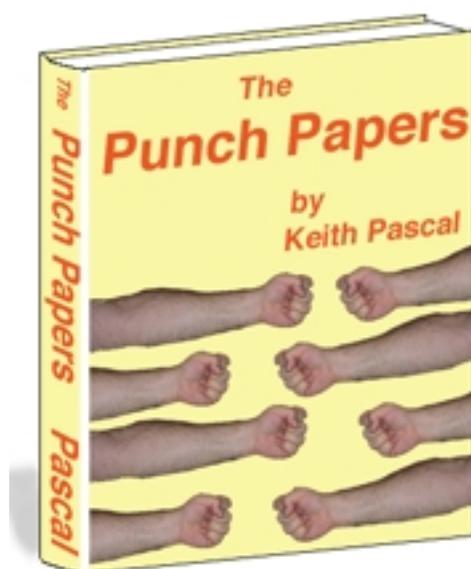


~Revised Edition~

# The Punch Papers



by

**Keith Pascal**

**This is NOT a Free eBook!**

Please don't copy this book. It is unethical, dishonest, and not befitting of a true martial artist.

Plus, it will guarantee that this will be my last eBook!

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This book is designed to provide authoritative information with regard to punching, and martial arts. It is sold with the understanding that neither the author, the publisher, nor anyone involved with the book is engaged in rendering legal advice, or advice and expertise for your specific situation or set of circumstances. If expert counseling of any kind, including legal, is required, the services of competent professional people should be sought for each specific area in question. And you should do a lot of your own research too.



# Acknowledgments:

## **Steve Golden:**

All that I have learned in the martial arts stems from **Steve Golden**. Each time you find something that you really like, and plan to use, in this book, you should credit him. Yes, he is that good.

## **Kate Pascal:**

My wife, **Kate Pascal**, gets credit for editing, taking photos, listening to me moan, and being a good sport about it all -- most of the time. I love her -- always.

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Without you, there would be no **Punch Papers**. Specifically, thanks to **Mika Grube** and **Rick Kirkham**, from Hawaii. Internet friends are great, especially when they are such optimists.

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Thanks to **Imram Butt**, **Loren Christensen**, and **Dimitri Woei** for allowing me to print portions of their letters. These are great guys too. And I value their contact.

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# Introduction

And their letters poured in. The readers of **Martial Arts Mastery** wanted to know:

“Keith, where are all of your super articles on punching?”

“Master Pascal, could you give me advice on punching?”

Keith, why don't you archive all of your past articles?”

Mr. Pascal, where can I find more of your reports? They are so practical ... and entertaining.”

Well, here you go. I took over 20 articles from past issues. I reworked them, added new points, and included a few photographs. I even wrote a over ten new articles -- this is their first time in print.

What you have before you is a collection of tips, tactics, and techniques, plus a few quotes, that have one purpose -- to make you a better puncher. In a minute, you'll read reports on developing speed, power, and efficiency in your strikes.

You'll get specific advice to stop telegraphing your punches. They will seem ultra fast.

There are articles that teach you how to develop smash-through power. You get reports on timing and counters. This advice is great for martial artists, women boxers, and amateur boxers just beginning.

Advanced practitioners will appreciate and agree with most of these punching tips.

You'll never flinch at a punch again.

Soon, you'll discover a secret punch known by only about 5% of the martial artists out there. Try the experiment and prove to yourself that it really works -- another great drop them in their tracks technique perfect for the smaller martial artist or the realm of female boxing.

How would you like to get your punch in every time? There's a chapter that covers a very important principle.

And even though this is not a complete, style-specific book on every aspect of punching, you will get great nuggets of advice that really will change the way you punch. You are about to learn everything from a special fake that most boxers don't know -- to a practice tip that is worth the price of the book.

Without further ado, I present to you an all new expanded version of

# The Punch Papers!

**please mail all comments to me:**

comments@kerwinbenson.com

Enjoy!

Keith Pascal



# Before a Punch Becomes “Just a Punch”

Can't everyone punch? Isn't punching natural, instinctive?

Not all punches are good, and not everyone can punch well. Sometimes, you have to take a natural movement, break it down into something mechanical, and then build it back up to a natural, pure, and powerful state.

That's what Bruce Lee was talking about when he made his famous quote about the transformation of the punch in the learning process.

He basically said, that before studying martial arts a punch is just a punch. Then the student goes through training — the punch is broken down and analyzed. It is no longer just a punch.

And finally, when one has internalized the rules of punching, and practiced proper punching long enough, then it goes back to being just a punch again.

You see the same phenomenon in boxing all of the time. Beginning punches need a lot of improvement. Combinations at first seem awkward - later, the series of techniques seem to flow naturally.

So, to avoid completely missing the point of his quote, I am going to describe what learning to punch has meant to me. Then we will talk about three elements of proper punching — direction, contact, and extension.



## Keith Learns To Punch

Yes, at one time, I was a beginner. And I had to learn how to punch. I started with classical punches — first from Taekwondo, then from Shotokan, and finally from Wing Chun. Along the way, friends taught me boxing combinations too.

Obviously, before I took formal martial arts, I already knew how to punch. Most people do. Even the kids at Quinn's wee school already know how to hit.

I knew how to hit. I had a powerful hit. And I thought — what's the mystery? A punch is just a punch. What's the big deal?

Well, it was a big deal. I had a powerful punch, but it wasn't a good punch. I telegraphed. I wasn't all that fast. And I did some extraneous movements — totally unnecessary.

So, I studied punching. I really learned the mechanics of punching. My punches were no longer natural. I was learning to punch from stylized systems. They were mechanical.

As I punched over time (no, I didn't hold my fist on top of my watch or a clock), my movements became more natural. Eventually, my body couldn't even remember the "old way" of punching.

Now, a punch is again just a punch. I don't think about the punch while punching. I don't worry about positioning. I don't plan when to stay loose and when to contract. My punches fly in naturally.

Am I happy with my punches?

Not by a long shot. Beginners, pay special attention to that. I am over 40 years old; I started punching formally when I was 13 or 14. And I still feel as though I could improve a lot more. It is a never-ending process. As it should be.

I have great punches — but they could be a lot better. Really.

Think how much worse off I would have been, if I had settled for my original punch, when I thought that a “punch was just a punch.” And hopefully you will now understand, when I say that it took a long time for a punch to go back to being just a punch.



## Direction Of Your Punch

You’d think this would be a no-brainer. Sometimes the simplest of statements just doesn’t quite process.

Obviously, you should punch in the direction of your opponent, right?

### **You’d think!!**

Yet, some of my first experiences with punching had me punching away from my opponent first.

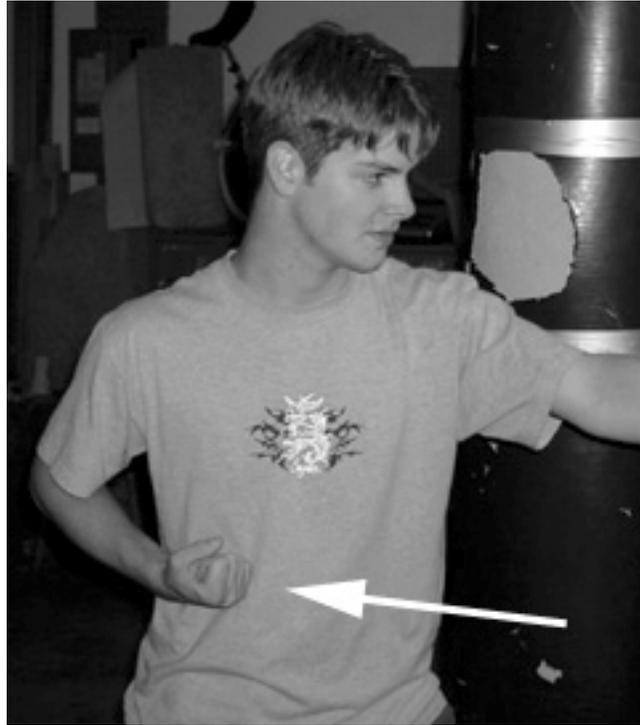
You see, some of my teachers had me pulling my punch into a cradle position under my armpit “before” I punched. Weird, huh?

That’s right. Here was an opponent in front of me. I wanted to punch her. Yet my teacher wanted me to cradle my arm by pulling it backwards first.

How many times in pro men’s boxing and women’s boxing do you see the boxer cock his or her hand back to punch with more power?

It may add more power, but the boxer is moving in the wrong direction. If the target is to the front, then that’s the only direction the punch should be moving.





In martial arts, after my punch was cradled next to my chest, under the pit, I finally got to head in the direction of my opponent.

Note: Before you think that I was a 13 year old genius, no, I didn't know better. After all, a "black belt" was teaching me how to practice.

I "did" notice that nobody at the Taekwondo school seemed to punch that way when they were sparring. I tried to cradle my punches, but I kept getting hit. Going in the "wrong" direction just took too much time. That's when I first started to notice.

I made a mental note. Formal tae kwon do punching is great for practice, but it doesn't work in real life. Now, "that" was a pretty hefty conclusion for a 13 year old to make.

Eventually, I found Wing Chun, a gung fu style invened by a women -- yes, the Asians had the first women's boxing . At first, when I looked at the

First Form (Sil Lum Tao), I thought that they were cradling too. I was wrong. They “do” get to the same position, but not for their punching. Think of the cradle as an elbow strike to the rear.

I was fortunate. I had people like Roger Harvey, James Chandler, and others to patiently explain punching to me — over and over again.

\* Yes, you can get power without going in the opposite direction first

\* Yes, a vertical punch is effective — and fast

\* Yes, you will get clobbered by us, if you ever do any stupid telegraphing, like moving in the opposite direction of your opponent.



## Contact and Your Punch Extension

As these guys patiently worked with me, I learned the mechanics of making contact. I kept copious notes.

Since I hadn't internalized punching, I spent some valuable practice time trying to describe principles with words, rather than letting my body learn how to move more efficiently.

### Some of my observations were:

\* Punch through your target. If you always practice pulling your punches, then you will be really good “at pulling your punches” during a fight. Oops.

\* You can extend more, without hurting your elbow, when vertical punching. Full extension on a horizontal punch could really screw up your elbow.

\* Since I am a magician, I don't want to toughen up my fingers and hands. First of all, heavily-callused knuckles look gross, and they aren't all that necessary.

And I am not going to thrust my fingers into sand, pebbles, etc. to toughen them up — I need to feel the difference in the thickness of small stacks playing cards (not to mention feeling the soft skin of a

loved one).

- \* Punch through your target. I was just checking to make sure you were paying attention.
- \* If you do a horizontal punch, your first two knuckles contact the target. If you do a vertical punch, that's not the case. More on this in a later chapter.
- \* Don't tense too early. It may make your arm look rippled with muscles, but it slows your punch down. Tense the instant before contact. Tensing too early is a bad habit found in lots of boxing schools. You won't be fast, if you are tense.

Can you see how valuable these tips are? And we have just begun. Some of the tips are so important that I'll emphasize them in future chapters. I really want you to become a faster and more powerful martial artist and/or boxer.

These tips are great for female boxing. Women pay attention -- the more precision you develop, the faster, more powerful, and more effective your punches will be.

There are some pretty incredible punchers out there. **The Punch Papers** will make you much more effective with your punching. You'll get an edge. Guaranteed.



# Quotes

Learning to punch takes time. It's hard work. Of course, when you can really punch correctly, it will seem easy — almost effortless. You may even forget the long practice sessions that it took to acquire your skill....

“Before the gates of excellence the high gods have placed sweat; long is the road thereto and rough and steep at first; but when the heights are reached, then there is ease, though grievously hard in the winning.”

— Hesiod, **Works and Days**



And although I have mentioned one or both of these quotes before in *Martial Arts Mastery*, I think they are worth mentioning again here.

I have these Bruce Lee quotes (and a few others) hanging on my study wall:

“It is the will that makes men — success takes perseverance.”

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.”

— Bruce Lee



# Develop Devastating Power Punches In One Month!

**What if I could absolutely guarantee that your punches would be more powerful in a month? What if I could make it a week? What if I could guarantee that you'll see results in one day?!**

**Are you interested?**

Those boxers who have never practiced this way will be absolutely amazed at the amount of power they can generate after perfecting this exercise. many martial artists are unfamiliar with this practice method as well.

And those of you who already know and practice this style of punching will probably still benefit from reading this article and the quote and tip that follow. I think I have a few twists to add....

Have you noticed that some martial artists seem to have punches that have 'impact'? Boxers too?

Sure, we all learn to punch powerfully. We punch focus mitts, heavy bags, makiwara, etc....

We learn the proper technique. We learn to put our hip behind the punch. Some learn to punch from a cradled position ... others learn the one-inch punch.

We are learning to power punch. Still — some folks pack an awesome, devastating amount of power behind their wallops. You could say that “their wallops pack a wallop.”



## Developing Smash-Through Power

So, how does one develop this kind of smash-through power?

When I started out in JKD, I really lacked power in my punches. Sure, I had been taking Karate, and before that Tae Kwon Do. Yet, the guys in my JKD class were sending folks flying with their one-inch punches, while all I could get was a little grunt out of my partner, and I was starting my punch from more than two feet away.

I needed power.

Steve Golden was more than happy to oblige. He threw me up against the wall ... not literally. He had me practice on my own — against the wall.

I practiced with vertical punches.

I had noticed that he had these small canvas sandbags hanging on the wall. They were filled with sand. They looked like mini throw pillows that you find on couches or beds.

He put me in front of one of them and had me start punching ....

**\*\*\* Don't stop reading yet. It gets better.\*\*\*\*\***



## Changing the Way I Punched

After I got used to punching the wall bag, he changed the 'energy.' It was time for me to develop that powerful punch that I had imagined.

Note: Energy doesn't have to be any mystical mumbo jumbo. Just think of it as unifying the mind and body. You visualize all of the time. Imagine yourself successfully giving that speech ... making that three-point shot ... making it to work on time.

Energy in the martial arts is a combination of thinking the right imagery at the right time, and translating that into a physical response. That's it .. my two-paragraph explanation. Nothing too mystical -- nothing anti-religious, OK?

Steve Golden didn't want me to stop punching after my fist made contact. I had heard about punching through an object, but this was different.

He wanted me to continue the pressure against the sandbag for a count of 10. Not 10 seconds, but not a super fast 10 either — somewhere in-between.

So, I'd punch-two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten relax.

It's almost as if the real pressure started after I made contact with the sandbag. Punch, two, three, four ....

Then I'd punch with the other fist. He had me do this until my arms were really aching. They were trembling.

Then I rested.

When he had me go against other students, my punches seemed to fly threw their defenses. Nothing could stop them ... except better technique, which most of these guys had.

But I had powerful punches.

I felt a big difference after only about 20 minutes against the wall. And you will too, if you have never tried this before.

I went home and rigged up a temporary pad against the wall of my carport. I punched all weekend long. I noticed even more of a difference.

After a month of daily practice ... all I could say was **“WOW!”**

Note: Some of the young women in my wife's classes have had excellent (astounding) results with this exercise.



## Getting even More Power

Steve has always given me something to think about when practicing. He has had me imagine that my arms were like wet noodles, my fingers like mini-hoses filled with water, my wrist like it was pulling a giant spring, etc....

At first, when I punched, he had me imagine that I was moving the wall with my count of ten. I imagined that the sheer intensity of my punch was shoving the building back.

My fist vibrated as it trembled from the intensity of the continuous punch for a count of ten. I imagined that I was causing the wall to tremble too.

My punches got good, but they still had a bit of a 'push quality' to them. I wanted more penetration.

So, Steve had me change my imagery again. Now, I imagined that my fist punched with such concentrated power that it punched a hole in the wall.

On my own, to make the image more complete, I imagined bursting the sandbag. Then I extended that to 'denting' the wall ... in my mind.

**And my punches got stronger.**

You understand why this works, right? You get used to punching a wall ... an immovable object. Your muscles get used to the jarring impact — and they keep pushing/punching.

Then, when you actually make contact with an opponent, your muscles are used to trying to pound through a wall. A human is nothing by comparison, and so gives way easily.

This method really works. I guarantee it — more or less. (Really, what kind of a guarantee could I put on a punch done by someone I have never met, who read about it in an eBook?)

**You need to try it, if you haven't before.**



## And for those already familiar with this technique:

1) Have you tried it from different extensions? My punch makes contact with the sandbag just slightly before the arm reaches full extension. But you can get a completely different energy effect by making contact at 3/4 extension.

Can you see the benefit of being able to draw on this penetrating energy a little early?

2) If you are punching to a count of ten, try adding an extra little push on the count of eleven. You punch to ten, then dig it in a bit on the eleventh count. You'll get an extra little advantage when the time comes.

Don't think of this as a separate motion ... it just continues a hair more with more intensity. I even mentally repeat the word 'dig' as I do it.

3) Don't forget your follow-ups; Punch two-three-four-five-six-seven-eight-nine-ten-DIG, elbow strike into the sandbag!

