

# Wisdom of the Martial Arts



## To Lift the Mind, Body and Spirit

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The study of martial arts is a path of personal growth, encompassing body, mind, and spirit. The Mindful Lessons of the Martial Arts program is designed to support and supplement your physical practice, and to motivate and inspire you to deeper levels. Congratulations on taking the first step toward achieving all your personal goals, lets get started!

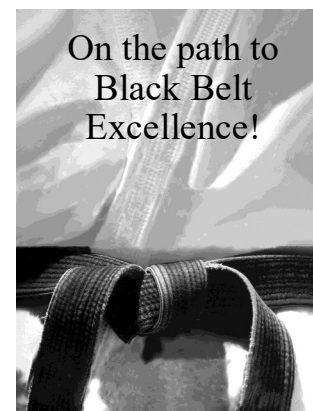
# Topic

## Achieving Mastery

A strong body plus a strong mind equals a strong future. The ability to focus and harness willpower is the real key to great success and happiness. Choosing to join this program of introspection and discipline makes you a unique and special person. Few people make the effort to reach their highest potential. In this lesson, you will learn the seven principles necessary to become a great martial artist. Some of the principles might seem basic, while others might be new concepts. These seven principles are universal truths. They will guide your practice, and by learning to apply them to other areas of life, you will be much happier and more successful.

### 1. Find a Good Teacher

The first step to take after deciding to pursue the study of any subject should be to find a person who has already accomplished greatness in that field. Do not waste time trying to, "reinvent the wheel." You can learn many topics from books, videos, the internet, etc. To effectively study martial arts, though, you must be face to face with a teacher. The other resources can supplement the process, but real learning happens on the floor, through trial and error, and personal experience. A strong body plus a strong mind equals a strong future.



*Reading and talking is not enough. You must do the work. The only person who can change you is you!*

Because this is such a logical first step, why don't most of us first consult those who have walked the path ahead of us before starting a new endeavor? The biggest reason is we are excited to be starting something new. We can't wait to begin. Another reason is that we fear that by consulting others, our creative juices will be stifled. Lastly, we just don't want to share the credit for the accomplishments. We want to feel like we did everything on our own. Our ego makes us believe that climbing a mountain with a guide cannot possibly be as satisfying as climbing solo. A great teacher enhances learning, helping you to get the skills you need as fast as possible. With enough practice, you will reach a point where you no longer struggle with the basic techniques. When you have mastered technique, you have the freedom to become an artist. Remember, you must be a great technician before you can be an artist.

### 2. Patience

After you have found a great teacher, the next requirement is to be patient. Our society demands immediate gratification. The quicker the better! We have blazing fast internet connections and powerful microwaves to cook our food faster. We can even buy peanut butter and jelly in the same jar, to optimize our sandwich-making experience! Impatience is an epidemic in our culture. We despise slow beginnings, but the true study of martial arts takes time. You must be patient; you are not going to master your techniques quickly. You won't get into shape overnight.

Impatience is the number one reason why people quit their practice. We are a society with short attention spans. People quit activities at the drop of a hat. In any field, find the person who is at the top. The master of any discipline has immense staying power. They could not have reached the heights of greatness without pa-

tience.

There once was a farmer who purchased a very expensive seed with the hope that it would grow into a beautiful tree. He found the perfect place in his garden where the soil was fertile and the sun and shade would be just perfect. He took care to water his seed regularly, and every day the farmer dreamed of picking delicious juicy fruit from his strong and beautiful tree. Shortly after planting, he became curious about the progress of his seed as he had seen no sprout break through the earth. Just to make sure that everything was going well, he dug up the seed and carefully inspected it for growth. Slightly disappointed but still hopeful, he replanted his precious seed. He continued to water the spot each day, making plans for the future of his harvest. A few more days passed, and again his impatience got the best of him. He decided to dig up the seed and take another look. This cycle continued for several more days. As you have probably guessed, the seed, which held such enormous potential for growth and greatness withered away and died.



*Do not let your practice die under the weight of over  
examination. Learn to be patient.*

*When practice  
becomes incon-  
sistent, making  
excuses for  
staying away  
becomes easier.*

### 3. Perseverance

At first glance, perseverance might seem the same as patience, but they are different principles. Perseverance means that you practice regularly. You must come to class two to three times a week consistently. A student was coming to class only 2 or 3 times a month. His teacher asked him about his inconsistent attendance, and he responded with a smile, "Sir, I am patient. I plan to practice for the rest of my life, so I am not in a hurry." His teacher explained that patience is a great quality, but skipping classes slows progress. When practice becomes inconsistent, making excuses for staying away becomes easier. The most successful long-term students are those who stick to a consistent weekly routine from the very beginning-no excuses!

