournament, the intention to perform in Ne-waza must be clearly stated.
3. A referee is authorised to change a Tachi-waza match into a Ne-waza match. The judoka that triggered this decision will then perform in Ne-waza for the remainder of the tournament.
4. Tilting techniques leading to Uke landing on his/her back will gain a score according to the IJF Tournament Regulations

## Prohibited Actions

In addition to the prohibited actions as described in the IJF official Judo rules, the following techniques are also prohibited:

1. Any and all forms of:
  - a. Sacrifice techniques (sutemi-waza) including Tani Otoshi and Makikomi
  - b. Arm-lock techniques (kansetsu-waza)
  - c. Choking techniques (shime-waza)
  - d. Choking, locking and holding techniques that involve holding the legs in a triangle position (sankaku-waza)
  - e. All throws executed on one or two knees (to the front and rear).



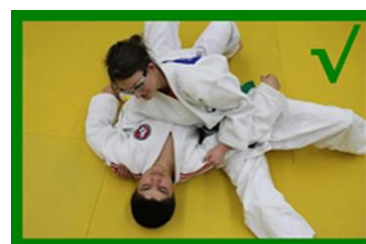
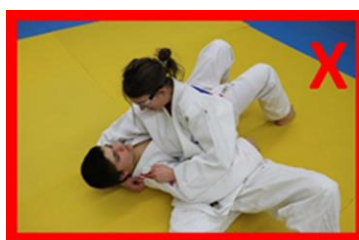
2. Allowing yourself to fall on the opponent after a properly executed technique.
3. To put pressure on head, neck or throat of the opponent.
4. In Tachi-waza:
  - a. To perform Kumi-kata around the head or neck of the opponent. While taking hold over the shoulder or collarbone, the hand may not pass the center line of the back.





5. In Ne-waza:

- a. In Ne-waza, it is not allowed to put pressure on either head or neck. In Osaekomi situations where Tori is in Kesa position, Tori is not allowed to put either hand or arm under head or neck of Uke.



- b. Pushing opponent backwards while in kneeling position is not allowed.



- c. To immediately release kumi-kata after Ha-jime during matches with a modified starting position.
- d. In Ne-waza matches: Raising the knee to gain leverage when it is agreed beforehand that this is not allowed.

Prohibited techniques will not be scored, and where possible mate will be called before the technique is executed to ensure the safety of the players

## Penalties

1. The techniques mentioned in section 6 will be penalised with Shido.
2. All actions that go against the spirit of Judo or the safety of either judoka will be penalised with Hansoku-make, to protect the judoka affected by this.

The referee is allowed to consider the level, the disability, type and intention of the offense in his decision, as well as the intention, repetition, overall match image and safety while deciding on a penalty

## Injuries

1. There is no limitation for the number of times the same injury may be treated.
2. If the referee deems it necessary for coach or attendant to treat an injury, these persons may enter the contest area

## Judo Gi and Aids

1. Aids are considered all attributes outside the standard Judo uniform as described in the Tournament Regulations.
2. The Judo Gi must be adjusted to the physical limitations of the judoka however must not be a hindrance for the opponent to perform Kumi-kata.
3. Wearing socks and a plain white t-shirt under the Judo Gi is allowed.
4. Wearing a mouth guard is allowed.
5. Aids must be safe for the wearer and the opponent, and cannot contain hard substances or surfaces, to be decided at the discretion of the main referee.
6. Opponent may not be disadvantaged, nor may the wearer have an unreasonable advantage from the aid.

Glasses cannot have hard surfaces and must fit flush to the face

## Coaching

1. Coaches and attendants must refrain from comments on the arbitration.
2. During Special Needs competition level 1 and 2 coaching is allowed according to IJF rules only during Mate. In Level 3, encouraging positive comments from the coach are allowed throughout the competition. Judo technical coaching is allowed only during Mate. In level 4 and 5, encouraging positive coaching is possible, as well as technical coaching throughout the competition



## Kata Contest Rules

In kata contests, the judges will take the following into account when assessing the competitors' performance:

The kata both begins and ends with a greeting.

