

Taking on a Boxer



by

Keith Pascal

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

And I won't be able to write more eBooks, because I will be too busy suing the dishonest people out there!

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Introduction

When I joined some discussion groups last year, it seemed that the hot topic was still the “**Boxer vs. Martial Artist Debate.**”

First of all, just to clarify terms, “**Boxing**” is a martial art. I think it would be more accurate to have the discussion of Taekwondo vs.Boxing, or Karate vs. Boxing.

Well, it's time for me to give you my two cents' worth, with a lot of references to the Jeet Kune Do perspective. You need practical advice that works. Apply what you need to your style or system.



This debate is nothing new.

When I was a fledgling martial artist, I heard countless stories of new black belts going into taverns, getting in fights, and getting the “feces” kicked out of them by the tavern regulars.

These “regulars” were **Oregon grown boys**. They had beentaught how to box by their “pappy.”

They absolutely stomped the “martial artists.”

Now, don’t drop everything and suddenly become a boxing convert. At least, not until you have read the next three chapters. They cover **the good, the bad, and the ugly of boxing**.

Adding to one’s repertoire is always a good idea. And boxing could be one of the better additions. But be forewarned — don’t get blinded by the light of becoming a new convert. That’s the worst — as you’ll see inthe next couple of chapters.



The Good Aspects of Boxing

This should probably be the longest of the three chapters. There is a lot of good in Boxing.

Bruce Lee became very interested in it, as his art developed. Before I reread some of Bruce Lee's writings, I jotted down some of the more obvious benefits of boxing:

- * You learn a ton of combinations. Jab-jab- uppercut; jab-cross-hook; There are a zillion combos. You get much more variety and mobility than the limited punches from TKD, for example.
- * You learn to move. Watch a typical Karate class. Watch them move across the floor. Look at their wide stances (no "horsing" around). No go to a boxing gym. Watch those folks move. Incredible, isn't it? Yes, boxers get a better sense of balance and mobility.

- * You learn to take a hit. You are pounded upon constantly. Pulling punches, the way you would in a lot of classical styles is just unheard of in boxing. I once saw a martial artist punch a Boxer — once in the face, and a bit later in the stomach. Neither blow had any effect whatsoever on the Boxer. It scared the snot out of the karateka.



Well, those are the points that I emphasize in my classes. Then I went to some of the Bruce Lee books to refresh my memory on some other good points:

- * He really liked some of the punches from boxing. They are very straight-lined. And you know how Bruce felt about the shortest distance between two points being a straight line.
- * He liked rapid hits from Boxing. Again, compare a series of reverse, horizontal punches from, say Hapkido, to a barrage of punches found in the Boxing Ring. There is no comparison. Boxers get a lot more hits in.
- * Bruce wrote notes on the bent-arm position of many of the Boxing blows. He felt that they offered more variety in the strikes — you gained flexibility. They offered a lot of power for what he called “finishing blows.” He also thought that they were less confined.
- * He studied how Boxers slipped punches. He was fascinated by the fact that not all slipping was passive. At some point, he saw the slips combined with scoring techniques.



Bruce was also fascinated with the footwork specific to Boxing. He studied the Boxers' counters. He incorporated many of the aspects of feinting — fakes designed to elicit a response.

He also studied the timing of Boxing. He studied evasive hits, commitment, and what he called “gaps in the exertions.”

Yes, Boxing has a ton to offer. We haven't even talked about the physical conditioning — it's awesome. Maybe, I need to start doing some more Boxing drills, just for the aerobic benefit.

If you do learn some of the finer points of boxing, you will be better at taking on boxers. It's sort of like getting information from the enemy camp.

This time, it's information that you can incorporate into your own style.

But before you run off to become a Boxing Convert, read the next chapter....



The Bad Aspects of Boxing

I guess “Every Silver Cloud Has a Gray Lining,” to reverse an old saying. Boxing is great, but boxing is not the end-all. In fact, some of the aspects that make it so good, are directly linked to its failings.

