

BLACK MEDICINE



The Dark Art of Death
N. Mashiro, Ph.D.

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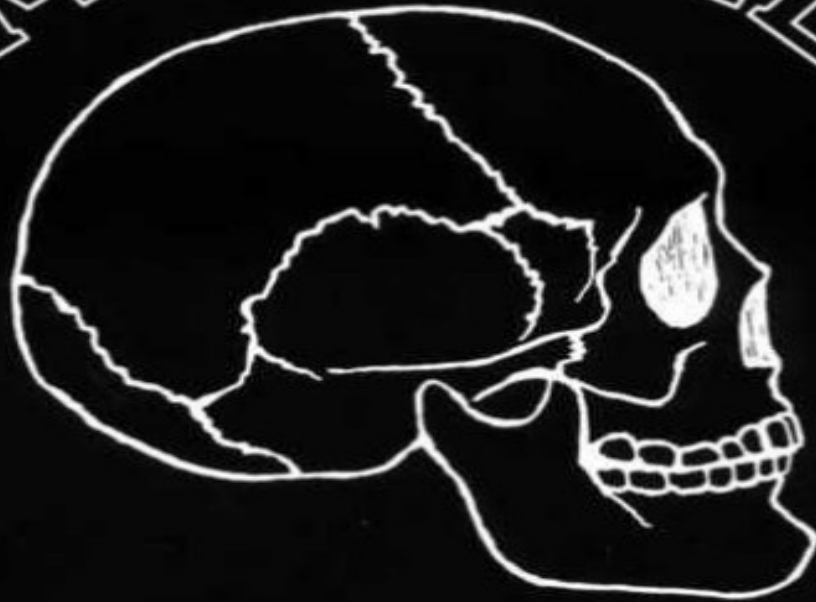
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N. Mashiro, Ph.D.



WARNING

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BLACK MEDICINE: The Dark Art of Death

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by

N. Mashiro, Ph.D.

***The Vital Points of the Human Body
In Close Combat***
Also by N. Mashiro, Ph.D.:

Black Medicine II: Weapons at Hand

Black Medicine III: Low Blow

Black Medicine IV: Equalizers

Black Medicine: The Dark Art of Death

by N. Mashiro, Ph.D.

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FOREWORD

The title Black Medicine is a word play on “black magic.” Just as white magic does good, and black magic specializes in evil, there is a white medicine which cures and a black kind of medical and anatomical knowledge that is used to produce injuries and death. Black medicine is the study of the “vital points” of human anatomy for the purpose of disrupting the structure and physiology of the body in the most rapid and deadly manner possible.

This manual is devoted to the discussion of one hundred and seventy parts of the human body where a minimum amount of force will produce a maximum impact on a person’s ability to fight. The study of these vital points is basic to all branches of the martial arts. This particular discussion is oriented toward the karate or self-defense student, the police officer, and the military combat specialist to whom a thorough grounding in the details of human anatomy may make a life-or-death difference someday.

There are several reasons for studying the vital points of the body. Self-defense students, because they expect to use their skills only against high odds (or not at all), need every advantage they can get. Karateists, with their highly developed power and accuracy, can obtain amazing results by utilizing the vital points as targets and therefore have a responsibility to be familiar with these weak points of the body if only to avoid injuring their friends during practice sessions. Law officers have a serious responsibility to study the vital points carefully because such knowledge makes a small amount of force go a long way, minimizing cries of “police brutality” and increasing an officer’s chances of survival in the street. Members of the armed forces, remembering some of the lessons of Viet Nam, study the vital areas as a kind of close-quarters insurance. After all, the M-16 doesn’t always fire when you want it to....

There will be some people who will suggest that the macabre material in this manual should not be made public because of the use to which it might be put by criminals. My reply is that they already know ... from cruel and gruesome experience. It is the rest of us who are morally restrained from acquiring firsthand knowledge who need instructions. To those of you who read this manual with a sense of shock, horror, and rising nausea I dedicate this book. Someday it may save one of your lives.

N. Mashiro

May 1978

Introduction

Power of blows: A few words of introduction are in order, particularly for those readers who are not very familiar with the martial arts. Although many of the vital points listed in this manual would obviously be effective when attacked by anyone, there are others which only a highly trained martial artist can use. The reader will note that occasionally a vital point is designated for “an extremely powerful blow.” This refers to the punch, chop or kick of a black belt who can break three one-inch boards with a punch, or crack a brick with the side of his hand. The author has occasionally amused his friends by neatly slicing coconuts in two with the “knife edge” of his hand, and he has no doubts about what would happen if he applied the same blow to the side of someone’s head. If you do not have the ability to deliver such attacks you should either restrict yourself to the targets which require less power or learn to use hand-held weapons.

Speed of blows: A second factor which seems almost incredible to those not involved in the martial arts is the speed with which blows can be delivered by a trained fighter. Even a mediocre karateist can stand with his hands at his sides and without warning deliver an incapacitating punch to his opponent’s groin in 1/25 of a second. Flurries of punches to the face and body can be generated at upwards of six punches per second. There are even a few gifted individuals who can get off six kicks in one second!

Hand-held weapons: The weapons referred to at various places within the text are the pistol, hatchet, machete, bowie knife, stiletto, bayonet, ice pick, nightstick and yawara stick. Most of these are self-explanatory. The bayonet is presumed to be fixed on the end of a rifle. The yawara stick, for the uninitiated, is a short rod about the size of a ballpoint pen which is clenched in the fist with both ends protruding.

General comments: Basically, the goal of attacking the vital points is to make the opponent stop what he is doing. You attack his vital points to force him to stop trying to injure you - stop choking you - stop holding you - stop raping you - or stop hurting someone else. There are three general ways to accomplish this:

- (1) Make him lose his concentration. If he stops thinking about hitting you he will stop trying to hit you.
- (2) Interfere with his control over his body. If he has a bruised nerve in his arm and cannot form a fist, he can’t hit you.
- (3) Destroy the integrity of his body. If his forearm is broken, he won’t try to hit you whether he can form a fist or not!

If the thing the enemy must stop doing is “stop living,” which will be the case for some readers, there are again three ways to accomplish the end:

- (1) Destroy the central nervous system. Damage to the brain, brain stem, or spinal cord is usually fatal and always incapacitating.
- (2) Destroy or interfere with circulation. Draining the circulatory system of blood is an indirect attack on the brain, as is closing off the carotid arteries. Injuring the heart is

another approach.

(3) Interfere with breathing. Either strangulation or injury to the lungs, filling them with blood, is effective.

The reader should be aware that the terms “fatal” and “lethal” have a special meaning in some military manuals. In the military context a knock-out blow is “fatal” because it makes the enemy helpless under circumstances where the victor could not afford to show any mercy. Under such circumstances, the difference between being helpless and being dead is just a matter of seconds. In this manual these words are employed in their conventional meanings.

One of the most important lessons which a study of the vital areas reveals is that there are vulnerable targets almost everywhere on the body. If any part of your opponent is close enough to strike, you can hurt him, (Figure 1).

This discussion is oriented toward the adult male body. The targets are 99% similar in the female. The difference lies in that the breasts are much more sensitive to injury in the female, and of course a woman has no testicles. In addition, the bones of the female are smaller and lighter than those of the male, and are easier to break.

Figure 1

The diagrams were prepared under the assumption that the reader would not need any help finding his eyeball, nose, lip, fingers, testicles, etc. Therefore, most of the illustrations concentrate on the vital points which are harder to locate. In the event that both the text and the illustrations fail to convey a clear description of the location of the target, the reader is advised to consult a standard medical anatomy text such as Gray’s Anatomy.

Figure 1 is a general diagram of all the vital points covered by this manual. By carefully reading the description in each paragraph of the text, you should have no difficulty locating the appropriate point on the diagram. Figure 1 has been left without identifying labels partly for clarity, and partly so that copies of the diagram may be used as examination sheets in self-defense and karate classes.

Notice that although the concentration of vital points in the head and neck is very high, the overall distribution is fairly even throughout the body. It is important to know this, because it means that if any part of the opponent is within reach, you can hurt him.

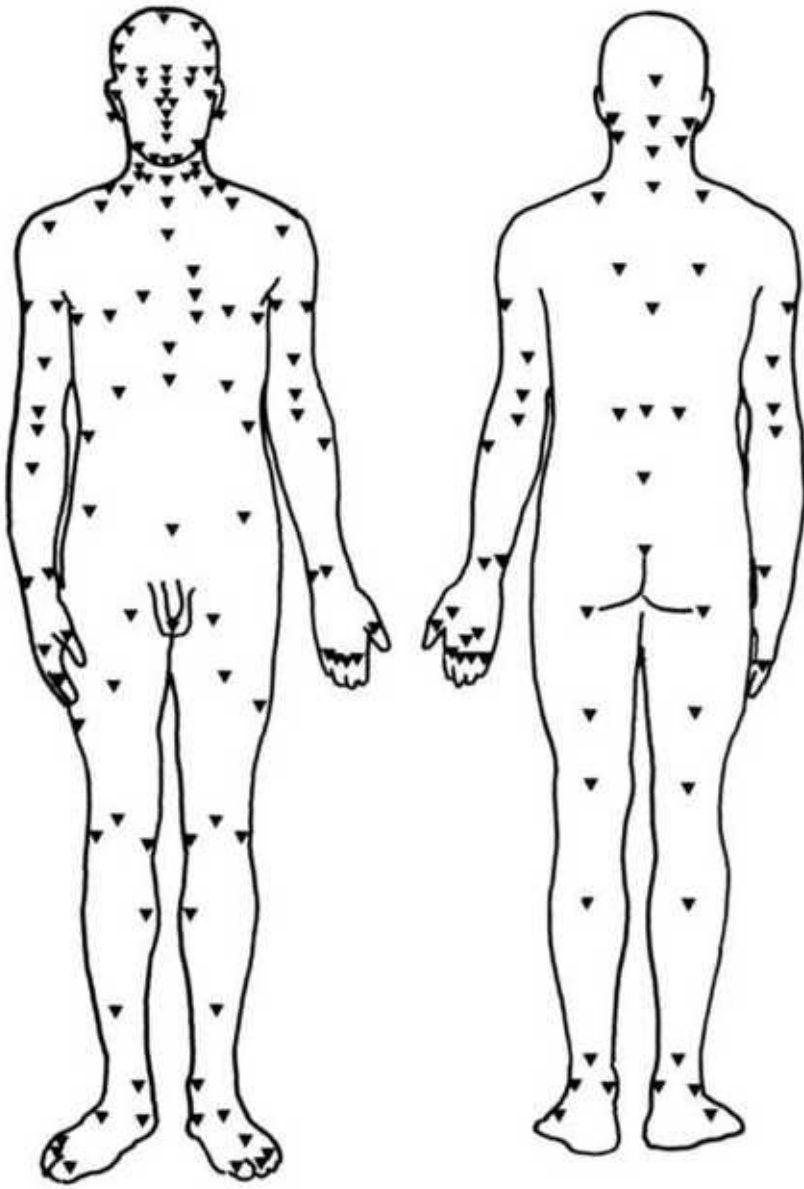


FIGURE 1

Vital Points of the Head

Hair: There are several releases and throws which depend on tearing or pulling at an opponent's hair. The pain can be used as a distraction, or a grip on the hair may be used to control the motion of the head. An example would be to grasp the opponent's hair with both hands and pull his head down sharply into your rising knee.

Bregma: The point near the top of the skull where the frontal and parietal bones meet. A violent, hammer-like blow from a fist dislocates the frontal bone, causing severe damage to the motor areas of the brain which lie immediately beneath. There is a ranger trick involving hitting a sentry over the head with his own helmet which uses this striking point, (Figure 2).

