

All Japan Judo Federation

Long-Term Development Guidelines

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長期育成指針

All Japan Judo Federation Long-Term Development Guidelines

Published by All Japan Judo Federation
Date of Issue : December 5, 2024

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I Intentions behind the Establishment of the Long-Term Development Guidelines

"Nation building starts from human resource developments" (Council for the Implementation of Education Rebuilding), and human resource development is the most vital component of every field. While individuals should develop self-sufficiently, providing the necessary "environment" (such as opportunities, stimulation, and timely conditions) makes it possible to bring out their inherent potential. Until now, human resource development in sports has laid emphasis on immediacy and efficiency, and physical education in schools, recreational sports, and competitive sports has often been developed separately. However, the international consensus is that it is challenging to fully develop the physical, psychological, social, and cognitive foundations of all children and to maximize each individual's talent through development aimed solely at a specific goal. Therefore, it is crucial to continuously provide an appropriate "environment" according to developmental age, without focusing solely on specific goals, and to adopt a perspective of "long-term development" that considers the lifelong development of the mind and body.

- (1) The Long-Term Development*¹ Guidelines are presented to realize the purpose stated in Article 3 of the Articles of Association of the All Japan Judo Federation: "to govern and represent the competitive Judo community in our country, and to promote and enhance Judo established by Professor Jigoro Kano, thereby contributing to the healthy physical and mental development of the nation's people."
- (2) The Long-Term Development Guidelines are addressed to a wide range of people, including Judo practitioners,*² and aim to achieve healthy lifelong development*³ of mind and body through Judo.
- (3) The Long-Term Development Guidelines define "Judo practitioners" as "all people involved in Judo" and represent the ideal image of those who continue to learn throughout their lives for various goals. This includes people who compete, pursue Judo as a hobby, maintain and improve their health, and support other Judo practitioners.

Glossary

*1 Long-Term Development

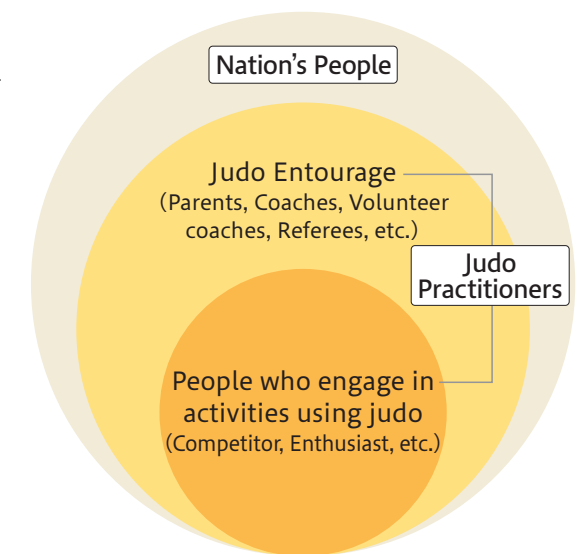
In the Long-Term Development Guidelines, 'purpose' refers to the ultimate vision or reason behind our actions, while 'goal' describes the measurable steps or milestones along the way. Purpose gives us direction, while goals provide measurable targets along the way. A long-term approach to the lifelong development of physical and mental well-being through Judo. This involves identifying the appropriate physical and sports skills and moral cultivation content for each age group based on the developmental stage and implementing a gradual and timely training program.

*2 Judo practitioners

This refers to people who perform Judo mostly for competitive reasons (also called competitors); however, in the Long-Term Development Guidelines, it is used in a broad term encompassing everyone involved in Judo. This includes competitive athletes, those practicing as hobbies or for maintaining and improving their health, and participants in school education (including school clubs). It also includes the "Judo entourage" — the people who support Judo practitioners from the outside, regardless of their own Judo experience, such as parents, coaches, volunteer coaches, and referees.

*3 Lifelong development

The concept of human consciousness and behavior changes continuously throughout life. This development is based on the idea that humans learn, change, and mature through the accumulation of various experiences, building on their innate predispositions.



II Challenges for Japan

The total population of Japan peaked at 128.08 million in 2008, and the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births since then, indicating a phase of population decline. Moreover, the aging rate of the population aged 65 years and older has increased rapidly to 28.9% (as of October 1, 2021), whereas the total fertility rate*⁴ remains low. This implies not only a decline in population but also an imbalance in the population composition (declining birth rate and aging population).

Population decline and demographic



imbalance are directly linked to a decline in national strength,*⁵ presenting a pressing challenge to Japan. The overall vitality of society is needed to be increasing by taking measures against declining birth rates through enhanced support for childbirth, child-rearing, and education; promoting the active participation of elderly people through extending healthy life expectancy.*⁶ While Japan is currently facing such challenges, demonstrating the role of Judo in people's lives is essential.

Glossary

*4 Total fertility rate

A birth rate is calculated by summing the age-specific fertility rates (number of births per age-specific female population) for women aged 15–49 years. This is an important indicator for understanding the overall demographic trends in Japan. This represents the average number of children a woman will bear in her lifetime; a decline in this rate will lead to a decline in Japan's overall number of births.

*5 National strength

The overall strength of a nation encompasses various aspects, such as economy, industry, military, culture, resources, technology, and population. While the definition varies, population or population structure is a key element of national strength. Historically, a correlation has been observed between population fluctuations and changes in national strength.

*6 Healthy life expectancy

The average number of years a person can live 'healthy' when considering their lifetime, which is divided into "healthy" and "unhealthy" periods. This refers to the period during which a person can live independently and healthily, both physically and mentally, without their daily life being restricted by health problems. It is an indicator of the quality of life (QOL), which differs from lifespan.

