

breathing

Breathing is the life force which directly moves the Ki. The breath is of great importance in focusing and strengthening one's Ki. Training in meditation, martial arts and shiatsu emphasizes the importance of increasing one's awareness on breathing.

The average person breathes 12-16 times per minute, usually with shallow, rapid breaths. To generate more power and increase vitality it is best if the breath be slowed down. In breathing we exchange the outside environment with our own internal environment. To allow for proper respiration breathing should come from the lower abdominal area (tanden).

These are 3 commonly used breathing techniques:


1) Long Inhale – Long Exhale
 _____ / _____ / _____
 Long inhale, long exhale creates peaceful power, calm and energy for control. This breath can provide deep insight and is commonly used in meditation. In shiatsu it is used for tonifying and in martial arts for control and balance.

2) Short Inhale – Short Exhale
 ___ / ___ ___ / ___ ___ / ___ / ___
 Short inhale, short exhale is used for situations of stress requiring quicker reaction times.



Infinity

This type of breathing generates power quickly and is used for sedation techniques in shiatsu, strong sharp strikes or blocks in martial arts and for clearing the mind and energizing in meditation.

3) Spiral Breath 

Spiral breath in and out provides guidance, intuition and inspiration. The inward spiral and outward spiral directed breath focuses power around both the vertical and horizontal axis of the body which allows for deep grounding and directional power.

The point of changing from inhale to exhale is the critical decision making time for each technique. Developing skill in proper breathing and paying attention to our breathing patterns requires perseverance and diligence. We all know how to breathe, it is breathing with awareness that makes the difference.

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