

May 2007

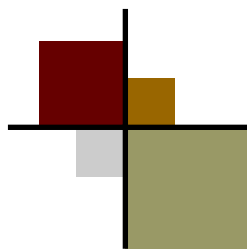


Special points of interest:

- Learn about Chinese 5 Element Theory
- Read the martial arts joke found on page 4!
- Visit our website www.8step.com

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ACMAF Newsletter

Sifu Highlight – Daniel Finley, Austin, TX

Q. Please tell us a little about yourself and your school/students.

A. I have been interested in martial arts for as long as I can remember. When I was old enough, I convinced my parents to let me try Tae Kwon Do. I went to a school near my house for about six months, but soon got bored with it and left. I later learned there were several different martial art styles that offered a wide variety of technique. When I was old enough to drive, I looked in the phone book, closed my eyes, and put my finger down on a martial arts school. It was Sifu Thanh Van's school in North Richland Hills. I went to tryout a class and was so impressed I started right there and never looked back. I now teach kung fu and tai chi at a YMCA in Austin. I only teach adults and have a few very dedicated students.

Q. What do you enjoy about teaching Kung Fu and Tai Chi?

A. I enjoy helping students do things they never thought they could do. When most people come in and try their first class they say it will take them forever to get comfortable. A few months later they have learned



more than they thought possible. I also enjoy teaching because I learn so much from my students. Often they ask questions which help me see things in a new way. I also learn a great deal when a student is having difficulty learning a technique. It challenges me to come up with a new way to help them understand the technique.

Q. Besides your duties as a sifu, what other responsibilities occupy your time?

A. Right now I attend Acupuncture school and

that takes up most of my time. It is a year round program and I take about 20 credit hours a semester along with working in the clinic seeing patients several times a week. When I'm not there, I teach kung fu and tai chi classes and find time to work out and practice my kung fu. When I get a chance on the weekends I try to attend some of the interesting and fun events occurring in Austin.

Q. What are your hopes and expectations for the Federation?

A. I hope the Federation becomes one of the largest martial arts communities in the country. I hope we can continue to advance our knowledge and produce more sifus. I also hope the Federation gets more public recognition for Abimoxi, and that people begin to seek out Eight Step Praying Mantis schools to deal with health concerns as well as for martial arts training. ☺

The Art of Training Without Training

By Lee Yokota

Modern American culture has become obsessed with saving time. The old saying, "Time is money," has become the motto for our fast food nation. How many times have you heard some one say, "I'd like to do that, but there just aren't enough hours in the day?"

Finding the time to balance work and play can be challenging. Younger students are trying to finish school and work, while older students have the task of working and raising a family. Now we add the fact that we spend about 8 hours or more a week practicing kung fu at our school and it seems all our time is taken up. How can we practice our art without letting one of the other areas of our lives suffer? Here are some of the techniques I incorporate into my daily life for when I just can't find enough time:

Horse stance

I hold my horse stance while brushing my teeth in the morning and at night. You can also try holding it while eating, working, or watching TV. (You can hold other stances too).

Single leg

I put on my socks and shoes while in a single leg stance. If you put on your socks and shoes and tie them too, it equals about one minute of single leg stance on each side. You can do the same thing when you take off your socks and shoes.

Kicking

When I am at home, I turn the light switches on and off with a front kick. Lift your leg up slowly towards the switch and lightly flick it on or off. Make sure that you are not wearing dirty shoes or you will mark up the wall. This will help increase your balance and accuracy of your kicks.

Breathing

On my way to work each morning, I practice my deep abdominal breathing. I have found that this practice gives me many added benefits. It helps wake me up, puts me in a better mood (I am not a morning person), and lets me reflect on my goals for the day.

Grip

I keep a grip ball at my desk at work. I grab this periodically throughout the day and squeeze it to increase my grip. I have been told that this also

reduces stress.

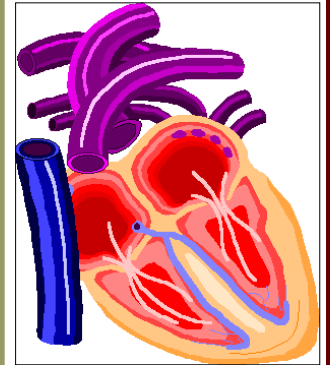
Abdominals

While sitting down, I squeeze my abs to make them flex. When you practice this technique, make sure that the rest of your body (especially facial expressions) do not tense up. If done correctly, no one should be able to tell that you are squeezing your abs. Remember to breath. Hold up to a minute and relax.

Stretching

Throughout the day, I get up from my desk at work and stretch. I hold a stretch for three breaths and then get back to work. I do a different stretch every hour or so.

These are just a few simple techniques you can use in your daily schedule to help keep your skills at their peak when training regularly seems impossible. Remember, these tips are not intended to get you into shape, rather they are a guide to keeping your skills from declining during down training time. Grandmaster Shyun sums it up perfectly when he says if you want to be good at anything you must "practice, practice, practice." ☺



The average person's heart beats 70 times per minute. That's more than 100,000 beats per day!

"American culture has become obsessed with saving time... 'Time Is Money' has become the motto for our fast food nation."

Abimoxi: Understanding 5 Element Theory By Nicholas Willan

Remember...The American Heart Association recommends that children and adolescents participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.