III Challenges around Judo

1. Decline in Judo Population

The Judo population in Japan has been declining continuously since its peak immediately after the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. The total population of Japan began to decline in 2008. Similarly, the number of members registered in the All Japan Judo Federation (AJJF), including individuals and groups, declined from 206,000 in 2000 to approximately 122,000 in 2021 (a 40.8% decrease compared to a 1.1% decrease in Japan's total population). Moreover, there have been two significant declines in the Judo population: one from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, and another during the 1990s. As stated above, the Judo population in Japan has experienced several critical declining phases to date, and the AJJF has yet to implement effective measures to halt this trend. These changes in the Judo population act as indicators of the pervasiveness of Judo in Japanese society and its educational and cultural value among the citizens during each phase, thereby necessitating an investigation into the fundamental background and reasons for these membership variations. For Japan to maintain and increase

its national strength amid a declining population, it is crucial to nurture and produce capable youth in various fields, owing to the limited human resource. The Japanese sports community is also facing the same challenge. However, the skills acquired through learning and practicing high-performance sports,*⁷—aimed at winning gold medals in international competitions, such as the Olympics—have not been transformed into an axis that can contribute to the real world. In Judo, it is essential to cultivate strength that can be used in a balanced manner through daily practice. In response to the decline in the Judo population, establishing innovative pathways*⁸ that can minimize randomness by identifying talent from a limited talent*⁹ pool and training them effectively based on developmental stages is vital, rather than relying on traditional pathways*¹⁰ that depend on chance and the number of competitors. In addition, developing teaching contents and methods that meet different goals and implementing measures to enable their practical application in different regions are essential.

Glossary

*7 High-performance sports

Sports that require competitive abilities (high-performance), as required in the world's highest stage, such as the Olympic Games. This refers to the approach to sports that focuses on the top athletes competing and aiming to achieve high-performance and place in international competitions, such as the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

*8 Innovative pathway

This is a systematic and planned process for developing elite athletes by scientifically identifying the most suitable sport for each individual, in contrast to traditional pathways that rely more on chance or observation. This approach aims to maximize efficiency and minimize luck in producing top-tier athletes.

*9 Talent

The ability to possess a natural aptitude for a particular sport, such as Judo, and demonstrate a high potential for achieving outstanding results in international competitions.

*10 Traditional pathways

The pathways for competitor development are called athlete pathways. Among them, those that depend on chance are referred to as traditional pathways. The conventional process of athlete development, in which athletes are introduced to a particular sport at a young age, such as in school or a local sports club, and their talent and encounters with a good coach result in them blossoming in that sport and growing into athletes who can compete in international competitions, such as the Olympic Games.

2. Increasing Tournament Sophistication, Lowering Participants' Age, and Disregarding Individual and Sex Differences

In Japan, numerous competitions are held at the district, prefectural, regional, and national levels, with national championships for elementary school students being common. Moreover, numerous junior-level competitions tend to emulate the Olympic Games (seniors) and are organized in a sophisticated manner (e.g., using the same refereeing rules). Under these circumstances, an excessive “win-at-all-costs” mentality (obsessed with achieving results at all tournaments) has become apparent. In particular, intensive daily coaching of primary school students by the coaches and parents has become an issue. While “enthusiastic” coaching aims for happiness in primary school students, “overzealous” coaching merely satisfies the desires of adults. For competitive Judo practitioners, prioritizing winning and pursuing it genuinely is rather natural, and there is no right or wrong about “win-at-all-costs” itself. A problem arises when Judo practitioners, especially the coaches, fail to embrace the diverse values of Judo and instead focus solely on achieving results. Significant individual differences in

growth and development are observed during the junior stages, particularly from elementary to junior high school. Applying excessive intensities and volumes of training, such as the multiplication of strength and duration or intensity and frequency, to young athletes can lead to acute and chronic sports injuries or overtraining syndrome. In other words, it is dangerous to apply the training programs meant for adults to junior Judo practitioners who are still in the developmental phase without considering individual differences in growth and development. Furthermore, applying the training content meant for competitive male Judo practitioners to female practitioners without considering sex differences is a significant problem. Appropriate scientific guidance should be given to female Judo practitioners, fully recognizing that they are at high risk of developing the “Female Athlete Triad (relative energy deficiency, amenorrhea, and osteoporosis).” Furthermore, the weight cuts observed at national championships for junior high school students around the age of menarche cannot be ignored.

3. Insufficient Consideration of Athletes' Developmental Differences in Coaching Systems

Studies on the relative age effect*11 in Judo among the Japanese national team members across different age groups have shown significant effects during elementary and junior high school periods. Owing to the nature of Judo, which involves direct grappling and control of the opponent's movement, physical size differences profoundly affect the competitive outcomes, with developmental differences playing a significant role. Given the potential for physical size differences to increase injury risk, the safety management and coaching perspective should aim to understand and carefully consider each individual's developmental stages. The presence of the relative age effect on competition outcomes can hinder the development of self-efficacy*12 and athletic competence*13 in primary and junior high school athletes born later in the year, potentially encouraging

early dropouts*14 among late-developing children with future potential. Conversely, early maturing children may experience excessive expectations and evaluations from coaches and parents who are heavily biased towards the “win-at-all-costs” perspective, and may be exposed to early specialization in pursuit of competitive activities. This can foster self-centered attitudes and increase the risk of burnout.*15 It is also important to learn from advanced studies conducted in other countries. Most early-age specialization cases in primary and junior high schools have ended unsuccessfully in a loss of promising talent. For Judo practitioners in their developmental stages, demanding short-term results (such as an immediate competitive win) is not advisable. Rather, spending sufficient time enhancing physical literacy,*16 which develops throughout life, is essential. Physical literacy is acquired and applied



Glossary

*11 Relative age effect

Various effects arise due to age- or grade-level distinctions. For instance, in the Japanese school system, individuals born between April 2nd and the following year's April 1st are considered to belong to the same grade. However, this can result in a difference of up to almost a year in terms of the actual age. This age gap becomes particularly pronounced during growth and development, leading to significant variations in physical and mental maturity among individuals of the same age or grade level.

*12 Self-efficacy

Confidence or belief in one's ability to select and execute appropriate actions to achieve the desired outcomes in a given situation.

*13 Athletic competence

This multifaceted concept encompasses the following three key factors: self-confidence in an individual's ability to perform physical exercise and sports (perception of physical competence), confidence in an individual's effort and dedication that can influence their success (perceived control), an individual's feeling of being accepted within the context of sports and physical activities (sense of acceptance). When these three factors are enhanced, individuals are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward sports and physical activities, leading to increased engagement and participation.