It might be more accurate to call them failings in many of the practitioners of the art. I wouldn't call some of these errors of Boxing, just shortcomings of a lot of Boxers (not all). Let's look at the flip-side of some of my points from the previous chapter:

- * They learn to take hits. Sounds great, doesn't it? But they learn to take them as their major defense. Ouch. This also won't get you very far as you get older. Boxers also aren't used to guarding certain areas that are either illegal targets,

or are protected, while they are in the ring. I'd rather find ways not to get hit. Uhhh — let's block the punch with our heads. Not always the smartest idea.

- * Don't you just love the way Boxers dance around the ring? So do they apparently. Bruce Lee said to "move with a purpose." It seems a lot of Boxers have learned "the dance," but they don't know why they are dancing.
- * It's dangerous to just bounce around ... someone who actually knows to move only when it is of benefit —will like picking off the bouncer. I don't know, maybe everyone has been watching too many old **Rocky** movies with Sylvester Stallone.
- * There are a lot of great combinations in boxing. And a lot of "newbies" practice these combinations like crazy. And they use them.

Unfortunately, not at the right time, or in the right places. It seems that they are just performing pattern. They aren't looking for targets. they punch right into an arm that is guarding the chest, when they could have adjusted a bit and got a clean shot to a kidney.

These boxers who just do sequences for the sake of doing sequences, almost seem like Ralph Macchio at the end of Karate Kid III. He starts doing a kata in the middle of the last point of the sparring competition. His competitor thinks that he is hallucinating opponents that aren't there.



I could go on. We could talk about their lack of focus on legs, grappling, locking, etc.... But we could also discuss how they deal with these shortcomings — what their response is.

Instead, let's move on. Boxing has entered the World of JKD....

The Ugly Result of Boxing in JKD

Many of you know that Jeet Kune Do had several developmental stages. Towards the beginning, it still resembled Wing Chun a lot.

As it progressed, other arts were added. But one of its most profound changes, was that it moved in its later years to resemble Western Boxing. JKD incorporated many aspects of Boxing.

So, what's so ugly about that?

Do you remember many moons ago, when I discussed how, while many of the Filipino arts are pretty incredible, and they have a lot of good to incorporate, some folks have taken it too far?

How did the salad combine?

It's my opinion, that sometimes, each and every one of us gets led astray — some of us are better at getting back on the efficient path, than others....

An acquaintance of mine was giving a seminar. He had us doing a certain combination of hand techniques in response to an opponent's attack.

It very much resembled Boxing. I tried it his way. Then for a comparison, I tried it the way my teacher had taught me. My teacher's resembled Wing Chun a bit more.

After playing with both, I decided I liked the old one. The Wing Chun offered a better (safer) body position "for me."

The seminar presenter had been watching me. He told me that my "early stage" technique was abandoned in favor of this Boxing combination. Then he modeled the "correct" way to do it.

Now, historically this guy was right. Bruce Lee had progressed to a "freer" body movement, more akin to Boxing.

Keep something in mind though — I am not Bruce Lee. I am big and slow. I weigh 275+ lbs. I can't move the way Bruce did. I don't have the combinations that he did. For me, this was the wrong move — I was just trying to adapt it.

But my acquaintance wanted it done a certain way. When I tried it with the boxing style, I cocked my punches a bit. This definitely telegraphed my strikes. Not a good thing in my book. But it made it look much more like Boxing.

Sure enough. He said, "That's it. Now, you're getting it."

Later, when I told my teacher, he just chuckled.

So, don't change just to change. You change or modify your style, when you can improve upon it. You don't change, just "be-

cause.” Don’t abandon what already works well for you. If you can’t find fault in what you are doing — if the techniques score efficiently, then don’t eliminate it from your repertoire.

This applies no matter what your style.

If you have awesome kicks in your style, don’t suddenly stop kicking, just because you have taken up Boxing. If you typically grab the hair, expose the throat, and chop — then don’t give that all up, when you learn Boxing. Incorporate the two.

Rather than abandoning what I know in favor of Boxing, I would prefer to add techniques, to improve my own. At the same time, I am trying to figure out how I’d take a boxer using my own stuff. This is important.