4) Vary the count. Shorten your count to three. Can you convince your brain that you need to punch three times as hard, since you'll only be punching to a count of three?

**Be sure to read the quote after this 'further reading suggestion.'**  
**The quote gave me a nice piece of advice on how I sometimes train -- now.**



## For Further Reading

Does this article seem old hat, or does it seem fresh and new? Those who have been into martial arts for years and years, and have already developed their internal energy strikes, probably don't need any more advice on the subject.

**Would you believe only \$19 ? No kidding.**

**Let's try that again ... ONLY \$19 !!!**

And you can be reading it in just a few minutes ... and you'll be practicing these new exercises just a few minutes after that.

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?kerwin/hometutor>

This link will take you to his catalog page. The **Internal Energy Strikes** book is the second listing on the left-hand side.

Take advantage of this offer now, while the price is so low.

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?kerwin/hometutor>

You may also ask me questions about his book. Write to:

[pascal@kerwinbenson.com](mailto:pascal@kerwinbenson.com)

## **Quote: From “Ki In Daily Life” by Koichi Tohei**

This week's quote comes from “**Ki In Daily Life**” by Koichi Tohei, published by Ki No Kenkyukai H.Q. (Tokyo, Japan), 1978.

I think you should consider it when punching. Even though my exercise takes the thought out of power punching, there is still something to be said for having the mind focused. It can make all of the difference in the world....

“It is rather easy to unify mind and body when one does not move his body. The difficulty is coordination of mind and body while moving. If you train yourself in the mountains for ten or twenty years and achieve coordination of mind and body, if it is

disturbed when you come down to the city, it is of no use.”  
(page 49)

I am suggesting that you practice with distractions. Have blaring music on occasion. Have someone distract you by surprise. Practice power punching while on the move.

**Generalize your earth-shattering punches.**

**And now onto a tip for this power punch technique....**



# Tip: The Triple Stack

Steve Golden used to have more than one punching sandbag up on the wall. In fact, he had one that was a series of three 'pillows' stacked on top of each other. They were vertically hanging from top to bottom.

This presented three targets at different levels.

Now, I could practice developing this energy at three different heights. And when I made my counts even shorter, I could combine punches.

Eventually, I straight blasted, but at three different levels. Most straight blasts that I see only have one target. This way, I could punch at different heights and still focus on the center.

Whenever I felt I was losing my demolishing power, I'd go back to the counting method — now I could practice punching the abdomen, solar plexus and throat — in my mind.



# Playing With Power -- Hunch a Bunch

Before we move into an esoteric talk on internal energy, let's deal with three quick tips for dramatically increasing your punch power.

This first tip deals with your shoulder position while you punch. If you punch with your shoulders spread wide, you won't get nearly as much power as you can generate with a hunched shoulder punch.

Curl your shoulders in when you punch. Many boxing positions incorporate this body position naturally. Unfortunately, many martial arts positions do not.

If you don't believe what a dramatic improvement this little adjustment will make in the power of your punches, try punching against a heavy bag.

Or better yet, have a partner hold a telephone book or focus mitt against his or her chest.

First, punch at the target with your shoulders open, thrown back a little. Then punch the target with your shoulders curled in.

Do you feel the difference?

Warning! Curled in does NOT mean curled UP!!

Note: Experiment. Adjust shoulder shoulders, then try punching. One position will work better for you than others. Find your perfect shoulder position for power punching.

You just want your shoulders to hunch inward a bit. You do not want the shoulders tight, raised to your ears. You still want relaxed shoulders.

When my martial arts students punch for practice, I keep telling the beginners to drop their shoulders. Only after they learn to drop the shoulders, do I teach them to roll the shoulders in a little -- for a lot of added power.



# **Playing with Power: Elbows Down All Around**

In another part of this book, I talk about the difference between a vertical punch and a horizontal punch. You learn many of the merits of keeping your elbow pointed to the ground.

Another reason for keeping the elbow down is that you automatically generate more power in your punches. You have your entire body behind the punch. The punch support emanates from the center of your body -- you don't try to gain power just from your shoulder.

**Can You Get This Awesome Power with Non-Vertical Punches?**

Sure. Just be sure to keep the elbow pointed downward all the way through the punch.

Here's a way to find the proper elbow position for hitting with a lot of power....

Hold a vertical punch in front of you. Now, open your hand and rotate it palm up, so the thumb is on the outside of your body.

Your elbow is now pointed down in the proper position for power punching.

Now, as an example, rotate your hand back to a horizontal punch position -- make sure you only rotate at the wrist. Leave your elbow in the down position. It stays immobile.

And there you have it. One example of how to gain many of the benefits of a vertical punch, including added power, with just one elbow adjustment.

Try it. It works.



# **Playing with Power: Make It a Vow, Don't Bow!**

This piece of advice will be hard for boxers to swallow. So, let's say you don't have to adhere to this principle all of the time, OK?

Although maybe after playing with the concept, you'll make adjustments to your overall fighting style. Who knows?

After watching my teacher for years, and observing other Bruce Lee students in action on many occasions, I have come to believe that power is generated by keeping the hips dropped a bit, and tucked in a little too.

Don't break the line at the waist.

Don't bend!

That doesn't mean you need to stay rigid as a board. It means staying upright from the waist up -- for four or five inches, at least.

You can still twist your body on the punch to get torque. You can still lean into the punch to add force on the impact.

Just try to keep part of your body, from your waist up, vertical -- perpendicular to the ground.

Those of you familiar with Bruce Lee's ready stance (bai jong), can generate a lot of power, by throwing your hip behind the punch, and shoving forward with your back leg. And guess what? You can still punch from this ready stance with your waist upright.



# Not-So-Randon Thoughts on Chi (Ki)

This is pretty normal talk for martial artists, but not so normal talk for a boxer. By the way, if you fear that a chi discussion somehow borders on the religious, email me. I have an article on the subject.

Send a blank email to: [meditation@kerwinbenson.com](mailto:meditation@kerwinbenson.com)

Let's begin with a little fun trivia. Sometime, when you get a chance, look at the Japanese symbol for Ki. Then look at the Chinese symbol of Chi. Next go looking for the Hebrew symbol Chai (Life).

See a relationship? Eerie, isn't it. And we could find similarities in other cultures too. So is, this internal energy (Ki, Chi, Chai) magic?

*I promised you that we wouldn't get religious.*

I wanted an answer to the question ... what is chi?

I was 19 years old, attending a University that housed the second largest Psychological Cognitive Laboratory in the world.

I became a Psychology major for a few years. I wanted to study and conduct experiments in chi.

But the Psychology Community had already dismissed acts of chi as just a surge in adrenaline. A woman sees her baby trapped under a car and as if by magic, she lifts the car up to save her child.

Magic? Adrenaline? Internal energy?

I wouldn't be so quick as to attribute acts of chi to adrenaline. Yet, as a seasoned magician, I tend to doubt real magic as well.

There are martial artists who stand on cartons of eggs and perform other cheap tricks. Let's discount the magic tricks right now — I am not talking about cheap tricks.

Yet something is going on with energy in the martial arts, right?

After all, Rick Kirkham wrote an entire book on 'Internal Energy Strikes.'

Can this chi be applied to punching?

First, let's talk about examples of real internal energy. In my mental notebook, I have witnessed many instances of chi, including the following:

- \* small, petit(e) martial artists and women boxers who hold off muscle-bound attackers with simple positioning. No matter how hard the brutes pushed, they couldn't collapse the smaller person's position.
- \* a couple of 'killer' aikido unbendable arm demonstrations. With my teacher's help, I have developed a great one, that some day, I hope to put in a book.
- \* many martial artists breaking hard boards and bricks with their hands, feet, and heads. I have seen so much of this, it makes me yawn. Bruce Lee might have said, "Boards don't hit back," but Keith Pascal says, "Boards bore."
- \* with eyes closed and hands touching, martial artists seem to react to an attack even before the attack is fully under way.

Not only that, but if you want to jump into an ‘almost’ magical realm, when I am out in the cold, I personally can make my hands warm up at will.

Bystanders can feel the difference in the temperature of my hands before and after. Significantly so.

Also, I think of myself as a quick healer.

Are you sure we aren’t talking about the occult? Is this all mumbo jumbo?

OK, OK — what ARE we talking about?

**For me, chi, ki, or internal energy is nothing more than the unification of the mind and body.**

All you are doing is getting your body to behave the way your mind wants it to.

I have read every book on chi under the sun — everything from Tohei to Hyams. I know what they have to say. I agree with some advice, and think the other advice borders on myth and folk tales.

**I do believe, by training the mind, you can get the body to do some fairly incredible tasks.**

- Chi is knowing precisely where to push during a round of sticky hands.
- Chi is being able to perceive by almost imperceptable queues when your opponent is going to move. You almost anticipate the attack.
- Chi is not relying on muscle to keep your attacker at bay — your precise positioning is all you need.
- Chi is generating knock-down power from a one-inch punch.

**So, how do you develop this kind of internal energy?**

You're going to hate this answer ...

### **Visualization!**

It's what you think about that will determine your level of success. You need to plant the right images in your mind.

For example, you practice your punches. When practicing with your fellow students you pull your punches. No one gets hurt.

Then you actually have to use your punch to stop an attacker. You punch — and you pull back just a little, unconsciously. You don't generate smash-through power.

Based on the above, I would never pull my punches. Figure out another way to practice.

Instead of the above example of pulling punches, say you practice trying to unify your body and your mind. You concentrate on a point past your opponent's head — a couple of feet beyond.

Each time you punch, you punch slightly to the side of your partner's head. And you punch past. Sound like an earlier chapter?

Nothing gets in your way. You punch to the imagined target.

It's the same each time you work out on the heavy bag. You punch through the bag to the imagined target a couple of feet beyond.

I guarantee that if you practice with this link between mind and body, when the time comes, you will melt through your attacker's face, like a hot knife going through butter.

I tell my students to imagine everything from bicycle bars attached to their bodies, to elbows pulling tow ropes attached to a car, depending on the application.

They visualize snapping giant rubber bands. They picture themselves scratching their own ears, while their hands are held immobile in a lower chi sao trap.

I try to develop imagery appropriate to the specific situation.

If you really want to develop incredible speed or power, you 'just' — have to be able to think the right thoughts to allowed your trained body to

react in a highly specified manner.

And you have to get your mind to shut off or suspend its disbelief system, to allow your body to do what the mind thinks it can't.

Easy?

Of course — after you have studied martial arts for 'how many' years?



End note: So where does this energy emanate from? If you concentrate on specific images, like giant rubber bands, you may never think of internal energy in those terms.

Yet many, searching for a point of origin, have come to believe that this energy begins from a point just below one's navel.

In my humble opinion, an inch or so below the navel is as good a point as any to start your visualization process.

Bruce Lee started experimenting with having his energy explode from the point at the body where it was needed. I think he felt that it would take too long to get energy from the navel to the point it was needed.

Remember, for me, it's all a matter of visualization. If you can move energy quickly with your mind ....



# Tip for Blockers

You're practicing with a partner. Maybe you both are wearing boxing gloves, or maybe you are doing some light sparring.

You circle each other. Your partner enters with a strike ... again and again.

Each time, you block it and punch to the face.

Can you figure out a way to block with enough directional energy that you move your blocking arm to the 'next place' you want it to be?

For example, your partner punches at your chest with his or her right hand.

Say your response is an outside to inside block with your right hand. If you are a boxer, you push the blow slightly to the inside.

Boxers have the right idea -- but could we take that slight push one step further?

Instead of just making contact with the block, and letting your block hand whoosh by, or just slightly push your opponent's arm, could you use the block to push more in toward your opponent's body?

Can you set your right hand up for a punch follow-up?

Even though this is a book about punching, if you can't position yourself for a strike, could you set up for a throat grab follow-up?

If you can change the force of your block, so that your hand ends closer to where it *has* to be, then you'll increase your efficiency.

Do we have any folks out there who avoid blocking first?

Then apply this tactic to your first strike. Can you counter with enough force that your hand ends up in a good position for a follow-up technique?

Think about it.

Ah, now we are back to punching!



# If You Know a Lot of Techniques ... I Pity You

This is one time where boxers may have a definite advantage over martial arts practitioners. Many boxing schools insist that their protoges just learn the basics. Knowing many uses for just a few techniques has many advantages.

Or, let's just say keeping track of a myriad of techniques has its disadvantages.

First, let me preface this article by saying that I'll do my best not to repeat what can be found in the Bonus eBook '**Become the Martial Artist You Were Meant to Be By Taking Charge of Your Learning.**'

This 53-page eBook is Free, when you order a copy of "**Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert.**"

It covers the subject of building techniques vs. paring down techniques in much greater detail.

This chapter came into being because of a letter one of the Martial Arts Mastery subscribers sent to me.

Master Gouken wrote in — two letters —wondering about ... well, everything. Master Gouken, you don't write 'simple, easy-to-answer questions:

Hi Keith,

Sorry to keep pestering you with questions, but do you think you could please give me your opinion on something which I see as a possible problem in martial arts?

It's about drilling. Keith Kernspecht a Wing Chun practitioner was describing the different elements of WC, he said that one of the things which makes a WC practitioner a good fighter is his reflexes.

This is partly due to the sensitivity training in the form of chi sao, but also to the fact that WC compared to some martial arts has very few techniques.

I would say that it has very few techniques, but variations of each, but despite that the small number of techniques seem to be able to blend in to almost any combative situation.

He compared this to Karate where large numbers of techniques are drilled.

Anyway the problem was that in a confrontation the speed that the brain is able to take in all the information and process it together with their own knowledge depends on the number of techniques learned, and in the case of the karate practitioner his reaction would be comparatively slow to that of the WC man, but then my problem arose when I started to think about the large number of techniques learned in many of the grappling arts.

It's not like WC in order to be able to deal with a certain situation/position you need to learn the technique for that situation, and how many are there?

So wouldn't you say that the grapplers reflex's could be just as slow as the Karateka's? In order to really make a technique stick

you need to drill it thousands of times. But if you have hundreds of techniques in your repertoire, how slow would your reactions be?

I was trying to think of ways to get around it.... It may be true that you have to 'drill for the skill', but at what cost?

Thanks for listening, bye,

Master Gouken



Whew. Believe it or not, the letter goes on ... and there is another one too.

So, let's talk about numbers of moves in this chapter and sensitivity in the next.

Master Gouken is right. I think trying to keep a huge number of techniques in your body's responsive memory is pure folly. Boxers are on the right track when they train a limited number of combinations over and over. Bruce Lee started to incorporate this philosophy too -- more on that a little later.

This technique memory overload is one reason I am not big on katas. Too many moves — you'd never be able to call them up as an automatic response when needed, unless you took them out of the kata and practiced them in a more realistic context.

[Don't ask for a refund quite yet ... and boxers, wipe that grin off your faces]

Think of it this way.

You are in your best ready stance. Even though you are guarding your body well, you realize that all ready stances have some sort of opening. There is something your opponent can try on you.

Let's say there are '**FIVE SOMETHINGS**' that you recognize that your opponent could attempt.

For each of those five possible attack moves, you have only five responses. That means that you already have to have 25 responses that you must be able to respond to automatically.

Let's jump into the world of fantasy and pretend that you really can call up all 25 techniques, in the proper context, when needed. I doubt it, but let's pretend.

That means that if you counter with a proper technique, then your opponent has to have responses for each of your possible counters — for this fantasy fight to continue.

If he (or she) has five counters for each of yours, then he has to have 125 moves at the ready.

### **Do you see where this is going?**

Yes, indeed — on your next response, you have to have 625 trained automatic responses!!

Ridiculous, you say?

Think about it:

*Attack —response,*

*response — response.*

With only two engagements (three follow ups), we already have to remember over 600 different moves.

So, Master Gouken — I go the other direction.

I hope my traditionalist friends will forgive me, when I say that I spend a lot of time eliminating what Bruce Lee referred to as “The Classical Mess.” As I said before, he was moving towards simplicity.

My training involves finding workable moves that function in many situations. For example, I want **one technique** that covers a high punch with the right hand, a high punch with the left hand, and a feint with either hand.

So, if I see the punch coming in to an upper gate (terminology from wing chun), I know that I have an 'answer' to three questions, including a fake.

From that initial countermove, I immediately follow with a barrage of efficient, continuous attacks.

So, how can a grappler avoid getting into a brain gridlock?

How can the grappler avoid getting bogged down with too many techniques?

Start by using one initial response that covers several attacks.

This will be your 'quick-reaction response.'

From there, you'll have choices depending on your training. If you follow my '**Spoking**' training method found in "**Secrets of Teaching Martial Arts More Effectively**" (pages 47 - 50), you'll always have options for a decent response.

And you won't have too many options, if you follow that training up with the '**Working a Principle to Death**' exercise found on pages 50 and 51.

The combination of learning how to branch out sensibly to different moves, and working one principle over and over in many contexts, even situations that are NOT perfect for the move, will help to get your reactions straight in your brain.

Why?

Because you are building with limits. In the first case, you are limited by one counter with several follow-ups.

And in the second exercise, you are learning to generalize a principle, so you find out boundaries where the technique or tactic is no longer practical.