*14 Dropout

The act of dropping out or withdrawing from something halfway through an activity. In the context of sports, dropping out refers to the discontinuation of participation in a sport in which one is involved.

Glossary

*15 Burnout

Burnout syndrome is a state of exhaustion in which athletes lose their motivation to compete due to chronic emotional, physical, and mental fatigue. Burnout syndrome can occur in athletes, and also in individuals who are highly dedicated to their work, studies, or other pursuits.

*16 Physical literacy

Although there is no international consensus on the definition of physical literacy, it is gaining attention as a factor promoting physical activity. In Japan, the term physical literacy is used in discussions on the expected roles of physical

education and health in school education. It refers to the development of “qualities and abilities (also called physical literacy) that enable individuals to continue to exercise and play sports throughout their life and lead a healthy and happy life both physically and mentally” (Japan's Third Sport Basic Plan, 2022), and children are recommended to acquire this concept. Internationally, the application of this concept is widely extended from children to the elderly and is often interpreted as the qualities and abilities that enable individuals to lead a healthy and happy life, both physically and mentally, through physical activity by acquiring, applying, and learning it comprehensively throughout their lives.

III Challenges around Judo

during physical activities, encompassing a comprehensive learning process throughout life and enabling a healthy and happy life through engagement in physical activities.*17 Developing physical literacy involves the integration of physical (such as physical fitness and skills*18 acquired and applied through physical activities and sports and efficient and effective movement), psychological (attitudes and emotions towards participating in physical activities and sports, confidence and competence in sports participation, and motivation for physical activities and sports), social (interactions with others through sports, sensitivity to others, and the ability

to engage with others), and cognitive (knowledge and understanding of how to engage in physical activities and sports, the reasons for engaging in sports, and the principles affecting one's sports performance and health) abilities. The concept of physical literacy is recognized internationally and closely aligns with Professor Jigoro Kano's Judo training methods, including kata (form), randori (free practice), lectures, and questions and answers, aimed at nurturing athletes. To achieve optimal performance in various fields, it is crucial to provide the appropriate stimuli at the right time based on developmental characteristics.

Glossary

*17 Physical activity

It refers to all activities that consume more energy than a state of rest and is a concept that encompasses exercise and sports. When "physical activity" is used alone in the Long-Term Development Guidelines, it refers to all physical activities, including "exercise" and "sports," as described below.

■ Exercise

This is a physical activity that moves the body for a specific reason (such as physical education, health, and enjoyment). This can be performed by a single person. The part of physical activity that does not fall under exercise is called "daily activity" and refers to labor in daily life (such as carrying luggage and farming), housework (such as shopping and hanging laundry), and commuting to and from work or school.

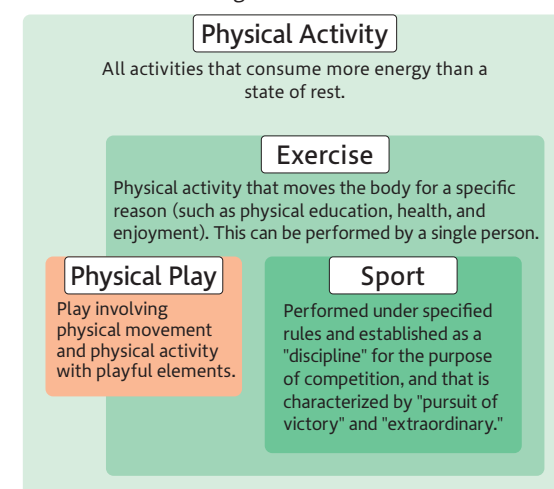
■ Sport

This refers to "The Basic Act on Sport" (Japan Sports Agency, 2011) as "athletic competitions and other physical activities performed by individuals or groups for the purpose of the sound development of the mind and body, maintenance and improvement of health and physical fitness, acquisition of a sense of fulfillment, and cultivation of self-discipline and other mental qualities." However, within the Guidelines, "sport" is defined as an exercise that is performed under specified rules and established as a "discipline" intended for competition, and that is characterized by "pursuit of victory" and "extraordinary." Recreational sports are not fixated on results, but can be interpreted as taking action to win and enjoying the process.

■ Physical Play

While the definition of physical play varies, in this Long-Term Development Guideline, it is defined as "physical activity that is initiated primarily by the

child's free will, with an emphasis on play, from early childhood to elementary school years." Physical play is rooted in the enjoyment of the movement itself, and can be done alone or in collaboration with others. Through interactions with others and the external world (nature, objects, animals, etc.), as rules and other factors come into play, a sense of gameplay is created, leading to the development of structured physical activities." Physical play encompasses not only activities with a strong emphasis on "exercise," such as hide-and-seek, tag, or using equipment like swings and horizontal bars, but also spontaneous activities that arise within "daily life," such as hopping, skipping, walking on stones, jumping off stairs, and kicking a stone while walking.



4. Insufficient Nationwide Establishment of Continuous Promotion (Talent Identification), Athlete Development System, and Training Environments (Dojos)

Similar to several other sports, the promotion (talent identification) and development of junior Judo practitioners in Japan has largely depended on school education, particularly through extracurricular sports activities. This approach is unique to Japan and differs from that of other countries. Consequently, the AJJF has not actively engaged in the promotion (talent identification) or development of junior high and high school Judo practitioners. Consequently, the transition from junior high to high school often leads to disengagement from Judo because of inadequate cooperation between schools, particularly when schools lack coaches and training environments. Especially in junior high schools, cases of the dissolution or nonexistence of Judo clubs are increasing significantly throughout Japan. One remote cause of this trend is the lack of the AJJF's involvement in training junior high and high school teachers with Judo experience. The AJJF must take advantage of the opportunity for the transfer of junior high school club activities (sports club and cultural club activities) to the local

community from 2023 onwards and propose a system for the continuous and systematic dissemination (discovery), development, and strengthening of Judo as soon as possible. School club activities (sports and cultural) were set to transition to community-based management from the fiscal year 2023. The AJJF should view this as an opportunity to propose a continuous and systematic promotion (talent identification) and development system. It is also essential to explore the connections between schools and "local dojos," which have contributed to the promotion and development of Judo. This requires educating the local Judo instructors and volunteer*19 coaches to become junior athlete experts. They must fully understand the significance of school education and club activities as part of school education (educational activities outside the curriculum), as well as the psychological development of students who are still developing, including those with disabilities. Simultaneously, there is an urgent need to create a convenient and inclusive system that allows easy access to local Judo training environments (dojos) and accommodates disabled participants.