And finally, I am going to answer the letter that was so eloquently written to me this morning....

Don’t play the other person’s game. Ever. If someone is an awesome Boxer, sure you may want to study Boxing to see what your up against, but not as THE way to defeat your opponent.

Think about it. If someone has been studying Boxing for the last 15 yrs, or so — will you really be able to beat him at his own game in just a matter of months?

It’s not like Jean Claude Van Damme in “Kickboxer.” You won’t suddenly beat the best in the country by working out for a few months with a good trainer and learning to do the splits. (Still, a very fun movie.)

As the letter to me pointed out, if a Killer Boxer comes in on you, use something unfamiliar to the typical Boxer, like kicking in the shins, or collapsing the knee.



What was Bruce Lee's response to a Boxer? He had many.
I'll give you a hint to one very important direction he took
... Bruce also incorporated some principles of Fencing.

Quote

Bruce Lee had many things to say about Boxing. So, why have I chosen just one quote here? And a quote that doesn't even include Boxing in it, no less.

I am really trying to help here. I found this to be an important quote. It's especially important, when you find out that it came from one of Bruce Lee's sections on Boxing.

For this quote to make sense, look to his movies. Especially watch the sequences that have a boxing feel to them. This quote comes from "**Jeet Kune Do: Volume Three: Bruce Lee's Commentaries on The Martial Way**," Edited by John Little, published by Tuttle Publishing, 1997. You'll find this quote on page 249:



"The Art of Moving

The essence of fighting is the art of
moving at the right time."



Yes, it's that important.



Training a Golden-Gloves Boxer

When I lived on the Oregon Coast, one of my administrators had been a Golden-Gloves Boxer.

I think the first time we got together, he wanted to test me a bit. That was OK, by me. My only real tactic was not to play a Boxer's game.

It worked. What can I say — the JKD worked.

So, he started training. He learned a lot from me, but more important, I was learning a valuable lesson.... I couldn't keep up with a boxer. He was stronger than I. He had more stamina than I

did. He had many more combinations. So, during our training, I kept him pretty shut down.

I controlled the situation, because I didn't want him going wild on me. I only gave him openings, that I was prepared to take. After months of training with him, I realized that I was limiting his learning.

My fear of letting a trained Boxer go wild was making me deny him some important opportunities for learning JKD. So, I started to open the gate, let loose the reigns, and thus I allowed him more freedom.

As predicted, his Boxing training came back. All of a sudden, a speedy hook caught me smack in the ear.

Fluid oozed out.

I went to the doctor —no permanent damage. The next day at school, he came limping up to me to check if I was all right. Why was he limping?

Because even though I wasn't able to handle his hook, I still had my JKD. And remember, we always strike first. So, even though I was in the wrong position to take his punch, my kick still automatically found the closest point to me....

Without thinking, I had stomped his ankle. Oops.

Don't worry. We're still friends. I was even one of the few guests invited to his wedding.



More Thoughts on Boxing

If the letters from Martial Arts Mastery readers on the desktop of my computer are any indication, I guess taking on a boxer is still a hot topic.

I think it's so hot, because, for some, it's a scary thought. They don't want to admit it, but having a muscle-bound speed hitter who can pound on them at 100 miles per hour, with power punches, is not a fun thought.

Remember, Bruce Lee saw a lot of value in Boxing. And so, apparently, does Rick Kirkham. I won't comment on all of his points, since I did state in my article that some of the faults that I found in boxing had to do with the sloppiness of a lot of the practitioners, not with the style itself.

He restates this. A few points that he made should be mentioned. Rick Kirkham says:

- * Learning to take a punch is just as important as learning not to get hit.
- * Bouncing wastes energy.
- * (In response to me telegraphing my punches at the seminar) Often when someone is learning something new I will let things like telegraphing slide and utilize positive reinforcement. I agree however that everyone including the lecturer should keep an open mind.



Yes, Bruce knew and Rick knows that Boxing offers a lot that good. It's not the end-all, but it does offer a lot. It's funny, while we had been having this discussion, a new issue of a magazine hit our stands. I picked up a copy of "Black Belt Presents Bruce Lee, 2001."