Coronal suture: The posterior edge of the frontal bone, passing from the temples diagonally up to the bregma; the joint between the frontal bone and each parietal bone. Strictly speaking this includes the bregma, and the mechanism of injury is much the same, except that the lateral aspects of the coronal suture are vulnerable to a blow from the side such as a karate chop or a blow from a nightstick, (Figure 2).

Temporal bone: The side of the skull above and around the ear is fairly thick and not a very good target. Most people have an instinctive tendency to strike this region, however, if they are called on to use a club or nightstick. There is some evidence that this is an innate behavior pattern over a million years old, and self-defense students have to learn to overcome the impulse. There are much better places to apply a nightstick if necessary. On the other hand, a hatchet can make quite an impression on the temporal bone, (Figure 2).

Sphenoid bone: The sphenoid bone is a small patch of bone on the side of the head about an inch back from the eye. A relatively thin bone, it is the only bone of the brain case which is concave inward, making it structurally weak. A potentially lethal target, the sphenoid bone can be attacked by a variety of blows, and is very vulnerable to a yawara stick or ice pick, (Figures 2 and 3).

Temporal artery: A knife slash to the side of the head over the sphenoid bone can sever the temporal artery. This is a serious injury if the bleeding is not attended to within a minute or so. The copious amount of blood spurting from the wound and running down the opponent's face may unnerve him completely, especially if the blood runs into his eyes.

Figure 2

Figure 2 is a diagram of the head, throat, and part of the upper shoulder. The location of the letters on the drawing represents the location of the point to strike. The reader should realize that many structures have been left out of this diagram for purposes of clarity, particularly in the region of the throat.

- a. Bregma
- b. Coronal suture
- c. Temporal bone (the large bone above it is the parietal bone)
- d. Sphenoid bone

- e. Orbital bones (the entire area around the eye)
- f. Glabella
- g. Nasal bones
- h. Nose
- i. Philtrum (or intermaxillary suture)
- J. Mouth (just below the lower gum line)
- k. Mandible
- 1. Point of chin
- m. Occipital bone
- n. Vertebral artery (note rings of bone)
- o. Carotid sinus (in the carotid artery. Note the position of this point relative to the angle of the jaw and the level of the thyroid cartilage. The vagus nerve and the jugular vein run parallel to this artery, between it and the skin.)
- p. Thyroid cartilage
- q. Trachea
- r. 3rd intervertebral space
- s. Brachial plexus
- t. Subclavian artery (behind collar bone)

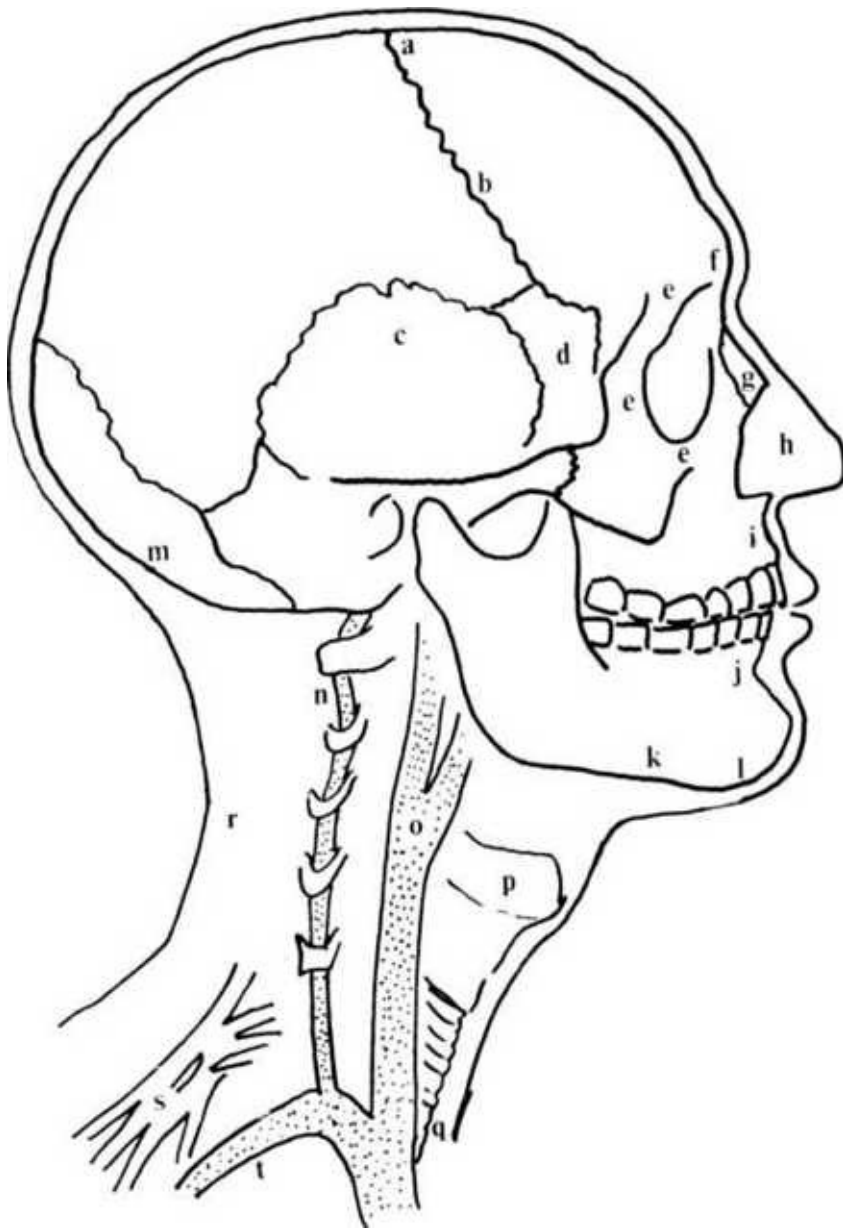


FIGURE 2

Orbital bones: The circular ridge of bone around the eye socket. A solid punch to these bones will communicate its force directly to the frontal lobes of the brain. Loss of consciousness can result, (Figure 2).

Eyeball: The layer of bone behind the eyeball which separates the eye from the brain is paper-thin, and the brain case can be penetrated at this point by a knife, pencil, or even stiffened fingers. In general, any finger poke or foreign substance in the eye will serve to distract and temporarily blind one's opponent at the very least. Permanent blindness is also quite possible, (Figures 4 and 5).

Glabella: This is the lethal striking point which is frequently mis-identified as "the bridge of the nose." The correct target is about half an inch above the bridge of the nose, directly between the eyebrows. A heavy blow here communicates directly to the frontal lobes of the brain, causing concussion, unconsciousness and possibly death. Originally, this target was used only by skilled karate fighters due to the amount of power required to be effective, but modern military training manuals simply suggest delivering the blow with the butt of a rifle. Times have changed, (Figure 2).

Bridge of the nose: The thin nasal bones, directly between the eyes, can be easily shattered by a punch, chop or glancing club blow. It is not a serious injury, but can be very painful and releases copious amounts of blood which can interfere with breathing. It can also produce permanent disfigurement, (Figure 2).

Nose: The nose is heavily loaded with nerves, due to its sensory function. A light slap to the nose will cause no serious damage but will produce stunning pain, and temporary blindness due to watering of the eyes. The nose is a particularly good target because of its prominence. It can be struck equally well from five directions (left, right, above, below, straight in), and its position in the center of the face makes it a good target for a blow delivered with the back of the head against an opponent who is trying to pin one's arms from behind, (Figure 2).

Nostrils: Jamming your finger up to the second knuckle into your opponent's nostril is a sure way to distract him and make him let go of you. For maximum effect bend your finger into a hook before yanking it back out! (Figures 2 and 5).



Figure 3

The yawara stick strike to the sphenoid bone (temple). Almost any small rod-shaped

object can be used as a yawara stick.



Figure 4

An extremely effective attack is to spray deodorant, insecticide, oven cleaner, hair spray or paint into an opponent's eyes, blinding him.

Philtrum or Intermaxillary suture: This is the upper lip just above the gum line, or about one quarter inch below the nose. A blow at this point commonly results in broken upper teeth, possibly some disruption of the nasal bones, and concussion to the brain since the upper jaw bones (maxilla) are firmly attached to the brain case. Less frequently a powerful karate punch to this point can generate shearing forces strong enough to fracture the dens, a small finger of bone which helps keep the skull in place on top of the vertebral column. Trauma to the brain stem causes instant death, (Figure 2).

Lower lip: By twisting the lower lip between the thumb and index finger, twisting it through a half turn and pulling roughly you can make a drunk follow you anywhere. (Make sure he's drunk first!)

Mouth: Taken here to mean the point in the center of the mandible about one half inch below the lower lip (i.e., the gum line of the lower incisors). A blow here will cut the lip

against the teeth or break off the lower teeth altogether, with the shock of impact being carried to the balancing organs in the inner ear through the mandible itself. Fossil evidence in vertebrate paleontology shows that the three tiny bones of the ear mechanism were once part of the mandible, hence the close relationship between the jaw and the ear. The shock to the ear disrupts balance and results in disorientation, dizziness, or unconsciousness, (Figure 2).

Mandible or Jaw: The lower edge of the jaw, about two inches from the point of the chin. Depending on the direction and force of the blow, the jaw may absorb the shock itself by dislocating or fracturing, or it may communicate the shock upwards through the teeth to the brain. The jaw lends itself to being attacked from below, as in the case of an uppercut, but its shape and size make it one of the most resistant bones in the body. A punch to the jaw always carries with it the possibility of injury to the attacker's fist, (Figures 2 and 6).

Point of chin: The point of the chin is vulnerable to a rising palm-heel attack or a rising elbow blow, either of which can be powerful enough to cause whiplash injury to the neck. It is also possible to dislocate the skull from the top of the spinal column, causing instant death, (Figure 2).



Figure 5

A finger jammed into a nostril is very painful. As the photo shows, this attack can easily be an attack on the eyes at the same time. A person subjected to this attack immediately tries to break away.



Figure 6

The heel-kick to the rapist's jaw illustrated here is an extremely powerful attack which involves no risk of injury to the woman. Had she tried to punch him in the face she might easily have broken her hand or wrist in the process.

Occipital bone (cerebellum): The attack point is in the center of the back of the head at the point where the trapezius muscles attach to the occipital bone (where you can feel the dome of the skull disappearing into the neck muscles). A blow to this area will cause concussion to the cerebellum, which is the portion of the brain concerned with the coordination of muscular movements and posture. This is a favorite target of assassins who specialize in hatchet work, (Figure 2).

Tympanum or Eardrum: The ear contains a high concentration of sensory nerves associated with hearing and balance. Striking the ear with a cupped hand sends a shock wave down the ear canal which ruptures the tympanum and shocks the delicate inner ear

mechanisms, producing severe pain, dizziness, or unconsciousness. A pencil, ice pick or stiletto rammed into the ear has an even more dramatic effect.

Ear lobe: Under certain circumstances, the ear lobe can be seized in the teeth and even torn off, severely distracting the opponent. Women can use this technique to dissuade a drunk from amorous advances, (Figure 7).



Figure 7

When a woman finds herself in an unwelcome embrace it is usually difficult for her to break free but very easy to get closer. Clamping on to the masher's ear with her teeth turns the tables ... he then tries to push her away!

Vital Points of the Neck and Throat

Facial nerve: The facial or seventh cranial nerve emerges from the skull just beneath the ear canal, from which position it branches out to supply the muscles of the face which control facial expressions. A knuckle blow to the soft spot immediately beneath the ear will bruise this nerve, producing startlingly severe pain and possibly some disorientation due to the shock to the inner ear. This point is frequently used as a “releaser,” in that a coordinated attack on the left and right facial nerves will disconcert a masher or strangler sufficiently to allow his victim to escape. A gouge at this point with a yawara stick is very effective, (Figure 8).