### 4. Practice Hard

Prepare to push yourself, body and mind. During class, you will sweat, and push your body to its limits. Mentally focus on your techniques with such intensity that you have no room for any of the day-to-day problems and frustrations you might have brought with you. With effort, you will begin to break through physical limitations. You will begin to feel more confident, and your new assurance will carry over into other areas of your life. When you train your body and mind together, you are preparing to take on life and its' challenges. Cultivate an attitude of discipline and concentration in class. Don't allow yourself to focus on anything else but your practice. Drop the outside world at the door. With a break from your regular life, a clearer, more objective perspective will come into view. You'll be able to see solutions to your problems with fresh eyes.

*A serious martial artist cultivates mindfulness in all  
Phases of his life.*

*(Continued on page 3)*

### 5. Practice exactly what you want to perform

As human beings, our nature is to like what comes easy to us, and to shy away from things that are hard. Success makes us feel good. The same is true in martial arts. After several months of practice, you might begin to gravitate toward your favorite moves. You do them fairly well, and you feel successful. Other techniques will still be difficult and this is normal. Excelling in some areas and finding others more challenging is to be expected. But to become a well-rounded martial artist, you will need to execute all of the techniques in the curriculum. Keep challenging yourself. Use this principle as a compass to guide you to your highest performance in the rest of your life. Frequently ask yourself, "Am I practicing exactly what I want to perform?" Maybe you need to manage your time better, so that you are more productive at work. Look at your relationships with others. Which are fulfilling and which are frustrating? Are you doing everything that you can to make your life work in the best way possible? Your life is not a dress rehearsal—this is the real thing. If you are not living the way that you want to live, what must you change to make your life exactly as you want it to be? Remember, if the highest goal is a joyful satisfying life, practice what you want to perform. Smile often. Laugh and have fun. Find solutions, rather than focusing on problems. Practice being happy and you will find happiness.

*A serious martial artist sees his practice as a path leading to greater awareness, concentration and patience—with himself and others.*



### 6. Mindfulness

So you've found a good teacher, you've been patient and perseverant, you've worked out hard, and you are trying to practice what you want to perform. By diligently following these first five steps, you can learn to defend yourself well, and you will get in great shape. But these accomplishments do not make you a true martial artist. The primary difference is that a serious martial artist sees his practice as a path leading to greater awareness, concentration and patience with himself and others. He believes that his practice is more than just physical movements, and he cultivates mindfulness in all phases of his life. Introspection and self-analysis are important techniques to the martial artist. In other words, reading about philosophy, and discussing the subject is not enough. You must do the work. The only person who can change you is you. Change does not happen overnight, but incrementally on a day-to-day basis. In the activity and the technique sections of this lesson, you will be given the real work. Complete the assignments and practice the techniques. In doing so, you are choosing to take your practice and your life to the next level.

### 7. Passion

The final principle in becoming great at anything is passion. You must love what you are doing. Martial Arts develops discipline, but no one can reach greatness through pure discipline alone. You must love your practice so much that you embrace it with great passion. Many masters in different styles began with feeble bodies and difficult physical challenges. Their passion for their practice kept them coming to the dojo. Unfortunately in our busy society, few people set up their lives, to consistently include an activity that brings them immense pleasure and joy. You need something to live for and something to die for. You are very fortunate if they are one and the same.

*(Continued on page 4)*



A great master said, "You need two things in life, something to live for and something that you will die for. You are very fortunate if they are one and the same."



**Ten thousand rivers flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full.**

*Ancient Proverb from China*

Passion plays an immense role in the quality of your life and your happiness. You simply must find something which feeds you and completes you each day. Maybe the beginners are thinking, "Whoa, slow down, I just came in for some classes. I don't know that I love this yet." To become a great martial artist, or for that matter, great at anything, you must learn to love what you are doing! If you are new to the practice, just concentrate on having fun. Enjoy your time in class and be enthusiastic. Slowly the passion will develop.

To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the highest skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the highest skill.

-Sun Tzu

## Activity

You should have read Karate-Do, My Way of Life, by Gichin Funakoshi last month. This book is a terrific introduction to martial arts. Within its pages are many universal truths to help you see your practice from a different perspective. Choose your favorite chapter, and write a paragraph to a page explaining what you liked about it. When you have completed the activity, keep a copy of your work for future reference and make a copy to turn in to your instructor.