In it, there is an article on Boxing by Bruce. He liked the evasive movements — the "slips, ducks, and weaves." He believed that the boxing had many things to offer, but the best it had to offer was its rigorous training.

He called it the "training grind." Of course, he pointed out some of Boxings limitations too. I touched on some of them in last week's article.

Another reader, from London, wrote in. Roe Elliot had several insightful comments about taking a boxer. Elliot does favor the JKD philosophy of going for the closest target to you — like the knee, for example.

But one of the main points of his letter was for us not to forget grappling in all of this. While I disagree a bit with the ease that he thinks it requires in taking a boxer — I have met some pretty rough ones, I do agree with his methods.

Without knowing it, he is reinforcing one of my main philosophies — never play the other person's game.

Note: And if you grapple a clincher, then you may be playing someone more accustomed to grappling than you. Read the chapter on clinchers towards the end of this eBook.

By grappling the boxer, he is moving to another playing field. He is also changing the rules Which by the way, was a main criticism by Bruce Lee about boxing. The rules imposed limitations.

The boxers get too accustomed to folks playing by the rules ... just the way many of the Asian martial arts teach their practitioners to “pull” their punches.

Rather than punching through, they stop right in front of the face. They practice “stopping” just before they reach their opponent. Hmmm???

You figure out why this is a very very bad way to train for a “real” fight.



There's No Such Thing As a Fair Fight: Several Dirty Tactics

"You wouldn't really kick someone in the groin, would you?"

I am occasionally asked that question by some of my novice students. I think that they feel it would be dishonorable to use "unfair" tactics and techniques in a fight.

First, let me emphasize, there is a difference between sparring and an actual self-defense situation. In a classroom session, you

may have to set up guidelines or rules, in order to keep everyone safe. On the street, you are defending yourself, to stay alive.

Don't treat the two situations as though they were the same "animal." They aren't.

Many of the best martial artists are honorable people. Some even have a gentle nature about them, as a result of gaining confidence, while disciplining the mind. This gentle nature develops with years of constant training.

The "best" of these gentle folk would still do what it takes to survive in a real encounter. So, what kinds of techniques would be considered unfair?

Before we get down to specifics, let me give you some general advice:

- *Any move that is illegal in competition, should be considered fair game on the street. Maybe the reason it was made illegal is just what you need to really defend yourself.

- *Anything that could be labeled as a "cheap shot." Taking advantage of your opponent's weakness (injury or disability) is considered a cheap shot. So is catching your opponent off guard. And "faking" or feinting is definitely cheap. USE THEM ALL!

- *Taking advantage of your environment is both cheap and unfair. That's why I wouldn't hesitate to use anything available to stay safe. Dirt or gravel in the face sounds effective. Sticks, canes, and even umbrellas can be used as bludgeons to pound on an attacker. Get the idea?

Recently, I examined some of the tactics and techniques that I use, that might be considered unfair. There were too many to name. I realized that a fair bit of my system is based on taking advantage of the immediate situation any way I can.

“Any way I can” translates to a lot of unfair tactics. A few of these tactics that I consider basic, yet super essential are:

*Obviously, I go for the groin. Just think how awesome you’d be, if your goal were to plaster the crotch, no matter what else happened in the fight. You might get tagged, but you would reach your goal— and probably defend yourself in the long run.

*I would head for the eyes with an almost equal intensity as I would the groin. Eye jabs are great. You extend your distance a bit. They are fast. If you actually succeeded with an eye jab against a serious assailant, would you have anything more to worry about (except being sued by the criminal or put in jail for excessive violence)?

*I step on feet. If I have my foot firmly planted on the lead foot of my opponent, then I know that at least the front foot won’t be kicking at me. Enough said.



You do realize that whenever you go into “unfair mode,” you are probably increasing the potential legal damage. In today’s society, throwing “any sort” of kick or punch will probably attract some sort of legal repercussion, let alone an “unfair” technique.

