

Mississauga Kendo Club

Shinai Safety Guidelines

Proper inspection and care of your shinai is the responsibility of every student. Check your shinai carefully before each practice. Failure to do so could result in serious injury. The following guidelines should help you ensure your safety and that of your fellow kenshi.

Do not use a shinai if you can see any of the following:

- Splintered or cracked bamboo
- Holes or tears in the sakigawa
- Broken or missing sakigomu
- Frayed, cut or loose string
- Loose or broken nakayui
- Torn or broken handle
- Any other condition that might cause the shinai to come apart during practice

If you find any of the above, the shinai must be properly repaired before use. Refer to the shinai maintenance page for more details.

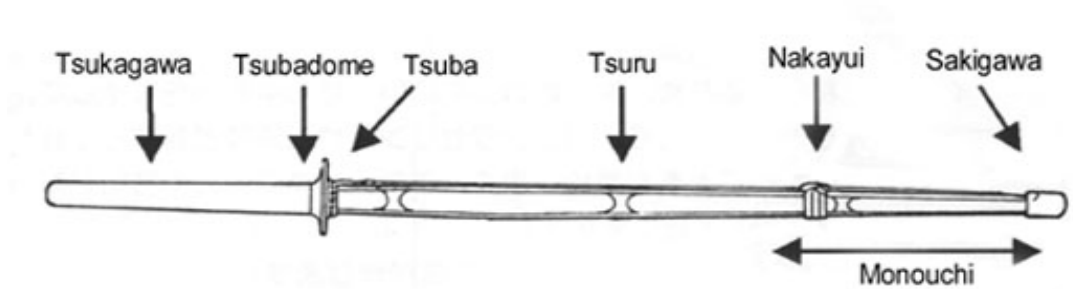
Shinai Repair Guidelines	
<p style="text-align: center;">ALWAYS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sand splintered staves smooth• Take care while handling and sanding splintered staves• Replace torn or broken leather parts immediately• Ensure recycled parts are in a safe condition before you use them• Ensure that replacement tips and handles fit securely• Trim staves to ensure all four are the same length	<p style="text-align: center;">NEVER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attempt to sew or otherwise repair a broken sakigawa• Use tape or glue on your shinai• Sand a splintered stave too thin• Use or attempt to repair a cracked stave• Put anything other than the sakigomu inside the tip of your shinai• Use anything other than a properly-seated chigiri (metal square) to align your staves at the butt

NOTE: It is important that you understand and abide by these guidelines, for your safety and the safety of others. If you have questions regarding any of the above, ask an instructor.

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Shinai Maintenance

Proper inspection and care of your shinai is the responsibility of every student. Failure to do so could result in serious injury. The information below should help you maintain your shinai in a safe condition and prolong its use.



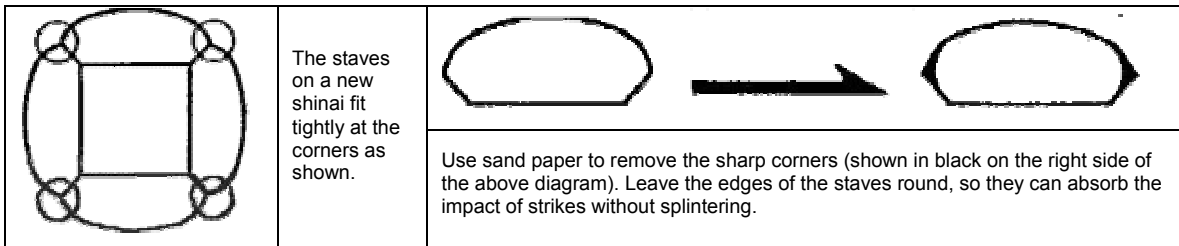
The shinai consists of four carefully shaped staves of bamboo. A square piece of metal (chigiri) is wedged into a slot cut on the inside of the butt of each stave, to keep the staves aligned. A rubber insert (saki gomu) separates the tips, which are covered by a leather tip (sakigawa). A long strip of leather (nakayui) winds around the shinai at one third of the distance from tip to handle. It keeps the staves together in the middle, and marks the lower limit of the tip portion of the shinai that we must strike with (monouchi). The leather handle (tsuka) holds the stave ends together. The string (tsuru) binds the tip and handle together, and also serves to indicate back of the shinai. The hand guard (tsuba), is made of plastic or animal hide, and is held in place by a rubber or leather ring called the tsubadome.

Disassembling the Shinai

Remove the tsuba and tsubadome. Untie the string at the handle. Pull off the handle. Untie the nakayui. Pull off the sakigawa and the nakayui with the string. No need to take the nakayui or sakigawa off the string unless they need to be replaced. Mark the staves so don't forget the order of assembly. Separate the staves and remove the metal square (chigiri) holding the ends together.

Preparing a New Shinai

Untie or carefully cut and remove the strings wound around the shinai to hold it together during shipment. Disassemble the shinai as outlined above. Sand the staves to remove the sharp edges. This will minimize the potential for splintering and increase the life of your shinai. See details below.