# Worthless Wing-Chun Videos ... I Mean “Videos”

Master Gouken’s letter also seemed to ask about reflexes, building techniques, and relating it all to wing chun.

Rather than boring everyone with long explanations point by point of each of his questions and concerns, I am opting for some indirect teaching.

Since I just referenced “**Secrets of Teaching Martial Arts More Effectively**” in the last chapter, I thought it appropriate to mention one of the Bonuses that comes with the eBook.

You can read more about Indirect Teaching in Martial Arts in “**Become a Super Martial Arts Teacher in 72 Hours.**”



## Anecdote #1

“Oh, so you practice karate?”

“No, not any more,” I reply. “I practice a system of martial arts based on wing chun. But it incorporates tactics and techniques from many styles while following the principles of Bruce Lee.”

“Bruce Lee? Didn’t he do kung fu? And aren’t karate and kung fu basically the same?”

Rather than going into a long explanation of the differences between karate and ‘gung’ fu, I offer a simple demonstration (taught to me by Steve Golden), to show the difference between the ‘standard’ martial arts that they may have in mind and what *we* do.

**Both of us pretend we only have one arm each.**

[Yes, that’s where I got the idea for The tale of One-Armed Albert, if you were wondering.]

We stand facing each other, in close enough to touch each other’s chests.

I reach my left hand toward his center. Rather than forcefully blocking, he keeps me out with just a little pressure from his right arm. This is our starting point.

I can’t continue reaching in, because he has this line checked.

This forces me to withdraw my hand and try to strike the right side of his face.

All he has to do is block upwards a little, in order to stop my attack.

The first time, I withdraw and punch slowly.

And sometimes, the other guy has to ask me how to block — inside to outside block? Upward block? Should I use my other hand? (How quickly they forget that we are both pretending to only have one arm.)

So, I get him blocking quickly.

We repeat the exercise over and over.

I can never get my hit in, no matter how fast I try.

My participant feels very satisfied, until I show the flip side of the demonstration....



**In the second part of the demonstration, we reverse roles.**

My left hand is on the outside applying pressure to his right hand, which is trying to reach in.

He removes his hand to try to strike the left side of my face.

He never makes it.

Oh, did I mention that I close my eyes and always do this demo 'blind'?

**Here's the difference:**

When my hand is resting on the outside, I have a little pressure going to his center. I can feel the direction of his centerline, even with my eyes closed.

I am pressing toward his center from the very beginning.

If he removes his hand to hit me in the face, my pressure just continues into a punch to that centerline.

He can never beat me — he has to cock his hand back to clear my arm. So, while he is going in the wrong direction, away from my body, I have already started my journey forward.

It's pretty easy to see who is always going to win.

I am not thinking technique. Nor am I planning counters.

My body is simply waiting to feel the opening — with the constant pressure, it's already reacting.

The question now becomes, how much of your techniques can you eliminate and replace with 'reactions'?

Note to Boxers: Just think if you could incorporate this reaction into your repertoire. Each time you had contact on the outside of your opponent, you could force your opponent's fist to retract and punch to the outside. And you'd go right up through the open center and score every time. Wow -- powerful tactic!

## **Anecdote #2**

I had only been practicing with Steve Golden for a couple of years at the time. Some of the guys were going to meet on "*Saturday, in the park, I think it wasn't the Fourth of July*" ... to 'play.'

Actually, we ended up meeting in someone's backyard ... but then I wouldn't have been able to allude to an old song by Chicago.

We were meeting with a few guys, black belts, from other styles. They wanted to talk and play -- knife fighting, practice drills, etc.

These guys also wanted to do chi sao with us. I think they thought it was our form of sparring.

### **The Beginner Touches Hands**

Remember, I had only been practicing for a couple of years in this wing-chun based style. So, I feared going against black belts from another style.

After all, they were BLACK BELTS!

So, I touched hands with one — the teacher of the school. We played.

I was timid at first.

But I kept melting through his defenses like a hot knife cutting butter.

I didn't understand.

Later, I found out that their style didn't incorporate chi sao. Their teacher had watched some videos and he and his students had practiced the moves diligently.

In fact, they could do some of the wing chun techniques faster than I could.

So, what was going on?

Steve Golden wasn't there, but he had played with the instructor before. He explained it to me. They had no feeling.

They knew the moves, but they didn't know the pressure —the context of when to react.

They were using their eyes ... I didn't need to. I had a much faster way of processing the information — I 'felt' where to go.

Now, imagine if you could combine reaction of feelings when you're in close, with a strategic distance game. Your goal — use your strategies and tactics to get into touching range, so you don't have to think, after a certain point.

You just feel.

Here's a thought -- what if a boxer could learn the sensitivity from wing chun along with the angles, while still maintaining the timing and distance variations found in boxing? Add in the hand combinations from boxing, combined with the checks and legs from wing chun and you'd ... pretty much have a good start on developing a Bruce Lee-like system of martial arts. Just a thought.



# Tip — One Way to 'See' the Fight

First things first. Go out and memorize Bruce Lee's Five Ways of Attack. Really learn what they mean —everything from Single Direct Attacks to Attack By Drawing.

Really study them. Boxers need to study these five ways as well. After all, all formas of attack can be reduced to these principles.

Now, think of all your future martial encounters like this ....

*You are in a relationship with your opponent ...*

[Ho hum — boring. You've heard that before.]

**... and this relationship is only about 'openings.'**

It's a game of getting openings without giving openings.

It's a game of perception. Do you see the openings?

It's a game of timing — can you take advantage of the openings, when they appear?

Think about it:

- \* You react to openings.
- \* You find openings.
- \* You even create openings.
- \* And you close down your own openings.

At the basic level, you find openings. But think how complex it can get. You teach yourself to react to an opening. Whenever that opening happens, your body instinctively reacts, in a trained, efficient manner.

This is great ...

until you realized that you have been faked out. You went for the created opening, hook, line, and sinker.

Do you see the relationship between this tip and the last two chapters, or am I being too vague?



# Quote

Nobody wants to lose — to be defeated.

It's not just a cheap excuse when I say that nobody can win all the time.

Most of the time?

Sure.

But don't discount the losses. Don't quickly block psychologically all unpleasant martial encounters.

We have all heard it before — we learn from our mistakes.

Here's what Bruce Lee had to say about it:

“Adversity Shocks you to higher levels. — With adversity you are shocked to higher levels, much like a rain storm that is so violent, but yet afterwards all plants grow.”

**“Striking Thoughts: Bruce Lee’s Wisdom for Daily Living,”** Edited by John Little (Tuttle Publishing, 2000), page 100.



**Boxers --Learn to Fight Outside Your Style**

**Taking on a Kickboxer:**

# **Learn To Defend Against Spins Effectively**

In Issue #21 of **Martial Arts Mastery**, my readers got advice about not taking their eyes off of their opponents — '**Basic Bruce Lee.**'

I used spinning kicks and back fists as my example.

Some of you need a little more guidance on how to catch someone with a punch while spinning. So, let's break it down.



For your example, you will train with a spinning back fist. Of course, feel free to generalize this exercise to a spinning kick as well. In the kickboxing arena, I see spin techniques all of the time with both hands and feet.

## **Step One:**

You and your partner need to develop fast spinning back fists. Start from a lead position, hands guarding the chest or face.

Your regular back fist would just shoot forward from your guard position. With a spinning back fist, you spin around in the direction of your lead — with a right lead, spin to the right; with a left, spin to the left.

The punch would 'make contact' toward the end of your spin.

**Get fast with this technique. Really fast.**



### **Why?**

Because you will eventually counter someone who is pretty decent at this technique. To learn to defend against a competent spinning back fist, you have to practice defending against ... pretty competent spinning back fists.

Otherwise, you and your partner will only know how to defend against amateurish back fists. Get good, so you and your partner learn to defend against someone decent.

(This is a good principle to apply to all of your training, right?)



### **Two Back Fists To Practice**

I want you to practice two types of spinning back fists:

- 1) A spin without any forward movement. You keep the same distance.
- 2) A spin, where you reach forward. You step towards your opponent as you come out of your spin. You get more reach this way.

**Now, go practice. Get good at your spinning back fist.**

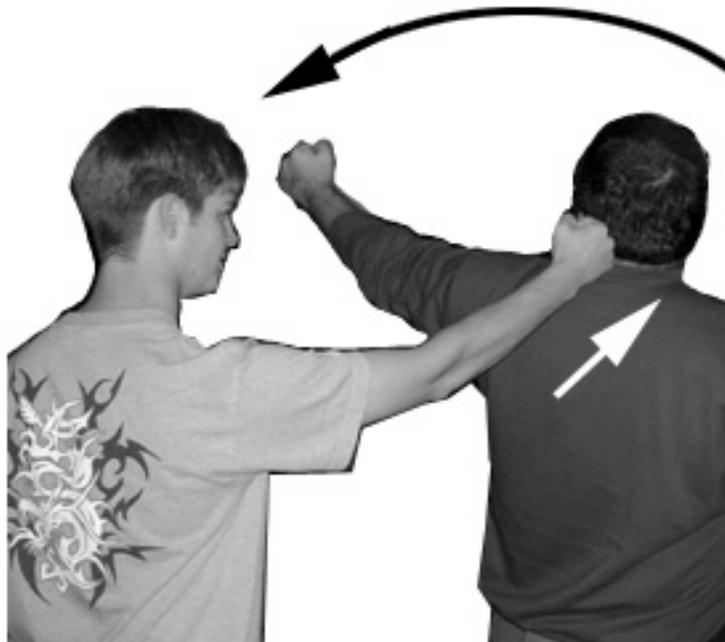


## Step Two:

Stand facing your partner. Your partner is close enough that he or she wouldn't have to really reach (or step) to tag you in the face.

You are at the end of their reach, but still a little in range.

Have your partner start practicing slow spinning back fists to your face. As your partner's eyes leave you for the spin, you are going to pop the back of your partners head. Ouch -- hard heads hurt. Maybe you should punch to the neck. Or for practice, you could shove between the shoulder blades.



In real life, you could stop with a low kick, a punch to the kidneys, or a palm strike to the back of the neck. For now, you will just pop the head.

Agree on how hard the pop will be ahead of time, so you don't actually hurt each other. No whiplash allowed.

Now, have your partner start speeding up those spinning back fists. Faster and faster and faster.

Note: Steve Golden would kick me — he probably will anyway — if I didn't remind you to break your rhythm while practicing. Don't just go through the motions: back fist — counter; back fist — counter; back fist — counter; back fist — counter.

Break up the rhythm.

wait .. wait ... back fist — counter; wait ... back fist — counter;  
wait wait wait wait wait ... back fist — counter; back fist — counter; wait wait ...

### **Get in lots of practices.**

Get the timing down. The instant you see the back of the head, Wham!



## **Step Three:**

Add the step. Increase the distance. Make your partner have to take steps to get to you with the spinning back fist. Now we are turning it into something that a boxer could really use. Many martial arts are used to playing with longer distances and closing the gap. This is good practice for the systems that are more comfortable in close.

You still do the head bop, as soon as the back of your partner's head is in range. You have to be much more precise with your timing now.

[You are giving your partner equal practice time, aren't you?]

The idea is to make this technique almost automatic. Whenever there is the back of a head in perfect range, you hit (or kick, or kidney punch — practice them all for automaticity).



## Step Four:

It's time to mix and match. Remember, I don't take my eyes off of my opponent — for this very reason. But the only time I 'would' try this technique, if I were the spinner, would be in conjunction with a straight back fist.

I would use the regular back fist as a fake. This is my personal preference. So, if I were the spinner, I would try to fake my opponent out with a few regular back fists first.

I throw a bunch of non-committed back fists at my opponent. Then I slip in a spinning back fist. I fake out my opponent, if I am subtle. And I don't telegraph the change in my technique.

So, you need to practice against ... me. Get ready for the opponent who knows when to use the spinning back fist.

Practice slipping it in on each other, so you can practice tagging the back of the head.

Was this chapter useful? Let me know.

<mailto:comments@kerwinbenson.com>



# **A Technique Only Known By 5% of The Martial Artists — Can I Change Your Point of View About Punching?**

Over 15 years ago, my teacher, Steve Golden, and I were having a conversation about kicks. I wanted to know why some of the penetrating, power kicks just sort of knocked someone back, while some of the lighter snap kicks seemed to instantly drop the attacker.

I had always thought that penetration was necessary. Power kicks -- power punches. You need power, no matter what the technique ... or so I thought.

Our talk shifted from kicks to punches.

I had been taught to power through my opponent. I punched past my target. I blasted through them and sent them reeling backwards.

Now, with this one conversation, Steve was pointing out another aspect of punching.

He taught me how to cause pain while my punch was pulling away from my opponent. Yes, you heard me correctly, PULLING AWAY.

(Boxers, don't ask for a refund just yet.)



## A Truly Secret Punch

Have faith in me. This is not magic. I am not speaking of myth.

In fact, martial arts expert, Loren Christensen, mentioned that it is also an Okinawan concept.

He said, “You minimize contact by snapping the punch back, so that maximum energy goes into the target and not back up your arm.”

For Loren, I guess the punch has a reverberating effect. For me, I think of this strike as **creating a small vacuum**. If you keep both images in mind, you'll eventually be able create the effect in this article.

I am not suggesting that you stop power punching. I am pretty proud of my one-inch punch. I won't give up that kind of quickly-generated forward power.

I **am** suggesting that you start playing around with the following technique. This could definitely be added to your knowledge base. You will be a better fighter.

No, I won't teach you the applications of this pain-inducing move. Experiment. Figure it out on your own. Add it only where it is needed.



### **What are we talking about?**

Imagine that you are standing in front of your attacker. You know you can find an opening for one of your punches.

Normally, you punch as hard as you can, demolishing any body part in your way. But sometimes, your power punches leave you in a bad position, especially if your punch gets blocked or deflected.

What if there were a way to cause pain without committing? Could you cause pain without following through? Could you hurt your attacker by pulling away?

**And the answer is — YES.**



### **The Super Secret Technique**

So, here is the super-secret technique to start to get a feeling of what I am talking about. For this demonstration, you need a practice partner.

One of you needs to stand with your back to the wall. You stand right up against the wall, facing your partner.

Now, relax your tummy.

Your partner makes a fist. No, he or she doesn't just haul off and hit you in your stomach.

Instead, your partner pushes with the fist into your stomach.

Don't resist. Relax. Relax your stomach as much as possible.



You want your partner to push the fist in as close to the wall as possible, without hurting you.

When your partner can't push his or her fist any further into the fleshy part of your stomach, then it's time to stop.

(Your partner should almost be able to touch the wall through your stomach. Not really -- but you do have to have it completely relaxed.)

Hold that position for just a second or two. You don't want to feel pain, but you want that fist sunk in as much as possible.

Now, here's where the 'magic' enters into it.

Your partner pulls the fist out of your tummy as fast as possible. Have your partner make it a very fast withdrawal of the punch.

As the fist speeds away from your stomach, you should feel a little pain from the 'vacuum' created in your stomach.

It may take your partner a couple of tries to get the fist fast enough to where the fast removal of pressure causes a little pain.

**This is just a demonstration.**

As you get better, you will find that you don't need as much initial penetration. You will get faster.

Eventually, you will have two kinds of punches. You'll have your power punches that penetrate and send them flying, and now ...

you'll have a new kind of punch. You will have a short, quick punch that instead of sending them flying, just makes them crumple to the ground in one spot.

End Note: This is not fantasy. I can do this punch and make it work about 70% of the time. I admit that I rely on power a lot more, but I can definitely drop someone without the penetration too.

## **Experiment!**



# Quote

In his book **Martial Arts America: A Western Approach to Eastern Arts**, (Frog, Ltd. 1997) Bob Orlando talks about the classical, karate punch that starts with the fist cocked all the way back to the body. This is the standard punch that starts with the fist resting above the hip. I referred to this cradle position towards the beginning of this book.

“There is no disputing the power claims made by proponents of the classical punch. Indeed, coupled with proper hip rotation....

...punches fired from the hip are simply too slow.... they have too great a distance to cover before reaching the target.... which punch will arrive first: the one traveling the thirty-five inches to the opponent’s face, or the one traveling twenty-five inches?”

[Hey Bob, what about Bruce Lee’s one- and three-inch punches?]

“Before anyone jumps higher than his blood pressure and begins shouting how much more powerful the thirty-five inch punch is than the twenty-five inch punch ... with proper hip rotation ... even an eighteen-inch punch will....”

(pages 64-65)

Good man. Shorter is better and faster. He has some great points about firing the hip into your punches. Hmmm, shorter punches coupled with the pull-pain from the previous chapter. Are you getting any ideas?



## The Beginner's Corner

# Tips to Develop a Fast Back Fist (Back Knuckle)

You make a fist. It hangs in front of your body. You suddenly lash out with a punch that makes contact with your knuckles and the back of your hand. It is so fast, that you only see a blur.