Just keep in mind that a lot of times you can’t plead minimal force in the eyes of the court, if you do something that seems unjust.

I am not the first to notice that justice in the courts can easily be skewed by perception. Be careful.



Bonus Unfair Tactic:

Use a control maneuver in between two series of damaging blows. Huh? Here's what I mean:

Usually, a wrist lock or an arm bar would be thought of as a controlling move to bring a sequence to a controlled close.

Instead, I continue wailing on my opponent "after" I gain control. I have my initial strikes — after all, I wouldn't try to respond to my opponent's attack with a lock, before I countered with strikes of my own.

After doing some initial damage to my attacker, then I am ready to try some sort of joint lock. OK, I lock my attacker; am I done? Not a chance.

Now, that I have some more control, I really start to defend myself. I don't even pause between the lock and when I start to pound, in theory...



*****Caution*****

Yep, this is an unfair move. And you might be in real trouble with the law. You went beyond minimum force, and not only that, but the attack might have been considered over, if you stopped after you got control, and then started a "new attack" (in the eyes of the law).

Figure out your own limits. Know how far you could be pushed, before you'd "do whatever it takes to survive." Avoid conflict at "almost" all costs. Take responsibility for your actions. Be ethical. Be moral. Yet survive.

And have a nice day :-)



Martial Arts Quote:

I don't want you to get the wrong idea from the above article. I am not advocating that you give up martial arts practice and just rely on "sneaky" maneuvers for self defense.

Even my unfair tactics require a lot of practice, It takes precision to be able to trap my opponent's foot with my own foot.

It also takes precise timing to be able to execute a successful boxer's feint. And wrist locks aren't easy to put on someone, unless you own my book ;-)

Unfair moves without practice, are nothing more than poor choreography for a cheesy martial arts movie.

Morihei Ueshiba, the founder of Aikido said:

"Progress comes to those who train and train. Reliance on secret techniques will get one nowhere."

FYI — I found a quote from the 1600s. I thought it relevant:

“When acting in a time of order, one should act with propriety. When acting in a time of confusion, one should adapt to circumstances.”

—Hung Ying-ming



Tip: Practicing to Be Sneaky

Let's continue the theme of being sneaky against a boxer. One tactic that I might use would be to throw something at my attacker(s).

Sure, I might go for whatever loose change I found in my pocket, but I might also be inclined to pick up an object from close by.

So, how do you practice throwing an object, when you have no clue what objects might be available in your time of need? Break your possibilities into categories.

Maybe you could consider "Frisbees, balls, and javelins." In other words, you could practice throwing flat objects (a small picture frame, compact discs, etc.) by spinning them like a Frisbee.

Then, you could practice your throwing accuracy with tennis balls. Just aim for a spot on a wall.

In a pinch, you'd be ready to throw anything from a battery (C or D cell??) to a rock the size of a golf ball.

By javelin throwing, I mean a spear technique. Use it if you had to hurl a long, narrow object.

Are there other categories you should consider?



A Woman Against a Male Boxer — “And Then You” Elimination

There are a lot of articles, books, and videos, on self defense for women. Some offer good advice. And some don't. In the case of practical self defense, I think the good advice is the “basic” advice.

A woman who is just learning to defend herself should have the motto of “keep it basic.”

Note: Of course the first motto should be “get away, before you have to apply the second motto.” Call it your Mission Statement.

Or think of it as: “She who turns and runs away, lives ...
to read future articles in ‘Martial Arts Mastery’.”



So, what’s basic?

My first piece of advice would be to get rid of any techniques that require a sequence of inter-related steps. Eliminate **ALL** of the “And Then You.”

First you grab the arm. “And Then You” pull it over the other arm. “And Then You” punch to the kidney. “And then You”

- * You don’t have time for a series of “And Then You.”
- * You may be too frightened to get to an “And Then You.”
- * Circumstances could change before you could employ your “And Then You.”

For an example, just think of a simple front kick to the groin. Even the attacker’s reaction can change the effectiveness of the follow-up technique.