Vertebral artery: There is a rare but always fatal injury which can accompany a blow to the side of the neck, especially if the blow lands just below the mastoid process of the skull, below and behind the ear. The vertebral artery, an important supplier of the brain, runs up the side of the neck through rings of bone attached to the cervical vertebrae. If struck in exactly the right way, this artery can be severed where it passes through a bone ring. The result is immediate unconsciousness followed by certain death. Surgical aid cannot come in time to prevent the death of the parts of the brain supplied by this artery, (Figure 2).

Hypoglossal nerve: This cranial nerve lies just inside the lower edge of the mandible slightly forward of the angle of the jaw. A sharp jab under the jaw at this point (as with stiffened fingers or yawara stick) will cause considerable pain.

Sternocleidomastoid muscle and the Accessory nerve: The accessory nerve is the eleventh cranial nerve, which innervates the sternocleidomastoid muscle and trapezius muscles. The first is the muscle which extends from the mastoid process behind the ear down to the clavicle and the sternum; the second is the muscle running between the top of the shoulder and the vertebrae of the neck which is used in shrugging the shoulders. A jab or gouge which catches the sternocleidomastoid about halfway down its length (about an inch below the angle of the jaw), will bruise both the muscle and accessory nerve, resulting in pain and partial temporary paralysis of the neck and shoulders.



Figure 8

Car keys can be used to attack the facial nerve where it lies against the back of the jawbone.



Figure 9

The jugular vein and the carotid artery are vulnerable to knife attack from about the position illustrated up to the level of the jaw. The slash should be about one and one-half inches deep to catch both vessels.

Jugular vein and the Carotid artery: A knife slash or saber cut across the side of the neck directly below the angle of the jaw will sever the jugular vein and, if deep enough, the carotid artery as well.

Fairbairn's timetable indicates unconsciousness within five seconds, and "death" in twelve seconds for this injury. This requires some qualification. Cutting off the blood supply to the brain for twelve seconds will not produce death or even brain injury, as every serious judo student knows. Brain deterioration requires one and one-half minutes or more of oxygen deprivation. Fairbairn's twelve second figure may indicate that after that period of time the victim has lost too much blood to be able to recover. If any first aid is to be applied it must come before this time limit, (Figures 9 and 10).

Carotid sinus and Vagus nerve: This is one of the most interesting of the karate striking points because of the sophistication of the effect which a light blow to this area can have.

Since the brain is probably the most delicate organ in the body, and since it requires a constant and uniform flow of blood in order to function properly, the body has developed extraordinary safeguards to insure that the flow of blood to the brain is not interrupted. Similarly, the blood pressure to the brain must not be allowed to rise to too high a level because of the danger of cerebral hemorrhage. To maintain this status quo there have developed special nerve cells in the carotid artery called baroreceptors whose sole function is to monitor the blood pressure in this important artery. If the pressure suddenly rises to a high level, these baroreceptors respond by sending immediate signals to the central nervous system. Within a fraction of a second the central nervous system has acted in turn to decrease blood pressure in the body by causing four things to happen:

- (1) The heart immediately slows down.
- (2) With each beat the heart is able to pump out less blood.
- (3) The artereolar smooth muscle relaxes, which greatly increases the volume of the arterial system, drawing blood away from the head.
- (4) Venous dilation, which increases the volume of the venous system, greatly decreases the amount of blood which can get back to the heart.

The net result is an almost instantaneous four-way reaction to decrease the flow of blood to the brain. This is the reason that the side of the neck is such an effective striking point, because shock to the baroreceptors forces the central nervous system to react (mistakenly) as if the blood pressure in the head had suddenly risen to a dangerously high level. The central nervous system responds with a drastic drop in blood pressure, and within a second or two the blood supply to the brain is cut off completely. Fainting is immediate and unavoidable, and yet the helpless victim has actually suffered no more than having a slightly bruised neck.

No.	Name of Artery	Size	Depth below Surface in inches	Loss of Consciousness in seconds	Death
1....	Brachial	Medium	½	14	1 ½ Min.
2....	Radial	Small	¼	30	2 "
3....	Carotid	Large	1 ½	5	12 Sec.
4....	Subclavian	Large	2 ½	2	3 ½ "
5....	(Heart)	—	3 ½	Instantaneous	3 "
6....	(Stomach)	- -	5	Depending on depth of cut	

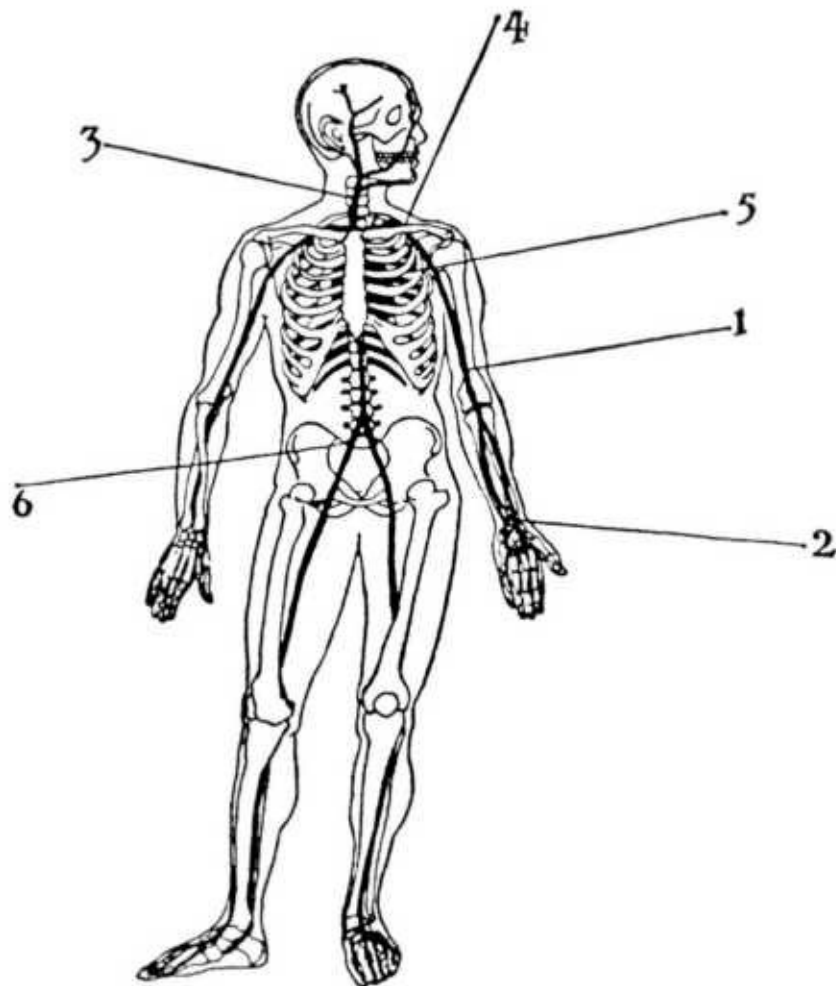


Figure 10

This is a reproduction of Captain W. E. Fairbairn's table of arterial targets for knife fighting as it appears in his combat manual, *Get Tough!* The source of Fairbairn's information is not clear, and the meaning of the times listed under the "Death" column apparently stand for the amount of time that can pass before the victim has lost too much blood to be able to recover. Death follows within minutes, much less rapidly than indicated in the table. The "Loss of Consciousness" figures seem quite reasonable, however.



Figure 11

The blow to the bifurcation of the carotid artery is easy to apply and produces fainting, dizziness or disorientation without permanent injury.



Figure 12

The thyroid cartilage can be crushed by a strong grip or by any of a variety of blows. Light pressure is extremely painful, and heavier pressure is extremely dangerous.

The vagus nerve, which runs beside the carotid artery at this point, is also involved in this reaction as it controls or affects the function of the pharynx, larynx, bronchi, lungs, heart, esophagus, stomach, intestines and kidneys. The blow momentarily disrupts control of all these organs at once, (Figures 2 and 11).

Thyroid cartilage: The thyroid cartilage can be crushed by a relatively light blow, after which the resulting hemorrhage swells the soft tissue of the throat until the windpipe swells shut and the victim dies of suffocation. Only immediate medical aid can prevent a horrible death in this case, (Figures 2 and 12).

Jugular notch: This is the “soft spot” in the front of the neck just above the manubrium. At this point the trachea is exposed to attack, being covered only by the skin, with no protective bones or muscles. A finger poke here will result in pain; a more powerful attack can crush the trachial cartilages and result in death by strangulation. A jab by a knife or bayonet into this spot spills blood into the trachea, which due to a reflex seizure makes it

impossible for the victim to breathe. He chokes to death on his own blood, (Figures 2 and 13).

Third intervertebral space: The striking point is the center of the back of the neck where the column of vertebrae is least supported by surrounding tissues and is therefore weakest. A blow to this region produces severe trauma to the spinal cord, resulting in unconsciousness or death. TV heroes make free use of the chop to the back of the neck to knock out the bad guys, but in real life the technique is frequently fatal, and is never harmless. This spot is another hatchet or machete target, (Figures 2, 14 and 16).

Seven cervical vertebra: This is the last vertebra of the neck, resting immediately on top of the first thoracic vertebra. The first thoracic vertebra is braced into position by the first pair of ribs and by the muscles of the shoulder girdle, while the seventh cervical vertebra is not particularly braced in any way. For this reason the spinal cord may be attacked relatively easily at this point because the immobility of the first thoracic vertebra predisposes the system to a shearing injury between the two vertebrae. The seventh cervical vertebra also possesses an unusually long dorsal spine, which is vulnerable to painful fracture. This is the part of the neck under attack during a violent application of a Full Nelson hold, but is best attacked by a sharp, hammer-like blow of the fist, (Figure 16).



Figure 13

The three-finger strike to the throat. The tracheal cartilages lie just beneath the middle finger. (The index and ring fingers help locate the target in the dark.)



Figure 14

The blow to the third cervical vertebra administered to the back of a sentry's neck by the butt of a rifle.

Figure 15

Figure 15 is a diagram of the vital points of the rib cage. The ribs are numbered downward from the top. White areas represent bone, while striated areas represent bands of elastic cartilage.

