BREATHING IN TAEKWONDO

In Martial Arts, appropriate breathings are essential and fundamental factors for concentration. It has been used to develop internal power (KI) self-confidence and good health, which in itself leads to a fruitful longevity. Dan-Jun (in Korean) means “Red Field”, “Hot Point” or “Center of Energy”. It refers to the place located two inches below the navel. This place is the center of gravity of the human body and at the same time the seat of KI (internal power of vital energy). Dan-Jun breathing is an important martial arts exercise, for developing KI, which is used primarily with meditation and the execution of martial arts technique.

Breathing Method
Most people only use the top portion of their lungs while breathing, they fail to fill the bottoms well as the top part of their lungs. When you breathe, imagine the air you are breathing as it fills your entire abdomen, concentrating on your Dan-Jun and storing energy. When you exhale, imagine the energy moves to any part of your body while the air is being released through your nose.

Dan-Jun Breathing and Meditation
There are many different breathing formulas while meditating, and in all of them inhaling should be executed slowly. Some of the many breathing are as follows:

- Inhale for five seconds, exhale for five seconds.
- Inhale for five seconds, hold for five seconds, and exhale for five seconds.
- Inhale for five seconds, hold for five seconds, exhale for five and hold for five seconds.
- Inhale for five seconds, hold for ten seconds, exhale for five seconds, and hold for five seconds.
- Inhale for ten seconds, hold for fifteen seconds, exhale for ten seconds etc.

As we can see, the length of time we can inhale, hold and exhale can be gradually increased to the point that we can remain for one minute or even longer. Choose one of the above methods and practice this breathing exercise while meditating, or performing Tae Kwon Do and you will increase your KI as well as attain spiritual unification.

Dan-Jun Breathing and Martial Arts Techniques

Another method of practicing Dan-Jun breathing consists of inhaling and while holding air in, press it down in your Dan-Jun point, and now feel the energy stored in your Dan-Jun point go to your muscles giving you a significant intrinsic power. When you press the air down in your Dan-Jun, you may exhale very slowly (your tongue touches slightly upper teeth) not to tighten your face, which might cause dizziness. It allows you to concentrate or focus your KI on the part of the body we are using to do the technique. In similar ways, Dan-Jun breathing can be used while practicing Tae Kwon Do forms. When a block or strike is executed, this should be done while the air we have inhaled is
pressed down instantly in our Dan-Jun. Now imagine the power generated at the Dan-Jun transferred to your hands or feet. After the technique has been executed with real power, then we exhale, relaxing our body. During performance of a Tae Kwon Do form, with harmony of breathing and softness, hardness of our body we can feel rhythmical movement at every moment we are executing the technique.

Also while executing a Hapkido technique, hold, throw or strike, our power should come from the Dan-Jun while the air sown after having inhaled, continue till the technique is completed. KIHAP (yell) is a kind of Dan-Jun breathing. It is nothing but a scream if you make KIHAP without tightening your Dan-Jun. You must fell the air come out slowly from your abdomen when you make KIHAP. As above mentioned, Dan-Jun is the center of gravity of human body. Stressing Dan-Jun point after inhale means adding weight at the center of gravity of our body. The heavier the center of the mass is, the more stable it is. So we can be balanced while we perform Tae Kwon Do’s form, Hapkido techniques, kicking, punching or any kind of physical activity.

**Dan-Jun Breathing and Breaking**

Before we execute a breaking technique, we should concentrate with Dan-Jun breathing. Once we inhale and press the air down towards our Dan-Jun, and imagine the power generated at the Dan-Jun, and transferred to your hand or foot that you are going to use with. This is the precise moment that the breaking techniques should be executed. Your hand should be very tight only at the moment it makes contact with the target. If your arm and hand is tight at the beginning of execution, you will not be able to obtain maximum speed because the muscle will be too tense. When any muscle is tense, there is no fluid motion.

**Dan-Jun Breathing and Free Sparring**

Any attack must take place while you have inhaled and concentrated the air in your Dan-Jun point, having the maximum amount of KI ready to be used. And if possible attack your opponent while he is exhaling, when his KI is temporarily drained out. It is at this point that your opponent is more vulnerable.

**Conclusion** In general Dan-Jun breathing can be used in many situations. For example when we are nervous or under stress due to everyday life situations, Dan-Jun breathing helps us to calm ourselves so we can recover our serenity and think more clearly. The daily practice of Dan-Jun breathing cannot be over emphasized in the training program of a martial artist. It takes constant practice. However, when used to it, one is able to do it automatically. It unlocks a tremendous potential by the release of the internal force or vital energy centered in the Dan-Jun point. Through proper breathing, we attain self-confidence, good health and spiritual unification, which is the ultimate goal of the true Martial Artist and the Universal desire of all beings.
BREATHING CONTROL & MOVING QUICKLY

**BREATHING** Correct abdominal breathing control is the most important thing you can learn in any martial art. By breathing correctly it not only manages to maximize your internal energy flow but it relaxes the body so that maximum speed and power can be delivered into the strike. Every single movement that you execute should be combined with an expulsion of air through the nose. When you prepare a technique you breathe into your abdomen forcing this area to rise but your chest and shoulders to remain motionless and then when executing a technique you quickly force the air out of the abdomen by contracting your muscles. This means that your body is relaxed so you are able to generate maximum speed therefore maximum power into the technique. Breathing is like everything you need to practice it constantly and breathe in this way every time you move.

**Breathing Exercise:** Lie on your back and place one hand underneath the knot on your belt (your abdomen) and place the other on your chest. Take a breath of air into your lower abdomen (Ha-Danjeon), this should mean that only your lower hand rises up. Count how many seconds it takes to fill your abdomen with air, hold your breath for a second and taking a longer time exhale gently exhale and force the air out of the area until no air remains in your body. Hold your breath for a second and repeat the exercise. The only groups of people who naturally breathe this way without training are in fact newborn babies because they breathe this way in the womb. That is why babies have incredible strength for their size when grabbing hold of something. As we get older we become lazy and begin to breathe into our chests.

Breathing into your abdomen and practicing this exercise is extremely good for your health as it maximizes internal energy and strengthens your vital internal organs.

**How to incorporate this exercise into your training.** When preparing for a move take a breath into your abdomen and as you deliver your technique simultaneously breathe out. By stopping your breath you can stop your technique and have maximum control over your body.

If doing a single technique, take ONE breath in and quickly ONE breath out. At the moment of impact there should be no air left in your body.

If executing multiple moves, you do not have time to breathe in before every move, so you must take ONE breath in and then breathe out on every move. So for example if you are doing a combination block followed by a punch, you take ONE breath in, followed by two breaths out.

**THE FASTER YOU EXHALE THROUGH YOUR NOSE THE FASTER YOU WILL EXECUTE YOUR TECHNIQUE, WHETHER IT’S A BLOCK, KICK OR STRIKE.**
Try this exercise really slowly to start with and gradually increase your body movement and your breath out. Once you get used to breathing every time you move it will eventually become more natural.

Breathing connects all bodily functions. If you stop breathing for more than five minutes you will die. Breathing is life. Through breathing correctly into your lower abdomen (Ha-Danjeon) you can control your mood and state of mind. The more times you breathe the calmer you become.

In martial arts training you must be able to extend one breath to between one and five minutes. This can only be achieved by practicing exercises using your lower abdomen. **This is why in the martial arts you wear a belt. The knot should be placed over your abdomen and you should be able to just place your palm under the knot. When practicing inhaling, push your abdomen out against the knot and when exhaling release the pressure.**