

Knife Tips #1



by Keith Pascal

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This book is designed to provide information about knife self defense. It is sold with the understanding that neither the author, the publisher, nor anyone involved with the book is engaged in the rendering of legal advice, or advice and expertise for your specific situation, environment, or set of circumstances.

Picking up a knife in a fight is serious business. Such an action could result in legal consequences. You'd also have to live knowing you may have maimed or killed another individual.

Services of competent professionals should be sought, to help you gain more expertise in judging self-defense situations and appropriate reactions.

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Do you hold the knife up or down (ice pick style)? Loosely or firmly? In the dominant or weaker hand? In the lead hand or the rear hand?

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Perfect for someone using a pen as a makeshift knife. Imagine jabbing a pen into someone's leg.

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A few suggestions for those who are into knife throwing.

Holding the Knife

In the past, we have discussed whether the knife should stick out of your fist with the blade coming out on the thumb side, or whether it's better to hold the knife in a blade down position, and have the blade stick out the bottom of the fist.



In passing, I have also mentioned the difference between holding the knife so loosely that it can be easily knocked from your grip vs. holding the knife in a death grip, muscles tightened to slow down all movement to a crawl.

In all of these discussions, have you considered which hand you will hold your knife in when defending yourself?

What I am about to say may sound like I am criticizing the *JKD Concepts* folks. I am not...

The *JKD Concepts* crowd follow Dan Inosanto's lead. They blend *Jeet Kune Do* (Bruce Lee's understanding of the martial arts) with the Filipino Arts (something that was definitely NOT Bruce Lee).

I think it's a great idea to apply Bruce Lee's teachings to whatever style you practice. But you have to be aware of certain conflicting principles.

For example, even though we should learn to knife fight with both hands, each philosophy emphasizes a preference to which hand holds the knife.

In the Filipino arts that I was taught, I often had a stick in my dominant hand. My empty hand (Live Hand) worked in concert with my stick hand.

Often, we picked up knives along with our sticks. The sticks stayed on our dominant hands, and the knives were held in our "rear" hand.

The Bruce Lee thought says to always lead with your best forward. Bruce's teachings emphasized that you may not get a second chance in a real self-defense situation.

With a stick, your dominant side is the side with the reach — the stick hand.

Whether empty handed or with a weapon (or two), you may only get one chance to defend yourself.

So, you hit the attacker with your best shot, your best side, from the very beginning.



Do you see where this is going?

Let's say you are right handed:

If you are stick fighting and also have a knife, then you hold the stick in your right hand and the knife in your left.

On the other hand, if you are only knife fighting, then *“Bruce Lee thought”* would dictate that you hold the knife in your right hand. Lead with your best chance of success.

How do you solve this problem?

“Easy — learn both ways.”

Not so fast. What happens if you are stick fighting, have a knife in your rear hand, and suddenly your attacker disarms your stick?

Do you continue fighting with the knife in your secondary hand?

Do you take the time to switch hands mid-fight?

I have thought about in detail the tactics for when I am holding a knife. It’s better for you to know now what you’d do, then to have to react in the middle of an attack.

End note:

I apologize if you were looking for a pat answer on which hand should hold the knife. There are too many variables:

- * Does your style lead with its best or worst?

- * Do you cradle your hands at your waist or do you always keep your hands to the front?

- * Do you take a wide or narrow stance? Neutral stance?

* Will you be knife fighting at a sparring distance or will you be doing some in-fighting?

* Are you holding the knife stick up, stick down, or do you switch between the two?

* Do you have a single or double edged blade?

* Are you using a comb or pen in place of a knife?

* Are you accustomed to using both hands in concert, or is one 'waiting' for the other hand to perform its action?

* Do you stab, slash, or perform a combination, depending on what the fight dictates?

Good luck working through all of the variables. And to think, all I wanted to do was ask you which hand you use when knife fighting ;-)

Changing Pats to Stabs

Many of you know that I often practice my knife-fighting techniques with a ball-point pen. Unfortunately, a lot of the drills in **10 Days to Better Knife Fighting** work with a slashing motion. The poke required for a pen won't work.

So our 'pokers' (people who like to stab) don't feel left out, here's a quick tip:

Grab a partner. Grab a practice knife ... or two.

Have your partner practice his or her longer range kicks. Your partner tries to tag you with roundhouses to the midsection, side kicks to the head, front thrust kicks to the groin.

If your normal response would be to step back and pat away your attacker's foot with your hand, I have a better idea...

Practice poking the foot with your practice knife — no real pain or injuries allowed — this is a practice session.

Maybe use a wooden dowel instead of a knife.

Have your partner fire kick after kick after kick (Be sure to vary the rhythm between kicks).

You jab with the point of your practice knife at anything that comes into range.

I am sure you see the benefit of being able to poke your knife or pen into your attacker's leg or foot.

By the way — What's your other hand doing while you are jabbing?

Is it trapping the leg? Attacking with a technique?
Just resting?

Steak Knife Rotations

My best friend in magic moved across country, to work on a few projects with me.

After finding him an apartment, we had the weekend task of hitting up garage sales for a few necessities ... a chair, a dish or two

While we pawed through a lot of ... crud ... I saw piles of steak knives, for sale. Such cheap prices!

I am sure you have all practiced throwing and sticking knives in the past, right?

Many of you have thought ahead. You have practiced throwing the knife you carry with you at all times. This makes sense, don't you think?

Have you ever practiced throwing and sticking steak knives?

Regular knives found in the kitchen? Nothing fancy.

If you want to add to your versatility as a martial artist, here's an exercise for you:

Set up a board against a wall. Soft pine is nice — I used an old board from a set of shelves. Stand about six feet from the board target.

Have a bowl or pile of steak knives by you. Vary the size of the knives. The more variety the better.

Practice single rotation throwing with each knife.

You hold the knife by the tip of the blade, between your thumb and your forefinger. The handle of the blade extends backward toward your shoulder (face).

It will be easier to stick in the board, if you begin with the knife sharp edge down.

If you have never practiced a single rotation throw, you should start by practicing with only one knife. Use this knife over and over, until you can stick the blade consistently.

Generalize for Speed Throwing

Then work on generalizing the skill to different knife sizes and weights.

Eventually, you want to be able to hold six or seven knives in your hand and throw each one, one right after the other — BAM, BAM, BAM.

Imagine having the skill to be able to pick up any knife

and sink it into a wall or the flesh of an attacker.

End note:

For most of the exercises in **10 Days to Better Knife Fighting**, you'll maintain control of your knife.

If you want to learn more about throwing during a fight, take a look at *Day 8* of **10 Days to Better Knife Fighting**.

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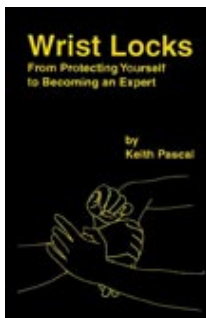
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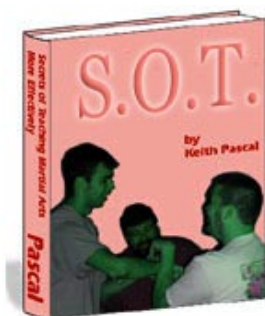
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