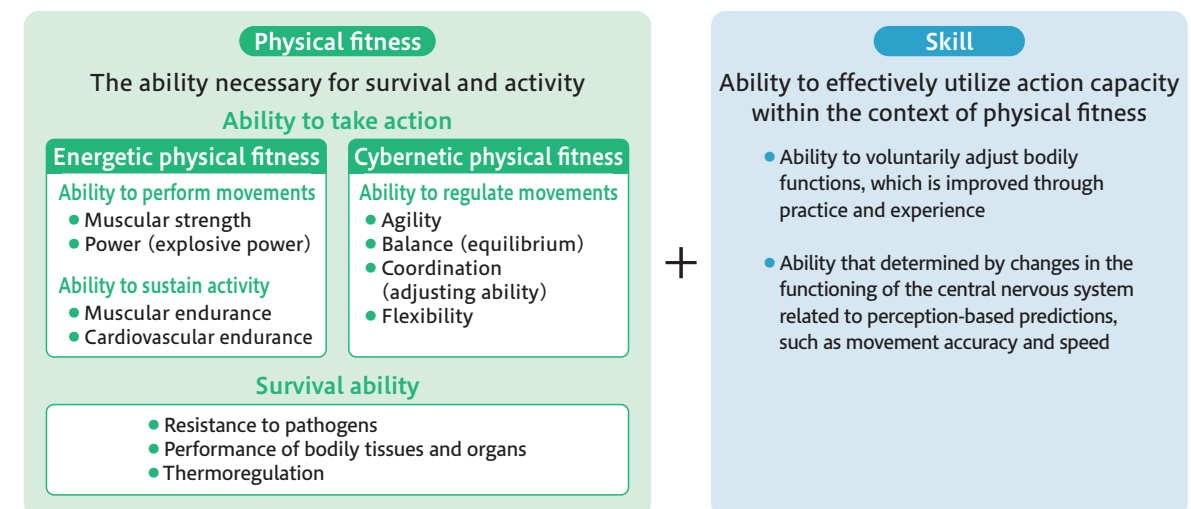
Glossary

*18 Physical fitness and skill

Physical fitness refers to the ability to survive and engage in physical activities. It comprises survival and action capacities. The latter is further divided into energetic physical fitness (the ability to perform movements and sustain activity) and cybernetic physical fitness (the ability to regulate movements). In contrast, skill refers to the ability to effectively utilize

action capacity within the context of physical fitness. It is the ability to voluntarily adjust bodily functions, which is improved through practice and experience. Additionally, it is determined by changes in the functioning of the central nervous system related to perception-based predictions, such as movement accuracy and speed.

$$\text{Performance (athletic ability, results)} = \text{Physical fitness} + \text{Skill} + \alpha$$



*19 Volunteer

This refers to activities undertaken voluntarily to contribute to others or society beyond one's primary occupation or studies. It is generally understood as an activity in which individuals freely offer their time, effort, knowledge, and skills without expecting

compensation. Although some forms of volunteering may involve financial remuneration, volunteer sports and physical activity coaching positions are often unpaid. Volunteers in these roles typically cover their expenses, such as transportation, and rarely receive additional compensation.

III Challenges around Judo

5. Lack of Educational Opportunities for Judo Entourage, Including Coaches

Although the "Judo Coach Certification System" was introduced in 2013 and is being operated by the AJJF for Judo coaches, there are concerns that not all Judo coaches have achieved a sufficient level of quality. Some coaches still rely on unscientific coaching or purely experiential methods, resulting in failure to eliminate serious accidents. In some instances, coaches and parents are so focused on immediate results that they fail to understand the physical and mental states of developing Judo practitioners and lack a comprehensive perspective. Improving the quantity and quality of the Judo entourage,*20 including coaches, is an urgent issue that the AJJF must address

by ensuring the appropriate educational opportunities. Promoting lifelong Judo that is easily accessible to middle-aged and older Judo practitioners has hardly been considered outside of "kata." Therefore, there is a need to develop innovative Judo promotion programs that specifically propose various ways to engage in Judo throughout one's lifetime, such as maintaining and improving health and preventing falls, fractures, frailty,*21 and dementia. The Judo entourage should also recognize the various challenges faced by Judo practitioners with physical and mental disabilities and develop the necessary support systems.

6. Lack of Awareness of the Significance of Learning Judo

Judo is one of Japan's unique cultural elements and is highly valued as a traditional martial art. By respecting opponents and adhering to traditional practices, such as etiquette, practitioners cultivate self-discipline, which contributes to human development. This value is regarded highly internationally, and as of December 2022, the International

Judo Federation (IJF) has 207 member countries and regions, with numerous people worldwide pursuing lifelong development through Judo, which originated in Japan. All Judo practitioners must reacquaint themselves with the essence of learning Judo and communicating it to the public.

However beyond the development of physical prowess and athletic ability, judo students learn much more. They learn how to control their feelings, emotions, and impulses. They learn about values of perseverance, respect, loyalty, and discipline. Judo students develop an outstanding work ethic, as well as important social manners and etiquette. They learn to overcome their fears, and to show courage under pressure. Through competition and the rigors of daily practice, they learn about justice and fair-ness. Through their experience, they learn about politeness, modesty, and many other wonderful values that contribute to their development as successful citizens of society.

International Judo Federation (Ed.) Michel Brousse and David Matsumoto, Judo: A Sport And A Way Of Life, Korea, 1999.

Glossary

*20 Judo entourage

This refers to the individuals who support those who practice Judo to maximize their potential regardless of their level of experience or involvement in the sport. This includes a wide range of individuals, such as parents, coaches, volunteer coaches, and referees.

