



# CBIA Internal Manual

Internal Core

Internal Level 2 Phase 3

## Peng & Breathing

# Peng

Peng refers to “Body State”. Body state is how the tension and relaxation of the body distributes itself across the whole body. Using the muscles, tendons, ligaments and fascia, the tension of the body can be governed different ways. For example, one could throw lots of tension into the bicep making it far different than the other parts of the body.

Peng on a scale of 1-10 is often used to describe the feeling of tension in the whole body or part of the body. The goal is to use a little more peng on projection and a little less on defensive yielding. We say up front 1 and 10 is to be avoided. So in hitting I think a 6 or 7 is good and on yielding defensively a 3 or 4 is good. Of course this is not always possible but that is a good goal.

One has to experiment with hitting the air and apparatus to develop the 6 for projection. It is so easy to tense during a hit so confidence that you can hit hard and even harder having the idea of a conduit rather than a hammer and send force with the dynamic of your whole body through a wrist fist that has enough peng to be protected in the contact but little enough Peng so there is no stoppage or obstruction in the path but a full allowance for energy to travel through the arm to the target.

Peng is a basic that holds the body together. It can exist while standing still in a posture and it should also exist when the body is in movement. The strong tendency to tighten the upper body in order to get more force is what will mess up the desired Peng in the body. One must learn that it is energy, movement and a sending force that will outdo the tensing of the upper body for more power.

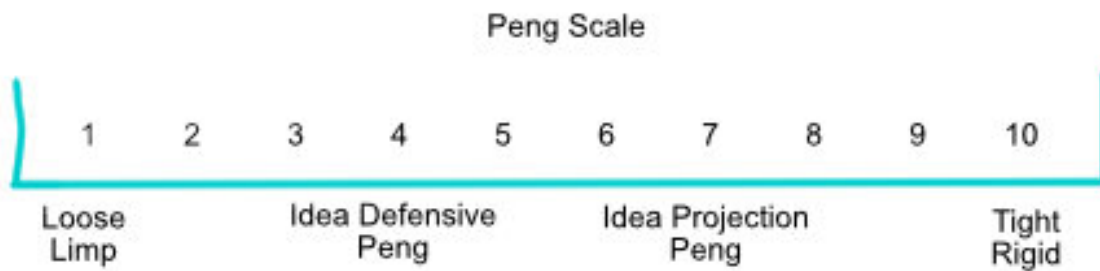
## Peng - Continued

On projection one must learn how to hit the apparatus with the right amount of depth so as to avoid the feedback or returning force back into the arm or body. If anyone hits something deep and hard enough there will be feedback. If your projection depends on sending out force than one must definitely learn how to do this as feedback will sooner or later create problems in the body. One must strive to make his hit in the air feel very close to the same hit on an apparatus.

Defensively one needs lots of touch dueling such as push hands or Joint hands to feel what it is like when one is attacked with force and the body state response to that. Of course wise movement is necessary to have a chance for good body state. So experience is necessary in order to develop the proper Peng.

When one is pushed or popped in the shoulders, the strong tendency is for energy to rise up in the upper body to handle and return the energy. One needs to recognize the attack and then keep his body moving and responding with no muscles resisting the force as it comes in. This is easier said than done. When one does learn to let go and do this response it is much easier to develop a body state that is built for this changeability.

Body state will be worked on your whole career in martial art. Adjustments will be made with more experience. When doing simple solo exercises it is easier to work on the lower peng numbers and there will be the chance that you will feel energy running down your arm. This is a good thing and should be pursued with more and more simple practice.



Peng can be strong and flexible. For example someone strong has both hands on your wrist bending the wrist toward inner arm toward you. You can project forward out your finger tips rather than resist against the direction they are projecting. It will do a lot to neutralize a pretty strong force. That could be a peng of 8 or 9 but not totally rigid and being projected out the finger tips.