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## Activity

## Technique:



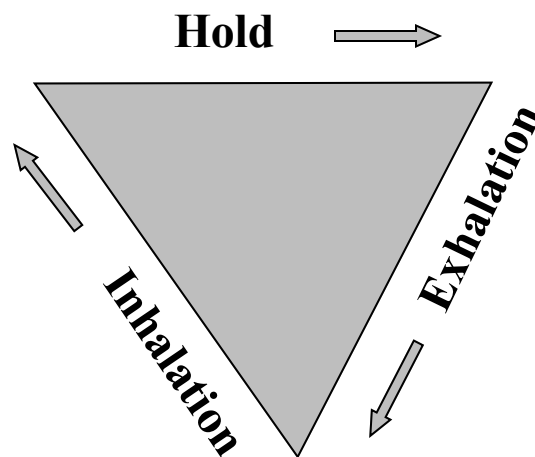
Triangular breathing helps to equalize the breath.

*Sifu Robert Brown*

### Triangular Breathing

Now that you have practiced diaphragm breathing, you may recognize that your inhalations and exhalations are not the same length. This is normal. Triangular breathing helps to equalize the breath.

- Start by kneeling in seiza, or sitting on the floor with your back straight and your chin parallel to the floor. You may also sit with crossed legs, or in a full lotus or a half lotus, or in a straight back chair with your feet on the floor. Pick a comfortable posture, which allows the spine to stay straight and relaxed.
- Exhale. Begin to inhale slowly and consistently without breaks or pauses. Fill the lungs completely from the bottom up to the top and then hold the breath. End with a slow exhale from the top of your chest down.
- In triangular breathing, the goal is make the durations of the inhalation of the breath, the holding of the breath, and the exhalation of the breath, exactly the same. Breathe as slowly as possible, concentrating on balancing the three parts of the technique.



### Key Points:

- Do not practice breathing techniques on a full stomach. Wait one hour after eating to practice.
- Always inhale through the nose—never the mouth. This might irritate your throat. Exhalation can be through the nose or the mouth.
- The inhalation, hold, and exhalation is counted as one cycle. Practice triangular breathing 6-12 times, before practicing diaphragmatic breathing. Practice 6-12 times daily. If you find that your breath during diaphragm breathing is equal, you might still choose to practice triangular breathing.

### Benefits:

The benefits are better control of the breath, a calmer, less stressful attitude, and greater mental clarity and focus.

*Control your emotion or it will control you.*

*-Chinese saying*



## Glossary

### Seiza:

Kneeling posture traditionally used in Japan for showing respect. Sitting in seiza while meditating allows the practitioner to keep the spine straight.

### Introspection:

Introspection is self-examination-taking the time to truly look at yourself. Notice your motivations, actions and thoughts. Be honest about yourself and your life.

### Dojo:

This term has been translated in many different ways. On the simplest level, a dojo can be a training hall, studio or gym. This is a very basic translation that can only be excused if used by beginners. A deeper and more accurate translation would be "place of the way." On the most profound level, the word dojo means, "place of enlightenment, place where one is transformed (where the ego is transformed)." A dojo is a place of realization and inspiration.



Thought is  
the blossom;  
language the  
bud; action  
the fruit be-  
hind.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Recommended Reading

The Karate Dojo-Peter Urban \*

How to Win Friends and Influence People-Dale Carnegie

Zen in the Martial Arts-Joe Hymas

*A man who has attained mastery of an art reveals it in his  
every action.*

*-Sam.wal Maxim*

\*Highly recommended

# Hachi Belt

## LOWER BODY BASICS

When kicking we prepare by lifting the knee in a position prior to executing the kick, this is termed "Chamber." Basic kicks always return to the "chamber" position before setting down.

In all basic kicks the leg extends ninety percent before snapping back. (With the exception of Mae Konate (#7), which is a locking thrust kick.) A snap kick returns twice as fast as it goes out.

The stance we take prior to kicking is termed "Ready Position for Basic Kicks". Assume a "Heel/Toe" relationship with the feet shoulder wide, the right foot in back. Hands are open and holding sides with thumbs pointing to the back. This stance applies to all basic kicks, except the Otoshi Geri (#6) and Mae Geri-Ushiro Geri (#9).

The following kicks are explained using the right foot only. Practice the kicks using both legs.