*21 Frailty

A condition characterized by a decreased ability to recover from stress due to a decline in reserve capacity with aging. It is positioned as a pre-stage of a dependent state and involves various factors such as physical ability decline, as well as psychological and social factors. This condition is indicative of a state that is susceptible to health impairments including dependency and mortality.

IV All Japan Judo Federation's Direction for Long-Term Development

1. Securing Opportunities to Appreciate the Diverse Values of Judo and Proposing Athlete Pathways

The Long-Term Development Guidelines are to create opportunities for as many citizens as possible to engage in Judo, increasing the number of people who can enjoy the physical and mental lifelong developmental benefits. Concurrently, the AJJF will conduct a detailed investigation into the causes of the decrease in AJJF-registered memberships and propose specific measures that can adapt to the changing times from a long-term perspective. To continue achieving better results in Judo as a high-performance sport, the AJJF should scientifically verify suitable athlete pathways and develop an innovative system for talent identification and development.



2. Supporting Challenges with Oneself and Others Using Diverse Evaluation Criteria

The results of competitive matches serve as a measure to evaluate the outcomes of training and practice. However, the diverse values of Judo cannot be assessed using a single metric. Therefore, the AJJF plans to promote a coaching system that allows Judo practitioners to experience a sense of achievement and fulfillment by providing multiple evaluation criteria, which include the degree of skill acquisition and moral cultivation.*22 In addition, the AJJF promotes initiatives that ensure safety at tournament events by adjusting the level of competition, number of competitions, and applicable rules according to developmental stages.



3. Promoting Safe and Appropriate Judo Coaching Considering Individual Differences

The AJJF plans to support the implementation of Judo coaching that considers individual differences, such as developmental pace, sex, and disabilities, across dojos nationwide. This detailed coaching will enhance self-efficacy and

a sense of physical competence, thereby expanding future possibilities. The AJJF also plans to establish coaching methods that aim for the timely acquisition of diverse body movements (physical abilities), based on the foundation of physical literacy cultivated through Judo.

Glossary

*22 Moral cultivation

As advocated by Professor Jigoro Kano, the ultimate purpose of Judo is the formation of individuals through the following three pillars: physical education, competition, and moral cultivation. Moral cultivation involves cultivating virtue, refining intellect, and integrating the theory of competitive Judo into various aspects of life.



4. Support for Judo Practitioners to Continue Activities Smoothly Throughout Their Lives

The AJJF promotes spatial cooperation between dojos in communities, schools, and businesses, and cooperation among practitioners at different developmental stages. This enables continuous activities from early childhood to elementary school, junior high school, high school, university, and adulthood. The AJJF will also explore the creation of new values in Judo through cooperation with other sports. To achieve these goals, the AJJF will develop nationwide networks and systems that allow practitioners to select and continue learning Judo based on individual needs.



5. Expansion of the Judo Entourage, such as Coaches Capable of Supporting All Generations

The AJJF will curate diverse educational programs to enable Judo practitioners of all age groups to realize the significance of learning Judo. By developing "Judo Instructor Training Guidelines," the AJJF aims to expand the Judo entourage

quantitatively and qualitatively, focusing on coaches. The AJJF plans to provide education to familiarize individuals with the Long-Term Development Guidelines to enable them to serve as messengers across prefectures to promote awareness.



6. Clarification and Promotion of Goals for Moral Cultivation Through Judo

The AJJF will clarify the goals of moral cultivation, which encompasses the psychological, social, and cognitive aspects of physical literacy, that Judo practitioners in each age group should aim to achieve.



Physical Literacy Cultivated through Judo and its Benefits in Japan

Physical literacy comprises the following four elements: physical, psychological, social, and cognitive abilities. Among these, physical abilities developed through physical activities and sports represent the core elements of physical literacy. These abilities enable efficient and effective execution of various movements under different conditions. In addition to physical abilities, psychological (confidence and motivation in sports and a sense of competence), social (the ability to interact and communicate with others), and cognitive (knowledge and understanding of the significance and principles of physical activities and sports) abilities are crucial. Nurturing these elements together throughout life will lead to a healthy and enriched lifestyle. Judo is expected to significantly contribute to cultivating physical literacy.

Judo involves gripping a judogi and directly engaging with an opponent to control the movement. This requires the complex coordination of the entire body to manage balance (sway and stability) by pushing, pulling, lifting, pushing down, or entrusting one's weight on the opponent. Judo's dynamic discipline involves frequent transitions between standing,



sitting, lying down, getting up, turning, and rolling. These movements are particularly beneficial during early childhood and elementary school when physical development occurs rapidly. These movements will help develop physical abilities.

In a society where safety and security are paramount, space and opportunities for free physical play (involving physical activity) are becoming increasingly restricted. There are concerns that the types of movements children acquire may be reduced or biased. This problem can be solved by Judo. Adequate physical abilities form the foundation for an active and healthy lifestyle. They are also crucial during emergencies, such as hazard prevention and rescue. These physical abilities are nurtured through Judo and will likely be further balanced by physical play and other sports. Progressively learning and mastering the 100 techniques in Judo (Kodokan), according to the difficulty of the techniques and developmental stage, can foster a sense of achievement and self-efficacy. This enhances the psychological ability to boost confidence and motivation to participate in various physical activities and sports. Judo requires constant interpersonal engagement.



Physical Literacy Cultivated through Judo and its Benefits in Japan

For instance, learning unfamiliar techniques requires collaboration with others, and mastering one's skills depends on effective communication. It requires both the "tori" (the one executing the technique) and the "uke" (the one receiving the technique) to work cooperatively to successfully complete a piece of work (technique). When the "uke" entrusts their body to the "tori", both parties adjust the force and feel each other's breathing through direct physical interaction, allowing them to consider each other's physical and psychological state. Therefore, Judo also has the ability to enhance social skills.