Now if you also would use your entire arm and body to give and go in the general direction that the opponent wants you to go you can draw them into a position that you can twist and reverse the control. If the peng had been too light they may have crushed your wrist instantly. If the peng was too rigid you might survive but if they were stronger than you they could drop you fast with this lock. Using the right mix of yielding and Peng body state you can deal with this situation. Distinguishing between body state and direction you are projecting is a very important item. For example in push hands you could be sticking and connecting to someone's arm and you could have a rigid state of 10. As they push you stick but yield very softly without even deflecting their push but by moving your body.

Now that is not the state of Peng I would recommend but one should understand the difference in the Peng state and the direction one is moving or yielding. I should point out that since the body state was a 10, the opponent could have grabbed instantly and jerked to use the body state against me. So in Peng there is also the art of deceiving or hiding your body state from your opponent.

## Breathing

Breathing is an important area in all of the martial arts but especially in the internal arts. In martial art it is the general action to exhale as one projects outward and inhale as one pulls inward. In martial arts there are several considerations which alter the breathing.

If you are just in poor shape your breathing will become erratic and it will cause your whole body to function less efficiently. In martial art there are considerations such as if you get hit in the diaphragm, then how will breathing effect your recovery. One good method is to have a system of inhale and exhale with the belly full of air around 70%. Then when hit one will have give or yield to lose air rather than to be down at 10% and then the solar plexus locks and you cannot breath for a little while.

In the internal arts there are several more purposed for breathing. In the desire to learn how to relax the body, it is basically impossible to get fully relaxed and see your potential without breathing technique.

Generally, one begins with what is called natural breathing. Learning to take a big long breath while expanded your entire mid region is very important. The mid region should expand in all directions .... Left, right, forward, backward and up and down. One can best learn to feel all these directions best by lying down on a hard surface. First you can push your stomach in with your hands. Then, inhale and push your stomach. You can really get some strength doing this if you get someone to start by leaning over you and pushing down into your stomach prior to your inhale. You will have to push up all that weight on your expanding inhale. This can also be done up against a wall for a little easier push.

Then you put both your hands on your sides and as you inhale you try and focus the sides to expand outward. Then you focus on pushing your back into what you are lying on or even have something at the lower back that you can push into on the inhale. This one takes a little more practice. Finally you have an area from just above the private parts and up to just below the hollow of the

## Breathing continued

Throat which you will want to stretch opposite directions on the inhale expanding up and down. Then on the exhale these two areas collapse toward each other. This is just a way to break it down so you are aware of any limits you have to expand your body in different directions. Once you do this just do the breathing trying to expand all these areas at the same time and collapse all at the same time.

In the general movement of the internal they say pull your arms in or down during exhale and push up or out during exhale. This cannot always be done, but that is the general rule of motion and breathing.

Now in order to change your body and make it more relaxed, you get in a good standing Wuji and then begin to take long slow breaths with the natural breathing. On each exhale you let the body sink with the breath naturally while you still lift up from the Baihui. Feeling the body relax on a well stacked structure releases a lot of tension that can be held in the body. Another method of using the breathing is to focus on an area of the body such as the chest and during the inhale put all your mind into relaxing the chest inward naturally. This technique can be used in four or five areas when standing in Wuji. There are also methods we will teach later in the curriculum where you can use this technique in over 30 areas or points in the body.