1. It should be as normal as possible, adapted when necessary.
2. The kata should be based on an existing kata form
3. Attention to the adjustments in the kata.
4. Execution quality
5. Control of Tori
6. The development of the techniques

The actions and movements of Uke may only be judged under point 4 "execution quality" and 5 "control of tori"



## Classification Levels

The levels are determined by comparing the skill level of the SN-judoka with a mainstream competitive judoka (for level 1) or a mainstream recreational judoka (levels 2-5)

### Level 1

Level 1 is a judoka who can perform in a shiai with a mainstream competitive judoka. This judoka is fast and powerful and has an excellent reactivity. He/she has a strong feeling for Judo and an excellent strategic view. This type of judoka has a minimal disability and therefore usually attends regular education. In general, these are judoka with high functioning autism or light physical disability, VI and deaf judokas and some intellectual disabled judoka that has grown beyond level 2.

*Level-1 judoka can only compete against other level-1 judoka. (\*\*) However a tournament organiser can, as an exception, allow good level-2 judoka to compete in a level-1 poule. This should always be done in agreement with the judoka's coach. Safety is always the first and foremost consideration!*

### Level 2

Level 2 is a judoka who can perform randori with a mainstream recreational judoka. This judoka is fast and powerful and has moderate reactivity but is usually late responding to judo situations. He has a good judo feeling, but usually no effective strategy.

### Level 3

Level 3 is a judoka who can perform a playful randori with a mainstream recreational judoka. This judoka is reasonably fast and powerful and has a reasonably developed reactivity, but is almost always late responding to situational judo. Strategy for this type of judoka consists of repeating the same technique over and over.

### Level 4

Level 4 is a judoka who can grapple and play with another judoka of the same or comparable level. Reactivity is suboptimal. Usually the only judo technique consists of takedown and osae-komi. 6 SNJU Rules and Regulations

### Level 5

Level 5 is a judoka who can romp and play with other judoka of the same level. These judokas are very passive, or respond very slowly. Constant coaching to take action is necessary. When they end up in osae-komi, the action to escape can take a very long time.



## 8. Benefits of Participation

In this chapter we will talk about the benefits of judo for people with ASD and the different ways people can benefit from sport, either from participating for leisure and pleasure or at a competitive level. Regardless of which level the student chooses, judo will accommodate their needs and ambitions. This is due to the foresight of the creator of Judo, Professor Jigoro Kano.

Professor Kano's interest in sports and gymnastics made him look at the gymnastic movement in Europe. Judo became a way of both physical and mental training. This combination of body and mind development, makes judo an extremely suitable and adaptable activity for people with ASD.



## Chapter 8

## Benefits of Judo for People with ASD

For people with ASD, judo can be very easy to understand, because it's a lot of clear rules about what to do and why. We refer to judo as training for 'Body and Mind'. In the beginning when you start a group the first thing is to present yourself and make your athletes familiar with the dojo (training room). You show them the mat, the judogi, the belt, picture of Mr. Kano, the national and the Japanese flags and anything else there is, that can be of interest.

A judo lesson starts with a bow and then you giving warming-up exercises for the whole body. Depending on the group it can be a various set of games, both individual and together with a partner. Some people with ASD have difficulties with close contact, so try to build your training on easy contact exercises (refer to our lesson plans for some good ideas). First with no contact, then try to involve more and more contact into the games. This is one of the benefits with judo, you learn to physically interact with someone else.

Between the exercises you show and tell the athletes what to do next. They learn to take instructions and wait for their turn to perform.

To train judo you need a partner. To keep a partner, you must be kind and be a good friend. If you're not, people don't want to train with you. Our athletes learn respect, to respect their partners.

You train with smaller, bigger, younger, older, boys or girls. You learn what your own body is, and what you can do. If you are older and bigger, then you must be careful with the younger and smaller ones. You learn how much, or how little, pressure or strength that is needed to perform a technique.

Maybe you learn something yourself! For example: After a competition a parent of a 11-year-old kid approached the coach said: I need you to talk to my son. He can't understand why he lost every fight today when he beats you (coach) every time. Our athletes can have difficulties to see their own strength/weakness compared to others. The coach spoke with the child and made him realize the difference between him winning and me letting him win, when he does the techniques correct. So the benefits are physical, mental and social!