Soak a cloth in a light vegetable oil and apply a coat to the disassembled staves. Wipe away the excess. A coating of oil can help keep your shinai from drying out. Contrary to popular belief, soaking your shinai in oil will not return the moisture if it is dried-out. It's important to buy a good quality shinai from a reputable vendor, so you can be sure it's not already dried out when you receive it.

Reassembling the Shinai

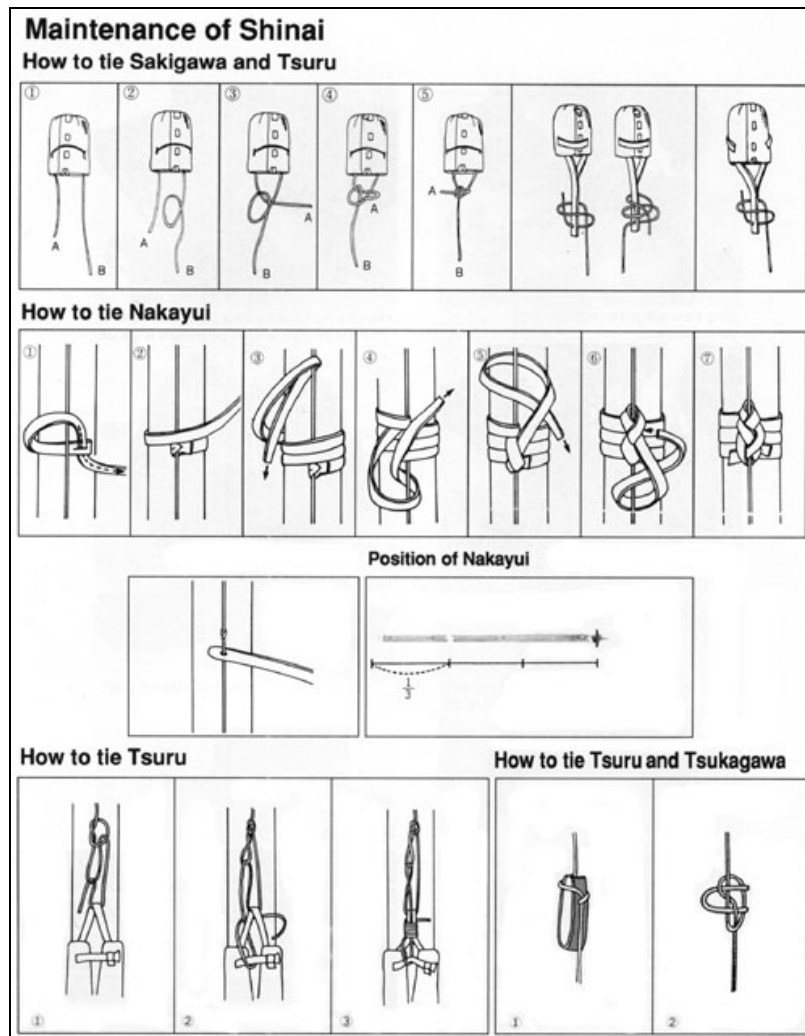
Reassemble the staves in the correct order based on the markings you made when you disassembled your shinai. Be sure the metal square (chigiri) is properly fitted into the slots. Slide the handle (tsukagawa) back on the butt end. If the handle is tight, a dampened cloth or a rubber glove will improve your grip and make the job easier. Replace the rubber insert (sakigomu) and tip (sakigawa), taking care to ensure the staves reach all the way into the sakigawa. Re-tie the string securely. Do not over-tighten the string, as it will cause the staves to break through the end of your sakigawa over time. Re-tie the nakayui. See below for more details.

Tying the Sakigawa, Tsuru, Nakayui and Tsukagawa

The diagram on the next page shows two methods for tying the sakigawa (tip). The one on the left (steps 1 - 5) is most common. If the knot is tied properly, it won't slip. Use the method on the right if your sakigawa has a leather strip attached.

The most commonly used method of tying the nakayui is shown. Note the position of the nakayui. A small knot tied in the tsuru will help keep the nakayui from slipping up the shinai. It's easier to get this knot in the right place if you tie it after you have secured your sakigawa.

Two methods of tying the tsuru to the tsukagawa are shown. The one on the left is most common. As you gain experience and buy more expensive shinai, you may see the leather tab method shown on the right.



Repairing and Rebuilding Damaged Shinai

It is acceptable to rebuild or repair shinai using parts from old shinai, provided all parts are in good condition and can be fitted together properly. See the shinai safety page for more details in this regard. Don't discard useable parts. You may need them later.

When using staves from different shinai, it is important to ensure that they fit together properly. At the butt end, use a fine saw to cut a new slot in the replacement stave to ensure the chigiri (metal square) fits securely, and the butt or tip of the replacement stave does not protrude beyond the others. Otherwise, the protruding stave may puncture the sakigawa (tip) of tsukagawa (handle), creating an unsafe condition.

Other Resources

The all US Kendo Federation has an excellent resource page which includes more useful information on shinai maintenance: <http://www.kendo-usa.org/reference.htm>

An excellent Japanese equipment manual has been translated into English and is available on-line here: <http://www6.big.or.jp/~budogu/manu/topm.htm>