

# Knife Tips #3



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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# Which Knife Tactic Should You Use?

Those of you who are into Filipino stick fighting often train with a stick in one hand and a knife in the other.

The chances are ...

you have a stick in your dominant hand, and in your “alive” hand, you hold a knife.

Your attacker advances — Crunch! — He or she knocks the stick out of your hand. You are left with the knife in your weaker hand.



How do you proceed from here?

Do you keep the knife to the rear as your 'protector hand,' and use your 'normally' stronger hand (it just got whacked by a stick) as the forward attack or defense ... or defense by attack?

Or do you change leads, and make your knife hand your 'best' side?



Note: In Issue #227 of **Martial Arts Mastery** dismissed switching the knife to the recently 'rapped-knuckles hand.'

Making a decision as to which strategy you prefer might be hard. So, which is it?

If you were to lose your main weapon, should you fight empty hand forward or fight with the weaker hand holding the knife forward?

I feel that you won't approve of my solution. Bear with me — the solution to this specific problem isn't of paramount importance, but I think you'll like this method of pitting two strategies against each other, in order to create a workable plan.

So, how did I solve the problem when I first experimented with the choice of knife and lead?

First, I practiced keeping my empty hand forward, after the disarm. My attitude was to use the knife in the rear hand to slash at anything that broke the perimeter of my tighter (because of the rear-hand position) body bubble.

I used my empty hand for my first move after the disarm. I either hit, 'arm barred,' or flowed from a take-away into a joint lock.

I worked this lead over and over, until I felt completely at ease holding the knife in its original position.

Then, it was time to practice the opposite — as soon as my stick was gone, I either stepped forward with the foot that was on the same side as the knife, or I stepped back with the opposite foot. The result was that with one small step, the knife side became the lead side.

## **Are you with me, so far?**

I practiced both ways independently, until each felt very comfortable.

The last step of my first experimentation process was to respond to variations on the theme. I *lost* my stick with the attacker striking from various distances. I responded

with the attacker holding the stick in the right hand and then the next time in the left hand. Sometimes, I was disarmed with a hit from below. Other times, my attacker followed the stick strike with a kick.

The point was to mix it up — add a bunch of variety.

And I just allowed my body to respond.

As the attacks varied, I paid attention to how my responses felt.

Sometimes, I kept the empty hand forward, and other times I made the immediate switch.

Letting your body respond is what we hope to do with our martial arts style, but we have to have “best responses” in place, in order to allow trained reflexes to take over.

In this case, I was combining the two for analysis, I wanted to learn when I should be practicing one way, and when variables in the fight might dictate the other tactic.

Are you interested in some of my conclusions?

Read on...

# How to Handle Your “New” Strategy

**These are some of my conclusions from the *knife-lead* experiment:**

When did I prefer to keep my empty-hand forward?

- \* Whenever my opponent “stepped in” with a second hit with the stick
- \* Whenever my opponent angled his body so my empty hand could punch across his arm
- \* Whenever my opponent tried to hit me with a backhand, unmatched leads — swinging backhand with his right hand, with my left hand (my dominant) forward.



## **On the other hand (pardon, the pun):**

\* I tended to use the slash techniques from '10 Days to Better Knife Fighting' whenever I felt panicked

\* Instant quick motions panicked me ... especially if he held a knife in his other hand

\* If he attacked mid-beat, I tended to react with my knife

Note: I try to begin my stab, even before my foot starts switching leads. I want my weapon to start moving before my body.

## **End note:**

Can you think of other times when you'd use one tactic over the other?

OK, here's a little more help:

I use my empty hand first, if that hand is so close to my opponent, that "I just can't resist." Does this make me susceptible to a fake ;-)

And I use the knife first, when the opponent steps in so close that I can slash "while" my empty hand responds on its own.

Are you starting to get ideas of your own?

# Back to Making Your New Martial Strategy Automatic

Don't do yourself a disservice and continue to compare the two tactics forever.

At some point, I want you to come to conclusions. You need to develop a strategy.

Once you know when you'd use one over the other, then practice for it. Set up the circumstance(s) where you'd respond with the empty hand first.