- a. Manubrium
- b. Sternal angle
- c. Body of the sternum
- d. Intercostal spaces (knife thrust to heart)
- e. Xiphoid process
- f. 5th and 6th ribs
- g. 4th intercostal space

h. 7th intercostal space (costal cartilages)

I. Floating ribs

j. 1st lumbar vertebra

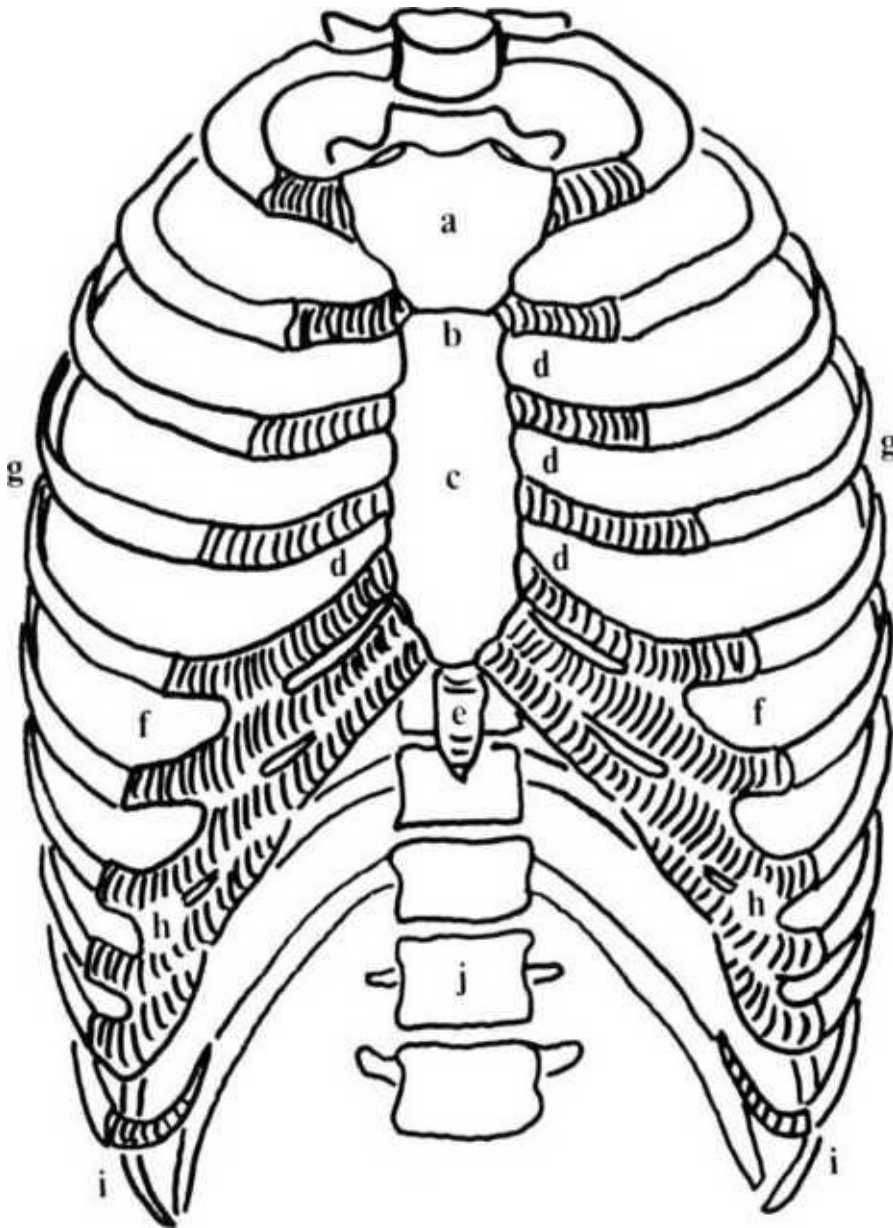


FIGURE 15

Figure 16

The diagram is of the entire spinal column as viewed from the left side of the body.

a. 3rd intervertebral space

b. 7th cervical vertebra

c. 1st thoracic vertebra

d. 5th thoracic vertebra

e. Area occupied by the rib cage, shown here for reference

f. 1st lumbar vertebra

g. 5th (last) lumbar vertebra

h. Sacrum

i. Coccyx (tailbone)

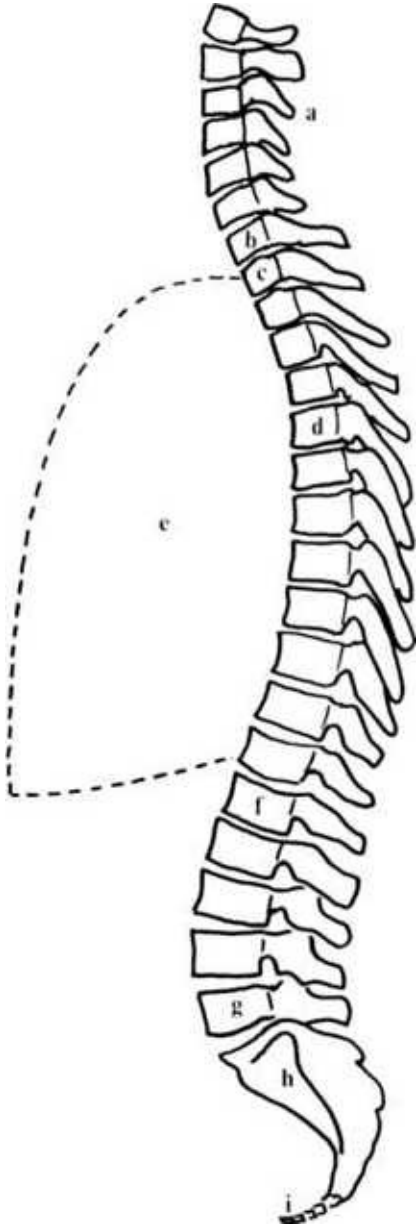


FIGURE 16

Vital Points of the Upper Trunk

Brachial plexus: This is beneath the muscle reaching from the top of the shoulder up to the vertebrae of the neck. A downward blow here can inhibit the muscles of the neck, shoulder and arm, severely limiting the opponent's ability to fight. In addition, a man can be forced to release a hold by pinching and gouging deep beneath this muscle with the thumb and fingers. Note: One should not expect the spectacular results obtained by Star Trek's Mr. Spock, (Figures 2 and 17).

Subclavian artery: A stiletto forced downward into the top of the shoulder in the soft spot behind the collarbone will sever the subclavian artery. The victim bleeds to death in seconds. This is a very difficult area to reach with a knife because it involves holding the weapon above the victim's shoulder and stabbing downward, an approach not widely endorsed by knife wielders, (Figure 2).

Clavicle or Collar bone: This is the prominent horizontal bone in the front of each shoulder. A heavy fist blow or sharp tap with a nightstick can snap it in two, effectively destroying the opponent's ability to fight with his hands, and in most cases completely putting him out of the fight. The jagged ends of the fracture may even be driven backward to penetrate the subclavian artery, which lies just behind the bone. Damage to this artery can be fatal, depending on the nature of the internal wounds.

Sternal angle: This is the point where the manubrium and the body of the sternum come together, about two inches below where the collar bones meet at the base of the throat. It is a weak point in the sternum, and if attacked with a powerful blow to the sternal "shield" over the heart, bronchus, lungs and thoracic nerves can be broken, producing pain and shock to the circulatory and respiratory systems. This crushing of the chest should produce unconsciousness at the very least and can be fatal. This injury is the reason automobiles are now supplied with collapsible steering columns to avoid chest damage in collisions, (Figure 15).

Intercostal spaces: There are four intercostal spaces next to the body of the sternum through which a stiletto point can be inserted into the heart. These are below the third, fourth and fifth rib on the left side, and below the fourth rib on the right. The blade should be angled in toward the midline of the body and jerked back and forth for maximum effect, (Figure 15).



Figure 17

A very deep pinch into the trapezius muscle can bruise the brachial plexus, temporarily paralyzing the arms and shoulders. It is usually used as a release.

Xiphoid process: A finger-like tab of cartilage hanging off the lowermost edge of the sternum. This is the insertion of the rectus abdominus muscle on the sternum. A powerful karate blow which strikes the xiphoid process while traveling upward at an angle toward the heart causes severe bruising to the liver, stomach and heart, resulting in unconsciousness or even death. This is also another knife route to the heart, (Figure 15).

Fifth and Sixth Ribs: The target area is about one inch below the nipple on either side. A powerful punch or a sharp kick at this point will breach the rib cage and inflict injuries on the lungs. This is the point where the fifth and sixth ribs articulate with the costal cartilages, the articulation being at the very tip of the bony part of the rib. Hence a blow at this point exerts maximum leverage against the ribs, fracturing them relatively easily, (Figure 15).

Sympathetic trunk: The striking point is the head of the third rib, right between the spine and the top of the shoulder blade. A powerful blow here will dislocate the rib, forcing it

into the chest cavity. This tears the thick bundle of sympathetic nerves which lie next to the spine, and the rib may penetrate a lung. The result is a disruption of the activity of the heart and lungs and agonizing pain, to say the least, (Figure 18).

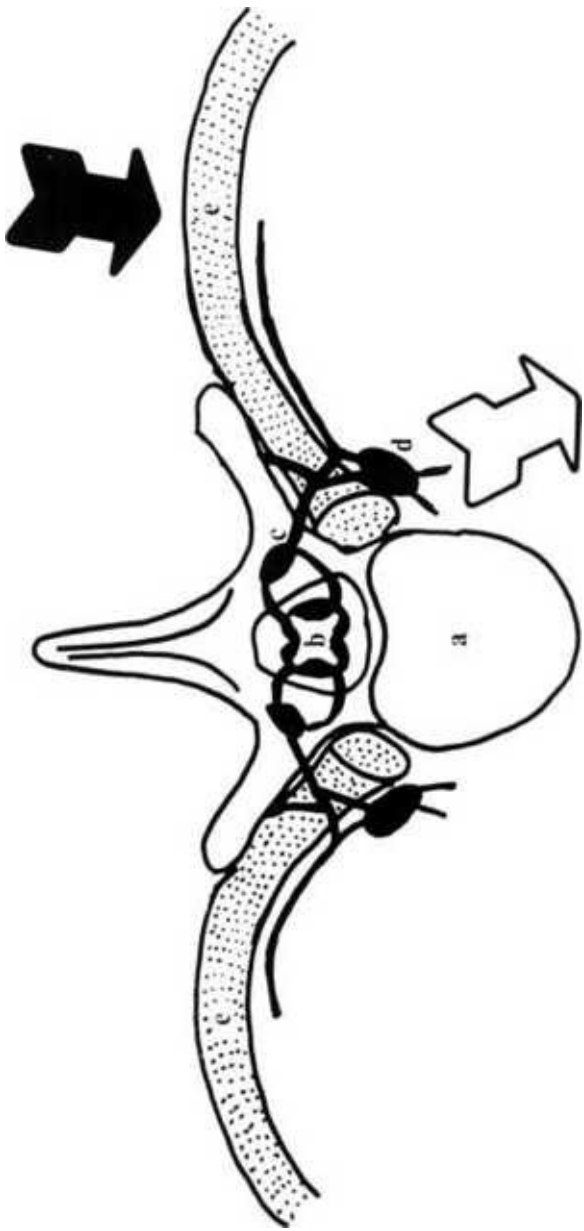
Fifth and Sixth Thoracic vertebrae: This striking point is squarely in the center of the back, at about the level of the lower ends of the shoulder blades. The spinal cord, and indirectly, the thoracic organs are under attack. This area is frequently attacked by a blow from a rifle butt used to stun or kill a sentry, (Figures 16 and 19).

Side of chest: The target area is the side of the rib cage just below the armpit, at about the same level as the fourth intercostal space. There is no particularly weak structure here, but a very powerful attack will break and dislocate the ribs, possibly driving them into the lungs. Karate blows directed to this point are almost exclusively kicks, which can be slipped in when the opponent raises his arm to ward off a high-level hand technique, (Figures 15 and 20).

Figure 18

Figure 18 is a diagrammatic cross section of the spine at the level of the third rib. The striking point is shown by the black arrow. Struck forcefully from behind, the rib tears away from the vertebra (white arrow) and into the chest cavity. In the course of this, the rib head severs a spinal nerve, and damages the sympathetic nerve trunk.

- a. Thoracic vertebra
- b. Spinal cord
- c. Spinal ganglion
- d. Sympathetic nerve truck (a cord of nerve tissue which runs down the length of the backbone, seen here in cross section.)
- e. Rib



00 d. CL .~ :L



Figure 19

A potentially lethal blow to the spine (5th and 6th thoracic vertebrae) administered with the butt of a nightstick.



Figure 20

The kick to the side of the chest can be slipped in under a raised arm, jarring the thoracic organs and bruising several important nerves in the armpit.

Vital Points of the Lower Trunk

Celiac (solar) plexus: The soft spot just below the stomach. A relatively light blow to this area will shock the diaphragm, momentarily paralyzing it, which makes breathing difficult. Pain and giddiness result, especially in an individual who has been exercising heavily and therefore is breathing hard. A powerful blow directed straight in (rather than upward as in the case of the xiphoid process) can injure portions of the liver and stomach, producing internal bleeding, shock to some of the thoracic ganglia and unconsciousness. This striking area is not protected by either bone or muscle which makes it singularly vulnerable even to finger pokes. The end of a nightstick can produce a very dramatic effect here, (Figure 21).