## Leisure and Pleasure

### Competitive

To compete is one way to practice judo. To compete in Judo, with its origin in combat, is just like in wrestling a way to measure your skills in comparison with your opponent. You can compete in Shiai or Kata. Shiai is what most people are used to think of when you talk about a judo-competition, two athletes trying to throw each other to the floor. Kata is two athletes working together to perform formal techniques in a special order. Both Shiai and Kata has their benefits.

### Shiai

A competition can be anything from a small competition in the group, to a big national/international competition. When you start teaching you make a lot of different games. Most of the games have a kind of competitive element in them, even tag-games. Your athletes learn to win and to lose.

In your training you can start with exercises in a kneeling position. You teach how to break your opponent's balance; you twist and turn your body in a way so that your opponent falls to the mat. You pin him down. We teach how to do break-falls (Ukemi). This continues in the teaching of throwing your friend to the mat and pinning them down. During this training we teach how to help each other in a safe controlled way. Both athletes help each other to make the technique the best it can be.

To be able to compete in Shiai you must train some techniques, both to throw your opponent and to hold them down. You must be able to fall in a safe way.

To be able to do all this, you train Randori. It's a way to test your techniques together with a friend. It can start with simply taking turns to throw each other. Then you both try to throw each other at random. Randori is not competition; it's when you try your skills against a friendly opponent.

The first competition can be a small one in your group/club. You put athletes together that can have a good competition where everyone is happy. No need for checking weight or age, just to have a good time.

When the skill level improves, you can go to friendly competitions in the region, where the aim is to try new areas and new opponents. They learn to train (at camps) and compete together with people that they maybe don't know before. Then maybe you can go to some bigger camps and tournaments. Both national and international!





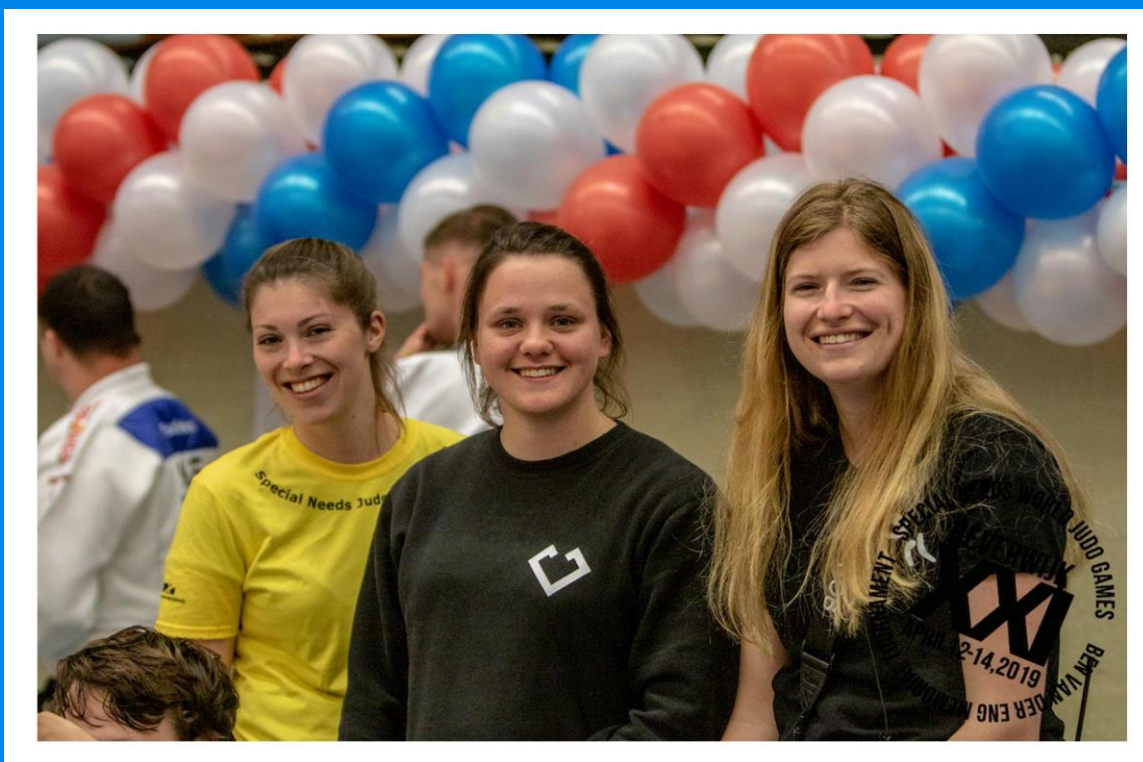
Most camps/competitions for ASD-athletes have adapted rules that make the whole experience a safer one for the athletes. That includes arm-locks, strangulation and sacrifice-throws.