Then work on filling the holes with the other tactic.

With the two tactics combined, you should be able to more complete response after losing the weapon in your 'primary hand.'

End note:

Are you ready to generalize this principle of contrasting two responses to the same situation?

Start with an attack.

Develop two conflicting, but functional strategies.

Then use the process just outlined to develop a combined strategy. And when you're ready, take it to the next level...

# For the Really Advanced

Once you feel your combined strategy is tight — no holes in the armor, so to speak, it's time to strengthen your 'response set.'

Learn to make your responses efficient. Be ready for any variety of attack.

How do you accomplish this?

The following principle is easy to understand ... 'applying' the principle is another matter.

Start researching other styles, to see how they'd take your stick away -- although in a real fight, I am not sure of the chances of you having both a stick and a knife. Still, for those times you have to *play* with obnoxious martial artists ...

Learn all of the Kali disarms.

Figure out what the Arnis folks would do.

How is this different from fighting with a sai, or what a karate stick fighter might do?

Respond to all of those attacks with your set of responses, whether empty hand forward or knife stabbing first.

Do you have to modify your strategy, to incorporate new criteria for deciding which tactic to use?

What's your follow-up like?

Are you remembering to use your feet?

# Empty-hand Against a Knife — Cloned Photos, Except ...

When you look at martial arts books, the photo does NOT tell all.

I realize that I often pass judgment on books, because of the photos — I see dangerous angles and positions and 'assume' that the author is advising the reader to do those bad moves.

Fortunately, I read the text, to find out if the author was advising for or against the bad technique.

The other day, I came across a photo in a book that looked almost identical to one in **10 Days to Better Knife Fighting**. It could have been its clone.

But there was a big difference.

In both photos, a woman is in close, being attacked by a man with a knife. The woman is on the



inside, which means if she looks to the left, she sees the attacker's (right) fist, and if she looks to the right, she see the attacker's knife in his left hand.

But there is a big difference in the accompanying text.

I show that position, to point out the vulnerability to the fist. The woman turns to deal with the knife, and misses that she is in range to get punched by the other hand.

In other words, this is not desirable.

In the photo I saw in "*Defend Yourself: A Woman's Guide to Safeguarding her Life*," they were teaching the women to block at the knife hand.

They seem to *want* to get to this spot.

The punch hand was only inches from her cheek, but everyone seemed to have missed it. The authors didn't catch the bad position. The woman didn't see the secondary attack. And even the attacker in the photo didn't know how close his fist was to her face.

### **Conclusion to all of this "garbage?"**

In a knife fight, your attacker has TWO hands.

Be careful. Don't fight on the inside, unless you know how (Day 4 of **10 Days to Better Knife Fighting**).

Avoid being suckered by that punch!

# A “Big” Reminder

Even though we are talking about knife fighting, I don't want you to forget your *other weapons*.

In **10 Days ...** you worked punches and kicks along with your knife technique.

Remember, that you can lead with a kick. You don't have to start with a knife response. Bruce-Lee Theory would have you go for the closest target to you, first.

Doesn't this tactic make a lot of sense?

- \* The bad guy raises his knife menacingly ... you kick him in the shins.
- \* The bad guy grabs you ... you kick him in the shins.
- \* The bad guy raises his hand to hit ... you kick him in the shins.
- \* The bad guy tries to poke you in the chest ... you kick him in the shins.

You get the idea. This is a reminder to use that shin kick first, if you can. You'll make contact before the knife is in range.

No matter what happens, your attacker's shins ... are “toast.”

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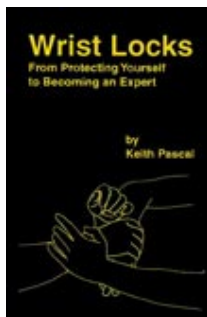
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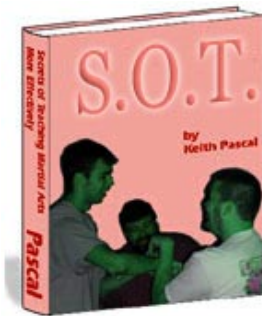




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