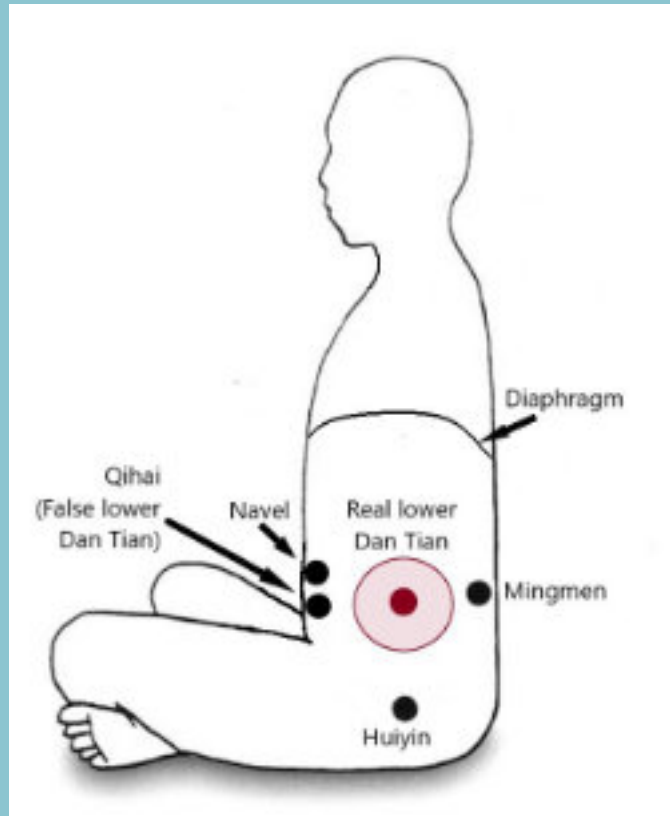
In developing this breathing it is important that you don't inhale your breath fast. It will take some practice to inhale slowly. Start with 5 seconds inhale and 5 seconds exhale. The exhale will be easy so you will focus on the inhale.

Then proceed to develop toward the 10 second inhale. This will be very good so then you will have three cycles of inhale/exhale per minute.

Our habits and how we move and sit etc. throughout our life creates an imbalance in our body where muscles are more tense in one place than the other. When one stands in Wuji, you can get behind someone and many times notice the right shoulder with less of a slant from left to right than the left shoulder going right to left. This is because a right handed person usually has developed a lot more muscle strength on one side than the other causing this imbalance.

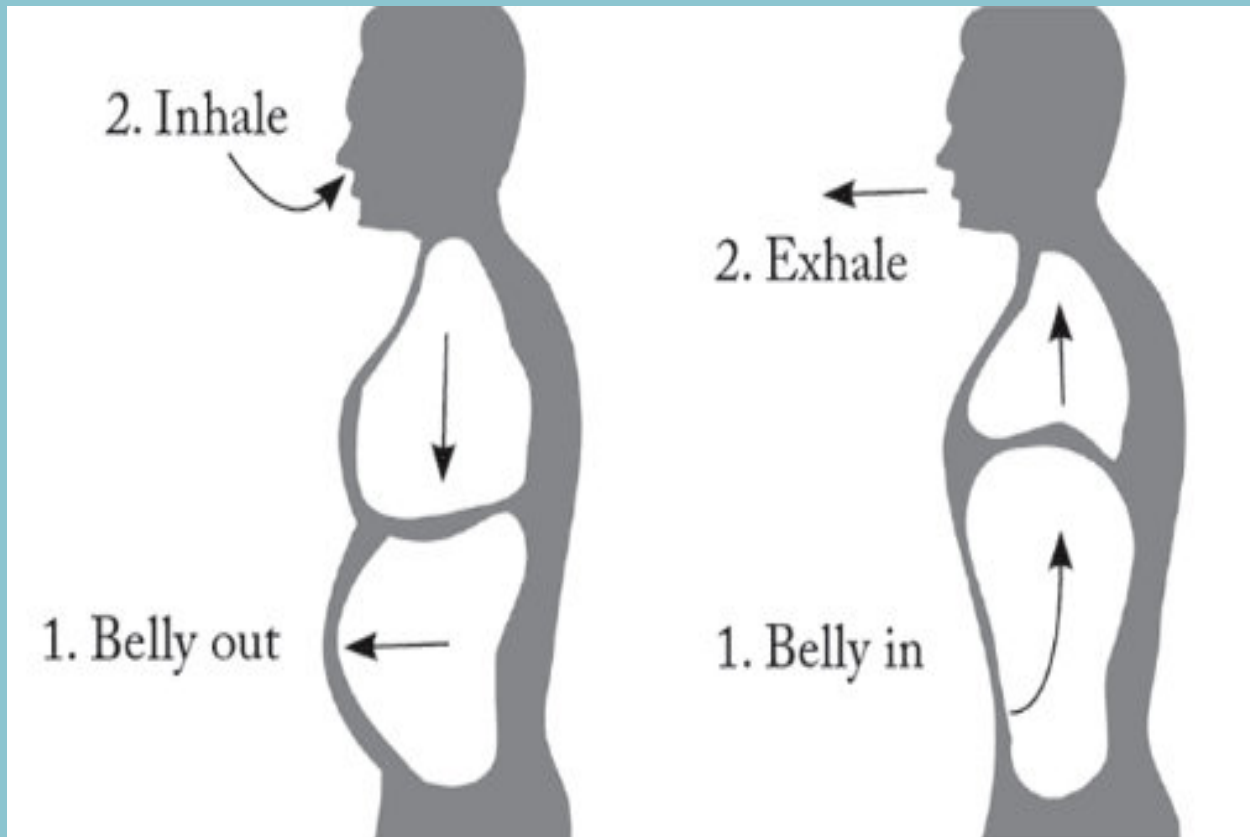
If you look at someone standing in Wuji with their arms to the side, often you will see that their arms and hands move a little bit in front of their body rather than straight down to both sides.