## Here are some tips to help you develop your back fist:

- \* Keep your muscles and hand relaxed until just before the point of contact
- \* If your hand is really relaxed and you whip it out there, then you could learn to produce a snapping sound by tensing your fingers at the last instant before making contact. This sound isn't necessary — it just demonstrates the proper place to contract the muscles.
- \* Practice punching at open doors. Pull your punch back right before you make contact. You have to adjust depending on the angle of the open door. You'll develop precision and not end up whacking a friend in the face.
- \* Spend some time punching a bag, so you don't learn to only pull your punches. After all, you 'do' want to make contact in a real fight, don't you?
- \* You might want to consider back-fisting without making knuckle contact. Use the fleshy part of the bottom of your fist instead, ala Steve Golden and Bruce Lee.
- \* Don't become the 'Death of the Party.' Nobody likes having back-fists being thrown in their face. It's annoying, and it doesn't impress. Practice in class — take turns. Don't drive away family and friends.
- \* Learn to feel a whipping motion. Your back-fist definitely picks up speed as it flies out in front of you.
- \* Instead of starting from the center and ending in the center, end your punch a little on the side. Left punch to left side -- it crosses the body. Right punch out to the right. You can even turn your body, so you are snapping a right back fist with a right lead.



# Loren Christensen Ponders the Back Fist (Exercise at the end)

Remember Loren Christensen, the martial arts author quoted earlier in this book? Well, I guess I got him thinking about back fists.

Maybe you'll find this little dialogue beneficial to your back-fist punching. And there is a useful exercise at the end of this chapter.



**First, Loren wrote:**

“I have a question regarding the method of back-fisting you mentioned in last week’s newsletter.”

You might want to consider back-fisting without making knuckle contact. Use the fleshy part of the bottom of your fist instead, ala Steve Golden and Bruce Lee.

“The muscles involved in the outward phase feel to be the same as with the regular knuckle back-fist. On the retraction, however, the muscle involvement feels to be a tad different ...a different feel on the biceps and more involvement of the upper forearm.

Do you retract with the bottom fist outward, or do you rotate it and bring it back as you do a regular back fist?”



**I responded:**

Personally, I still use the knuckles. You are absolutely correct — for me, it slows everything down on the retraction, if I leave my fist rotated to catch it with the fleshy part.

Steve Golden seems to use it to barrel through — so, I haven’t paid attention (or can’t call it up visually in my head) on how he retracts.

Once, one of my students asked close to the same question —I had him rotate it back to a vertical position on the way back. He was able to do it quickly, once I got him to do the rotation ‘while’ retracting. Before, he was almost breaking the retraction into two movements.

I use my knuckles, because that position is blindingly fast for me.

It’s pretty insightful of you to notice the difference...



**We corresponded a few more times.**

It turns out that the modified back fist is very close to Loren Christensen's hammer fist.

Then, a few days later, he provided this exercise. You may want to give it a try.



## **The Exercise**

Hi Keith,

Regarding the bottom fist back-fist: I lift weights a few days a week. I usually finish my triceps workout with an exercise for the back-fist.

I lie on my side, say right side, pick up a dumb bell with my left hand, and do 8-10 reps of back-fists straight up. I lead with my first two knuckles and make sure not to lower it past the horizontal plain.

For the last three workouts, I have included two or three sets of 'bottom fist' back-fists, that is, leading with the bottom fist.

My conclusion is that the poundage seems a tad lighter, or to say it a better way, the repetitions are a tad easier when leading with the bottom fist.

### **So what does that mean?**

Possibly, that there are more muscles involved with the bottom fist or, those that are involved, are stronger than those involved with the regular back-fist.

This may mean that the power potential is greater with the bottom fist leading.

I think for my next couple of classes, I'll have my students do it on the bags and see how it feels to them.

And if anyone wants more advice from Loren W. Christensen, you should definitely get ahold of some of his books. He is the author of many martial-arts related books.



# Tip: Never Flinch at a Punch Again

When I started classes with Steve Golden, (mentioned earlier), I had this terrible habit of flinching.

Every time someone threw a punch at me, I blinked my eyes. I don't know if I unconsciously thought that what I couldn't see couldn't hurt me, or if it was truly an autonomic response, like when I flinch at a hammer making a very loud striking sound. Either way, I flinched.

**It was a very bad habit.**

So, Steve put one of his instructors in front of me.

And had him punch at my face. He never actually hit me; he'd always stop just a fraction of an inch in front of my nose, eyes, or chin.

He did rapid-fire punches, over and over and over again.

And when I came back to class the next week, he started up again. While

the instructor practiced his punches, I practiced not flinching. Eventually, it worked. My flinching stopped.



Yet again, I found that repetition has a lot of benefits.

Of course, then Steve trained me to respond properly to a punch — it wouldn't have been a good thing to have me just stay motionless, while my attacker pounded my face in (look Mom, I didn't flinch).

So, if you ever need to stop flinching, just get someone to punch at you. Emphasis on the word “**at**” ...

**A minor point:** Get someone who has some “punch control.” No bloody noses, please. Remember, I said that Steve had one of his “instructors” punch at me. Yes, definitely choose someone with a lot of control.



# Automatic Panic Responses and What to Do About Them

'Zachary' wrote with a difficulty he has experienced. The next day, I found a similar question at a martial arts forum — additionally, this guy is bothered by the 'sharp noise factor.'

Let's see if we can come up with some workable ideas for both 'Zach' and the forum poster. Here's the letter that I received:

hi! im a practitioner of arnis. i have been practicing it for a year and i can say that im fairly fast and i can hit hard.

during our practice sessions where we spar but don't hit, i clearly see every strike of my opponent, i can "hit" them before their sticks reach me. however in an actual tournament, its a different story.

i have the tendency to squeeze my eyes shut whenever im hit, or whenever i think im about to get hit. i end up not being hit with

everything because im practically fighting blind. i know it is stupid especially since we use very protective helmets.

how do i keep my eyes open?

ive even noticed this problem with ordinary stuff like when a glass falls off the table. im close enough and fast enough to catch it but instead i cover my ears and close my eyes....

any help would be very much appreciated thanks!



Let's see if we can give Zach some quick fixes for all of the points that he mentioned.

The first 'eyebrow raise' came when he contrasted fighting in practice with fighting in a tournament.

We have two situations, and two possible "Zach responses."

Zach is stick fighting during practice sessions and during tournaments. My first line of thought might be what's the difference between the two environments?

- \* Is he fighting folks from his style in practice but a lot of different styles during tournaments?
- \* Is he used to the responses of his classmates, but not accustomed to the 'energy' of his tournament competition?
- \* Is the environment itself different? Bigger ring to fight in and move around, different lighting, more noises and other distractions?

Do you see what I am doing? I look for the differences of the two to become a detective and find out what's going wrong? I analyze the situation.

If I still can't find what's causing the difference, I'll look to Zach himself.

If he really is responding the same in both environments — nothing internal has changed about Zach, then it has to be an external variable — the opponents, the place, or even his shoes ;-)

But it could be Zachary, himself.

Is he more nervous in a competition? So, does he react differently? Is he 'choking'? Is a fear factor coming into play?

It's much easier to correct a problem if you can figure out specifically what the problem actually is.



Let's move on. Squeezing your eyes shut when you get hit and squeezing your eyes shut when you are 'about' to get hit are different kettles of fish, on my pier.

If you are flinching at something coming near you very quickly, then you need to devise a practice situation where you are repeatedly exposed to the same stimulus, over and over.

Again — reread the last chapter on flinching. Basically, you want to have someone flick at your face, without hitting you, over and over again, until your blink response gets numbed.

I can identify with shutting your eyes after you get hit. Here are two true stories, one about me, with the solutions included:

## **Chi Sao Tensing**

All of you who play sticky hands know that tensing is bad, very bad. It turns your arms into marble columns. They become too stationary. It's easy to manipulate them, go around them, and clobber your opponent.

Seasoned boxers also love to tense up beginners. They go around the immobile arms as well. In order to become a great puncher, you have to work through this problem.

In the beginning, I tensed. I provided those columns for my more advanced classmates. They loved it.

And they figured out how to get me to tense my arms — just hit me.

Pop me a good one in the chest, and my arms became as immovable as power steering on a car with the motor turned OFF.

So, Steve Golden, my martial arts teacher, had the most advanced student come in 1/2 an hour early to practice with me.

We rolled in chi sao. Suddenly the advanced student would pound my chest. His tan sao rolled into a palm strike. Ouch. Then he'd instantly recover.

**My job was to learn to get hit without tensing. I practiced over and over.**

Once I could stay loose, he moved me onto stage two.

This is where Zach could immediately benefit.

Every time he hit me, my new response was to do the exact same move — tan sao into a palm strike back at him — instantly.

**Hit — recover. Hit — recover.**

The instant recovery after my hit was important.

After thousands of repetitions of that same response, it has become automatic.

If anyone pulls that move on me, my palm is already on the way to their chest, before my opponent has a chance to recover.

Could Zach think of a response that he might like to train for automaticity? Can you? A jab response might be just the ticket.

Instead of shutting his eyes, he could learn to have an instant, stick-hit response, don't you think?



## **Story #2**

Many beginners, especially in the style I practice, seem to go through a “what I can't see won't hurt me” period of training.

At least, that's what I call it.

I went through it, and so did a lot of my students.

You are doing chi sao, or light sparring with someone. All of a sudden your opponent is advancing much faster than before.

You barely have time to see the barrage of punches flying towards you. The straight blast has begun.

And so what is the typical beginner response?

Why turn away, try to protect your head in your arms, shut your eyes, and pretend that what you can't see won't hurt you.

Or maybe we were praying for mercy ... or appealing to our more advanced opponent's feelings of pity.

Note: I have seen beginning boxers run away from their more advanced opponents in the ring. As soon as they are cornered, they too assume the upright-fetal position.

### **So how do we overcome this tendency to cower?**

- \* Go back to the first story and practice those automatic responses. What can you do in response to a straight blast? Can you make it automatic?
- \* Can you replay the scene with your partner at half speed. Brainstorm some possibilities. Then pick the most practical and start bringing it up to speed. Then start adding different variables.
- \* Kick in the shins — cause pain. Maybe come in too close; clinch. Sweep, if you know how, have good timing, and can make them work.

As you get more workable solutions. As you are exposed to the same straight blast or barrage of sticks ... over and over. As your body learns that it is better to deal with the situation than to continuously get hit ... then you'll start to gain a lot more confidence.

The last part of Zachary's letter to discuss is the dropping of a glass.

If he just wants to catch glasses, he can train for it. Learn to juggle — you can pick up the basic cascade in about 20 minutes.

Then practice catching glasses. Have a friend place a glass on a table with cushions around, to prevent the glass from breaking. We don't need the realism of breaking 100 glasses to learn the technique.

Your friend will have a way to knock the glass over — use a cane or a stick.

He or she knocks the glass over the ledge, and you catch it.

Get comfortable catching that weird shape. It would be easy if all glasses were shaped like balls.

### **Can't catch it?**

Start with the ball, I mean 'glass,' away from the ledge. You'll get more advanced warning.

When you can catch the glass every time, it's time for you to turn around.

Your partner places the glass somewhere on the table. You don't know where. You turn around. Your friend times it to topple the glass, just after you see it.

You learn to snatch it no matter where it is.

Bonus: Not only are you learning the skill of catching the glass, but you are training your body/mind to grab for it. You won't pull away and flinch, because you have thousands of repetitions of automatically going for it.

Now, if it ever really happens — you'll impress everyone — I mean you'll respond like a true martial artist — I mean, you won't flinch.



### **Advice to sound reactors:**

Do you flinch because of the sound the breaking glass makes? Do sticks clacking together make your eyes involuntarily shut, like with the sharp pounding of a hammer?

I'd use some of the tactics we talked about to devise some exercises to teach you not to react so strongly to the sound.

Hint: Find the point where the sound is soft enough that you don't flinch. Add to the sound a little at a time, until it DOES cause you to shut your eyes.

Find the exact point where your response kicks in. Train from that point on. Get used to the sound in increments, OK?



### **Conclusion:**

This almost felt like an exercise in teaching folks how to learn. If you want more concrete methods to teach your students to improve at a faster rate, may I suggest "**Secrets of Teaching Martial Arts More Effectively.**"

It comes with three great teaching bonuses.

Read more about it:

[http://www.kerwinbenson.com/secrets\\_of\\_teaching\\_mart.html](http://www.kerwinbenson.com/secrets_of_teaching_mart.html)

BTW— Makes a great gift for martial arts teachers. They need a computer to read it, or you'll have the task of printing it for them ;-)



# Get Your Punch In Every Time

Awhile ago, we went to a martial arts seminar, where I heard a pretty lame statement. The presenter, a man who has actually taught me some very respectable martial arts techniques, made the following remark:

“You’d have to be pretty lame to be caught by any side kick.”

I almost couldn’t contain myself. Why? because there was someone in the audience whom I have seen break peoples ribs, through a reinforced kicking shield, with his side kick.

This man is James Chandler. Not only are his kicks powerful, but they are fast. More important is his timing.

If someone made me bet all of my money on either James Chandler’s ability to catch the presenter with a side kick, or on the presenter’s ability to ward off such a blow....

I’d put all of my money on my buddy, James.

Note: Unfortunately for me, and my betting money, James is way too humble to “strut his stuff” at a seminar. James really has “checked his ego at the door.” I am still learning.



## What does this have to do with punching?

I'd put my money on James Chandler, because of the “when” of his kick. He could have a super slow kick (he doesn't), and still score.

You see, he follows the principles of Bruce Lee. He knows about progressive indirect attacks. He knows “when” to kick.

Which brings me to my advice for your punching:

He does happen to have a very fast kick, but with his timing, he doesn't need to. He kicks to a spot **as** it becomes unprotected.

So, here's your quick tip for landing your punches :

You will just about always score, if you punch to a place, that your opponent is “forced” to leave unprotected. Better yet, you'll have tons of luck, if you land that punch, while your opponent is “in the process” of leaving that spot unprotected.

In other words, send your opponent's check hand on a wild goose chase, and it won't be where it needs to be, when the punch lands.

Example: Your attacker drops his (her) hand to block a kick, and the face becomes exposed.. The punch glides in as the hand drops.

Such a complicated subject for a quick tip. Anyway, you get the idea. Your punches don't have to be nearly as fast, if they are accurate and well-timed.

You will learn so much, if you just analyze where, and more importantly when, folks are exposing vulnerable areas. Maybe this week, you should just watch others spar. Take notes. Find the **when** of the openings ... and you will get your punch in every time.



# **A Mental Exercise — Try It With Any Technique**

In martial arts, most positives have a negative and most negatives have a positive. Not all, but most.

If you close one line you open another.

Block one technique leaves a new spot vulnerable for the next attempt.

Having a knife is a positive, yet holding it takes away some of your hand mobility and techniques.

Having steel-tipped shoes would allow you to break shins and knees

more easily of an attacker. Yet, the added weight of the shoe will slow down your kick.

Call this the yin-yang of martial technique.



### **Would you like to know my exercise for the week?**

You are welcome to try it too. It works. I have practiced it before. So have some of my students.

I am going to pick a positive technique. I'll work it to precision — make sure I am really good at it. Maybe I'll use one of my boxing combinations. Maybe a jab-jab, upper cut.

Then I am going to examine the flip side of the technique.

What are the negatives?

What lines do the techniques leave open?

What are their limitations?

How can this sequence be countered quickly?

What can I do to prevent that counter ....

And that will be my final phase.

What can I do to minimize the negative?

Can you see how this process could strengthen all of your techniques, one at a time?

Pick a technique. Perfect it. Find the flaws that are created by use of the technique. Reduce the flaws.

This type of analysis is what separates the experts from the intermediate practitioners -- whether we are talking about boxing, kung fu, karate, or any other martial art. Find your own openings -- reduce them; know they are there. You will improve.



# Tip: If You Can't Find the Error/Opening

If the previous mental exercise was a little too difficult, and you couldn't find the error of your technique, then try this little exercise instead:

**Try fighting in slow motion.**

Don't speed up.

If you do speed up, it's because your reactions have to move too far to be effective.

Here's an example: Your opponent punches at you in slow motion. Your forward hand is just inches from the arm coming in. You react by punching over the punch, or maybe you strike a muscle on the arm. Or you could block, if that's your cup of tea (I am not a tea drinker).

Since that forward hand only has to move a little, you continue to play the game.

On the other hand, if you were to try to execute a move with your rear hand by bringing it all the way forward, you'd have too far to go.

Unconsciously, many of us cheat by speeding up, so our move will work. Our subconscious thinks, "I can make it to that spot in time, if I just pick up the pace."

Those are the moves to get rid of.

Stay slow. Keep it practical.

Take this tip for what it's worth.

I once taught a similar game to a golden gloves boxer. He loved it. As predicted, he wanted to compensate by speeding up.

He swore a lot -- I always seemed to be at the right place ahead of time. There was no way he could reach my weapon, before it very very slowly made its way to the target.

As I taught him the principles of my style, his moves gained efficiency. He got there sooner. Soon, he figured out that he didn't even have to block -- he just had to move toward an open target close by.