You kick, and then you eye jab. Easy, right? Not necessarily:

In reaction to your kick, he could get thrown backwards. Now he’s out of range of your eye jab. Your “And Then You” won’t work.

Or maybe, you kick and he bends forward in immediate pain. Your eye jab misses again. Again, your “And Then You” didn’t work.

Or, you kick, and he crumples downward, instead of forward. Yet another target change, that you haven’t practiced for. You didn’t even practice what you’d do, if the first kick didn’t stop him.

He keeps coming at you. You just practiced a kick, followed by an eye jab with your opponent static.

Sorry, life doesn't stand still, and neither will your opponent. So, in a nutshell — my advice is to use singletons.

Use movements that don't rely on carrying out a long sequence. And make sure that even your two-steppers, like the kick/eye-jab combination, allow for impromptu changes.

Using a singleton doesn't mean that you only have to use it once. Keep eye jabbing, until he can't attack anymore. Use a flurry of punches. Even vary the targets.

Just don't use moves, where the next move in the sequence relies on all that came before.

I am just saying that there are too many possible reactions by your attacker to plan for a multi-move sequence to be effective. That doesn't mean you are limited to one move, or one target.



The Art of Fighting Without Fighting

In the last chapter, we discussed eliminating the “and then yous.”

You saw the logic of using moves that don’t rely on a series of interrelated steps, where the sequence would fall apart, if your attacker’s reactions were to vary.

Let’s stick with the same theme for a bit, but let’s add some Bruce Lee “flavor” to the equation.

And we’ll finish up the article by talking about how to end the confrontation without actually fighting. Normally in my articles, we start with some Bruce Lee philosophy.

I show how his feeling about a certain topic gels with what we’re discussing. In this article, I don’t have to “make” the connec-

tion between women's self-defense and his JKD philosophy. He specifically comments about women and self defense.

He answered a question about it in **"Bruce Lee: The Tao of Gung Fu — Volume Two"** (Tuttle Publishing, 1997). His mini essay appears on pages 174-175.

He just doesn't believe that a small, weaker person could "toss" a hulking giant. He compared the "90-pound weakling" to a "250-pound giant."

Bruce Lee didn't care what folks practiced in the dojo, and he didn't buy into some of the fancy techniques practiced by some of the styles. He just didn't think it was reasonable to think along those "unrealistic" lines.



So what can you do?

Bruce Lee said,

"...And if a 90-pound woman is attacked, the only thing she can do is strike hard at one of three places — the eyeballs, the groin, or the shins."

It seems like he was in favor of eliminating the "and then you" as well. He goes on to say that, if any of those techniques can even stall the attacker, the woman should take the opportunity to "run like hell."

This is exactly what I was talking about in my last article.

Note: We could discuss all day why Bruce only mentioned those three target areas. Was it because these writings were taken from notes? Was it because he mentions other vulnerable areas in other parts of the book? Could it be because he truly believed that those were the easiest to get to? Or was it because he was just answering someone's question?

He does mention tactics that a smaller, weaker person can use earlier in this book. Maybe he was just referring to “tossing” an attacker.

Whatever the reason, I'll bet that he wouldn't have objected to knee strikes, ear slaps, etc. Let's go one step further. What if you (the female) could dissuade the male attacker without even fighting?

Remember in “**Enter the Dragon**,” Bruce Lee avoids the fight on the boat by tricking his opponent?

He calls it “**The Art of Fighting Without Fighting**.” We'll, I am not sure a woman would always have a small boat nearby to trick the attacker to get into it.

So, how can you avoid the fight?

Many moons ago, I attended a self defense seminar held at our local University. The female police were teaching women's self defense. I was curious, so I attended.

A lot of the techniques were impractical. A few were direct enough to work (ahem — eyes, shins, groin). But one idea actually interested me....

They suggested that if a rapist approached, he might be dissuaded, if the woman could feign having a seizure. After brainstorming with my students of the time, we came up with the following possible behaviors to imitate.