The actions required through practicing Judo, such as throwing (nage-waza), pinning (osae-komi-waza), strangling (shime-waza), and joint locking (kansetsu-waza), involve certain risks. This prompts the pursuit of safe and rational techniques through lectures and discussions, thereby deepening the understanding of physiological and mechanical principles and enhancing cognitive abilities through Judo. The average life expectancy in Japan is 81.41 years for men and 87.45 years for women (in 2019). The proportion of elderly people (percentage of the population aged ≥65 years) is 28.9% (2022 Annual Report on the Aging Society), which is the highest worldwide. Individuals should aim to live long, healthy, and happy lives (expanding healthy life expectancy) in this "era of a 100-year life." Among health conditions that shorten healthy life expectancy (such as those leading to the need for care), frailty and fractures due to falls often stem from a deterioration of the locomotor system (muscles, bones, joints, and nerves),



specifically due to a decrease in muscle (strength) and balance abilities. Psychological, social, and cognitive abilities are suggested to be associated with these conditions and reduce physical activity. A decline in motor function is generally preventable through active movement, which can be effectively improved by Judo's unique full-body coordinated movements. Shifting the center of gravity barefoot on tatami (Judo mats) stimulates the development of dynamic balancing skills (sense of equilibrium). The full-body movements required in Judo, using the upper and lower limbs and torso, stimulate various muscles and help maintain muscle strength. Responding to others' movements and posture and adjusting the timings to turn, squat, pull, push, rotate, support, sweep, and carry enhances not only strength and balance but also agility,^{*23} explosive power, coordination, spatial awareness, and cognitive abilities, such as thinking and decision-making.

As Japan has the most significant aging population in the world, emphasizing the cultivation of physical literacy (physical, psychological, social, and cognitive abilities) is becoming increasingly important. In this context, continuing to learn Judo, which is deeply rooted in Japanese culture, is vital throughout life. Judo, as both a lifelong sport and martial art and a mechanism for health maintenance and enhancement, holds substantial value that should be maximized through adequate scientific verification.

Glossary

***23 Agility**
The ability to quickly change direction and speed in response to a stimulus.



Basic Movements					
Nine movements involving a shift in the center of gravity			Nine movements involving changes in posture or stability		
Vertical, Horizontal, and Evasive Movements			Posture Change and Balance Movements		
run	climb	walk	stand	grapple	ride
leap	swim	jump (vertical)	handstand	traverse	sit up
duck under	slide	crawl	hang	float	roll
Eighteen movements to control people or object					
Loading, Capturing, and Offensive Actions					
hold	support	carry	push	hit the target	dig
kick	hold down	catch	wave	pedal	pass
throw	knock over	pull	hit	grab	stack

Combining these movements with intellectual factors will enable individuals to perform the necessary movements in the following scenarios.

Movements required in everyday life	Movements required for disaster prevention, evacuation, and rescue	Movements required for sports
Complicated and Applicable Movements		
Walk in formation, walk through a crowd, lift something up, etc.	Dodge and roll, move whilst hanging, walk in water, etc.	Run and jump far, run and kick something far, run and throw something far, catch and throw quickly, etc.
More Complex and Practicable Movements		
Maintain a standing position for an extended period without significant fatigue, etc.	Swim to rescue someone, safely crossing obstacles while carrying objects, etc.	Run long distances at a pace that allows for good times, etc.

V Six Stages of Long-Term Development

Considering the various challenges surrounding Japan and Judo, the AJJF proposes specific guidelines for the long-term development of the population, including Judo practitioners, divided into six stages based on age and development.

This section provides the ages for each stage to understand the overall picture of development. However, practicing Judo can be started at any age by anyone in the nation.

STAGE 1 0-5 years

This stage should primarily focus on discovering "joy" and "pleasure."

Environment

Learn about and understand the dangers in the environment and safety limits by engaging in physical activity in a safe (not overly restrictive) environment.

Physical Education

Ensure that children do not remain seated for more than 60 min at a time other than when sleeping, and to use their energy, be more curious, and find joy in everyday activities. Children should begin developing physical abilities that will serve as the foundation for lifelong physical activity and high-performance sports by increasing opportunities for active play and enhancing basic movements, such as stability, locomotion, and body control.

Moral Cultivation

Foster creativity and lay the foundations for abstract thinking through unstructured play and physical activities in kindergartens, daycare, and homes.

Be accustomed to moving and playing, experiencing social interactions with others while enjoying and feeling exhilarated.

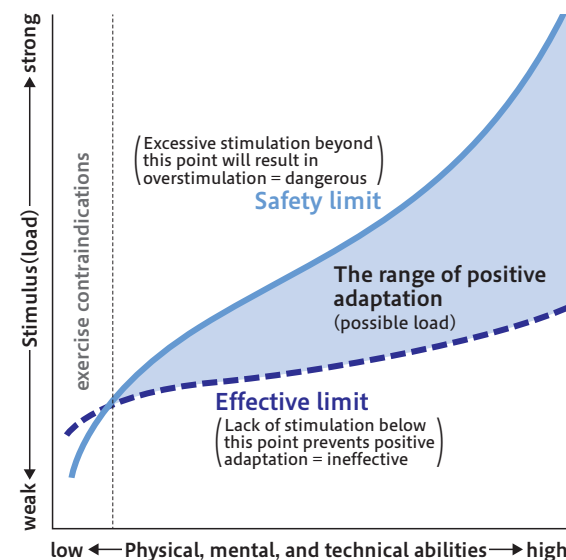
Harmony

Learn habitual manners and greetings through imitation.



STAGE 2 6-11 years

At this stage, the children build on the foundation while continuing to experience "joy" and "pleasure," aiming for all children to have equal opportunities to participate in competitions. At this stage, children can also increase their capacity for positive adaptive responses to stimuli (stress).



Competition

Experience the joy of victory and frustration of defeat through martial arts (such as Judo and sumo) play.

Moral Cultivation

Continue to emphasize fun in physical and sports activities at school and community levels.

Nurture curiosity and logical thinking through question-and-answer sessions, encouraging honest expressions. Be mindful of individual developmental differences and focus on the joy and satisfaction of overcoming challenges rather than comparing oneself with others. Encourage children to develop a sense of athletic competence and self-efficacy through support from the surrounding community, enabling them to participate confidently and independently in exercise and sports and continue participating in Judo.