Why do we have adapted rules? It's for the safety of the athletes. A lot of people with ASD have difficulties with submission/tap-out (a signal that says 'I give up'). In an arm-lock-situation they don't connect that they can give up by tapping the free hand when it hurts. In a strangulation-situation, they don't understand that they can give up by tapping their hand on the opponent, when they can't get any air. They don't understand that they can do one thing to make something else happen. The same thing applies for the opponent. Adapted rules are only for safety-reasons.



## 9. Parent involvement / Volunteer duties / Collating Information

This chapter will give the reader an overview of the importance of parental involvement in ASD judo classes/clubs/events. It will also outline the importance and duties of volunteers within these clubs and finally we will draw your attention to the guidelines in relation to the collating and storing of information and the ethics and privacy rules associated with such rules.



## Chapter 9



## Parental Involvement

### Parents involvement

Parents are the experts about their own kids. They know them and can help you to understand their behavior. The judo teacher can work together with the parents in a lot of ways.

Parents of children with ASD have experienced a lot with their children. They are used to the fact that there are sometimes difficulties, they are used to communication problems, they are used to the fact that not everything goes as you would like it to. It is then also very understandable that parents like to stay well informed and also like to get involved.

It is important that we gain the trust of both the parents and the children with ASD. This is possible through open and clear communication and honest information.

Once the trust in judo teachers and judo is gained, one can gradually work on the independence of judoka with ASD and the parents can present the progress. Thus, the role the parents will slowly change from first to supporting their children at the beginning, to a role of support from a distance, where they can watch and observe all the positive developments of their children.

Information can be conveyed through letters, emails or even parents' evenings. It should be taken into account that older and higher levels of judoka are also addressed directly.

Parents of children/adolescents/young adults with ASD often stay longer involved in small and large decisions in life and are therefore longer involved in judo decisions and information evenings.

## Volunteer Duties

### During Trainings

In some clubs, it is possible for parents to actively participate in judo training. They wear a judogi and practice together with their children. In other clubs, the parents stay next to the mat. They are there in case the judo teacher needs extra hands next to the mat or on request also on the mat.

Both options have advantages and disadvantages. Example: sometimes a parent can be a distraction for the student and this can result in taking longer for the judo teacher to establish a relationship with their participants. On the other hand, parents can also be a good support.

Parents who don't wear a judogi don't like to be seen on the mat in most training situations. This also gives clarity to the judoka with ASD. No Judogi - No Judo.

### During Events

In many clubs, judo is of course central, but this does not mean that no other activities are offered outside of judo. So there are trainer birthday party, Christmas party or even public appearances in the local community and much more, because it is nice for the relationships in the group and with the judo teachers to celebrate together. At all such events, judo teachers depend on the help of their parents. Parents can help by baking cakes for sale, at the stall for coffee and rolls, help with tables you set up chairs and many other tasks where no knowledge of judo is needed. Sometimes the professions or relationships can also be an important support, as an example someone who works in a print shop could have a judo flyer or poster printed cheaper.

### During tournaments

For the implementation of adaptive judo tournaments, we are dependent on the support of the parents. This is sometimes more difficult and a good introduction to the tasks to be done is very important.

Judo-relevant tasks are, for example, the operation of the scoreboards. Another task would be that of "preparer", this person ensures that the judoka are ready in the right order with the right competition belts on the right side of the contest area.

Also, all judo teachers and tournament organizers are happy for support with the laying of the field of play (judo mats) and the tidying up afterwards.

If a tournament is attended away from home, parents are sometimes also used as drivers to drive the judoka to a tournament.