Seventh intercostal space (liver): About four inches to the right of the solar plexus. The target area is the combined costal cartilages of the seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth ribs above the liver. Trauma to the liver can cause internal bleeding and possible fatal long-term metabolic dysfunction. A blow at this point will also paralyze the diaphragm temporarily, (Figure 15).

Seventh intercostal space (stomach): About four inches to the left of the solar plexus. As in the case of the previous striking point, the target is the combined costal cartilages of the lower ribs, but on the left side they overlie the stomach and spleen. The stomach may be forced to regurgitate its contents by a blow to this region. The spleen is one of the blood reservoirs of the body and can be injured relatively easily, producing internal bleeding. And, again, the diaphragm can be adversely affected by a blow to this area, (Figure 15). It is possible to force the fingers up behind the costal cartilages at this point, grasp them, and yank them outward. The sensation is indescribably unpleasant.

Eleventh intercostal space (floating ribs): The eleventh and twelfth ribs are the “floating ribs,” so-called because they are not connected to the sternum by costal cartilages. They lie very low on the side of the abdomen, about four inches above the hip bones. These ribs can be broken by a relatively light blow damaging either the stomach or the liver as in the case of the previous two striking points. Such a blow is commonly delivered from the side, traveling in toward the center of the body. This is a favorite nightstick target, (Figure 22).



Figure 21

An elbow blow to the celiac (solar) plexus can knock the wind out of even the strongest attacker.

Abdominal aorta and Vena cava: A knife wound anywhere in the abdomen can cause enough shock to put a man down, but this depends on the man and his state of mind. A deep thrust followed by jerking the blade sideways can sever the aorta or vena cava which lie along the backbone, resulting in massive internal bleeding and instant death, (Figure 10).

Lower abdomen: This vital point is just below the navel. A punch directed downward into the bowl of the pelvis will injure the bladder, the lower large intestine, the genitals, the femoral arteries and a profusion of spinal nerves. The pain and shock caused by a blow to this complex area is stunning.

Iliac crest: A thrust kick which lands squarely on the hip bone will badly jar an opponent, possibly injuring the nerves of the lower back. Breaking this bone, as with a heavy club, immediately puts the opponent on the ground.

Kidneys: The striking point is just to the left or right of the eleventh thoracic vertebra,

partially covered by the last rib. The kidneys are very delicate organs richly supplied with blood. Their proximity to the abdominal aorta makes them particularly prone to massive hemorrhage when injured. Damage to the kidneys can cause shock and even death. This is a primary knife target since the kidneys and the renal arteries are very close to the surface and can be reached by a shallow thrust, (Figure 23).

First lumbar vertebra: There are several combat karate techniques which involve lifting an opponent up into the air and then dropping him across your bent knee, snapping his backbone at the level of the first lumbar vertebra, (Figure 16 and 24).

Fifth lumbar vertebra: This is the last vertebra above the pelvis. It articulates with the sacrum, which is essentially fused to the pelvis, so all coordinated movement between the upper and lower halves of the body pivots upon this joint. Any damage to the spine at this point will serve to weaken an opponent even if no serious damage to the spinal nerves should result, (Figure 16).

Testicles: The genitals are very delicate and are so loaded with sensory nerves that even a glancing blow to the groin can be completely debilitating. A full power blow to the scrotum and testes will crush these organs against the pubic bones and can result in actual castration. The drawback in using this target is that street fighters universally expect the attack and learn to defend against it. Fathers who advise their daughters to “knee the bastard in the crotch” usually haven’t taken this into consideration.



Figure 22

A knee-kick to the floating ribs is a persuasive method of keeping a grounded opponent down.



Figure 23

The stab to the kidney is the classic example of an effective, skillfully executed knife attack.



Figure 24

One of the more brutal unarmed defense techniques consists of breaking a man's back over your bent knee. The victim has been forcefully dropped across the knee from shoulder height.

The reader should be cautioned that there is a slight delay between this injury and the resulting agony. Some combat karate schools train their students to make use of the second or so between injury and collapse to catch the attacker offguard and kill him before becoming helpless. A full second to work with is more than enough time for a desperate karateist to land several potentially lethal blows.

Coccyx: This is the tailbone, located at the tip of the spinal column beneath the sacrum. The coccyx overlies the sacral plexus where nearly all of the major nerve trunks of the hips and legs originate. In addition, the coccyx is a vestigial part of the spine and as such is innervated directly by a spinal nerve which descends from the extreme tip of the spinal cord. Fracture of the coccyx affects all the above mentioned nerves, producing agonizing pain. Fracture of the coccyx requires corrective surgery but does not endanger the life or health of the injured party.

Healing, even after surgery, is delayed and painful because the anal muscles attach to the coccyx, and pull against the fracture whenever the victim has a bowel movement, (Figures 16, 25 and 36).



Figure 25

A knee kick to the coccyx is extremely painful and the injury takes a long time to heal.

Vital Points of the Hand and Arm

Shoulder joint: Under the proper circumstances the humerus can be twisted and torn entirely out of its socket in the shoulder. The dislocation takes the fight out of an opponent immediately.

Subaxillary bundle: There is a target located high on the inner side of the arm, about an inch down from the fold of the armpit. The brachial artery can be felt at this point, and within a fraction of an inch of this artery lie portions of several major nerves, including the radial, ulnar, and medial nerves. A sharp blow or pinch at this point will damage these nerves and temporarily paralyze the arm. A slashing cut with a knife will sever the artery and the nerves, causing permanent paralysis at the least, and death within minutes if the bleeding is not stopped, (Figure 26).

Radial nerve (lateral aspect): About halfway down the outer side of the upper arm the radial nerve is exposed where it crosses the humerus on its way from the shoulder down into the forearm. The striking point is immediately beneath the insertion of the deltoid muscle. Bruising the nerve at this point produces much the same effect as that of striking the “funny bone,” i.e., a general weakening of the arm and a peculiarly debilitating pain in the arm and shoulder, (Figure 27).

Triceps muscle: The muscle on the back of the upper arm which causes the straightening of the arm at the elbow. A sharp blow, such as a knuckle blow, to the belly of the muscle will cause temporary paralysis of the arm making it very difficult for the opponent to use hand techniques effectively.

The mechanism for this is rather complex. Most of the muscles of the body operate in opposing pairs and pull against each other at all times. By stimulating one muscle and inhibiting the opposite muscle the body achieves movement. But most muscles are actually strong enough to tear their own tissue if they attempt to contract at full power when no movement is possible, such as in the case of a man trying to lift a very heavy object. To prevent injuries of this sort the body has nerves within the muscles and their tendons which sense this sort of self-inflicted damage and react by paralyzing both the injured muscle and the opposing muscle. This inhibition of the strained tissue makes it impossible for the muscle to contract strongly enough to do itself any further damage. The karateist can take advantage of this protective reaction by striking at the bellies and tendons of large muscles. This triggers the paralyzing reflex which then weakens not only the muscle which was attacked, but other muscles as well.

Figure 26

Front of the arm.

- a. Subaxillary bundle (arteries, nerve and tendons)
- b. Insertion of the biceps muscle (cubital fossa)
- c. Superficial branch of the radial nerve (in the mound of the forearm)
- d. Inside of wrist (radial artery, flexor tendons, and medial nerve)

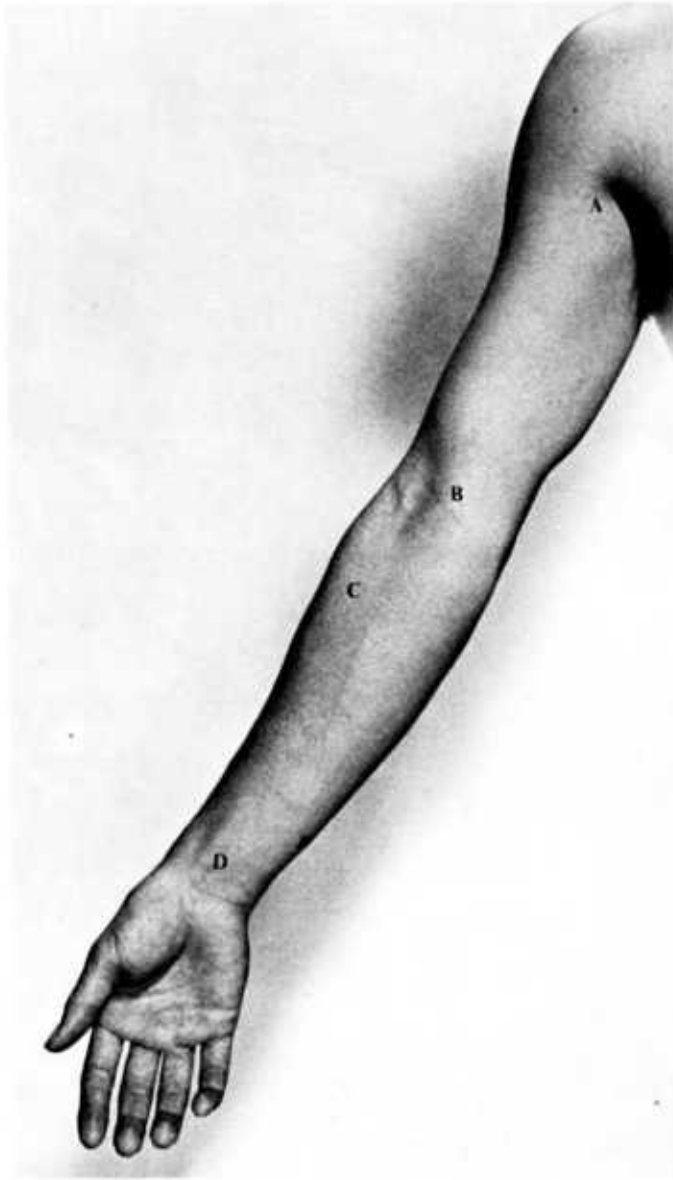


Figure 27

The back of the arm.

- a. Radial nerve (just below the insertion of the deltoid muscle)
- b. Triceps muscle
- c. Ulnar nerve (“funny bone”)
- d. Superficial branch of the radial nerve (in the mound of the forearm)
- e. Ulna (about one and one-half inches above the wrist)
- f. Nerve pressure points of the hand



The triceps muscle and the radial nerve are also very vulnerable to a knife slash, as when one fighter lunges for the kill but his opponent sidesteps and slashes at the extended arm, (Figure 27).

Biceps: The belly of the bicep muscle can be bruised, or slashed with a knife, temporarily paralyzing the arm.

Cubital fossa (insertion of the biceps): The thick bundle of tendons extending down from the bicep into the hollow of the elbow can be injured by a chop, or severed by a heavy “sabre cut” with a Bowie knife. Both attacks render the arm useless, (Figure 26).

Ulnar nerve: There is a soft spot in the back of the upper arm about an inch up from the point of the elbow, beneath which lies a portion of the ulnar nerve. This is the point commonly called the “funny bone.” A sharp blow at this point produces a paralyzing kind of pain in the arm and shoulder. Many armlocks depend on pressure applied to this point, (Figure 27).

Elbow joint: The striking point is the back of the straightened arm at the elbow. A relatively light blow to this spot will dislocate the elbow, breaking the arm.

Olecranon: Point of elbow. When the elbow is bent, a sharp blow on its point from a

nightstick can shatter the end of the ulna, (Figure 28).

Superficial branch of radial nerve: This is the branch of the radial nerve which passes through the mound of the forearm, the muscular bulge in the top of the forearm about three inches down from the elbow. A blow to this nerve will produce a dull aching pain in the forearm and hand that results in a weakening of the muscles which control the fingers and hand. Once struck in the mound of the forearm an opponent will experience difficulty in forming a fist or grasping a weapon. This nerve center is commonly a target for a knife-hand block (chop), (Figures 26 and 27).



Figure 28

A nightstick blow on the tip of the elbow can chip or break the end of the ulna, immobilizing the arm.