Harmony

In the second half of STAGE 2, enable children to understand others' perspectives and personal dignity through the protocols of mutual etiquette at dojos. Additionally, encourage them to work with others.

Environment

Understand the basic rules of sports ethics. Experience well-structured, basic, and deliberate play through well-designed programs. Use age-appropriate equipment and facilities, considering safety and skill levels. Organize events that briefly teach Japanese culture and make it easy for everyone to participate to make Judo accessible to more children.

Physical Education

Encourage the development of basic physical fitness, such as agility, balance, coordination,*²⁴ and speed. Engage in multiple physical activities and sports to promote motor control and sports skills. Basic Judo movements (such as moving forward and backward; breaking balance; setting up a throw; and movements, including pushing and pulling, maintaining balance, and timing) promote the balanced development of physical abilities and sports skills. Recommend participation in local, regional (prefectural), or smaller competitions. Avoid excessive competition and specialized training for competition preparation (tactics aimed at penalties and weight cuts) to prevent stress in children.

Glossary

*24 Coordination

It is referred to as "adjustment ability" and encompasses the ability to harmoniously control the movements of the entire body in response to various situations. It comprises several key elements, as follows: orientation ability (spatial awareness), transition ability (transition between different movements), linking ability (performing multiple actions simultaneously), reaction ability (responding accurately to external stimuli), differentiation ability (coordinating hands, feet, and equipment), rhythm ability (adjusting to a specific rhythm or timing), and balance ability (quickly regaining and maintaining balance).

STAGE 3 12-14 years

This stage involves commencing formal training and competition tailored to students' personal interests, goals, and developmental needs, considering their stage of development. In this stage, the importance of promoting technical, tactical, physical, and psychosocial development increases as maximizing one's potential to become an athlete becomes an option. Sports-specific training is also intensified, requiring the use of information related to sports science.

Environment

Base progression to the next stage of peak height velocity (PHV)^{*25} and motivation. Enjoyment and social interaction should be emphasized to avoid overtraining while increasing the frequency of sports participation. Musculoskeletal maturity during periods of significant height growth should be regularly assessed to understand the timing of PHV. Understand the rules of sports, organizations, and teams. Start focusing on specific sports while utilizing cross-sport training.^{*26} Progressively compete in challenging situations to develop and enhance necessary sports skills.

Physical Education

Continue to enjoy Judo offense and defense through dojo and community activities, considering the development of physical abilities. More specialized training should be introduced gradually to encourage the development of physical fitness and the skills required for Judo, considering sex and individual differences derived from PHV and developmental age. Regarding physical competence, the main fundamental movements and developmental phases of primary physical abilities (agility, balance, coordination, speed, endurance, and strength) should be refined. Muscular strength and range of motion should be continuously improved, emphasizing correct movement mechanics.

Competition

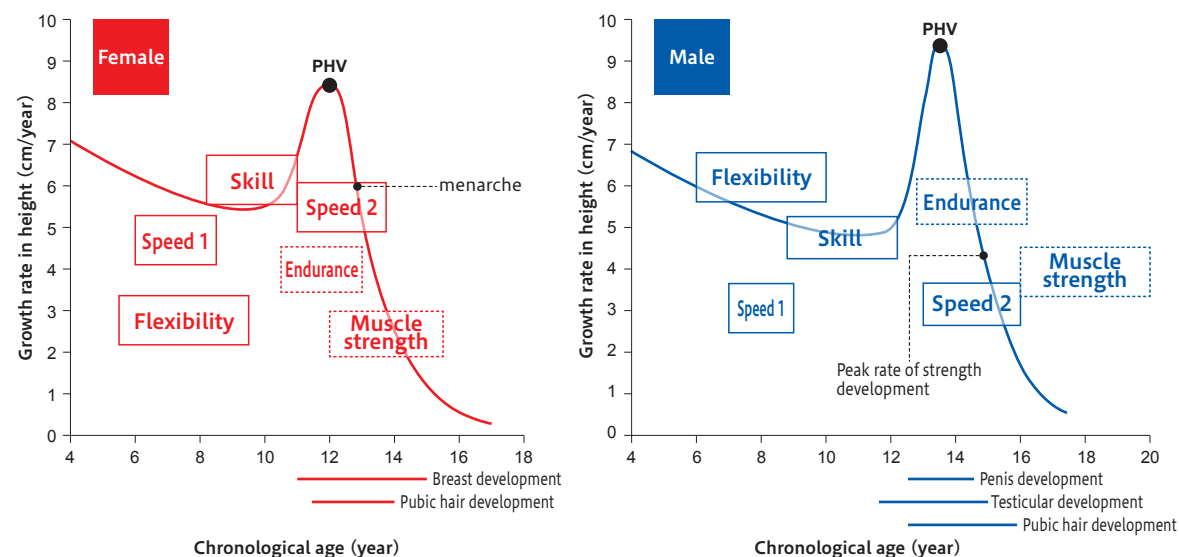
Learn the basics of Judo rules, manners, training methods, and competition preparation. Mainly focuses on acquiring correct basic Judo movements and grappling techniques, as well as learning advanced grappling techniques. Seek competitions that match the team or individual's ability. Participate in competitions without focusing on Olympic (senior) weight classes. Mostly participate at the local and regional (prefecture) levels or in smaller competitions. Careful consideration of training according to individual developmental stages and the number of competition participants to prevent overtraining and excessive competition. Determine age-appropriate practices and competition frequency to promote the development of team and individual skills. Focus on skill development and moral development in practice rather than competition results.

Moral Cultivation

Adjust challenge levels according to psychological and social abilities and focus on interpersonal skills, teamwork, communication skills, and performance development. Integrate mental, cognitive, and emotional development.

Harmony

Understand others' perspectives and positions and develop a sense of personal dignity through interactive protocols of etiquette (customs) in the dojo. Analyze one's own abilities.