## Collating information, ethics, privacy rules

### Collating information

At the beginning of the activity for any new judoka, you need to get some information and documents, which can be requested from the family. For insurance and legal purposes, including the activation of the insurance, it is necessary that the athlete shows up with the club registration form properly filled out, the medical certificate (of good health, or competitive, depending on the courses chosen) and with the expression of their consent for the use of sensitive data and images, in full compliance with current regulations regarding privacy.

In the case of adapted judo courses, it is also useful for the coach to ask for further information about the new judoka. It is interesting and essential for any new coach to be able to chat with the family and ask for more detailed information, which they can greatly facilitate the first phase of interaction between the coach and the judoka, which, in the case of children with ASD can be long and not always linear.

Knowing roughly how the athlete usually responds to requests, or how they react to difficulty, or how they express their fatigue or limitation, or usually expresses their own needs, all this information helps the coach to better understand their new students and how best to approach them with respect. This will facilitate the creation of a relationship of trust. It is also very useful to know any details related to sensory sensitivity, such as noises, lights, smells ..., as it can help the coach to implement small adjustments that can make the dojo more welcoming.

### Ethics and Privacy

Other useful information may be related to therapists, to whom you can contact for further collaboration, or to get advice and suggestions to align strategies and interventions, and therefore improve communication and development with the ASD student.

However, you should always remember that such information may contain sensitive data, and therefore it is necessary to know and carefully apply the indications and regulations established for the protection of the privacy of the individual (pursuant to articles 13-14 of EU Reg. 2016/679). (EJU, 2016)

For example, in the case that you choose to ask parents for an interview to get more information about the character and the condition of the judoka, it is advisable to remember always to look for a suitable place, secluded enough to be sure that the



conversation cannot be interrupted or overheard, and that not too many people are involved.

If, on the other hand, you decide to keep some written records, in which progress, improvements, difficulties and other similar information, both motor and relational, are recorded, it is important to ensure that such information is processed and stored correctly, so as not to be accessible to any third parties. It will therefore be necessary to ensure such information and documents are securely stored in a locked cabinet or facility.

Privacy regulations may differ slightly from Country to Country, but still they descend from a series of regulations shared and dictated by the European Community. It is therefore important to inform yourself and be updated about these rules in the country in which you work.

Also sharing within the work group, between coaches and any volunteers that work on the tatami, not only is possible, but desirable, since it has a positive impact in the educational action of the proposal. However, some indications must be respected, including, by way of example but not limited to, the choice of spaces in which these are kept, guarded and possibly shared information, which must ensure that such information is not audible to third parties not involved in the project. However, you should always remember that the treatment of such data must take place for purposes related to the implementation of obligations relating to legislative, contractual, tax, insurance and statutory obligations.

Another aspect not to be overlooked is the treatment of the images portraying the athletes. In accordance with the European legislation currently in force, it is necessary for the legal representative in charge of the course to get the informed consent signed by the adult athlete, or by the legal guardian in the case of minors, pursuant to art. 13-14 EU Reg 2016/679. (EJU, 2016)

The use of images, photographs, videos of minors, coaches and volunteers, made by persons in charge, as well as their communication, publication and/or dissemination on web sites, social networks platforms, newspapers or magazines, must always have informative, promotional or for institutional uses of the Association that owns the data processing.

It is necessary to inform members, parents, coaches, volunteers of the possibility that they may be photographed or recorded in videos during social activities, and that such material are stored appropriately and that it may be published on the internet for promotional or informative purposes.

## 10. History of Adaptive Judo

In this brief chapter we aim to give the reader a snapshot of the humble beginnings of Special Needs/Adaptive/Autism judo and the amazing progress that has manifested over the past few decades.

Since the inception of adaptive judo, the sport has been contributed greatly to progressive physical therapy, improving cognitive development, creating inclusion,



## Chapter 10





## History of Special Needs / Adaptive Judo

### Humble Beginnings

Special Needs Judo started to emerge as early as 1960s in the Netherlands. In 1963, Loek van Hal sensei, a PE teacher from The Hague, starts judo classes for children with Special Needs. Pretty soon his class expands to children from all over the country, and the first international contacts. In 1965 he was one of the founders of SGK, to this day an influential organisation in the Netherlands.