# Resistance Is Futile!

No, this is not a scene where the *Borg* attack the *Enterprise* or *Voyager* in *Star Trek*.

This is a great reality-type practice exercise for improving the *when* of your punching.

You are about to snap on a great wrist lock. Actually, any old lock will do. yes, even though you are a puncher, you know how to effect a good joint lock.

Note: For some 'designer locks' check out my book, "Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert."

<http://www.kerwinbenson.com/wristlocks.html>

Suddenly, your opponent resists.

What do you do?

What you DON'T do is take time to think.

The instant you feel any sort of resistance, you immediately strike.

This is the time to punch. Any of your practiced punches will do -- preferably one that will reach the opponent.

To gain more reach, you may have to try a shin kick or an eye jab, or both. The idea behind this exercise is if you even begin to feel that you won't be able to successfully effect your joint lock, you modify.

You go straight for an opening. Something close.

Then after you have hit, maybe it's time to try another wrist lock.

Still feel resistance?

Hit again.

Go with the force! (Oops — only one sci-fi metaphor allowed per article)

PS I talk a lot more about how to deal with wrist lock resisters in the book **“Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert.”**



# Arm Pops — Ball Bouncing

Just for the fun of it, I thought you might like to learn an *exotic* punch. This is a punch or hit that doesn't use the fist. In fact, it doesn't even use an open hand ....

The other day, I was showing some of my students a video tape of Richard Bustillo lecturing.

He did a little demonstration.

He had his attacker by the head. They faced each other. Richard had one hand on either side of the guy's head, slightly to the back.

Note: You could grab the hair or the ears too.

He pulled the attacker inward, towards his own chest — BAM — suddenly the guy went flying backwards.

What had happened?

Richard had popped him with the inside of his arm.

It seemed pretty normal to me — but it ‘impressed the snot’ out of my students. So, I thought I’d tell you about it.

We used to do a similar move with a tennis ball or juggling ball.

Did you ever start with the ball in your hand, palm up — then toss the ball back towards the crook of your elbow? Just as the ball was about to hit the inside of your elbow, you popped your arm and sent the ball flying straight up.

It was almost like popping the ball off your biceps, but it was a bit forward in the crotch of your arm (inner elbow).

This is the kind of technique you are going for as you pull someone’s head into you.

You pull the head closer and then send it back by popping it against the inside of your arm.

What part of the arm should make contact?

My students thought that Richard Bustillo was using his forearm.

I am pretty sure he was catching the head right on the inner bend of the arm, right below the biceps.

I have tried it there — it works.

I can also make it work by popping the head right on my biceps.

Experiment.



# Breakfast with Bob Bremer

OK, so I am name dropping a bit. But I feel fortunate. Each year at the **Bruce Lee Memorial Seminar**, Bob Bremer, one of the original Bruce Lee students, eats breakfast with my teacher.

Consequently, I get to eat breakfast with him too.

One year, he and I were discussing a great attack fake. I had been reading about the technique in Chris Kent's and Tim Tackett's book, "**Jun Fan/Jeet Kune Do: The Textbook.**"

I wanted Bob's view. When Bob demo'ed it for me, he used a jab that moved across just a hair, until he came in with the real strike.



## So, what tactic am I talking about?

Basically, the tactic is to convince your opponent that you are jabbing (or kicking) at the limit of your range. By repetition, your opponent is sure that he/she is just outside of your reach.

You guessed it. At the appropriate time, you fully extend and make contact with your opponent's face. It was a distance fake.

Now, the question is how to make it look as though you are fully extended?

Bob seemed to solve the problem by punching slightly across the body. His punch recoiled a bit, automatically. Then on the real attack, the fist came in on a straighter line. It had more extension.



### Another Question or Two for Bob

Unfortunately, we didn't breakfast with Bob and Sharon Bremer at the 2001 Bruce Lee Memorial Seminar.

My wife, Kate, and I couldn't travel to Europe for the seminar.

It's too bad. Last year, Bob and I had some good discussions. The year before that, his wife went mall shopping with my mother-in-law and my daughter.

And the year before that, Sharon and Bob gifted my wife and me each a photo (made from a negative) of Bruce Lee with his students — of course, Bob Bremer and my teacher, Steve Golden, were in the photo.

If I see him next year, I want to ask him about other fakes. If I am lucky, we will discuss dropping shoulders, switching leads, boxer's feints, and anything else I can think of.

He's a valuable resource.



# And Then What Would You Do? A Reality-Based Practice Exercise

Let's get real. If and when that attacker jumps out at you in a dark alley (just what the heck were you doing walking down that dark alley in the first place?), your self defense strategies will NOT go as planned.

Note: It “will” go as planned, if you have “no-plan” as your plan. But then that sounds too much like using Bruce Lee’s motto of “having no way as way, and having no limitation as limitation.”



Anyway, I think you already know that you have to be ready for anything. After all, that's why you're training, right?

Your punches are great.

You practice wonderful combinations of kicks and hits. You vary the combinations -- you know a variety of boxing combos, so you'll be prepared for anything, but **are you prepared to get hurt?**

Many boxers can take a punch, but could they keep fighting if they lost the use of a limb?

That's right. What would you do, if you suddenly were injured during a fight? And don't count on adrenaline getting you through the conflict safe and sound.

If you break your wrist, that whole arm is instantly out of commission. The slightest touch to that arm means excruciating pain. In all likelihood, your face is turning white, and you may be a good candidate for going into shock.

This isn't the ring. This is real-- you have to continue defending yourself -- even if that baseball bat just broke your arm!

Not likely?

What about a strong upward block to a knife that is being thrust down at you from above? Well, a good strong block could get your wrist slashed, (or wrists, if you are dumb enough to block a knife with both wrists .... ummm... I mean arms).

And speaking of knives.... a stab through a muscle in your leg means the end of use of your leg for that particular encounter. Don't believe what you see on TV. You probably won't rip cloth from your shirt, tie it around your leg, and continue valiantly defending your loved ones.



## It's Time to Get Real

So, if you can't plan for the unexpected (that sentence made sense, when I wrote it), and you might even lose the use of one of your limbs — bye bye combinations — then what can you do?

Glad you asked. You can practice for the unexpected. **Lose the use of one of your limbs while in the dojo or gym**, so you'll be able to react without thinking, if the time ever comes....

- \* When practicing limiting a limb, be extra careful. The balance is different. You could trip, and really hurt yourself...especially if you are using ropes or splints to limit your motion.
- \* A simple way to practice is just to hold one arm behind your back. That's right. You fight one-handed against an opponent who can use both arms. (Watch your angles, timing, and distance.)

(And definitely read **The Tale of One-Armed Albert. It's a great read for boxers and it's free ... to you**)

- \* Make a splint for your leg, so you can't bend at the knee. This should show you what a "bum leg" feels like. Don't forget to be careful — don't fall on the splint.
- \* If you are practicing stick fighting with an opponent, drop your stick in the middle of the encounter. Then continue fighting barehanded against someone who still has a stick. In a real fight, knuckles, arms, noses, etc. get whapped early in the game.

Can you still punch after your knuckles feel the excruciating blow of a stick?

- \* The same goes for knife fighting. Someone is going to get cut in a real fight. And no, you are not practicing to lose. You are being realistic. And by the way, once you get over the fear of being cut, you will fight a lot more effectively.



We could go on and on. For example, how about a brace to limit back movement. I thought about this while recovering from a back injury — six days in bed was no fun.

**\*\*Make sure that the brace doesn't put your back in a position that could cause you damage. Especially if this wasn't your brace to begin with, or if your body size or shape has changed since you last wore it. Be careful.\*\***

At the hospital, I tried to imagine how I would defend my wife and daughter at 1:00 am in the condition I was in. Of course, I tend to forget during these little mental vignettes, that I am married to a martial artist. She could protect us, if the need were to arise.

Also, I was walking with a cane. The nurses and the doctor asked if I usually walked using one. I explained that I occasionally practice martial arts with canes. And I have also practiced moving around with limited agility, relying on the cane for support.

Why have I practiced with a cane, if I don't normally use one?

Because no matter how much I live by the motto "childish never, child-like forever," I still realize that someday, my child-like body may require a bit of assistance.

Also, I may have to teach a cane-wielder someday. I want to be informed and practiced, if such an occasion were to arise. And cane fighting is very much like stick fighting, with a "twist" (pardon the pun).

Who knows? I might just find myself in an emergency room at 1:00 am in the morning -- again.



## **Conclusion**

You practice martial arts, even though you may never actually have to defend yourself. You should practice for the loss of one of your tools (hands, feet, etc.).

If you never have to fight with such a limitation, great. Then at least, during your next practice session, you can shout out, "look Ma, no hands."



# Quotes

As I reread the previous chapter, I fear that I am going to make some people too gun-shy about punching, or kicking, against someone with a weapon.

I apologize if you believe my warnings of pain and injury to be a “done deal.”

I am preparing you for *the possibility*, and trying to show you that all is not lost, if an injury does occur.



To bring this conversation around to a more positive note, let's see what Bruce Lee had to say about fighting people with weapons:

“A Man With a Weapon is the One With the Disadvantage”

“The man who pulls a knife on you.... his thinking is therefore limited to the use of that single weapon. You on the other hand, are thinking about all of your weapons; hands, elbows, knees, feet, head. You are thinking 360 degrees around him.”



### **Against a man with a club**

“He's holding something with two hands. I mean, what's he going to do: swing, thrust, jab? He's got a problem....”



All quotes were taken from:

**Jeet Kune Do: Bruce Lee's Commentaries on the Martial Way**,  
edited by John Little; Tuttle Publishing, 1997, pages 23 -24.



# Can **You** Punch After Being Punched?

When talking about limiting limbs, we considered a few “what if’s.” Well, what if an attacker pops you in the head, and you feel addle-brained for a minute or two?

The chances are that your attacker won’t wait for you to “collect your thoughts.” The blows will just keep coming.



## How do you practice for this?

Well, let's borrow a pep-assembly activity and what is also an exercise from a local Thai-boxing teacher. You'll need a baseball bat.

Hold the bat vertically, with one end on the ground. Now, touch your forehead to the top of the bat. Hold it there.

Got it? One end of the bat is on the ground, and your forehead is touching the other end. The next step is to run circles around the bat.

While the bat is in the same spot, you quickly run around and around — about 10 to 15 times.



As soon as you are done running, you drop the bat (or pole) and

immediately start punching at a pre-arranged target. You could punch at a focus glove, a heavy bag — anything that can “safely” serve as a target.

In high school pep assemblies, the students run around the bat, and then have to continue in the relay race. It’s fun to watch them swerve all over the place.

We are using the activity to simulate getting your brains rattled by a strong punch or kick to your head.

Spin around the bat for awhile, then see if you can punch or kick with any accuracy.

Note: If you can’t seem to center and land a decent punch while dizzy, you’ll need to develop new strategies.

Could you develop a wild swing for just such an occasion? If your punch whips around and covers a broader area, maybe you’ll score just by having your attacker in the path of your swing.

What other type of preparation could you do?



# Martial Arts Practice Tip (Worth the Price of the Book):

Of course, any piece of advice that truly helps you to improve is worth the price of the book. I put it in the title of this chapter, so you don't gloss over this oh-so-important point.

What I am about to tell you may seem too basic to even consider. Warning! It's more important than you think. It really could mean the difference between success and failure during your workouts.



## Here goes:

End all of your practice sessions, especially when you are learning a new tactic or technique, on a good note!

I don't mean smiling at all of the other folks training — although that could be important too — unless your smile makes them wonder what you are up to.



### **Always End With a Successful Execution of the Technique**

You should end every practice session by successfully completing the practiced sequence.

Don't ever quit in frustration, thinking "I'll come back to this later, when I am fresh."



### **Why?**

You are trying to teach your body a new movement, or to react in a stylized, specific manner. In lay-person's terms, our skills are composed of electric stimulation through our bodies, and the synapses of our brains.

We get good at something by imprinting this electrical pattern. We imprint by repetition. Of course, technically, this isn't exactly what's going on. It's more complex than that.



### **Now, here's where all of this theory gets useful:**

If you end on a bad note, in frustration, for example, your body (and your brain) will remember the incorrect repetition. Even residually, it stays imprinted.

If you end on a positive note, with a successful completion of the technique, then your body will remember the proper response....

And you are more likely to start where you left off at your next lesson.



### **So, in the future, tell yourself:**

“I’ll quit for the day, as soon as I can do the move successfully twice.”

“I am not having any luck with this new technique today. Maybe I could end the practice session by practicing an easier version of the move. Then I’ll pick up where I left off next time.”

“I can’t do all of the technique successfully. Maybe I could end with a ‘piece’ of the technique.”



### **Bonus Tip:**

Don’t push your luck. If you are starting to fatigue, and it’s a new move — stop as soon as you do it successfully.

Don’t get so excited about correctly performing the technique, that you extend your practice session ... and risk the chance of not being able to repeat the sequence.

Quit on your success, and then come back to it tomorrow. You will improve at a much faster pace. Guaranteed.

Will this be easy for you to incorporate? I am betting not. Why? How many gamblers can get up and walk away while they are ahead? It’s human nature to want to continue our success. If you can walk away, the gamblers call it:

**“Quitting a Winner.”**



# Footwork in a Punching Book?

And in Bruce Lee's "**Jeet Kune Do: Volume Three**," edited by John Little (Tuttle Publishing, 1997), Bruce Lee said:

"Footwork will beat any punch or kick."

(page 201)



"The Length of the step forward, or backward, should be approximately regulated to that of the opponent."

(page 200)



“The quality of a man’s technique depends on what he does with his feet.”

(page 199)



“Economical footwork is the sound kind, and a boxer’s aim should always be to move as little as possible.”

(page 198)



“Practice footwork, footwork, and then more footwork.”

(page 197)



Imran Butt wrote in to **Martial Arts Mastery** and asked about Bruce Lee’s ‘Drop Shift.’ He really wanted to perfect it to use with his punches.

If, as Bruce Lee said, footwork will beat a punch, what would happen if we combined good footwork with a decent punch?



## What Exactly Are We Talking About?

Imagine your opponent in a left lead. You are in a right lead (right foot forward). Your stance resembles Bruce Lee’s.

You are ready to dart with blinding speed towards your opponent and have your blindingly fast punch make contact, after your blindingly fast movement ‘carries’ you into the proper range.

Of course, **your** blindingly fast movements are more blindingly fast than your opponent's blindingly fast movements.

Note: My wife does the first round of editing on my books. I wonder if I can convince her to allow me to use the expression 'blindingly fast' even once, let alone six times! Oh well.

And this is where it all falls apart ... you aren't that fast. You telegraph your intent. Your opponent has no problem reacting to your, 'less-than-blindingly-fast' punches.



### **You aren't Bruce Lee**

OK, so maybe you aren't. And maybe none of us will ever develop the speed that he had.

But I can make you faster. And I can help you develop your drop shift, so you can get in with the same effectiveness that Bruce had — within reason. In order to actually be as fast as Bruce Lee was ... keep working.

So, let's figure out this darting motion that carries you so quickly to your opponent, that you can often get a clean shot with your right punch, if you are in a right lead. Here's most of what I wrote to Imran:

Hi Immy,

Drop shift, eh? Well, I'd put this in my category of 'scoots.' I think I know what you're looking for.

The one that John Little's book describes is for an offensive attack. I'll try to put it into writing:

1) Assume a forward stance, lead with your best, lead hand about chin height, bent at the elbow. Back hand in a check position, wherever you're comfortable.

2) Now, I am going to break it into steps — so you learn to do it correctly. Most folks do some sort of body motion first; **WRONG!**

Lead with your weapon, the hand. So, from this position, pretend you are reaching to grab a pole in front of you. You reach with your hand first, then your body follows to bring you back to a slightly bent-arm position.

Now, keep practicing this. Reach, move. Reach, move. Over and over. Get really comfortable with it.

Don't move any part of your body, until you have started that reach.

Author's Note: I bet that most of you readers won't take the time to practice this very important step. It may seem dumb, but I go back to it, when I start slipping and accidentally lead with my body ... instead of my hand.

3) Then start to bring the motions closer together. Reach/grab. Reach/grab. Then even closer. Get to the point, that your hand is barely moving a fraction of a second before the rest of your body. **IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT YOUR HAND ALWAYS MOVE BEFORE ANY PART OF YOUR 'BOD.'**

4) Now, let's get the drop part in — Lower your body. Put more weight forward. Almost like a sprinter starting a race, but not so low — just some weight over the lead foot. Now, if you were to lift your front foot off the ground, what would happen? You'd fall forward.

Combine this fall with a push off from your rear foot, and you have a very fast drop-forward motion, right?

5) Put those two motions together. Reach with the hand (you have turned it into a punch or eye jab by now, true?) and just a tad after that motion starts, your legs take over and propel you forward ....

6) Now, let's add the shift part. If your opponent is in front of you, and you were to do this technique, you'd crash right into him, so ...

You have to shift to the side. It just means stepping slightly off with your lead foot. You are still stepping forward, just at a slight angle. How much of an angle?