Figure 29

A club blow or karate chop to the inside of the wrist can shock the median nerve, making it difficult for the opponent to control his hand. A sharp blow here can force the hand to open involuntarily, releasing the weapon.

Median nerve: The inside of the wrist about an inch and a half up the arm from the heel of the hand. The striking point is the soft area between the radius and ulna. A blow at this point produces damage to the underlying median nerve. Digging lightly into this area with a knuckle produces an unusually intense and sickening kind of pain in the forearm, (Figures 26 and 29).

Radial artery and Flexor tendons: A knife slash across the inside of the wrist will sever the radial artery and several of the tendons which pull the fingers into a fist. The opponent loses the ability to grasp anything with his hand, and will pass out within thirty seconds, (according to Fairbairn) if he does not use his other hand to stop the bleeding. Therefore, a slashed wrist will effectively “disarm” an opponent. It takes about two minutes to bleed to death from this injury, (Figures 26 and 30).

Back of the wrist: About two inches up the back of the arm from the wrist joint. The

median nerve can be shocked by a sharp blow at the back of the wrist, such as a knifehand chop.

Ulna: A sharp blow to the ulna, about one and one-half inches above the wrist, such as with a nightstick, will snap it in two and immobilize the arm. (The author speaks from painful experience), (Figures 27 and 31).

Wrist joint: When bent in certain ways, the wrist will lock painfully and can be broken or used as a controlling pain. Aikido students in particular are fond of wrist locks, (Figure 32).

Back of the hand: There are three vulnerable areas. The radial nerve and the ulnar nerve form a loop of nerve tissue which runs out the thumb side of the hand, across the back of the hand just behind the knuckles, and back down the little finger side of the hand. These nerves are particularly vulnerable at three points: (1) between the thumb and the index finger where the radial nerve is exposed against the side of the second metacarpal bone, (2) between the knuckles of the middle and ring fingers where the two nerves meet, and (3) along the little finger side of the fourth metacarpal where the ulnar nerve is exposed. A sharp digging blow with a yawara stick or gouging with the fingernails at these points will produce surprisingly severe pain in the hand and arm. These nerve points are usually used to break the opponent's grip on a knife or other object, (Figures 27 and 33).



Figure 30

In this photo one fighter has tried to grab the other but has been blocked by a slash to the inside of the wrist.



Figure 31

Baton attack to the ulna. The smaller of the two long bones of the forearm is easy to break just behind the wrist.



Figure 32

The wrist joint can be locked painfully and used to control an opponent with the threat of dislocation. When the wrist is forced into this position the opponent's hand involuntarily opens and drops any weapon he may be holding.

Fingers: The fingers can be "jammed" or sprained very easily, a frequently used tactic being to strike the opponent's hands to hurt his fingers and make it difficult for him to make fists. Many releases depend on spraining or breaking one or more of the opponent's fingers, (Figure 34). In knife and bayonet fighting the fingers are primary targets, and a heavy blade can actually sever them. Once the hands have been mutilated in this manner the enemy is defenseless.

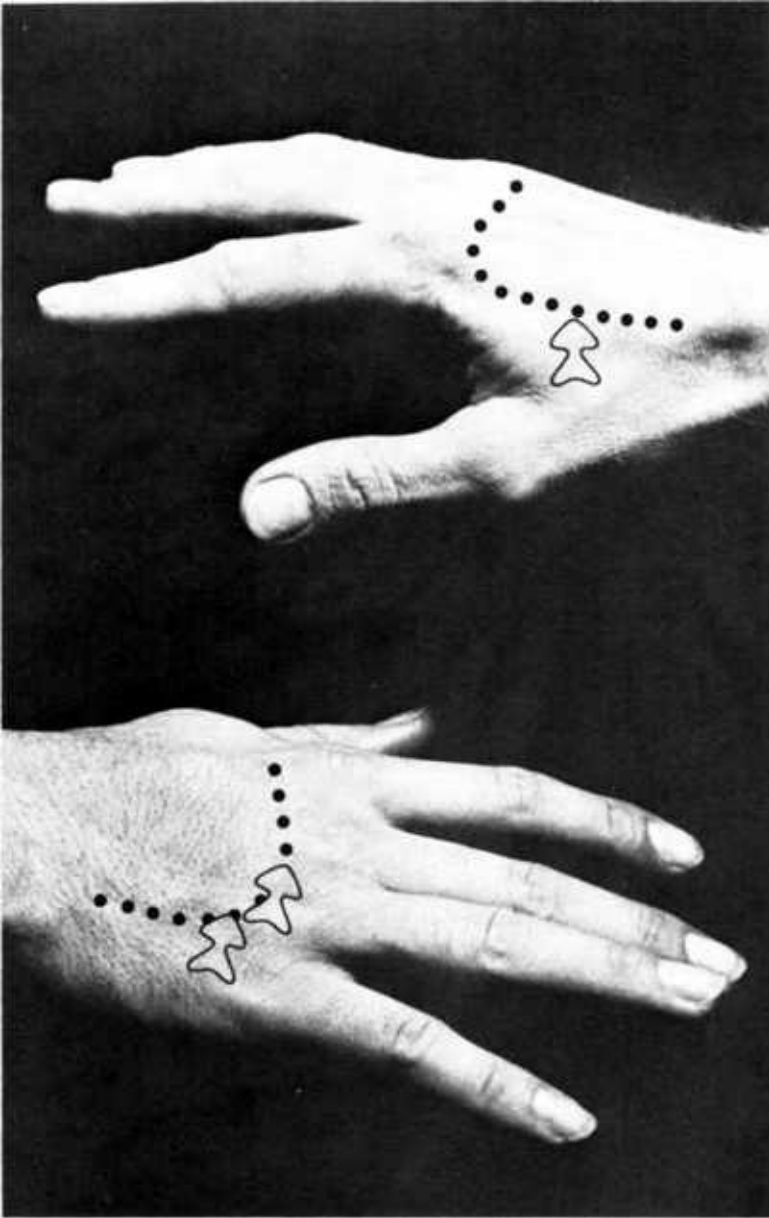


Figure 33

The nerve pressure points of the back of the hand. The dotted lines show the paths of the nerves, and the arrows indicate the three locations where the nerves can be squeezed against underlying bones by gouging with the fingernails.



Figure 34

In a fist fight a fast punch to the opponent's relaxed fingers can sprain, break or dislocate them making the hand useless.

Vital Points of the Leg and Foot

Inguinal region: The inside front of the upper thigh, at the fold where the thigh joins the trunk. The striking point includes the first few inches of the path of the femoral nerve, the femoral artery and vein, and the genitofemoral nerve at the point where they exit the abdomen and enter the thigh. Of primary importance is the femoral nerve, which innervates the sartorius and quadriceps femoris muscles. Trauma to this nerve will paralyze or greatly weaken the thigh muscles, preventing the use of any coordinated foot techniques by the opponent. In addition, the pain generated by a blow to the femoral nerve can be sufficient to take the fight out of an opponent even if loss of muscle control does not occur. A deep gouging of the opponent's inguinal areas with your thumbs is a quick release from a bear hug even when both your arms are pinned to your sides.

A knife or bayonet injury to this area is extremely serious because of the large size and exposure of the femoral artery. Unconsciousness and death follow in seconds. Note that some military manuals have mistakenly shown this point as being almost halfway down the thigh. The true target is no lower than the level of the testicles, (Figure 35).

Sciatic nerve: The striking point is the center of the back of the thigh just below the fold of the buttocks. The largest nerve of the body, the sciatic nerve, is vulnerable at this point. The sciatic nerve gives rise to the peroneal nerve and the tibial nerve, hence a kick to the gluteal fold will interfere with muscular control of the back of the thigh and the entire lower leg and foot. The blow also produces relocated pain in the abdomen as well as pain and cramping at the point of impact, (Figures 36 and 37).

Femur: There are karate techniques, mainly kicks, which purport to snap the thighbone in two, but this takes tremendous power, (Figure 37).

Vastus lateralis: The large muscle running down the outside of the thigh. This is one part of the quadriceps femoris, the alliance of four large muscles which extend the leg by straightening the knee. This and the next striking point ...

Figure 35

The front view of the leg.

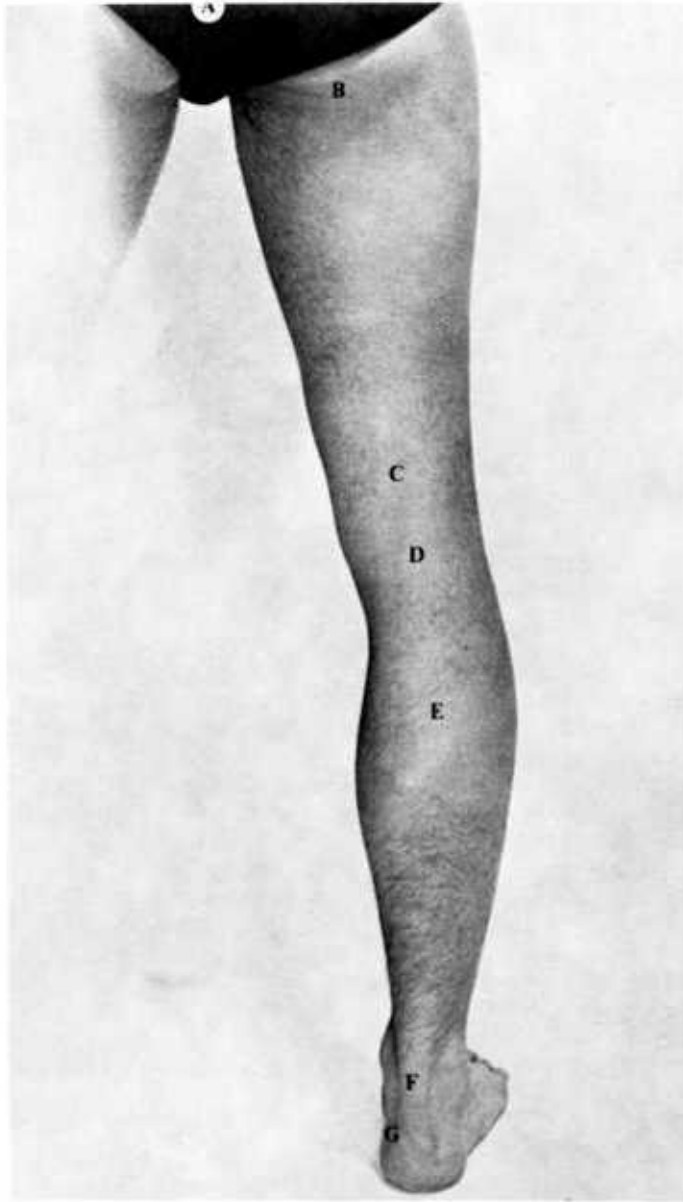
- a. Inguinal region (femoral vein, artery and nerve)
- b. Vastus lateralis
- c. Rectus femoris
- d. Patella (kneecap)
- e. Knee joint (strike anywhere on the front and sides)
- f. Deep peroneal nerve (shin)
- g. Arch of the foot (right against the shin)
- h. Lateral plantar nerve



Figure 36

The rear view of the leg.

- a. Coccyx
- b. Sciatic nerve (within or just below the fold of the buttocks)
- c. Hamstrings
- d. Popliteal fossa
- e. Gastrocnemius and Soleus muscles
- f. Achilles tendon
- g. Lateral malleolus
- h. Tibial nerve and artery



Rectus femoris:... are both areas where a kick or club blow to the belly of the muscle will cause temporary paralysis and cramping, making it difficult for the opponent to maneuver and impossible for him to use foot techniques, (Figure 35).