The optimal training window (rapid adaptations to training stimuli) and the maturational changes occurring during adolescence. Optimal Windows of Trainability (Balyi and Way 2005)

- ※Descriptions of chronological age (horizontal axis) are provided to understand the overall developmental picture. Currently, the programs, rules, and training of these competitions are based on age. However, athletes aged 10–16 years may have developmental levels differing by as much as 4–5 years. Therefore, it may not be appropriate to base competition participation solely on age.
- ※The solid squares show physical abilities influenced by chronological age, while dotted squares indicate developmental age influence. Each ability is plotted against chronological age (horizontal axis). 'Speed 1' is for actions under 5 seconds, and 'Speed 2' is for actions under 20 seconds.

Glossary

***25 Peak height velocity (PHV)**
PHV is the maximum rate of growth in height during adolescence. The age at which growth velocity peaks is known as the PHV age. PHV marks the onset of the growth spurt, which is the period when height increases most rapidly. PHV and menarche are biological markers for identifying sensitive periods

of accelerated adaptation to training.

***26 Cross-sport training**
This refers to engaging in multiple sports activities or a combination of sports activities. It emphasizes the holistic development of motor skills, physical fitness, and overall athleticism.

STAGE 4 15-17 years

This stage allows high school students to choose paths that maximize and optimize their interests and abilities, whether by pursuing high-performance sports or continuing sporting activities for fun, health, and social expectations. It enables maximizing development and commitment in sports (desire and determination to participate or continue in sports) while enjoying and benefiting from it. Enjoyment and development of social skills are important factors.

Environment

Seek opportunities for further skill development.
Compete progressively in challenging situations.
Develop skills through local, regional, or national level competitions.

Physical Education

Identify individual developmental differences. Avoid excessive focus on competitive performance; rather, work with a long-term development plan aimed at achieving peak athletic performance.
Use PHV as a benchmark to improve Judo-specific physical fitness by considering individual trainability.
Acknowledge the increased risk of sports injuries due to specialization at this stage. Adjust the training load (amount and intensity of training) and competition participation (number of competitions, weight cuts, and choosing weight classes) to prevent overtraining.
Emphasize competition-specific skills

Competitions

Learn and practice competition preparation and progress through specialized training to improve physical fitness and skills to meet international standards, aiming to compete at high levels.
Participate in regional (prefectural)-to national-level competitions based on individual abilities and competitive levels.

Moral Cultivation

Promote the comprehensive development of mental, cognitive, and emotional aspects.

Harmony

Practice protocols of etiquette and respect individuals' dignity during social interactions. Analyze one's own abilities and apply the knowledge gained through practicing Judo to other areas of learning and new situations.



STAGE 5 18-24 years

This stage emphasizes remembering and appreciating the joy and health benefits of participating in sports.

❖High-Performance Judo

At this stage, athletes strive for excellence and progress, not in comparison with others, but to achieve personal goals. Towards the end of this stage, athletes must consider the design of their life after retirement.

Environment

Provide athletes with elite-level expert coaching to maximize their potential. Develop an annual plan within a long-term plan to set appropriate goals, excel, progress, and focus on annual and long-term training programs.

Physical Education

Maximize tactical, technical, physical, psychological, and cognitive abilities to compete at a higher level.
Incorporate frequent breaks to prevent physical and mental issues (such as overtraining, female athlete triad, burnout, and acute and chronic sports injuries) resulting from an excessive training load (type of stimulus, intensity, frequency, and type of training).

Competition

Focus on improving sporting performance. Challenge and participate in higher-level

competitions that are beyond one's skill level, while being safe.

Specialize in the most suitable event and engage in specific training. Refine medium- and long-term planning and preparation for competition to sustain and improve sporting performance over longer periods. Compete for "challenge" and "fun" while interacting actively and positively with others.

Moral Cultivation

Focus on the enjoyment and health benefits of participating in sports. Understand the need for dual-career development and an international perspective as athletes and be aware of their role as professional athletes (role models).

Harmony

Practice protocols of etiquette and respect the dignity of individuals during social interactions.

❖Wellness Judo

This stage allows everyone to participate in sports and exercise to establish and maintain healthy lifestyles. In addition, several retired athletes use their experience to engage in sports and physical activity in leadership roles, such as coaches, managers, and referees, thereby supporting the success of the next generation of athletes.

Physical Education

Engage in activities with the intent to further develop physical literacy through the enjoyment of multiple physical activities, sports, and martial arts, including Judo. Maintain physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

Harmony

Practice protocols of etiquette and respect the dignity of individuals during social interactions.

Competition

Participate in and enjoy local, regional (prefectural), and interclub competitions and trial events.
Participate in and enjoy recreational competitions.

Moral Cultivation

Utilize safe and enjoyable Judo activities as a form of coping.*27

Glossary

*27 Coping

Use of self-regulatory mechanisms to reduce stress. Athletes face various potential stressors, including physical pain, fear, loss of confidence, psychological demands, coach-related stress, and the demands of sports performance itself. If these stressors are not managed effectively, they can become significant obstacles to achieving optimal performance. Engaging in sports and physical activities can be a coping strategy for managing stress related to life and work.

STAGE 6 Lifelong

This is the transition stage from highly competitive Judo to Judo as a lifelong sport (recreational sport), focusing mainly on martial arts, with an emphasis on moral cultivation. Regardless of an individual's previous experience with Judo, they form a physically active lifestyle and enjoy Judo and traditional Japanese culture throughout their lives.

Physical Education

Engage in at least 60 min of moderate physical activity or 30 min of vigorous physical activity per day.

Competition

Participate in masters competitions and initiate new exercises, sports, and hobbies.

Moral Cultivation

Utilize the knowledge, experience, and skills gained through Judo later in life (such as applying these to one's own work, coaching Judo and other sports, volunteering and engaging in social work, and engaging in sports administration and management). Find meaning in life through various activities. Bring value to the society.

Harmony

Strive for intercultural harmony through protocols of etiquette to build social capital.*28 Understand the importance of physical activity for an enriched and balanced life and integrate the knowledge of specific methods and principles that contribute to maintaining and improving health.

Glossary

*28 Social capital

This refers to the relationships between trust and connections among individuals (social networks). The underlying principle is that enhancing cooperation among individuals can increase societal efficiency.



All Japan Judo Federation Six Stages of Long-Term Development