We also determined that combinations of behaviors would probably work best. These might even work against a boxer. A cornered woman might:

- * thrash around with muscle contractions on the ground
- * froth at the mouth
- * roll her eyeballs back into her head, so only the white of the eyes showed

- * throw up (vomit) on the attacker
- * violently twitch the head from side to side
- * do “weird,” tongue-swallowing motions
- * start gagging
- * claim she has A.I.D.S.



Would an attacker turn tail and run? I honestly can't say. Years ago, I would have said “yes.” Now, with all of the sick things I have seen on the Internet, I am not so sure.

Keep in mind, psychologists feel that a rapist is thinking violence, not sensual/sexual act. So, even vomit may not be enough of a deterrent.

Write in and let me know what you think.

Also, should you have a seizure and play it out until the attacker leaves? Or should you take the first opportunity to run, even if you have to kick him in the testicles?

Write to:

<mailto:comments@kerwinbenson.com>



Martial Arts Precision Against a Boxer

It's no secret; martial artists practice for precision. Each repeated technique has to go to precisely the same spot. You learn to punch and kick precisely the same way, every time.

It's the Zen of martial arts. The "arrow" finds the bulls eye every time, because of the precision of technique. And so it is with each and every punch and kick...

—BUT—

**All of that seems to go right out the door in a real fight ...
especially against someone who can box.**

Or so a lot of the “Practical Martial Artists” would have you believe. I'd like to convince you that precision does have a place in practical martial arts.

I am sure that our seasoned veterans of martial arts can find many kinds of precision.

In this chapter, we will discuss two. We are going to discuss techniques that work better, when you add a dose of precision, and we'll talk about precision in the accuracy of speed techniques.



Precision Techniques

I wrote an entire book on wrist locks. And while I suppose that some of the techniques do work when sloppily executed, but they work better, when you snap them on “just so.”

They are great control sequences. You don't try to immediately snap a wrist lock on a boxer. That wouldn't work. You have to deal with his punches first.

Then you control.

Take the arm bar. You are standing behind your opponent, with his arm outstretched to the side. Say it's the right arm. You have just slowed down his barrage of punches. You are holding his wrist and/or hand with your right hand.

Now it's time to apply pressure with your left to the back of his arm.

Realistically, you could press anywhere, and you might cause

pain and even get some control. You could just wildly smash your left arm down and hope you break something, right?

But let's examine this more closely.

You don't want to press on his forearm, below the elbow. He could just bend his arm to resist. So, above the elbow it is. To apply pressure, our technique has to fall somewhere between the elbow and the shoulder.

If you get too close to your opponent's shoulder, you lose a lot of leverage. So, here is where precision comes into play.

While you 'could' just smash the elbow, here are two nifty controls. Try both places, and tell me which works better for you. On both controls, you push your wrist down towards the floor. It is a straight-down motion.

On the first one, you plant your wrist into the spot just above the elbow, between the elbow and the triceps. On the second one, you move up just a bit, so you are an inch or two on the actual triceps.

Other than the positioning, they are the same control. They both require precise technique.

Note: You can also push down and forward, in order to 'smush' the opponent's face into the ground.

Arm bars and wrist locks require precision in their techniques to make them work. They work, because the precision is not in the 'timing' of the technique. You don't try to do them from a fast punch, for example.

The timing part of precision in wrist locks and arm bars comes in the tenseness of the opponent's muscles. It's better to effect a lock, when the muscles are loose and unsuspecting... see **Wrist Locks**.



Precision in Speed Techniques

So, how does precision come into play, when your target is constantly moving? remember, Boxers weave all over the place. They are big on footwork.

Won't any gross, large-motion strike work? Just smash through any technique, right?

Well... not quite.

The precise martial artist is training “precisely” (pardon the word usage) to take on these big brutes, who lack technique.

We train just to be able to handle these wild swingers.... So, what's one way you train for this? Get a some protective gear — maybe a baseball-catcher's get-up.

Front body protection, joint and shin protection, etc.... Then get some paint. Paint spots at vulnerable areas — sternum, knees, shins, etc....

Then get out there and move around with the person in the protective gear. The goal is for you to strike those painted targets with your precise hits. And that's what martial training is all about.