Back of the thigh (the hamstrings): The biceps femoris, the semitendinosus, and the semimembranosus are three specialized muscles of the back of the thigh which collectively are known as the hamstrings. Although they are located in the thigh, these three muscles actually are attached to the bones of the pelvis and the lower leg, and do not attach to the femur at all. For this reason the hamstrings are able to both straighten the hip and also bend the knee. These are the muscles which athletes spend so much time trying to lengthen, because when the hip is fully flexed, as when attempting a high kick, the hamstrings are normally too short to allow full straightening of the knee at the same time. A blow to the bellies of these muscles will partially paralyze them, temporarily weakening the leg. Beneath these muscles lies the sciatic nerve which may also be affected by a blow to this area. Under rare conditions, the hamstrings may be presented as a knife or bayonet target. Severing them produces immediate collapse of the leg and permanent crippling, (Figures 36 and 37).

Patella or Kneecap: The patella is a small piece of bone which carries a tendon across the

knee joint from the rectus femoris to the tibia. When the leg is extended fully and relaxed, the patella can be grasped and manipulated from side to side and up and down over the surface of the knee joint. This looseness makes the patella vulnerable to dislocation by a skillful kick which catches the lower edge of the bone at either side and drives it upward at a forty-five degree angle across the face of the knee joint. Once dislocated, the patella requires surgery before it can be relocated, and permanent injury to the mobility of the leg may result, (Figures 35 and 38).

Front or side of the knee: The knee is a very weak joint since it is held together by a number of small ligaments and little else. In addition, the knee joint connects two of the longest bones in the body, the femur and the tibia, which makes it vulnerable to blows falling anywhere in the central third of the leg. When the knee is bent it can be broken by a kick against either side of the joint, and when the knee is completely straight in toward the patella. The knee is particularly vulnerable because in most fighting stances this is the part of the body closest to the opponent.



Figure 37

The photo shows an attack on the sciatic nerve and hamstring muscles intended to insure that a temporarily downed opponent stays down. In this position such a kick might easily

break the femur as well.

Broken knees have a reputation of not healing very well at all, and for this reason most karate instructors refrain from allowing their students to direct practice attacks at each other's knees. This is a target where a slight error can cause severe injury and permanent disability. Needless to say, in an emergency a kick to the knee will immobilize an opponent, effectively putting him out of the fight, (Figure 35).

Back of the knee (popliteal fossa): The popliteal fossa is the indentation at the back of the knee, bordered on either side by the tendons of the hamstrings. A light kick to this point will almost invariably bend the knee, abruptly bringing the opponent to a kneeling position. The tibial nerve is vulnerable at this point as well, (Figure 36).

Deep peroneal nerve: This nerve lies exposed on the surface of the tibia from a point about seven inches below the knee all the way down to the front of the ankle. Also known as the anterior tibial nerve, this nerve is vulnerable to any kicking or raking action against the front of the tibia. An unusually sharp pain results, which in addition to weakening the whole leg, also paralyzes the muscles which flex the foot and toes upward. This makes it impossible for the opponent to perform tricks involving the ball, front, or side of the foot. Severe trauma to this nerve will produce "footdrop," a condition where the toes drag on the ground with every forward step, greatly reducing the opponent's mobility, (Figure 35).

Gastrocnemius and Soleus muscles: These are the muscles of the back of the lower leg which extend the foot and which support the weight of the body when one stands on one's toes. It is interesting to note that the gastrocnemius is another of the unusual leg muscles which spans two joints, in this case the knee and the ankle joints. A kick to the back of the calf will tend to weaken and paralyze these muscles, and the tibial nerve may be injured as well, (Figure 36).

Achilles' tendon (tendo calcaneus): Any kind of stomping or raking kick to the Achilles' tendon is tantamount to a blow to the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles, since it is through this tendon that these muscles act upon the foot. Stretching of the tendon stimulates injury-sensing nerves which misinterpret the situation and inhibit the calf muscles. An attack upon the opponent's Achilles' tendon will produce pain and weakness in the opponent's legs. A knife slash here will sever the tendon and bring the opponent - permanently - to his knees, (Figure 36).



Figure 38

When embraced from behind it is very easy to attack the opponent's knees, shins and feet. Here a difficult dislocation of the kneecap is being attempted.

Lateral malleolus: This target area is the hard bony lump on the outside of the ankle, and the side of the fibula for a few inches up the leg from the ankle. The superficial peroneal nerve runs through the skin over the bone in this area, and a raking blow down the fibula will damage it. This will inhibit the muscles which control the ankle. This makes it very difficult to maintain one-point balance on the injured foot, (Figure 36).

Tibial nerve and posterior tibial artery: Immediately below the medial malleolus, which is the hard bony lump on the inside of the ankle, the tibial artery and nerve are exposed to attack where they cross the side of the first tarsal bone (the talus) on their way down into the sole of the foot. Trauma to this area produces pain in the entire leg and hip and paralyzes the posterior calf muscles, making it impossible to flex the foot downward. This in turn makes it very difficult for the opponent to support his weight on the injured foot, (Figure 36).

Arch of the foot: The target point is the instep of the foot at the base of the first and second

metatarsals, where the shin meets the foot. Trauma to the arch of the foot at this point will also injure portions of the medial plantar nerve, the deep peroneal nerve and the superficial peroneal nerve. The net result is loss of coordination in the entire leg plus secondary pain in the leg and abdomen, (Figure 35).

Lateral plantar nerve: The striking point is about two inches from the point described above, at the level of the fourth and fifth metatarsals. Dislocation or fracture of these bones results in trauma to the lateral plantar nerve, another of the branches of the posterior tibial nerves, producing severe pain and partial paralysis of the lower leg, (Figure 35).

Toes: The toes, like the fingers, are easily sprained by nearly any blow which brushes across the end of the foot, such as any of a variety of blocks which might be used to nullify an opponent's kick. An untrained individual could be sufficiently distracted by this injury that he might glance downward momentarily or in some other way lose his concentration and make himself vulnerable to a more serious attack.

Vital Points of Pistol Shooting

Why should a manual of vital points include a section on pistol shooting? There is a very good reason illustrated by the following story.

In their classic combat text, *Shooting to Live*, W. E. Fairbairn and E. A. Sykes related the tale of a sergeant of police who interrupted a Chinese robber as he was holding up a rice shop in Shanghai.

The Chinese immediately opened fire on the sergeant with an automatic pistol at about six yards, firing several shots until his pistol jammed. Fortunately, none of the shots took effect, and meanwhile the sergeant returned the fire swiftly and effectively with a .45 Colt automatic, commencing at about ten feet and firing his sixth and last shot at three feet as he rapidly closed in on his opponent. Later, it was found that of those six shots, four had struck fleshy parts of the body, passing clean through, while one bullet remained in the shoulder and another had lodged near the heart. Yet, in spite of all this, the robber was still on his feet and was knocked unconscious by the butt of the sergeant's pistol as he was attempting to escape by climbing over the counter.

The point of the story is that it is quite possible to shoot an attacker full of holes with a pistol and yet not stop him! Although there are many confounding factors to take into account, it turns out that the "stopping power" of a pistol bullet depends mainly on what part of the body is hit. In other words, there are a certain number of vital areas of the body which when hit by a pistol bullet will produce instant incapacitation. If these areas are missed though, there is no guarantee that any bullet wounds inflicted will slow the man down at all. Contrary to popular opinion, variations in bullet diameter, weight, speed and energy have much less effect on the stopping power of pistol bullets than the placement of the shot.

The previous statement calls for some justification. According to the Army Medical Department's *Wound Ballistics*, bullets of roughly the size used in modern small arms require a minimum velocity of 120 feet per second in order to penetrate human skin. Another 200 feet per second of speed is used up in penetrating a layer of bone, such as a rib, the breastbone or the braincase. Allowing a little more to account for damage to internal structures after penetration we can make the generalization that just about any kind of small arms bullet traveling faster than 400 feet per second represents a potentially lethal projectile. That pistol bullets in general are potentially lethal with standard velocities in excess of 700 feet per second is not in question. Even the lowly BB-cap traveling at 400 f.p.s. has been known to kill.

For most pistol calibers the maximum velocity of the bullet does not exceed 1200 f.p.s. At speeds between 400 and 1200 f.p.s. the bullet has a tendency to bore a hole through the body, creating a wound channel that is about the same diameter as the bullet. Damage is confined to this channel. At velocities higher than 1200 f.p.s. the bullet carries enough energy that under special circumstances much more severe wounds can result, but generally the bullet simply passes through the body. It is only after the bullet has been accelerated above 2400 f.p.s. that the high-velocity "explosive" wound becomes typical, in which a wide zone of tissue around the wound track is pulped by the passage of the bullet.

No defensive handgun approaches this level.

The most complete and comprehensive investigation of the effect of various pistol calibers and bullet designs on the human body was conducted by John T. Thompson and Louis A. LaGarde over seventy years ago on behalf of the War Department. (Note that pistol and bullet designs have changed very little since then). It was their ghoulis task to fire handguns at human cadavers under controlled circumstances in search of a pistol load that would prove more effective in combat than the .38 caliber sidearm the Army was using at that time. There was some thought that when an enemy soldier is swinging a machete at your head it would be nice if your pistol would kill him instantly rather than just puncture him.

Thompson and LaGarde tested a variety of pistols and bullet designs on the cadavers and carefully evaluated the wounds produced. Their conclusions, confined to a discussion of handguns, contradicted some of the more macho inclinica- tions of shooters then and today.

According to Thompson and LaGarde, the vital points of pistol combat shooting consists of the brain, spinal cord, and the long bones of the legs, (Figure 40). No other part of the body can be wounded by a pistol bullet in such a way as to guarantee that the victim will collapse immediately. Shots through the heart or major blood vessels can very quickly prove fatal, but collapse may not come quickly enough to prevent injury or death to the shooter.



Figure 39

In combat pistol shooting, the brain is the primary target for maximum stopping power.

Pistol wounds through the lungs, although commonly regarded as fatal, cannot be depended upon to drop a man in his tracks. This is true also of wounds in other fleshy parts of the body. To test for “shock” effects due to multiple wounds, which the cadavers didn’t show very well, Thompson and LaGarde fired rapid bursts of shots into the chests of living cattle. The idea was to determine what effect multiple shots through the lungs had on “stopping power” as measured by the number of shots it took to make a steer collapse. They found that ten .30 caliber Luger bullets (93 gr., 1420 f.p.s.) through the lungs did not upset the steers at all. The animals turned their heads to see what had caused all the noise, but showed no sign of distress. (This says something about the effectiveness of small caliber sidearms and also about how stupid a steer is). .45 caliber and larger bullets should drop the steers, but it usually took four or five shots.

As for “knock down,” there is probably no greater area of misinformation in the whole subject of stopping power. According to Newton’s third law, the detonation of the powder charge in a pistol must push the pistol backward as forcefully as it pushes the bullet forward. Therefore, if the recoil transmitted to the shooter’s body from the gun is not

enough to knock him off his feet, then it follows that the energy absorbed by the victim's body when struck by the bullet will not be enough for a "knock down" either. In his Textbook of Pistols and Revolvers, Julian S. Hatcher demonstrated this point with a series of calculations showing that a standard military .45 ACP bullet carries only enough energy to knock a man backward at a rate of a little less than two inches per second. This is next to nothing. Fairbairn and Sykes, authors of Shooting to Live, related their attempts to examine the "knock down" potential of pistol bullets by allowing themselves to be shot at while holding a bullet-proof shield. They reported that in all cases the force transmitted to them through the shield was negligible. The ability of modern kevlar body armor to stop .44 magnum bullets at point-blank range without knocking the wearer off his feet is further proof of this point, if any is needed.