In the 1970s in Germany paediatrician Dr. Khosrow AMIRPOUR, who as medical director of the Centre for Developmental Diagnostics and Social Paediatrics in Wolfsburg, offered judo for the physically disabled children who came to him as patients. His aim was to give the children incentives in the field of coordination and strengthening and thus to offer an interesting alternative/supplement to physiotherapy. He found that in many children, muscle tone became regulated, psychosomatic problems disappeared, self-confidence increased and coordination capacity improved.

Also in the 1970s a Hamburg coach, Reinhard LÖTJE started judo with a school for visual impaired students with incredible results. At the same time, Swiss judo coach Ricardo BONFRANCHI who was working with adolescents with dysmelia, with children with signs of behaviour and with special students with learning and mental disabilities. He sums up his work in such a way that judo can provide important impulses for all special educational groups and thus contribute to the development of physical performance, to the development of compliant behaviour and to the reduction of aggression.

In the 1980s it was recognized that there was a lot of programmes running in different parts of Europe and the need for some kind of cohesion and co-operation was needed. A number of countries were starting to develop their own programmes and it wasn't until the early 1990s that a number of individuals in different European Countries started to communicate and share ideas and experiences. The pioneers that started the first collaboration in this element of judo mainly stemmed from Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and the UK.

In 1995/96 a small group of people got together to share their experiences, ideas and successes in the development of special needs judo and the benefits it was having on the people taking part in it. The group consisted of Ben van der Eng from the Netherlands, Tomas Rundqvist from Sweden, Roy Court from Wales and Marita Kokkonen from Finland. Together they established an international alliance called Judo 4 All.



The goals of this early group was to bring together like-minded people with a passion for working with people with a disability within the sport of Judo, to develop competition opportunities, to share ideas & stories and to raise awareness , and develop an inclusive programme.

In the beginning there was small number of countries involved in the programme and with the dedication and hard work of those involved, the numbers started to grow year on year. Along with initial countries of Sweden, Finland, UK and The Netherlands, SN judo started to develop in large judo nations such as France, Germany and Italy.

In 2000 judo was introduced to the Special Olympics European Games in the Netherlands by Ben van der Eng. In the 2003 Special Olympics World Games in Ireland, judo made its debut as a demonstration sport with over 25 countries taking part. The Special Olympic movement was a catalyst for SN judo as it had an already well-established worldwide network.

Some of the most memorable past accomplishments of the initial programme was

- The inclusion of Judo in the Special Olympics
- Increased number of countries participating in SN Judo
- Structured Competition Opportunities
- Development of unified competition rules
- Establishment of high level national & international tournaments
- Adaptive coaching development

### Modern Day History

With so much work done and so many goals accomplished it is now time to take the programme to the next level. To this end, in February 2017 a new international organisation was established.

The Special Needs Judo Union (SNJU) was established by a group of highly motivated and dedicated professionals with a vast and varied knowledgebase of adaptive coaching, refereeing, athlete development, business management, administration, PR/Marketing and policy development.

The board of the SNJU are as follows, Chairman, Tomas Rundqvist (Sweden), Vice Chairman & Gen Secretary, James Mulroy (Ireland), Coaching & Education, Tycho van der Werff (Netherlands), PR/Marketing, Cecelia Evenblij (Switzerland) and IT & Social Media, Bob Lefevere (Netherlands).

In 2021 the World Adaptive Judo website was launched [www.adaptivejudo.com](http://www.adaptivejudo.com) by James Mulroy (Ireland) and Cilia Evenblij (Switzerland).

## 11. Autism Insights

This chapter is an intriguing insight into what we know about autism, starting with “What is Autism?” This first section gives a snapshot of the clinical definition of autism and highlights the difficulties associated with the disorder.

In later sections the reader will find out about modern day diagnosis procedures and the positive connections between Autism and Judo.

The final sections finishes off with a valuable non-exhaustive list of potential assistance tools which may aid the Judo coach and Autistic Judoka through an adapted Judo class and a section on the role and benefits of Autism Service Dogs.