Not much at all — barely. Just enough to brush past your opponent; nothing so bold as a classical Karate or Tae Kwon Do angle. You want to stay really close to the body with this one.

7) Obviously, punching straight forward won't work —you'd punch past your foe. So, you have to angle your punch towards his/her head.



## **Just a Scoot with a Punch**

Now, I just took a long time to describe something that occurs in a fraction of a second. In other words, you step forward and punch at the same time.

But it's a lot more than that — and at the same time it's 'nothing' more than that ... done with the right timing, absence of telegraph, etc.

Now, I pray that this is the drop shift you were referring to. There is also a scoot with Bruce's side kick, a shift while settling in to a back stance, etc....



## Tips: Refining Your Drop Shift

After that lengthy reply, Immy wrote back. He was successful. Then the next day, he had more questions. I responded to his letter. I think I am just describing the same motion using different words.

See if this dialogue helps you refine your Drop Shift:

hi ya 'Kip', its me again. Erm, i was just trying out the drop shift (once again, thank you!!!)...and i kinda noticed somethin...when i do punch, my lead foot is still in the air...is that supposed to happen.

I wouldn't call it "in the air." The foot 'glides' forward. It 'almost' maintains light contact with the ground. The back foot is the propeller ... it pushes off.

Also, in striking, is more power genetrated with that one foot propelled into the air...its like a catapult... is that the theory???

It's designed to get you to the side of your opponent very quickly, while avoiding his punch, or if you are good enough, his kick.

Think of the punch as starting first and ending first too. As the punch ends, your rear foot is drawing forward to close the distance back to normal between your two feet. It has a slight drag, right after the punch ends

Erm, also, i know this is hard, but, can this kind of movement happen with a stance that is more square...like in wing chun style.

From a neutral stance in Wing Chun, you'd still start with the punch, but ... and this may seem weird to a novice, a great application of this tactic is to move into a back stance.

Your ankle pivots, and you slide backwards and to the side. This time, your lead foot is dragging back to the original spacing, right after the punch.

Does that make any sense at all?

I tried but i couldn't get an off balance shift without lifting my leg higher and then dropping it. If there is a easier way, or a way of perfecting the higher leg drop then please...fill me in, in your own time...thanxs 'Kip' ... you're one tough cookie!!!

I used the leg lift as an analogy. How would you start a foot race where you had to sprint?

Now, in a real fight, you want your body fairly upright ... yet when my students have trouble developing speed, I have them lower their bodies, so the shift of weight at the beginning of the sprint is more pronounced.

Now here's a big secret ... Bruce Lee learned this movement from fencing. OK, so it isn't that big of a secret, but here's the kicker.

Everyone is trying to figure out the details of Bruce Lee's drop shift, when the place they could start is by learning the lunge from someone really into fencing.

Learn all the details from a master, then bring it back to your empty-hand arts. Just something to think about.

Keith/Kip



# Which Lead? A Note to Boxers

In Bruce Lee's later modification of his martial arts style, he began to incorporate more and more techniques from Western boxing. Many of the combinations are modified from the art of pugilism.

But not the stance -- well, not exactly.

The big difference in the stance between a boxer and a JKD artist is that the JKDer fights with the best side forward. I am left handed, so I fight with my left foot in front. My wife is right handed, so her right foot is slightly forward.

Sure, we know how to switch leads -- it's no problem. But the predominant lead is with the dominant side.

Boxers should keep this in mind. You won't see power wind-up punches with the rear hand.

Why do we fight this way?

To paraphrase Frank Zappa ...

"And yes, you only get one chance in life ... to hit, so make it with your best."



# QWERTY — It's Your Fault!

A few chapters ago, I quoted from the book “**Martial Arts America: A Western Approach to Eastern Arts**,” by Bob Orlando (Frog, Ltd. 1997). In it, Mr. Orlando has a great analogy for the martial arts....

Some of you already know that the **QWERTY** keyboard set-up for typing is actually not very efficient. It was designed so the bars of individual metal type wouldn't collide with each other on the way out to the paper.

But we're all on computers now. So, why haven't we switched to the Dvorak set-up?

Because good Ol' QWERTY is ingrained in our consciousness.

And so is one aspect of the martial arts. Most systems believe that you have to block an incoming punch **BEFORE** you strike back.

I know this is true, because of the resistance I get every time I have tried to influence the order of 'blocking-punching events.'

And to my JKDerS and Boxers, I am preaching to the choir — still, you will appreciate this chapter — I hope.



## **Advice for Beginners:**

You don't have a 'block-then-hit' system fossilized in you yet. The more hitting you can do first, the more efficient your system will become.

Remember, I am only showing you one aspect of this kind of 'defense-by-offense.'

Perfect this one, and you will immediately be better than a large percentage of martial artists out there. Once you can move the punch before anything else, you will seem very fast to the less experienced.



## **Advice to the Advanced Practitioners:**

Just take what you can use out of this. Don't try to get me off the QWERTY keyboard, and I won't try to get you to hit before you check. OK?

You'll find some natural spots where you can incorporate this technique. I am not trying to stretch anyone out of their comfort zone. Or to borrow an analogy from a certain Rabbi — think of this like a new pair of shoes.

This should be a little tight/uncomfortable; but not so tight that you won't wear the shoes (try hitting first). The more you wear/try them, the more comfortable they become.



## **Advice to All:**

Whether or not you decide to incorporate this super-efficient tactic, keep in mind that to some of us, efficiency is the only way to fight.

Many try to argue that you can't always hit first. (By the way, it could be a 'kick' first, or an 'eye-jab' first.) It's out of their frame of reference.

I know no other way. Or put it this way, it took a long time to un-train my block-first mentality to the point where my automatic reactions always respond to a strike with a strike of my own.

My wife had the advantage of never learning any other way.

After 20+ years, it's my only way too. So, it's fairly 'interesting' when other artists tell us it can't be done. Hmmm.

I hope you can incorporate some of this into your own art.

And if you are looking to read more on Bruce Lee's system of fighting, email me. I can give recommendations, if you tell me what you are looking for:

info@kerwinbenson.com

And now, let's learn a technique that will have you punching first, or at least at the same time as your check/block. I hesitate letting this secret out of the bag....



# One of The Real Secrets of Martial Arts

A lot of people wonder how an overweight guy like me, can move so fast. In my humble opinion, a lot of people are impressed.

Still, I am working on shedding some extra pounds, so I can get even faster.

I think one of the real secrets to my speed is the fact that what I am doing in one beat, most people break up into two.

It's not that my actual punch is faster; it's that they don't see a block before a punch.

I am talking about Bruce Lee's "Way of The Intercepting Fist." Here is just one technique from this system.

First the technique, then the application, OK?



## Another 'Worth the Price of the Book'

- 1) Stand in a neutral stance (at-ease position), with your legs about shoulder-width apart. I don't really care where your hands are — although I'd get pickier if you were actually in a class with me. For now, don't worry about it.
- 2) Punch straight out in front of you with your best hand. I prefer a vertical punch. Use whatever you can make work. Don't move anything before that punch. No telegraphing allowed.
- 3) Now that you know what the punch looks like, you are going to punch again, but this time you are going to start to check, slightly AFTER your punch begins its journey out in front of you.
- 4) Use your weaker hand to check. As you punch comes out with the dominant hand, the other hand cross the body with an open, vertical palm (fingers up), and checks on top of the biceps of the punching hand.

5) They end their respective journeys at about the same time. The check hand ends up having the bottom of the palm resting on top of the biceps of the extended arm. Of course, in real life you don't leave it out there. We are just talking position, right now.



And speaking of position, don't over-block! It's just a check. It only needs to protect about an inch past the face — no more. I am serious when I say let it land on the biceps.

And that is the technique. Now, let's turn it into an exercise.



Important Note: One reason you start the check afterwards is that you may need time to see where exactly you have to check. Here, I am just teaching you to take a high punch to the face or neck, coming with the opposite hand from your punch — the mirrored fist.

In real life, you don't know where the punch is heading. That doesn't mean you wait before you start your punch. Hey, if your punch is decent, you might not even have to check at all ;-)



## Practicing With A Partner

- 1) Put someone facing you in a neutral position
- 2) If they punch with their left hand towards your right cheek, you counter by punching back with your right hand. Your left hand 'blocks' his punch away from your cheek by checking. I call it a check, because it only blocks just past the face, almost landing 'onto' your biceps.

**Now, let's make this exercise a bit more interesting:**

- 3) Now, after his first punch, your partner suddenly fires out a punch with the right hand towards your left cheek. What do you do?

### **PANIC — Just kidding**

- 4) Actually, just reverse what you are doing. Your check hand fires straight out towards your opponent from its check position above the biceps. And now your right hand goes from an extended punch to a check on the left biceps.
- 5) You can practice this as a rhythm exercise, where your partner feeds you alternating punches as fast as possible. You'll get very fast at punching first.
- 6) The real benefit comes when you practice without a rhythm. **Wow.**
- 7) And you'll get even more benefit, if your partner mixes up the order of punches. Make them as random as possible. right, right, right, left, left, right, left, right, right, left, left, left, left, right, left, right  
....
- 8) Once you can do this from two facing neutral stances, then it's time to bring it to other situations — like starting out from a lead position.



**And remember:**

- 1) No telegraphing
- 2) No moving the check hand until AFTER the punch starts
- 3) Have your partner punch wide at first. It will be easier for you than a punch coming straight up the middle — of course, I have counters for that kind too. (Some other place, some other time)
- 4) This is all done in one beat



**Special Note to Boxers:**

I know some of your punches rely on timing to find the opening rather than blocking first. Other times, you block. The more you can hit first, the better off you'll be.

Also, this technique qorks beautifully for boxers who know how to tuck their heads into their arms, in order to let their opponent's punch slide over the top.



# **Double Checks With Your 'Live' Hand**

Would you like an even faster response to that second punch in the last exercise?

Your partner punches; you punch/check back. So, your partner fires off another punch with the other hand.

Instead of switching hands, why don't **you just check with the same hand that was resting on the biceps?**

Just swing it over to the other side of the face.

Of course, in my system, you **HAVE** to lead with a punch. So, how are you going to punch first?

Easy. Just punch with the same hand again. What's not so easy is doing this without retracting the punch. Pulling the punch back is just too slow at this point.

So, after your first punch 'makes contact' with your opponent's face, it immediately jumps forward for a second punch.

**Those who practice Bruce Lee's one- or three-inch punch will have no problem doing this.**

So, in effect you could keep punching with the same hand, while the rear hand just keeps checking as though swatting flies in front of your face.

Note: You could even switch back to the original exercise. Can you see how powerful a system is where the hands don't get tangled? Either hand can punch forward, followed by a check at any time.

You can check high or low, inside or outside, as long as you punch first, and don't waste any motion by blocking beyond where you are protected. Power blocking is something completely different.

Of course in real life, you don't sit there and wait for the next punch to come in. After all, what's the use of getting one beat ahead, if you aren't going to continue that momentum.

**Might I suggest following with a straight blast.**



# Make Use of The Punch Papers

Do you love to read? I do. Do you also love to practice?

I love ... to read.

But I recognize the need to practice. If you really want to perfect your punches, you have to do more than read. You know that, and I know that.

Actually getting out there and practicing, is a different matter entirely.

“Bernard Shaw once remarked: ‘If you teach a man anything, he will never learn.’

Shaw was right. Learning is an active process. We learn by doing. So, if you desire to master the principles you are studying in this book, do something about them.

Apply these rules at every opportunity. If you don’t, you will forget them quickly. Only knowledge that is used sticks in your mind.”

Page 27 of “**How to Win friends and Influence People**”, by Dale Carnegie (Simon and Schuster, 1936)

If you need a dose of enthusiasm to get you practicing, write me at:

[enthusiasm@kerwinbenson.com](mailto:enthusiasm@kerwinbenson.com)



# Beating Grapplers At Their Own Game — Without Grappling!

A grappler wants to control the fight. A grappler tries to control YOU! If successful, you will be locked down, unable to move — and you will probably feel pain, to the point where you have to submit.

\*Your encounter with a grappler doesn't have to end like this.

\*You can learn to control a grappler. And you don't have to grapple.



**Here's an exercise for interrupting a grappler's routine:**

## First, here's the grappler's routine

- 1) Make contact with the opponent (you)
- 2) Get ahold in a position where the grappler can force the opponent to the ground
- 3) Follow through with the grab or reposition to a submission hold
- 4) Apply pressure, until ... [you pick the 'undesired' outcome]



## Breaking the Grappler's Sequence

To successfully control a grappler, you have to break that sequence of steps. You have several possibilities, as to '**where**' you could break the routine.

For this exercise, you will break the routine **BEFORE** you would be forced to the ground.

You will counter this sequence with a two-step process. The nice thing about this method is that we don't need to get technique specific.

We can talk in general terms. You find the techniques that work for you. You apply the principle to more than one situation.



### Get a practice partner.

Your partner grabs you. Have him or her start to take you to the ground ... but work this exercise at 1/2 speed.

As your partner grabs, you are going to try to break their hold. How? By punching or kicking at some target.

Work through it with your partner. Which target would immediately cause your attacker to stop trying to force you to the ground?

- \* kick the shins
- \* poke the eyes
- \* punch ... the tummy, throat, groin, kidneys, chin, nose, or sternum
- \* pinch or poke
- \* scratch and bite

(I have heard that we are experiencing a shortage of partners, at this time — Don't really hurt your practice opponent.)



### **What's Next**

Now on to step two of the exercise. The instant your partner is distracted by your counter-attack, you will execute a wrist lock, a joint lock, or an arm bar.

#### **You have the perfect distraction for a joint lock or control.**

And what's better — if you react quickly, your partner is still holding you. So, you can go into any locks that work from a grab.

[For more information on going into a lock from a grab, see Chapter Five of "**Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert.**"]

You can peel hands and fingers off you — and go straight into a lock.

You can hit, in order to loosen up your attacker, if it still seems hard to perform the lock. You can hit during the lock and after, too.

And there you have it. Your attacker grabbed you and tried to take you to the ground. You loosen him (or her) up with a hit or two, and end up controlling the attacker in a lock ... all without 'kissing the floor.'

Practice slowly at first. Practice the same sequence over and over. Then vary the technique.

And finally, **bring it all up to speed.**



# Quote

Even the most seasoned fighters are wary of playing their opponent's game. Think how many times we have heard the sagely advice of:

## **Don't Box a Boxer! (A nice compliment to boxers)**

Well, the same could be said for dealing with grapplers. Don't let the previous chapter give you a false sense of security.

Yes, you can be successful, but you have to practice for your success. I am sure that Burt Richardson considers how he'd handle a myriad of grappling moves. And I bet he can grapple too.

Yet he has the sense to avoid fighting the grappler with his (or her?) own art.

He wrote an article, [Fighting the Big Guy](#), for the April 2000 issue of **Inside Kung Fu**. I don't think he would relish grappling a grappler either.

In the article, he said:

“Most of us would prefer to stay away from a big man, opting for long-range techniques. Sumo champion (Yokozuna) Akebono asked me what I would try if I had to fight him.

I am 6-foot-1 and weigh about 190 pounds. Akebono is 6-foot-7 and weighs about 450 pounds, and is a fantastic athlete. I said that if I couldn't run, I would try some low-line kicks, hoping he would bend over, so I could score an eye jab....”

([Fighting the Big Guy](#), by Burt Richardson, **Inside Kung Fu**, April 2000, page 20)



# **Defending Against Straight Blasts: Don't Panic!**

Those of you who follow the philosophy of Bruce Lee probably already know about the Straight Blast.

Those of you who have gone against Jeet Kune Do practitioners (those following Bruce Lee's philosophy) have already felt/experienced a Straight Blast, even if you didn't know the term.

A Straight Blast is basically a rapid series of punches. Most of the Straight Blasts that I have done or seen have been with vertical punches. They are faster than horizontal punches, because the fist doesn't cock all the way back to underneath the armpit.

So, in essence, our reader, yes this chapter is in response to a question posed by a young lady, who wants to know what to do when someone comes at you with a barrage of rapid-fire punches.

Here is one way to get you started thinking about taking a Straight Blast. There are other ways to take a Straight Blast, and there are other tactical considerations too.



We need to think about three aspects of self defense when taking a Straight Blast: **timing, distance, and angles.**

A lot of people panic when those quick hits come flying in. What we need to take into consideration is that there are a lot of inefficient fighters out there — they start their Straight Blasts too early.

They start punching before they have taken your initial attack, or before they have properly attacked themselves. They are inadvertently warning you.

**We are starting to turn our fear, our disadvantage, into an advantageous tactic. This is good.**

Depending how early they start their attack, you have several possible responses:

\*If your attacker starts punching beyond a kicking distance — if he is far away, heck, throw something at him. If he's stupid enough to start punching at you from across the street, use it to your advantage. Throw a handful of change in his face.

\*If your attacker tries to Straight Blast you from “no man's land” (that dangerous spot at the end of most sparring competitors' kicking ranges, then kick him. Got it? If he's in range of your kick, but not your punches, then kick. Take him by surprise.

