

KI PRINCIPLES

Keep One Point - Though we often describe the One Point being 2-4 inches below the navel, the One Point is not a physical space in the typical sense of the word, but rather a point within the body upon which the calm mind may focus. It is really a state of mind. By calmly focusing the mind on the lower abdomen, one becomes centered in the truest sense of the word. Physical movements, such as walking, are much more coordinated, while at the same time being very powerful. One may think of the One Point as the center of his or her universe. This universal mind/body centering creates a very powerful and calm feeling, which is very conducive to performing our martial arts. There are several tests which may be used to demonstrate whether a student has developed the ability to keep One Point, such as standing in forward stance and being pushed gently by a partner on the upper chest, shoulder and small of the back. If One Point is being maintained, it will be relatively difficult to move the person being tested. The position is maintained by simply holding your place, not by resisting through pushing back.

Total Relaxation - This is probably the most misunderstood of the four principles of mind and body unification. Complete relaxation in the sense in which it is applied in our martial arts is not the relaxation of a lump of jello, that of the "dead" relaxation or being limp. It is instead the sense of a body full of energy without tension.

Complete relaxation goes beyond simple muscular relaxation into mind/body relaxation. A calm mind naturally produces a calm body. Removing stress from the body greatly enhances freedom of movement, which is so necessary in our art.

Keep Weight Underside - With all objects, weight naturally falls in the direction it is pulled by gravity, namely down. In human beings, however, it is possible to influence the manner in which the body "carries" its weight. The human body is not solid in the strict sense of the term, but is instead fluid. As water moves within a glass, parts of the body "float" in relationship to one another. If one concentrates on the weight of the body being underside, or in the lower portion of the body, one finds that the body is very stable. If one concentrates on the upper body, for example the top of the head, the body becomes weight upperside and, as a result, unstable. When moving in our martial art, it is important to keep your weight underside. This happens naturally if you are calm in mind and body, whereas tension automatically makes the body weight upperside.

Extend Ki - In our martial art, extending ki means extending energy. However, it does not mean to simply push with physical force. Rather it is a state of mind used to align the body to permit movement in a unified and calmly concentrated fashion. The classic illustration of ki extension is the Unbendable Arm test. The arm is extended in neither a rigid nor limp manner, but with a feeling of lively energy coursing through the arm from the One Point and extending out to infinity through the finger tips. This mental image produces an arm which is soft and pliable to the touch, but which is very difficult to bend. This feeling of dynamic energy extension is used in all of our techniques. Without it, self defense, throws and takedowns quickly become exercises in muscular tension, largely dependent on mere mechanical advantage and bulk.