Enjoy!



Final Chapter

## What is Autism? – A definition

In simple terms, Autism is a neurological difference which many people throughout the world regardless of ethnicity, nationality or gender are born with. Autism affects how individuals experience the world around them and how they communicate, socialise and interact with others. In other words, Autism is a complex lifelong neuro-developmental condition which affects the development of the brain in the areas of social interaction (the way in which we relate to each other socially), Communication (receiving, processing and returning information) both verbal and non-verbal and in Social Imagination (the ability to imagine how others may be feeling, thinking or experiencing). This is known as the “Triad of Autistic of Diagnostics” which in turn affects behaviour (words, actions and mannerisms) and how that person experiences, learns and interprets their environment. This can lead to functional limitations in social participation, educational, sporting and occupational performance.

Autism is described as a ‘Spectrum’ disorder. This means that every individual person experiences their Autism differently. The Autism spectrum can range from Asperger’s syndrome or High Functioning Autism (HFA) considered at the mild end, to Autistic disorder at the severe end. The Oxford dictionary of Psychology (2006) (Colman, 2006) offers the following definitions:

- Autistic disorder *“is a pervasive developmental disorder characterised by gross and sustained impairment of social interaction and communication; restricted and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests, and activities and abnormalities manifested before age three in social development, language acquisition, or play.”*
- Asperger’s syndrome *“is a pervasive developmental disorder characterised by gross and sustained impairment of social interaction and communication; restricted and stereotyped patterns of behaviour, interests, and activities causing clinically significant impairments in everyday living, without the language and cognitive deficits characteristic of autism disorder but in other ways similar to it, usually found in males.”*

For the most part, an autistic person is considered high-functioning if there is no cognitive impairment. Asperger’s Syndrome is almost identical to HFA, without the early communication difficulties and there are no cognitive delays. Finally, there is also Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) which is increasingly diagnosed when an individual doesn’t quite fit either Autism or Asperger’s syndrome criteria for diagnosis.

Autism or ASD (autism spectrum disorder) is found to be closely linked to Sensory Processing difficulties, in which a person is either hyper (over) or hypo (under) sensitive to any of the body's information, gathering senses such as visual, auditory or tactile or indeed all of the senses. There is also a high possibility of a cognitive impairment or learning disability associated with ASD (A.R, 2006)

## Modern Day Assessment and Diagnose

### Autism Diagnosis

Diagnosing Autism can be difficult because there is no medical test, such as blood test to diagnose, doctors and professionals look at the child's developmental history and behaviour to make the diagnosis. Autism can sometimes be detected at eighteen months or younger. An autism diagnosis can take a number of different forms and can take place in the early years, or indeed into adulthood. Autism may be the only required diagnosis or it can exist alongside other co-occurring differences. Autism can only be diagnosed by a psychologist, psychiatrist, developmental paediatrician or a child neurologist. Diagnosis is typically accompanied by a diagnostic report outlining the supports needed for the individual to assist them to reach their potential.

In the case of children an autism diagnosis is required to access educational and therapeutic supports. For adults a diagnosis can assist the individual achieve reasonable accommodations in the workplace and support in university level education.

### Why is a Diagnosis important?

A diagnosis may be viewed as a framework rather than as a label, as it helps to plan the most appropriate way forward and identify what additional support an individual may require to reach their full potential. As such, a diagnosis can help to provide access to Autism specific resources and services for the individual such as Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Psychology, etc. It may also lead to an increased level of understanding and clarity for the individual themselves, their family and those whom work and interact with the person diagnosed with Autism. It may also give the individual or their caregivers relief to be able to put a name on their difference, many adults who are diagnosed later in life feel liberated; having finally found an answer to why they may have struggled in certain areas of their lives. The earlier the diagnosis is made, the earlier the appropriate interventions can be put into place, leading to potentially better outcomes for the

individual diagnosed with Autism. An assessment is required to confirm or rule out a diagnosis of Autism, for adults especially women, autism may be misdiagnosed as other mental health difficulties such as anxiety. We shall summarily explore a number of these diagnostic criteria and tools now.