\*If your attacker is just about to step into your punching range, and he has already started his Straight Blast, then take him with angles. In other words, read the rest of this article ;-)

You'll need precise timing with all of the above responses. Figure out how to catch your opponent off guard. Take advantage of openings.

Taking a Straight Blast from the inside (trying to counter attack by hitting between your attacker's arms) is tricky. And it should only be attempted by a professional — kidding. It is something I teach in my martial arts class. Who knows? Maybe some day, I'll update this eBook with a few of the techniques we use.

It's much easier to counter from the outside. Personally, I step off while coming back at my opponent with a fast series of my own punches. That's right; I counter a Straight Blast with a Straight Blast. Fun, isn't it?



#### **Here are some tips to make this kind of counter more effective:**

- \*You need a fraction of a second to reverse the attack. It's easier to reverse if you have this little "breather" of space and/or time. You can get it by either starting your counter before your opponent makes contact, or by stepping back a bit (if you know a Wing Chun back stance, use it).
- \*Your goal is to get your attacker to punch past you, while you turn back onto his center line — did you ever leave it in the first place?
- \*The tighter the angle, the better to slip this series of punches. You'll seem faster than Bruce Lee, well maybe not that fast, if you tighten your angles. Only move off as much as necessary — not one inch more.
- \*A lot of martial artists can't vary their Straight Blasts. They can't pick different targets — they only blast on one line. This is good "for you." It makes it easier for me to think of defending against only one line of attack — I don't get scared by the idea multiple hits. After all, it's only "one" line.
- \*If all else fails, run away... or kick. Don't be limited by technique. Afraid of a Straight Blast? Kick him in the knee or in the shins. Sometimes it's just easier to kick, than to have to engage someone in close-in, hand techniques.

As I mentioned before, once I have slipped the initial onslaught of punches by stepping off, I usually come back with a Straight Blast of my own.

I actually start punching slightly before I turn off. Always faithful to Bruce Lee, I don't move my body before the weapon.



## **Follow-up**

Once you have taken the blast, you could follow up with your own techniques. You don't have to Straight Blast a Straight Blast.

So, what about those pros out there who don't start Straight Blasting, until they have entered with one of the Five Ways of Attack?

In other words, what do you do against someone who doesn't give you the timing, or any warning, that a Straight Blast is about to come?

There are many chapters in this book that should give you a wealth of ideas. There are many possible responses. Another thing to keep in mind is that this really may be the time to avoid relying on your punch.

I don't mind straight blasting a straight blaster, but that's because I consider myself skilled at the technique. Depending on your proficiency at blasting, you may choose a safer route.

Go back to the idea of not playing the other person's game. If you're a grappler, then grapple the blaster. Pull the blaster's hair. Go for a very vulnerable area on the blaster -- shift the focus of the attack.

(Thanks to *Bong-Sao Bec* for the chapter suggestion)



# Quote for Taking a Straight Blast

In Bruce Lee's Book, **Striking Thoughts: Bruce Lee's Wisdom for Daily Living**, he tells a parable about a butcher (page 107). In this story, this butcher uses the same knife for his entire meat-cutting career.

That's right; the knife lasts just about forever — it never loses its fine edge. One day, someone asked him how he kept such a fine edge all those years. He responded:

“I follow the line of the hard bone. I do not attempt to cut it, nor to smash it, nor to contend with it in any way. That would only destroy my knife.”

When thinking about taking a Straight Blast, think about letting your opponent's blast go on past you. Don't forcefully block it out of your way — any time you exert force off the center line, like with a strong block, you almost create a new opening for your attacker. Don't do it.

See if you can respond by “not contending with it in any way.” That would be a nice finesse.

BTW — Bruce Lee goes on to explain how to apply this principle to daily life. I think John Little did an excellent job of arranging/editing the material in this book.



# A further tip on taking a Straight Blast

Even though the ultimate finesse is to counter the move by letting the punches whiz past your head, I sometimes go against the philosophy found in the above quote. Sometimes “my” Straight Blast counter pounds the original Blast down as I come in. I punch over the top of my opponent’s forearms.



I am still driving in and not blocking. I am still right on center line. And I am still Straight Blasting. I just cause a little pain while I counter.

Remember, Bruce Lee also said “efficiency is anything that scores.” And that’s not just a cop out. While this tip is not a finesse move, it does follow several of the JKD principles.

Write questions to me about this subject ... or not.

**questions@kerwinbenson.com**



# Modifying Moves By Turning On Your Technique Filter

When I first wrote the main part of this chapter as an article for **Martial Arts Mastery**, I thought about titling this article “How to Beat Steven Seagal Every Time,” but I decided I didn’t need some crazed fan knocking at my door.

I thought about this title for a minute or two, because we are going to put “Steve’s” Main-Movie-Move through a Technique Filter.

Note: After the article appeared, Seagal fans still wrote in complaining. And several of them unsubscribed -- even though I assured them that I loved watching his movies.

I couldn’t get them to admit that in his earlier movies, he relied on this move a lot. Oh well. I still like Seagal movies.

We'll analyze **the move**, improve the move, figure out how to counter it, and then draw some conclusions about it. It should be a fun ten-minute ride.



## The Technique Filter

First, let me tell you what I mean by having a “Technique Filter.” I have a set of guidelines that most (someday “all”) of my moves have to go through, before they are accepted and then incorporated into my arsenal of techniques.

I don't really have an *arsenal of techniques*—anymore. Nowadays, I just react, but we have to start somewhere.

### Where did I get my guidelines?

If you have been reading along with me, and didn't just jump to this chapter, then you already know the answer to that. I, of course, head to the teachings of Bruce Lee. No surprise, right?

Believe it or not, I am not necessarily advising that you do the same. Why not? Well, you may practice a system that has some incompatible techniques with the JKD philosophy.

That's OK, if it works for you. You'll need to brainstorm your own list of what needs to be included in your personal technique filter.

Understand? I am not trying to sell you on my art. I am just relating to you in terms that I know and understand. You will base your filter on your style, your beliefs, and your tactics.

For those of you faithful to JKD, compose your list of elements to be included in your filter from any of Bruce's writings on his efficient fighting techniques and tactics. If you really don't know where to get started, write me: [questions@kerwinbenson.com](mailto:questions@kerwinbenson.com)



## Steven Seagal's Favorite Movie Move

I am talking about his Clothesline Technique. If, after I get done describing the move, you still can't picture the full sequence, just watch any of the "martial arts" Steven Seagal movies, like "Marked For Death" or "Out For Justice."

If you don't want to watch a lot of the movie, but want to see the move enough times to bore you ... uh, I mean really understand it... then I suggest you watch his first movie, "Above The Law." He does it at least five times in the first five minutes — no kidding!



### On to the move:

Even though Seagal uses this move as a response to everything including kicks, knife thrusts, stick swings, etc., we'll look at it as a response to a punch. Your opponent punches you with his right hand. The right hand heads towards your face.

You take it, by angling off (or stepping off) to your left. In other words, you are going to the "outside."

As Seagal, I mean "you" move off, your right forearm blocks to the opponent's outside right. Immediately, your left hand blocks your opponent above the elbow on the same arm.

As this second block is coming in, your right hand is already lifting to extend straight out from your shoulder, as though you were going to put your arm on the shoulder of your best friend, standing beside you.



This move is often referred to as a clothesline, because that straight arm strikes right across your opponent's throat, face, or upper chest. It's as though your opponent just ran into a clothesline. BAM.

**To Steven Seagal's credit, he does this sequence very quickly. It's almost like three quick drum beats.**



### **Time to Turn on the Technique Filter**

Now, let's put it through the Pascal Version of the JKD Technique Filter:

**Filter #1:** No Force Against Force: so those first two blocks would have to go. Why? If you solidly block someone with decent energy, they will slip right around that block and come back on your center.

**Filter #2:** Hit Before Check: so as I am angling off, I should already be taking my first strike. In fact, it should really be my first motion, right?

**Filter #3:** Hit Before Check: — wait, didn't I just say that? Hey, if it works once.... What I mean is that you shouldn't just apply that rule to the beginning of a sequence. Your second move needs to be another hit. Go straight from your first hit-check move into another hit-check move.

**Advanced Filters:** I keep harping on these basics, because they are the foundation of what I teach my students. Of course, we can get more advanced, and talk about not having set patterns in the first place — Seagal is not up to that level ... yet.



**There are lots of filters that you could apply. But let's move on.**

After putting the clothesline sequence through the filters, I find that in response to my opponent's punch, I shouldn't be doing a forceful block, and no matter what kind of check I do with my right hand, my left hand (or even one of my feet) should already be striking out in response.

Next, I know that my second move, whether it's another punch with my left hand, or one with my right, needs to start immediately after I have started firing off my first.

Note: If my second punch does come from my right hand, then I won't be in a proper position to clothesline my opponent's throat. My punch will already have punched past (through) the guy's face.

And we know what Bruce felt about telegraphing, by cocking that right hand backwards for a clothesline. It's a definite "no-no." So, if I want to clothesline, I'll have to double punch with my left hand first.



## **How to Counter a Clothesline**

So, how do you counter this sequence, if Steven Seagal were to pull it on you? Well, my question is **"how can you not counter it?"**

I will give you a few clues. And these clues come in the form of my final analysis of the sequence.

While this clothesline sequence looks awesome at first, it definitely has some holes that need plugging. The sequence seems fancy. It appears fast. And I suppose that it does work for the movies, but ....

- \* When someone tries this sequence on you, try reaching out with the hand not being touched by your opponent. When your opponent blocks your first punch, reach toward his/her face with your free hand, right as your punch is being blocked.

- \* Try this “reaching technique” at other points in the sequence. It should show you some interesting openings.
- \* When your opponent starts the actual clothesline on you, see if you have time to bring either of your hands up to about a foot in front of your face. Why? Because you will inadvertently (at first) stop that clothesline.
- \* Once you stop that “puppy,” it shouldn’t be too difficult to figure out how to use your other hand (or one of your feet) to strike out while the first hand is checking. Notice, I said “while,” not “after.”



Putting your moves through a filter is just a beginning. Eventually, you want to go beyond technique.

I explain this development process further in my fifteen-page report “Become the Martial Artist You Were meant to be By Taking Charge of Your Learning.” It’s a report that Kerwin Benson Publishing has been including for free with each purchase of my “Wrist Locks” book.

You’ll have to check and see if it is still offered as a bonus, or if it is being sold for a reasonable price.

Still, one of the stages of development is adding techniques to your repertoire. The Technique Filter is a good way to “informally” analyze technique. Which moves could you put through a filter?

End Note: If you can’t see Seagal’s films, look for the technique in books on Aikido. I found this technique in the section on “En no Irimi,” in “**Aikido: The Way of Harmony,**” by John Stevens.



# Tip: If You Simply Have To Clothesline

If you read the last chapter, you know that I am not fond of the clothesline technique. It's just too easy to counter.

If you feel that you really want to incorporate this move, then I have the following advice to offer:

- \* If your opponent is guarding the upper body, don't make the clothesline your first motion. It will get tangled in your opponent's hands.
- \* It's better to catch opponents with a clothesline, if their hands are moving downward. Get them "as" they expose the throat.
- \* Any motion backwards with your shoulder immediately before the clothesline, is a major telegraph. Don't do it.
- \* The clothesline should move straight from its starting position to the target with no extra motions (see the above tip).
- \* Following the clothesline with a punch from the other hand can be very effective, if your timing is right. The punch has to come before the clothesline knocks or opponent too far backwards.



# Knuckling Up to Vertical Punches

If you don't know the difference in knuckle positions, you could really hurt your hand. This chapter almost guarantees that you'll punch correctly.

Dimitri Woei, a martial artist from the Netherlands, wrote to me with a question about the difference in knuckle positions in the martial arts.

Here is the letter he sent (slightly annotated):

Dear Mr. Pascal,

I was wondering if you could help me with the following question, since JKD incorporates both types of punches. In Karate and Taekwondo (and probably many other styles)

the contact area of a punch is formed by the knuckles of the index finger and the middle finger.

In Wing Chun and Ninpo (and probably many other styles) the contact area of a punch is formed by the knuckles of the middle finger, the ring finger and the pinky.

I have been trained in Karate and Taekwondo (will pick up Wing Chun next year though, when I'm back home), so I am familiar with the first mentioned punch, and was wondering what the arguments are for punching with the lower three knuckles.

The upper two knuckles are the hardest knuckles in the hand and the contact area is relative small. Whereas the pinky knuckle is the weakest and the bone behind the knuckle is prone to breaking under great stress.

Also the contact area is larger.

I read a lot of discussions about vertical vs. horizontal punches (although I'm still not convinced the vertical punch is superior), but never found any discussion on the fists in the different styles.

Hope you can help me with this question.

Regards,

Dimitri.



### **Good questions Dimitri. Here is your answer and beyond....**

Let's start the discussion by clearly defining our punches. You say that both punches are found in JKD — I would agree, up to a point.

Yes, you will see both the fist in a vertical position and a horizontal position (as well as diagonal positioning). But "I" have never seen a true JKD practitioner execute the classic punch, where:

\* The fist moves backwards, in order to cradle under the arm pit, before going out toward your attacker. I am not sure why someone would start by moving in the opposite direction of their opponent — uhhh, unless you needed to elbow someone behind you.

\* The fist twists from a palm-up position to a palm-down position, while the punch is moving towards its intended target. That extra motion just takes too much time, unless there is a reason for your twist — like following the #6 or #7 lines from the Filipino arts and others. Then you might want to twist, to angle in on those lines.

\* The shoulder snaps slightly backwards on the punch, thus creating a nice snapping sound with the gi, but taking away a significant amount of power from the punch. I assume this is just sloppy technique on the part of the practitioner — I don't think it's part of these styles.



So, yes I do punch horizontally, but it doesn't look like that classic punch that I just described.

But now, let's answer your question about the knuckles. It's pretty straightforward, really.

Why do you punch with the first two knuckles on a horizontal punch, but you use the 'smaller' knuckles on a vertical punch?

It has to do with creating a straight line. You need a solid foundation to back your punch.



## It's easier to explain by example:

Throw your classic TKD, horizontal punch out. Lead with those first two knuckles. Now, when you make contact with something, that's a pretty strong punch, isn't it? You already knew that.

Now, bend your wrist a little to the side (thumb moves towards your center), so that this same punch is hitting with the smaller knuckles. Now, you have just turned that horizontal punch into a weak punch, right?

You destroyed the straight line.

Now, with a vertical punch, the reverse is true. Punch with a vertical punch (forefinger at the top, pinky at the bottom).



If you cock that wrist a bit, so make contact with those small knuckles you will have a very solid punch. But if you bend your wrist down, so you are punching with the larger knuckles, you will almost break your wrist on the punch.

BTW — don't worry about breaking your fingers with a vertical punch. There isn't a heck of a lot of difference in size between your biggest finger and your smallest (compared to the big bones in the body). But don't sue me if you do hurt yourself. Accidents happen.

Forefingers (the big one) get sprained and broken all of the time in basketball, volleyball, etc....

A tightly packed fist, should prevent most damage no matter which punch you use. After all, proper punching is proper punching.

Whether you're punching horizontally or vertically, always create that strong line.

See, it's just a question of anatomy and physics.



## Some of the merits of a vertical punch

But let's keep going a bit. You didn't seem convinced of the merits of a vertical punch. Well ...

- 1) It guards the center better. Just compare the openings that are left by both.
- 2) You can get more extension without tweaking your elbow.
- 3) You eliminate that shoulder jerk that creates the snapping sound in the gi.
- 4) You don't have to take extra time to rotate your hand from palm up to palm down.
- 5) You have your whole body behind your punch. Push a classical, horizontal punch and the shoulder moves/twists back. On the other hand, push on a vertical punch and the whole body moves back.

I don't know about you, but I'd rather have my whole body packing power into my punch, than just my shoulder.

I really could go on. These are just some of the reasons, that I teach. Obviously, do what works for you. Always do what works for you.

If you have only punched horizontally in the past, maybe you should consider some places in your repertoire where you could use this type of fast, powerful punch.



# Useful Tips When You Punch

Dimitri wrote back, of course. In the course of a few more emails, we developed a dialogue about a good punch. Here is part of *the conversation*.

Dimitri: You are right, the position of the elbow is extremely important. If the elbow isn't behind the fist, the punch is extremely weak.

In Kyokushinkai Karate I see a lot of people punching with the elbows to the side, and not just a little bit. The elbow is way out of line from the fist.

It is showy, but most people practicing Kyokushin I have met are macho types who like to show off, so it isn't really surprising.

When I punch I try to keep the elbow as down as possible, the strength from the body is carried over better to the fist that way.

**Pascal: I suggest folks try punching with their elbows pointing to the ground. It's safer; it guards lines more efficiently, and it offers more power — when you have your body behind the punch.**

Dimitri: ... the fist moves from the current position directly to the target. The other fist does move back to the chamber position.