This simply means that they have more strength development and flexibility forward rather than backward. This can be corrected with regular stretches pulling the chest apart and bending a little toward the back. When the strength and stretch gets balanced the arms will hang naturally to the sides of the body. A proper use of the rolling shoulder loosening exercise both forward and backward is also excellent for correcting this problem.



Whether standing or sitting you can see the alignment above of the various parts used and talked about a lot in internal martial arts structure.

## Natural Breathing



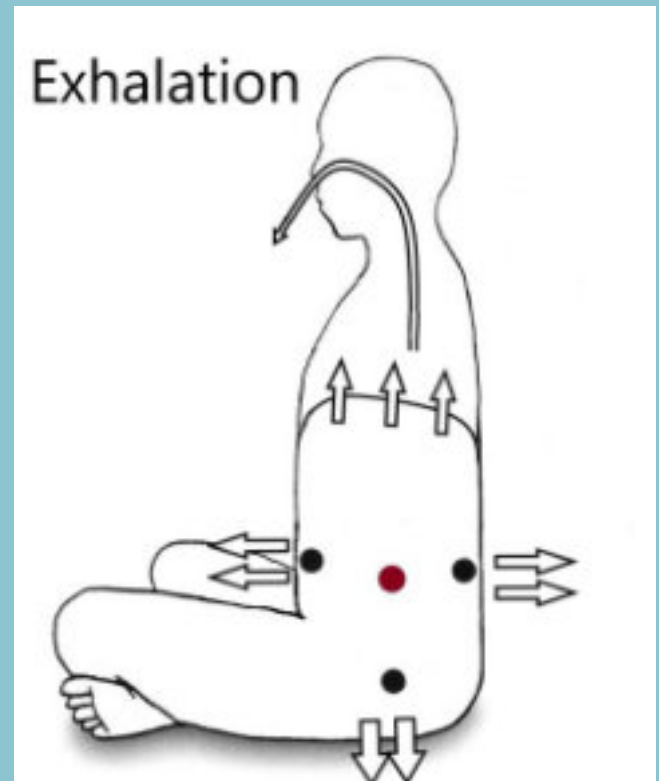
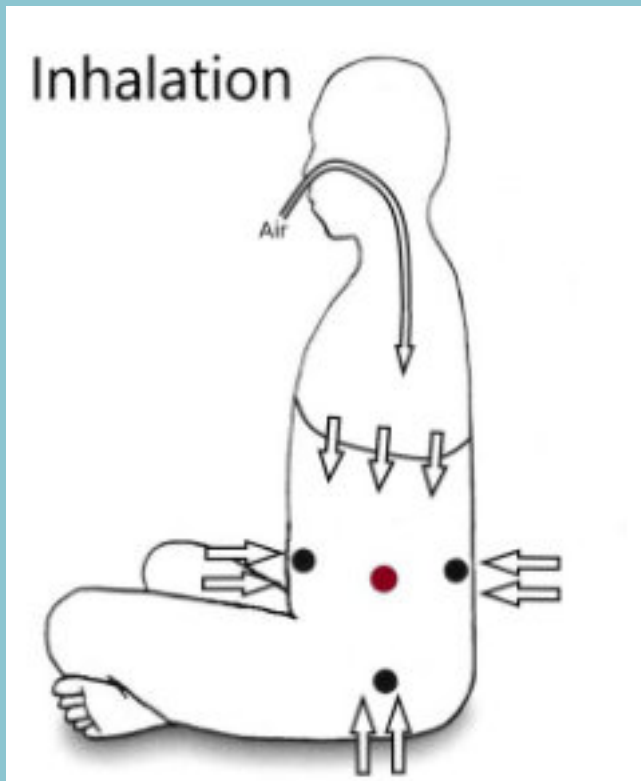
You can see in the figures above what I have been saying about natural breathing. While inhaling on the left you see the belly expand. Then while letting the air out, the belly falls back in. In the beginning you can force it a little more in so you can expand and lengthen your inhale/exhale process.

