

# Timing is Everything: The Purpose of Intentional Breathing and Eye Contact

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The phrase “Timing is everything,” is a common phrase that can be applied to many aspects of one’s life. People have been known to use the phrase when talking about relationships, job promotions, sports, and even dumb luck. Timing is especially crucial when it comes to martial arts and is a basic fundamental of Chayon-Ryu. The importance of intentionally using breathing and eye contact and their relevance to timing will be discussed throughout this article.

Breathing is one of the simplest yet most important things that we humans do in a day, so why should proper breathing when performing martial arts be overlooked? Obviously it should not, but often times people don’t think about its significance. When executing movements that require exactness and power, one must use intentional breathing. The easiest example to use is a simple punch to someone’s abdomen. Somebody that is very muscular and strong can still deliver a powerful punch regardless of their breathing patterns; however, they will not be using their full potential. For those of us not gifted with brawn, it is even more crucial that we use proper, balanced movements with intentional breathing. When punching, the root of the power should come from one’s center of gravity or chi, which happens to be our abdomen. The strength of the chi comes not only from the directional movement and tensing of the abdominal muscles, but also strong forceful exhalation. When breathing intentionally and forcefully you have to contract your diaphragm which comes from exhaling and tensing the abdominal muscles. In order to create even more pressure to allow your body to have something to tense up against, you purse your lips. People with COPD ( a common breathing disorder where you are unable to fully get the air out of your lungs due to some form of obstruction) utilize this principle all of the time. If you are trying to get the same volume of air through different size holes in the same amount of time, more pressure will have to be used to get the air through the smaller hole. This added value of pressure is what allows for quicker speed and power. So in order to maximize the power of a movement such as a center lunge punch, your chi has to be directed at the target, all of your body weight has to be behind it by effectively moving your chi in the direction of

the punch, tensing the abdomen (chi) as you forcefully blow through pursed lips or kihop. In essence, one's punch can only go as fast as they can forcefully exhale because the speed of the forced exhalation is a direct correlation of the intensity of the tensing of the chi and therefore the speed and power of the punch.

The importance of intentional breathing has already been shown when it comes to offensive moves such as punching. But what sort of intentional movements or awareness must one have in order to have an effective defense? Breathing will still be important, but intentional eye contact with your opponent is essential. When sparring or fighting someone, it takes too much time and requires too much wasted effort to look at and focus solely on what they are attacking you with. This will make it hard to give any counter attack because you are always a few steps behind. If you look at the attacker's eyes though, you can read what their intentions are and their timing. Your peripheral vision will be sufficient in picking up the details of what is coming; whether it is high or low, left or right side. This allows you to know immediately what they are going to do before they do it, which is much faster than waiting until the attack is being performed.

Timing is essential in many different ways in a person's daily life and is especially true in martial arts. It is used in delivering offensive moves such as punching and basic body shifting as well as defensively by looking at the attacker's eyes to know their intentions and timing. Heavy emphasis on basic fundamentals and being able to explain them in a logical manner, such as the two just discussed, is what makes Chayon-Ryu a scientific approach to the study of martial arts. There are no hidden secrets, but having a deep understanding of the basics, natural human body movements and the natural laws of the universe are gained through vigilant practice and meditation and should be the foundation for every martial artist.