1. **mae geri** (ma-eh) (gay' ree) Front Snap Kick. Start from the "Ready Position for Basic Kicks". Chamber- point knee pelvic level with toes curled up. Snap the kick out and back to the chamber position (contact is made to attackers pelvic with the ball of your foot), and then return your foot to the "Ready Position".
2. **soba konate** (sob' ba) (koh-na' tay) Crossover Kick. Start from the "Ready Position for Basic Kicks". Chamber- Point knee outward at a 45-degree angle, obi level. Foot is two inches above and in front of the (L) knee with toes curled up. Snap the kick down in an angle and back to the chamber position (contact is made to the hinge of attackers knee with the blade edge of your heel), and then return your foot to the "Ready Position".
3. **hiza geri** (hee' za) (gay' ree) Knee Kick (Strike). Start from the "Ready Position for Basic Kicks". With this kick the right hand is open (palm down) at obi level. (R) Foot scrapes ground and lifts to the back with toes curled down. From this position you drive the knee up and to the front, the knee strikes the open hand (contact is to the attackers pelvic with your knee), and then return your foot to the "Ready Position".
4. **yoko geri** (yoh' koh) (gay' ree) Side Kick. Start from the "Ready Position for Basic Kicks". Chamber-lift knee obi level, pointing outward at a 45-degree angle. Bottom of (R) foot is facing the inside of (L) knee with toes curled up. Snap kick out to your (R) side and back to chamber position (contact is made to attackers floating rib with the blade edge of your heel), and then return your foot to the "Ready Position".
5. **soba geri** (soh' ba) (gay' ree) Beside Kick. Start from the "Ready Position for Basic Kicks". Look (R), slide (R) foot into a "Cat Stance (the (R) foot is on the ball of the foot facing (R) and has ten percent of the weight on it. The (L) foot, which is still pointing forward, has the other ninety percent of the weight.). Chamber- point knee pelvic level with toes curled up. Snap the kick out and back to the chamber position (contact is made to attackers pelvic with the ball of your foot), and then return your foot to the "Ready Position" with feet again facing straight ahead.
6. **otoshi geri** (oh-toh-shee) (gay' ree) Drop Kick. This kick starts in the "Ready position for Upper Body Basics" with feet parallel and shoulder wide. Hands are closed and at the sides. Catch (L) hand to (R) hip; slide out with (R) foot at a 45-degree angle. Chamber-lift (L) knee and foot parallel to floor (foot will actually be slightly lower than knee level) with toes curled up. Snap the kick out and back to the chamber position (contact is made to at-

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tackers solar plexus with the ball of your foot). After kick and before setting foot down change hands to the left side, and then set foot down forward as if in front of it's original starting point. Pivot toes to left 45-degrees then kick with other side.

7. **mae konate** (ma-eh) (koh-na' tay) Front Thrust Kick. Start from the "Ready Position for Basic Kicks". Chamber-point knee pelvic level with toes curled up and the bottom of the foot parallel with the floor. Thrust the kick out to full extension and then snap back to the chamber position (contact is made to attackers pelvic with the heel of your foot), and then return your foot to the "Ready Position".
8. **sokuto geri** (soh-koo' toh) (gay' ree) Forward Angle Kick. Start from the "Ready Position for Basic Kicks". Chamber-lift knee obi level, pointing inward at a 45-degree angle in front of and protecting your pelvic. Bottom of (R) foot is in front of (L) knee toes curled back. Snap kick (in front and to the (R)) in a 45-degree angle and back to the chamber position (contact is two inches above the attackers knee with the blade edge of your heel), and then return your foot to the "Ready Position".
9. **mae geri-ushiro geri** (mae-eh) (gay' ree) (oo-shee-roh) (gay' ree) Front Kick-Back Kick. This kick starts from the "Ready position for Upper Body Basics" with feet parallel and shoulder wide. The difference is hands are closed with arms hanging down. Cross your open hands (palms facing down) at solar plexus level, slide the (R) foot behind the (L) foot into a "T-Stance shoulder width, the hands move into a guard. Chamber- point knee pelvic level with toes curled up. Snap the kick out and back to the chamber position, (do not put the foot down) now look behind you and throw a kick to the attacker in back of you with the blade edge of your heel. (Contact is made to the attacker in the fronts pelvic with the ball of the foot. Kick the attacker from behind in the solar plexus with the blade edge of your heel). Now return foot to the ground in the "T-Stance" ready to kick again.

This sheet is supplied to assist in the reinforcement of information learned at the school. It is not intended to replace learning them correctly from your instructor. Please use this curriculum sheet for that purpose only.

-Master Joslin

It is not required to learn the Japanese terminology for the lower-body basics at this stage of your training.

**A third degree black belt or higher must sign off on this form to test!**

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Student name

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Instructor

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Authorized Signature

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