This method is used in the beginning as it comes from the natural breathing a baby does from birth. You can clearly see the belly rise on inhale and collapse on exhale. As kids grow older into teens often the breath rises so that inhale and exhale primarily take place in the chest. This does not fill the lungs and relax the body as well. Then they say the dying person is breathing from the throat. So the idea for good health is to go back to your childhood instincts at least as it refers to breathing.

## Reverse Breathing

Even though the internals start with natural breathing the final product desired in most internal arts is reverse breathing. This puts a more pressure on the digestive system which is good for health. Also it matches the projection of striking outward while the body also goes out. This is a better match for sending force out of the body.

As the name suggest, this breathing is reverse of the natural method. Inhaling you pull the stomach inward. Upon exhale you let the body and belly move outward. During fajin this is how the breathing works. Using the reverse breathing method one can also incorporate the idea of having a 30% in hale and exhale space in the body while keeping a 70% tank in reserve for when one is needing to protect the body from strikes. This is not used by all but is one we suggest one try.



In conclusion, breathing is very important in order to get the body in the right condition and fang song for internal martial arts such as Tai Chi, Pakua and Hsing-i.

Breathing is also important in combat as many factors determine the outcome of a fight and as one gets winded quickly because of the energy of a real fight, it is important to develop some discipline and control of one's breathing under pressure so one can expend energy efficiently so it does not play a role in reducing your skill.

## Questions on Peng

1. How would you describe the meaning of the word Peng?
2. What is the range 1-10 and how does it relate to the Peng?
3. What body parts are included in the Peng Body State?
4. How does Peng hold together the body?
5. What numbers are undesirable in the number scale 1-10.
6. What numbers are idea for defensive work?
7. What numbers are idea for Projection work?
8. How can one develop a better Peng state?
9. How does body state and yielding work together.
10. Why is Peng a Basic?

# Questions on Breathing

1. Describe Natural Breathing
2. Where does the idea of natural breathing come from?
3. How does natural breathing help the internal development?
4. What exercise will help you get the most out of natural breathing as you start to implement it.
5. What is the martial method of breathing that prepares one to protect the body from impact.
6. Which breathing is first and which one will you end up in?
7. What is the most difficult thing in developing the natural breathing in the beginning?
8. Describe Reverse Breathing.
9. How does reverse breathing connect to martial arts?
10. What is the general idea about inhale/exhale and movement in the internal martial arts?