**Pascal: I don't want either fist chambering. In the classical styles I learned, it didn't matter whether it was the first, second, or third punch — one of them was bound to come from that chambered position —which mean it had to draw back to get there in the first place.**

**Think of it this way — Where do you put your hands to guard your body? In front of you, right. In fact, my teacher spent years trying to get me to extend my arms more. This keeps the opponent away from your body, but still within your reach.**

**So, when you chamber a punch, you are opening that whole line to your opponent's attack. You are taking an "interference" completely out of his/her way.**

Dimitri: There is no jerking back of the shoulder to snap the gi though.

**Pascal: I usually see this when everyone is lined up, practicing punches at the same time — in a series/set. The shoulder snaps back just a little to make a loud snap sound. This isn't a taught technique. It's an error.**

Dimitri: The only time I have seen people jerking back the shoulder to snap the gi is in kata competitions for effect. But they also stamp their feet and hit their chest with the chambering fist.

They also stretch their fingers in knife hands, which in combat application should be bend.

If you look carefully you will also notice most of them do move their hips, but this movement isn't carried over to their fist, it's just an empty movement. But this is all just for show....

**Pascal: I knew there was a reason I don't like most traditional kata. You just described everything I am trying to train "out" of my students. It's like all of their bad techniques rolled into one.**

**I can see, that we agree on this. It makes me shudder to think what some people practice. Yuck.**

Dimitri: I can't think of any reason for moving the fist back to the chamber before punching. The only time when I believe it is done is in the transitional state during a full step forward....

I have asked my instructors why this is done. And got varying answers.

One of them said, it is a power up for the next technique. Another said it was to teach the student proper focus before executing the technique and should be dropped at advanced levels, another answer was, that I should regard the pointing fist as an attack, leading the real technique.

**Pascal: Be wary of "power ups." To me, they mean wasted motion and telegraphing your intent.**

**Most techniques that should be dropped at advanced levels, should probably be dropped now. Not everything — but for sure anything that puts you in danger, while you're a beginner — or you might never reach that advanced level ;-)**

Dimitri: Hmm, writing this I am remembered of a time when I practiced Ippon Kihon Kumite with a partner. I had to step back into long stance lowerblock, with kiai, wait for my training partner to acknowledge she was ready, and execute a punch, which she had to block and counter attack.

In kihon stances are extremely wide and low. The idea behind this is, it trains the muscles and it teaches proper technique, and if you can execute it good and fast in wide and low stances, you can execute it better and even faster in short and high stances.

**Pascal: In Wing Chun, you stretch the muscles with an affected stance too. It is assumed in a real fight, that you won't go so deep. You move faster, by not being locked.**

**After your last comment, you went on to say that you got faster as you got longer. Maybe you meant to say shorter. Just ask a boxer. They have a much shorter tance -- for good reason.**

**Anyway, try an experiment. Try reacting from a stance that is too long. And then try reacting from a stance that is too short.**

**I move faster with the shorter stance. How about you?**



## **Conclusion:**

I am by no means discounting Dimitri with the above conversation. His points were insightful, and I agreed with many of them.

It just gave me a chance to elaborate from my perspective. I am grateful that we have such attentive readers.



## Cure Your Bad Habits in an Hour

This conversation reminds me of an article that I wrote about curing bad habits in the martial arts.

If you're interested, I think it is still up on the Kerwin Benson Publishing web site.

Go to the free report section of the Kerwin Benson Publishing and read this free report and others.

One of the reasons I mention it is because it deals specifically with length of stance. It's a very valuable tip -- and it's free.

**[http://www.kerwinbenson.com/martial\\_arts\\_freereports.html](http://www.kerwinbenson.com/martial_arts_freereports.html)**

Note: It occasionally moves to the subscriber section of the Free Reports Page. Don't worry, you get the Access URL each month Free, in **Martial Arts Mastery** (subscribe@kerwinbenson.com)



# **Making Your Defense Counters 300% More Effective-- Especially Your Punch- Responses**

Are you familiar with the term Atemi Waza? I first read about it, in a magazine article from a couple of years ago.

Atemi Waza is the tactic of attacking the vital organs.

**So what?**

I thought it was a given that everyone knew to attack the vulnerable areas. One of the first rules that the practical martial artist learns is that there is no such thing as a 'fair fight' (unless you hit somebody with your caramel apple or cotton candy as you get off one of the rides — OK, pardon the bad pun).

Boxers. pay attention -- there are no rules on the street!



**Are you using this tactic enough? Most folks aren't.**

From a quick round of TV 'research,' I would guess that most martial artists only make about one hit in four a strike to a vital area. Sure, they kick and hit to the body, but often their targets aren't vulnerable spots.

Here's a practical application, so you can make more use of those shots to delicate areas:

Your opponent has your arm pinned. You are standing slightly behind your opponent, and somehow he/she has your arm. It is stuck between your attacker's arm and body — it extends forward. Usually, your elbow is pointed down.

There are many ways to get to this point. We won't discuss them here.

There are several techniques where your opponent ends up with your arm locked in this manner.

One is a straight arm bar, where your attacker applies pressure to your elbow, which is in front of his body, as the rest of your body is still to the rear.

He/She applies pressure by pushing down on your wrist and up on your elbow at the same time.

Another move is the lock found in my book "**Wrist Locks: From Protecting Yourself to Becoming an Expert.**" It is the third lock in the second pattern. You are still standing slightly to the rear. Your elbow is wedged against your attacker's chest. He/she has your fingers bent in-

ward toward your wrist.

OK, either way, you're locked. And the pain is about to get so unbearable, that you won't be able to counter or reverse the lock. In "Wrist Locks;" I call this the "Point of No Return."

You only have a short amount of time to react. So why is it that many martial artists try to grapple with their foe, at this point?

I have seen attempts at variations on Nelsons, also grabbing the legs try to lift their opponents in the air.



I have also seen grabbing the attacker's hair from behind (not a bad idea), but then the victim pulls the attacker in, so the victim ends up going to the ground with the attacker anyway....

It just doesn't make sense.

Especially if you are small and your opponent is large. Women, pay attention: Don't grapple with a big, hairy, smelly-breath, macho attacker!!!

Reread the chapter on grappling in this book, if you aren't nodding your head in agreement.



### **Instead of going to the ground...**

Think Atemi Waza! You have a few choices. Just don't take very long making them. In fact, maybe a little practice in the dojo would be useful.

If your attacker had ahold of your arm, as in one of the aforementioned locks, you could:

- \* strike to the back of the neck. This is the traditional move that I found in the article.
- \* scrape down with your instep on the back of your attacker's leg
- \* even go for a groin shot from the rear

I am not sure I would try a kidney shot. It may be impractical if, for example, your attacker had your right arm locked through the left side of the body. It really depends on how securely you are being held. Experiment.

After you take your first shot, make sure your follow-ups also go for vulnerable shots.

This is how to make your counters 300% more effective. If you are only going for a vulnerable shot one out of every four shots, then trying to make every move thereafter a shot to a “soft spot” would mean instant improvement, don’t you think.

The downside to making all of your follow-ups ‘efficient’ is ...



# Quotes:

## A Legal Warning

You train in martial arts and self defense, so that you are prepared in case you ever have to defend against someone attacking you with force. The problem is ... someday, you may have to respond ... with force.

And as someone trained in the martial arts, you could be considered a deadly weapon.

In Dr. John La Tourrette's book "**Secrets of Speed Fighting**," (American Sports Training Institute, 1992) he gives a bit more insight of what exactly defines a deadly weapon:

"Legal Fact #3: Learn the legal definition of a DEADLY WEAPON, and 'never become one' in the eyes of the law.



### **Items of a Deadly Weapon:**

- a. Repeated and continuous blows ...
- b. To vital and DELICATE parts of the body, i.e., kicks to the head or face
- c. To a defenseless and unresisting victim.”

(pages 57 -58)



So, if you are planning on hitting your attacker in a vulnerable area, and this stops him, anything beyond that (and even that initial hit, depending on the circumstances), could be considered more-than-necessary (excessive force).

I'm not a lawyer, nor am I a law officer, so take all of this with a grain of salt. But if your one hit stops the attacker, then the next hit could be considered an attack on an “unresisting victim.”

If you follow my advice and make your counter 300% more effective by always hitting vulnerable areas, as mentioned in the previous chapter, then unfortunately you have satisfied all three criteria for attacking with a deadly weapon.

For some, this is a dilemma: Do you defend yourself thoroughly and risk the consequences both legally and morally (your conscience) that may follow? Do you instead play it safe, and risk your life and possibly the life of your loved ones?

**I know how I'd respond, how about you?**



# Countering Great Techniques: How Long Should You Beat Your Head Against the Wall?

Have you ever been frustrated while learning martial arts? Not because you couldn't learn a specific technique (although that could occur as well), but because your opponent/partner kept getting in on you with the same technique over and over again?

This repetitive rut often occurs when you work out with the same person all of the time.

I think it was Goodman who said, "stupidity is beating your head against the same wall, in the same way, and expecting different results."

So how long do you beat your head against the wall? It can get frustrating — I know from personal experience.

My wife has also felt the hopelessness of trying to counter the same technique, that keeps getting through her defenses.

You see, we do a lot of Chi Sao (Sticky Hands). Basically, we start from touching hands, close our eyes, and try to hit each other.

**It's a lot of fun.**

But it was becoming less so for my wife. Why? I kept getting in on her with the same techniques. I didn't mean to — my responses just naturally flowed from her attacks. And she wasn't able to counter them. Even when I did the same counter over and over.

So, how can you overcome this repetitive rut? Was Kate able to “ferret out some fine finesses” while trying to solve her “perplexing problems”?

Believe it or not, the answer came to us at an Alan Parson's concert (Eye in the Sky, Dr. Tarr and Professor Feather, What Goes Up Must Come Down, etc.).

During the intermission, my wife and I stood up, stretched, and started to play Chi Sao.

As usual, she tried to come over the top of my forearm towards my face. My counter was to get her to over-commit by striking up through the center towards her face.

In a slight over-reaction, she'd push slightly across center-line, where I could end it all by trapping one of her arms over the other (Lop Sao). Actually, the counter doesn't end on the trap; it's over after I drive a few punches into her body (OK, only light tags).

She'd end up trapped and frustrated.

So, we started working on an effective counter for her.

We did the sequence slowly a few times. Then we isolated her “window of opportunity.” She discovered that there was only a brief time where counters would work.

And then we explored. Remember, I trapped her by locking one arm down on top of the other.



### **From that position, we found that:**

- \* She could always punch up through my center towards my throat — she does a lot of throat grabs too. Since I am “bulky” up top, I can’t get my elbows into the center to cut off that line.
  
- \* She could shift slightly in the direction of the locked-down arm, in order to give her some movement, even while seemingly trapped.
  
- \* She could go low, and shoot a strike or a fake to the groin to get me to open up all sorts of lines.
  
- \* She could even start to do any of the above counters, only to surprise me with a completely different counter as her follow-up.

And the brainstorming went on. She now has a variety of techniques as counters to a strong Lop Sao.



### **A Great Brainstorming Session**

So, why did this particular brainstorming session, at a rock concert of all places, work so effectively?

1) We worked through a very repetitive sequence. We were both so familiar with the routine, that we felt what was going to happen even before the move was attempted. We had intimate knowledge of the technique.

2) We were willing to analyze everything. No egos were involved. We broke it down and worked through it s-l-o-w-l-y. We found the exact point where she needed to counter.

3) Once she had some responses to work with, we built everything back up to speed. And once it was at full speed, I varied my reactions, to add a dose of reality. She needed to be able to respond to the feeling, not rhythmically work the technique over and over again.



## **Conclusion:**

We didn't stop there. In future practice sessions, Kate found an inefficiency in our previous counters. She was countering the trap, after it was put on.

### **Do you see the error in this?**

Eventually, she figured out that she didn't have to wait for me to snap on a solid hand-immobilization technique. She could counter, as soon as she felt any part of the sequence starting.

And that's when you get something cool — when you can anticipate the attack, and counter so early, that your response seems like an attack of its own.

So, are there any frustrating techniques that you have that could stand going through a similar brainstorming session?



# Secret Tip For Punching Faster

Have you ever seen or felt a demonstration, where it completely changed your perspective? I don't usually have paradigm shifts of this magnitude.

This is very important. That's why I have saved it for close to the end of this eBook. Pay very close attention. I will not talk about this in my e-zine.

You may think that this is no big deal. **It is.** And I urge you to actually get someone to help you try it. It will change the way you think about punches.



## **Don't Push, Pull!**

You practice punching. You throw one punch out after another. You practice thousands upon thousands of punches. You imagine yourself knocking down opponents as big as refrigerators.

You can get some real force behind your punch. And this is wherein lies the error of our ways. Even the way we talk about punching implies that we are pushing the punch from behind.

Instead, you should have an imaginary force pull your punch out towards its intended target.



## The Experiment

Get a friend. Now, get ready to punch. Infact, punch towards your partner a few times, just to remind yourself what your normal punch feels like.

Now, have your friend graab your fist. ((Actually, I grab my students' fiust by holding on to their wrists.)

Don't you punch. Instead, have your friend suddenly pullyour punch to the proper extention. It should be a quick jerk to full extension, if you are vertically punching, and to almost full extension, if you are punching horizontally.

*Note: Be careful. The jarring motion could hurt your elbow. You don't want the person to dislocate your elbow.*

You want to feel as though your punch is being suddenly pulled forward. Does it feel different? It should.

Try to imitate this feeling, while you are punching on your own. Just by changing your thought process a bit, you will affect your punch. It will almost instantly get faster.

And over a period of time, you will develop a punch that doesn't need to start slow, and then pick up speed.

You will start your punch at full speed.



## **Actions Speak Louder Than .. eBooks**

You actually have to get out there and try it. The first time Steve Golden yanked my wrist, it changed the way I punched forever.

So much so, that I now routinely pull all of my students' punches out. I give them every advantage I can. And having a super fast punch is definitely an advantage.

After you get up to speed, then you have to figure out how to add in your power -- without going back to a push. It is possible.

Once you perfect this punch, if you want to follow some of the teachings of Bruce Lee, you can modify the exercise ....



# **Perfect Footwork With Your Speed Punch -- Always!**

Remember the grab--pull experiment from the last chapter? Well, you can have your partner make one small change, so that you always end up with perfect footwork.

Get in a neutral stance. Neither foot is leading. In other words, you are standing “at ease,” with your feet about shoulder-width apart.

Now have your partner pull your punch out again -- just like in the last chapter.

This time, have your partner pull it out further. He or she pull it out far enough that it forces your foot forward to catch your balance.

If you are punching with the right hand, then the right foot will fall forward a bit. And if you are punching with the left, then the left foot falls forward.

Seems simple enough, doesn't it?

Ah, but can you do this on command, without the use of a partner. I am teaching you to:

- \* punch first before the leg moves.
- \* punch without telegraphing
- \* get some more extension on your punch
- \* increase the range of your punch

If you can perfect this feeling, you can combine it with Bruce Lee's Drop Shift. Just let your foot fall forward -- and slightly to one side of your opponent.

Your punches will never be the same again.



# I Need Your Help

This book was an experiment. I have never combined articles into a full-length eBook before.

So, I need your help?

Was this book useful? Will it change the way you punch?

I have always felt that if I get one useful tip from a book, then the price of the book was worth it, especially if it saves my life. Maybe you don't feel the same.

I need your input. And I need your testimonials-- this product is still new.

If you send me your comments and testimonials, I'll reward you with a free copy of my eBook -- The Tale of One-Armed Albert.

To date, One-Armed AI has been the most popular series published in Martial Arts Mastery: A Tell-All of Tips, Tactics, and Techniques. In fact, it was so popular, that ...

I had to write a sequel. Really. And if you send me a nice testimonial for The Punch Papers, I'll send you both The Tale of One-Armed Albert, and the sequel ...

### **Little Brother Meets the Master**

One-Armed AI is all about punching and Little Brother is about defense techniques when you aren't a fast mover.

Just send your comments to:

punchcomments@kerwinbenson.com

And if you are sending a testimonial, could you include a few lines of a release ...

I give Keith Pascal permission to publish my comments in whole or in part, for the purposes of promotion in any format, electronic or other. keith may use my comments as he sees fit ...

Something like that, please.

And don't forget to include your name, and title, so we may give you credit.

-- Cassie Pascal, gray belt -- Black Dog Martial Arts

-- Cassie Pascal, athlete, cook, senior citizen

-- Kate Pascal, high school teacher, martial arts instructor

-- Rick Kirkham, head instructor, author of **Internal Energy Strikes**

Thanks,

Keith Pascal



# Punching Resources:

Want to Know what to do after you hit? How about controlling your attacker with a wrist lock, a joint lock, or an arm bar?

There easy to do when you know how. And if the situation warrants it, you can always go back to hitting. Read more about the best locking information available anywhere.

<http://www.kerwinbenson.com/wristlocks.html>

Master Kirkham has authored an eBook to furhter your study of punch power. If you crave even more advice on hitting hard, check out this title:

**“Internal Energy Strikes,” by Rick Kirkham.**

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?kerwin/hometutor>

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