Give me two fighters: One who is a large brute with wild swings, and the other is a small person who understands timing and the precise techniques involved in kicking and hitting targets — followed by precise joint-lock and trap follow-ups.

I know which one I'd put my money on. Give precision a try.



Taking on Tight Bob-n-Weavers

The good boxers don't have wild swings. Their techniques are every bit as tight as an asian-style martial artist. They are precise.

Every time you strike out at this boxer's face, he (or she) bobs the head to the side. You can never score.

Is there any hope?

Well, with a boxer, I would, as mentoned in previous chapters, not play his game. I would try to hurt the legs from a distance.

Some of you want more specific advice. Just telling you not to play the boxer's game seems too generic. You need a specific tactic.

So, here's an exercise for you. It will help a lot towards finding your bo-n-weaver.

Boxers are good at ducking from side to side. As an exercise, they move up a rope stretched out just below the shoulders. It is parallel to the ground -- they bob their heads from one side of the rope to the other, weaving in and out with their shoulders.

No wonder they can dodge your punches.



Your Counter Exercise

Get a baseball catcher's face mask, or any other suitable face protection that still gives the wearer visibility.

Now, attach a small, but thick foam pad over the part of the mask that covers the nose and mouth. Put the mask on your partner, and you are ready to go.

Just have your partner bob and weave around you. You punch at the target.

Start with your partner moving at a snail's pace. Then slowly build speed.

Eventually, you want to be able to pound the face of a full-speed bob-n-weaver.

Of course, if I were practicing, I'd also have my partner wear shin guards. I'd practice picking off the legs. Never forget the legs.

The boxer, by the very nature of his sport, probably will forget. You won't.

Once you get good at finding the target, have your partner start faking you a bit. He or she leads with the head slightly to one side, trying to get you to track where the head is going.

As you punch slightly ahead of the head motion, you partner bobs the head to the other side. Your goal is to learn to pick up on these head fakes.

By The Way, don't forget to give your partner a turn. Not only does your partner need to get some target practice, but you get to practice bobs and weaves and head fakes.

You'll both benefit.



In a Clinch

And who says boxers don't grapple! Even though they aren't allowed to, they grab on all the time. Often, they clinch to get a short rest. They hang on, until the referee breaks them apart.

They aren't taking their opponents to the ground ... in the ring. Who knows what they'd do in a street fight.

Of course, you will use your sneaky, dirty tactics, if a boxer tries to clinch you. You will knee the groin, poke the eyes, and scrape the shins.



Smart Advice

Don't do the dury tricks that boxer would be used to in the ring. Some boxers know to knee the testicles of their opponents.

These boxers know how to cheat, without getting caught by the referees.

My advice to you is to cheat in a way that the boxer isn't used to.

Familiar with a knee to the groin?

Maybe grabbing on full force with your hand, crunching it into a fist, would be a shocker.

How about pulling hair!

Your attacker clinches; you grab ahold of the hair and pull -- here's my motto:

AGAINST THE GRAIN, MEANS MORE PAIN!

Pull against the natural direction of the hair, and you will cause a lot more pain. Try it, you'll see. One way doesn't cause much pain, the other direction does. Amazing?

If your boxer is used to hair pulls, then you will use a nose control.

If not a nose control, then a sleeper hold.

You get the idea.

It goes back to the old rule about not playing the other person's game. Just how many times can I emphasize the importance of this basic rule?

What other ways could you think of getting a clincher off you?

Do they include stopping the clinch even before it happens?



Conclusion

It won't be easy taking on a boxer. Especially, if you haven't trained against one before.

It is possible.

But you need practice. If you want to learn to defend against a good boxer, then you should probably practice going against a good boxer.

Find a partner who boxes.

If you both check your egos at the door, you could really benefit each other. You learn to control the punches, timing, and movement of a seasoned boxer, and the boxer gets to start thinking about defending against kickers, folks who eye jab, etc.

It can be a mutually beneficial relationship.

And if you need more advice, write me:

boxingadvice@kerwinbenson.com

Train hard!