### Criteria for diagnosing Autism.

There are two primary manuals available to professionals whilst looking at the criteria for autism are the **“Diagnostic and Statistical manual of mental disorders, 5<sup>th</sup> Ed.”** (DMS-5) (Cooper, 2013) which replaced the DSM-4 in 2013 and the **“International Classification of Diseases-10-Clinical Modification”** (ICD-10) (WHO, 1992). It should be noted that the language used in both the DSM 5 and the ICD-10 do not reflect modern discourse and perspectives on autism and uses negative language throughout seemingly ignoring the strengths of individuals with a diagnosis of autism.

The DSM-5 tries to identify the signs and characteristics of Autism. Professionals diagnose autism on the basis of difficulty in two areas of either Social Communication and restricted, repetitive and/or sensory behaviours or interests. In order for an individual to be diagnosed they must.

- Have difficulties in both areas
- Have had characteristics from early childhood, even if they aren’t identified at the time.

In order to be diagnosed with autism the individual must have difficulties in the area of **social communication**, examples of this would include but not limited to:

- Not speaking at all.
- Rarely using or understanding gestures like pointing or waving.
- Rarely responding when spoken to.
- Rarely engaging in imaginary play.
- Not showing interest in friends or having difficulties making friends.

The individual must also present with difficulties in the area of **Restrictive, repetitive and sensory behaviours or interests**, examples of this include but are not limited to:

- Lining up objects in a particular pattern almost every time.
- Frequently spinning or flicking objects.
- Speaking in a repetitive way or using echolalia
- Having a very narrow or intense interests.
- Having difficulties with changes in routine and transitioning between activities.



- Presenting signs of sensory sensitivities use as becoming distressed with everyday sounds such as hand driers, the textures of clothes and clothing labels and licking or sniffing inappropriate objects.

The findings present a support level for the individual in each area of difficulty.

As the DSM 5 (American Psychiatric Association) and ICD-10 (World Health Organisation) and have been created by different organisations there are some discrepancies between the manuals. However, the indexes have very similar definitions of Autism and both are widely used.

### Autism Diagnostic Tools

The first tool used in the diagnosis of autism we shall discuss is the **“Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2” (ADOS)** (Catherine Lord, 2012). ADOS-2 is an assessment which delves into the key indicators of Autism, namely social communication, social interaction, restricted interest’s and play, administered to children and adults whom there is a query that they may be autistic. Observation by the assessors may include the following:

- Body Language
- Imagination
- Eye Contact
- Use of Language
- Sensory seeking behaviours
- Story Telling
- Use of Gestures/pointing
- Repetitive behaviours

There are four different modules of the ADOS - 2 which are applied depending on the individual’s age and communication level. The modules involve working through a series of standardised, structured and semi-structured activities, allowing those carrying out the assessment to observe what behaviours (Communication, interaction and play) are present or not at the time of assessment.

A second diagnostic assessment tool commonly used is the **“The Autism Diagnostic Interview – Revised” (ADI-R)** (Michael Rutter, 2003). This is a structured interview conducted with the caregiver/parent of a child over two years of age. This interview usually takes between one and two hours, in a clinical setting without the child present. The interview is focused on behaviour at the time of assessment in the areas of social interaction, communication and language, and behavioural patterns. The interview is formatted into five sections:

- Opening questions.
- Communication questions
- Social development and play questions
- Repetitive and restricted behaviour questions
- General behavioural difficulty questions

The assessors will then use the findings of the interview to form a diagnosis of autism if deemed appropriate.

It is common practice to combine the findings of the ADOS-2 and the ADI-R in order to give a more comprehensive assessment.

## Closing Statement from the Authors

As we come to the end of this Best Practice Handbook we reflect on the vast amount of experience and knowledge that we have shared as a group, both with each other and now with you, the reader.

We thank you for your interest in this publication and hope it will help you understand the wonderful possibilities that judo has to offer everyone that seeks to develop their mind and body and overcome their life challenges.

We hope you enjoyed reading this handbook as much as we enjoyed writing it. If you have any questions in relation to this publication you can contact the editors with your question and they will direct it to the appropriate partner.

Thank you from all the team

*Gracias*   *go raibh maith agat*   *Grazie*   **DANK U**   *Dankeschön*   *Tack*

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