

# Hapkido Principles

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## Three Principals

“YU WON HWA”

All of the Hapkido techniques practiced during class encompass at least one of the three principles of Hapkido. In order to better understand the physical aspects, you should know the principles of Yu, Won and Hwa. A student should be able to explain and demonstrate each principle as it applies to a technique. Although some techniques are better examples of one principle or another, each principle can be applied to every Hapkido technique.

## Yu

“The Water Principle” Water holds many meanings, primarily adaptability and softness. One need only look around his environment to see the strength and power of water over the earth. There are huge valleys created by rivers. Thunderstorms can wreak havoc on a field one month, and provide needed nourishment the next. Electric current, which we’ve become dependent on, is generated from the flowing of water.

Water does not struggle with anything it encounters. When water encounters a rock, it may flow over it, around it or even under it. If these options are not available, water will be patient, gathering in a pool until it can overcome the rock.

Water also holds many forms. It can be a liquid, a solid or a gas. But in any form, water does not change its composition. Water also has no shape or distinct form — it will adapt to any container it is put in. In Hapkido, a student must be able to adapt to the situation, but not sacrifice himself or his beliefs.

An example of a Hapkido technique using the water principle is the Korean two-step. In doing this technique, you flow around your opponent and attack from every direction. Adapt the flowing principles of water to augment your Hapkido techniques as well as your daily life.

## Won

“The Circle Principle” The circle is an important figure in Hapkido. In movement it represents smooth flowing motion as opposed to straight or linear movement. Force is not met with force, rather it is redirected away from the Hapkido defender. One’s personal space is a circle, into which none may enter. The circle also represents that invisible and ever changing range at which strikes and further out, kicks will be a danger to the Hapkidoist.

Won also represents the circle of life. We start our Hapkido life as a white belt beginner. After years of study and progression up the ranks, the student achieves black belt, only to find that they have come the complete circle and are now beginners again. Outside of the do-jang, we begin life dependent on others. Often, after living a full life, the circle is completed as we end life again dependent on others.

Hapkido is full of circular motion, almost every technique applies this principle, in one way or another, especially airplane, backspin and any throw.

## Hwa

“The Non-Resistance or Harmony Principle” Hwa is one of the hardest principles for the Hapkido student to learn, and one of the most important. Working with an opponent and using their strength is a tough skill to acquire. In Hapkido we push when pulled and pull when pushed, using our opponent’s energy to our advantage. “Going with the flow” helps conserve energy and enables the Hapkidoist to overcome much larger attackers.

In Hapkido, we must first have harmony with ourselves, then with the people and world around us. Working together can solve many problems before they get out of control. But when faced with attack, the true Hapkido practitioner reacts by instinct, not through conscious thought. If one has to think about how to react, it is too late. This is why we practice our techniques over and over again. Merely knowing how to use a particular technique is not good enough, Hapkido techniques must be practiced until they are second nature or an automatic reaction.

The epitome of non-resistance and harmony is the sacrifice throw, letting the opponent provide the energy and direction to throw himself.