The Chinese character for summer

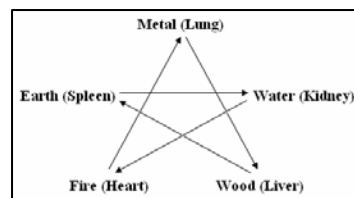
The human body works as a system and when functioning at its peak potential, allows no single organ to work independently or to over-control any other organ. Each organ has its specific function and each organ works as a symbiosis with every other organ to maintain health and protect the body from outside influences. This type of a system works very efficiently, effectively, and independent of our conscious understanding. Each part of the human organism has a relationship with every other part and no single part can function properly without each counterpart. It is this reason that Chinese Medicine is considered holistic and has five fundamental components (5 elements) which govern, mediate, and assist in our function and survival.

The foundational components of Chinese medicine rely on understanding the five elements and the properties associated with each element. The five main elements are metal, water, wood, fire, and earth with the accompanying organs being lung, kidney, liver, heart, and spleen respectively. Each has numerous

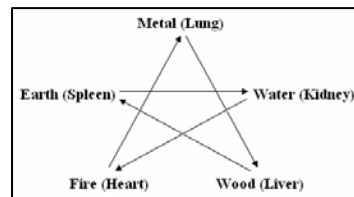
properties distinguishing it from the others and each play a crucial role in the others fulfillment. The components associated with each element (each organ) include a: color, season, direction, flavor, emotion, sensing organ, and an expression, etc.

As stated above, when discussing the 5 elements we must look at how each element interacts with every other element and how each affect the others. This interaction or relationship is typically divided into four categories; the promoting function, controlling function, overcontrolling function, and resistance function. These relationships are relatively simple. Imagine for a moment that each element is arranged in a pentagon fashion, shown in the image below. The healthy *promoting* function (when everything is working properly) allows each element to support and promote another, so everything is in harmony. When everything is in harmony our bodies are healthy and balanced.

As well, the *controlling* function (shown in the image below) acts as the checks and balances system, whereby each organ provides a normal and necessary control over another to ensure all activities are in check at all times. Hence, allowing our bodies to remain in a healthy balanced state. It is only when our bodies become out of balance that illness ensues.

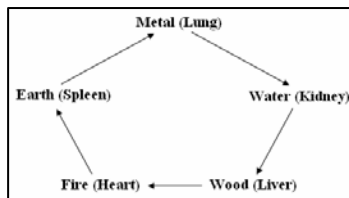


When the body becomes out of balance one type of unhealthy relationship that may have occurred is called an *over-control* relationship. The name implies exactly what happens, one element over-controls another and the equilibrium which once was, no longer exists. See the following image.



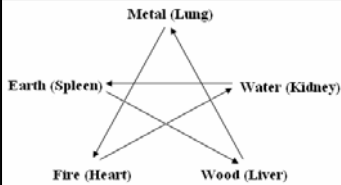
The other relationship that may occur during sickness is resistance of control.

(continued on page 4)



5 Elements cont...

Resistance of control is where one organ does not allow itself to be normally controlled by another and pushes back rather than accepts.



The human body functions as a delicate balance of organs and processes and a simple thing such as a cold breeze from the winter air can affect this system greatly. This is why we must listen to our bodies and respond accordingly.



Acknowledgements:

On behalf of the ACMAF, wholehearted thanks and gratitude go out to the following:

- Grandmaster Shyun for allowing us to take part in his life and vision
- The Disciples for standardizing the material and providing smoother acquisition of the information
- To all of the Sifus for their dedication in teaching and furthering the public's awareness of Eight Step Preying Mantis Kung Fu, Abimoxi Medicine, and Shyun Style Tai Chi
- The students and parents who make all of this worth while, "Thank You!"

The Lighter Side of Martial Arts

Top 10 signs you've joined the wrong martial arts school:

10) Your school's symbol is a bulls-eye target.

9) First demonstration consists of falling to the floor, curling into the fetal position, and whimpering pitifully.

8) The "uniforms" are used hospital gowns, and the "throwing stars" are just slices of old cheese.

7) The homework is always just to watch a Jackie Chan or Jet Li movie.

6) The techniques are only effective if your attacker is one of the Three Stooges.

5) Instructor's low fees enhanced from one-on-one "pop quizzes" in dark alleys.

4) Local muggers gather in the parking lot waiting for class to end.

3) Current students bark out on cue the phrase "Insurance does not exist in this dojo!"

2) You take yourself to the mat 4 out of 5 times simply trying to tie your belt on.

1) Sensei's "ancient Chinese secret" required notifying the neighbors when he moved in. ☹️



Congratulations!

The American Chinese Martial Arts Federation is proud to announce that 4 of its instructors have taken and passed the exam for Fundamentals of Abimoxi. Successful completion of this test allows these instructors to teach Abimoxi: Fundamentals the public. Master Kevin Loftus, Sifu Richard Mesmer, Sifu Mike Cimino, and Sifu Richard Myrvik all passed the test in the Spring of 2007. If your school, public or private organization is interested in a class on Abimoxi, please contact the American Chinese Martial Arts Federation at info@8step.com. ☺️

ACMAF Newsletter Committee:

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DID YOU KNOW:

The fastest growing plant in the world is called Bambusa oldhamii, otherwise known as Giant Timber Bamboo. It can grow at a rate of 48 inches in a single 24 hour period!