Thompson and LaGarde concluded that any pistol load in general use could penetrate the brain case and produce an instantly lethal wound of the brain. It was also found that although some of the higher velocity bullets (comparable to today's magnums) could produce explosive brain wounds there was no need for the added destruction. A .22 bullet in the brain will stop a man just as quickly as blowing his skull apart. Much the same conclusion was applied to the case of explosive wounds of the long bones of the legs, caused by high-velocity pistol bullets. Less energetic bullets were capable of fracturing these bones and producing instant incapacitation, and the explosive effect contributed little. In fact, the researchers tried actual exploding bullets, filled with black powder and a primer, but concluded that the wounds produced were not very different from those produced by high-velocity bullets, and therefore did not contribute much to stopping power.

The researchers found that larger pistol bullets in general produced more dangerous wounds since the wound channel was large in diameter and did not close easily when the various layers of skin and muscle re-arranged themselves after wounding. This promoted greater bleeding in wounds caused by large diameter bullets.

Pistol bullets of all types including soft lead, hollow point, and dum-dum completely failed to expand regardless of velocity unless they hit bone or solid cartilage. Soft lead bullets in a flat-point (wadcutter or semi-wadcutter) shape were judged fractionally more effective in producing wounds because they tended to catch on bones and cut into arteries in circumstances where jacketed or round-nosed bullets would glance off.

In general, Thompson and LaGarde concluded that the available pistol ammunition they tested did not differ much in terms of stopping power, although there were significant differences in penetration and general killing power. Wounds in the brain, spinal cord, and long bones of the legs would reliably stop a man regardless of the bullet employed, but for non-vital areas they somewhat facetiously suggested that a three-inch diameter bullet would be necessary for reliable stopping power.

Figure 40

This diagram illustrates the vital areas of combat pistol shooting as defined by Thompson and LaGarde. For absolute "stopping power" only the brain, spinal cord and the long bones of the legs can be wounded in such a way as to guarantee that the victim will drop immediately to the ground. The heart and associated major blood vessels present another

vital target, but some individuals will be able to stay on their feet for several seconds after being wounded in these organs. For the situation in which all resistance must be extinguished immediately, the brain is both the most effective target and the largest.

The reader should bear in mind that in a gun fight when time is the critical factor the old rule of firing into the center of the body is still good advice. These vital areas are for occasions when the shooter has that extra split-second in which to take aim.

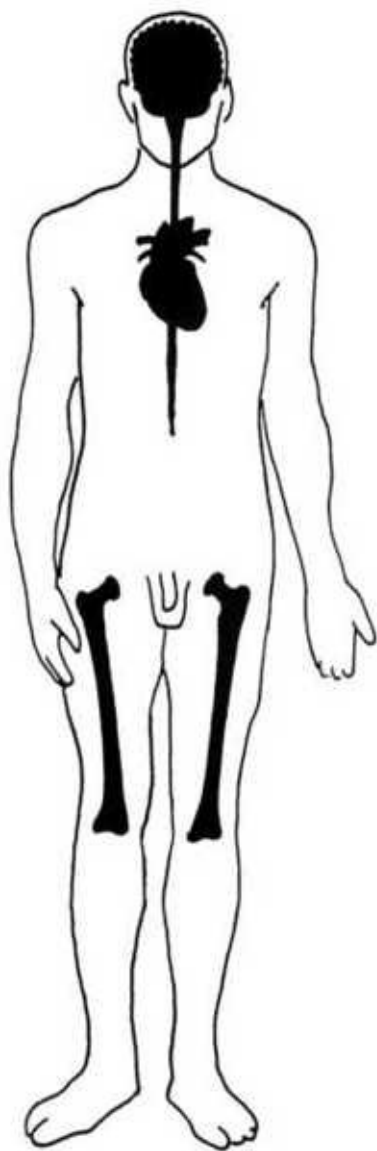


FIGURE 40

One aspect of pistol combat at close quarters that may have been overlooked is the destructive power of the muzzle blast, which can produce a more serious wound than the bullet itself if the pistol is fired in contact with the victim's body. That is a tricky business, admittedly, since there is always the possibility that the pistol will suffer a ruptured barrel if fired with the muzzle against flesh. Still, after contemplating some of the ghastly photographs in LaGarde's *Gunshot Injuries*, it is a possibility that cannot be lightly dismissed. One photo, for instance, is of a man who put the muzzle of a .30-'06 rifle in his mouth and committed suicide. It is a picture of a headless man.

The reader should not finish this essay without being reminded that stopping power is only

one aspect of pistol bullet effectiveness. Other considerations can have as much or more importance as stopping power, depending on the circumstances. The effect of the various calibers, powders, bullets and pistols on the ability to penetrate barriers, on accuracy, and on the stability of the bullet in flight are quite important. The point of this discussion is simply to emphasize that in hand-to-hand combat in which the pistol may be employed, a bullet fired into a vital portion of the enemy's anatomy will drop him. One that does not hit a vital point might drop him ... or he might just keep coming.

Further Reading

Almost all manuals of hand-to-hand combat, self-defense, and oriental or European martial arts contain at least a short section on vital points. Frequently these treatments are very incomplete and full of misinformation. Military manuals in particular are very poor sources of information about vital points.

For general anatomy, nothing beats the classic text:

Gray, Henry. 1973. *Anatomy of the Human Body*, 29th edition. Ed. by Charles Mayo Goss. Lea and Febiger, Philadelphia.

For a detailed treatment of potential injuries due to twentyfour formal karate attacks, see

Adams, Brian. 1969. *Medical Implications of Karate Blows*. 128 p. il., A.S. Barnes and Co., New York.

Fairbairn's knife-fighting "timetable of death" appears in

Fairbairn, W. E. 1942. *Get Tough!* ix + 121 p. il., Paladin Press, Boulder.

The authorities cited in the section on pistol stopping power include:

LaGarde, Louis A. 1914. *Gunshot Injuries*. William Wood and Co., New York.

Hatcher, Julian S. 1936. *Textbook of Pistols and Revolvers*. Small-Arms Technical Publishing Company, Marines, Onslow County, North Carolina.

Fairbairn, W. E. and E. A. Sykes. 1942. *Shooting to Live*. xiv + 96 p. il., Paladin Press, Boulder.

Medical Department, War Department. 1927. *Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War: v.ii, Surgery, pt. 1, General Surgery, Orthopedic Surgery, Neurosurgery*, xxiv + 1324 p. il. 7 pl. 1 tab.

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Army Medical Service, Defense Department. 1962. *Wound Ballistics*. Editor-in-chief James (John) Boyd Coates, Jr.; editor for wound ballistics, James C. Beyer. xxxix + 883 p. il. (Office of the Surgeon General).

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BLACK MEDICINE



Volume II
Weapons At Hand

N. Mashiro, Ph.D.

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Also by N. Mashiro, Ph.D.:

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Black Medicine III: Low Blows

Black Medicine IV: Equalizers

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WARNING

The techniques depicted in this book can be extremely dangerous. It is not the intent of the author, publisher, or distributors of this book to encourage readers to attempt any of these techniques. Attempting to do so can result in severe injury or death.

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INTRODUCTION

The first volume of this series (Black Medicine: The Dark Art of Death) discussed over 150 parts of the human body which are especially vulnerable in hand-to-hand combat. The present volume is a direct outgrowth of the previous one. Black Medicine Vol. II: Weapons at Hand presents 112 parts of the body which are natural weapons, largely because they are very resistant to injury. Even if stripped naked and bound securely a resourceful combat artist can still bring many of these natural weapons into play to the detriment of his tormentors. In this sense the body's natural weapons constitute weapons at hand.

The second half of this book contains suggestions toward a new art of makeshift weaponry. In it are listed over 180 common makeshift weapons which may be available in a crisis. The orientation of this discussion is especially appropriate to the victim of a kidnapping, a hostage held by terrorists or a prisoner of war. Any person who is disarmed and desperate will appreciate the information in this volume, especially since most terrorist kidnap victims are killed, not rescued or ransomed. Saving the life of the victim is usually a do-it-yourself proposition.

It is traditional in books about self-defense for the author to make allusions to the rising crime rate and the fact that the streets of America are dangerous. Usually there is some comment like "just glance through the newspaper to see how often violent confrontations really occur." Self-defense authors write such comments because they have to justify their obvious preoccupation with violence. Many people seem to think that the authors of books such as this one are mentally unbalanced. We get sensitive about it. I think the main difference between martial artists and "normal" people is that we martial artists have managed to overcome the widespread head-in-the-sand syndrome. Violent events happen to all of us with surprising frequency, but most people prefer to ignore this unpleasant fact. To justify this statement, and to explain my personal interest in the combat arts, I have collected a few short horror stories which illustrate the point that violence really does surround us. All of these anecdotes are true, and all happened to me or to people I know personally.

1. We'll start with something simple. I have distinct childhood memories of playground bullies who terrorized smaller and less aggressive children. I was such a victim at one time. To adults this kind of thing seems mildly amusing in retrospect, but to the kids it is terrifying and very real. There are two points to make here. The first is that today's schools with their forced mixing of children from extremely different backgrounds are much more dangerous than the schools you and I attended. The bullies who pushed us around with their fists carry knives and guns now. Second, those playground terrorists often don't grow out of their perverse pleasure in causing other people pain. They become adults who delight in rearranging people's faces. Sooner or later we all meet one again.

2. A young man I work with was riding his \$400 bicycle home after work one afternoon along a busy, well-traveled street in a fairly nice downtown area. Suddenly three black teenagers on bikes overtook him and started trying to force him into the curb. They were trying to steal the bicycle right out from under him! They didn't succeed, partly because

the victim resisted their bungling attempts to spill him, and partly because four Chicanos pulled up in a car and joined the fray. The newcomers had clubs and made short work of scattering the blacks. Unfortunately they weren't rescuers. They wanted the bike for themselves. They got it.

3. My wife was discussing the above story with several ladies where she works. It turned out that my wife was the only woman in the room who had never been assaulted on the street. That revelation was very unsettling to her.

4. I knew a little old gentleman (about 5'4" tall and 65 years old) who routinely took his young puppy for a walk every day. Master and puppy were taking care of their business one afternoon when three tough-looking teenagers walked up and demanded money. They made it clear that they were willing to beat the old gentleman into submission if he resisted. One of them demonstrated his contempt for life by viciously kicking the puppy. In most cases this situation would have ended in a successful robbery or mugging, but these unfortunate boys had selected the wrong little old man. He was a professional wrestling and self-defense coach. He knocked one of the thugs out cold and broke the leg of the second one. The third one proved that age does tell, however. He outran the enraged victim and got away.

5. My next door neighbor was driving home from work one night when he saw a young black couple with a gas can trying to flag him down. Being a generous Christian person he stopped and offered to give them a lift to a gas station. Once inside the car, the girl grabbed the wheel while the man clubbed my neighbor unconscious. He awakened several hours later, lying in an alley covered with his own blood. The hitch-hikers had obtained \$25 from his wallet. He was very lucky that the blows to his head had produced only a mild concussion. The beating might easily have killed or crippled him.

6. Another neighbor was walking along the street when he encountered an angry teenage boy viciously beating a younger child. The neighbor intervened ... and got a broken nose for his trouble.

7. A friend was walking home from work one night when he was accosted on the sidewalk by a robber carrying a .45 automatic. My friend was forced into an alley and relieved of his wallet and watch. Then the robber stepped closer, shoved the gun in my friend's stomach and fired. That might well have been the end of the story, but in this case the victim happened to be familiar both with firearms and with karate. When he saw the robber start to flinch in anticipation of the shot, my friend swatted the gun to the side. Then, before the second shot, he broke the neck of the would-be killer with a single blow.

8. My brother was visiting some hippie friends onetime when a couple of nasty operators walked in and pulled out knives. They demanded cash, got it, and faded away into the darkness. My brother's peace-loving friends looked like easy victims ... and they were.

9. I once had a practice partner in a karate class who seemed very intent on causing me as much pain as possible. His tendency to strike with full power during periods when he was supposed to be holding back was extremely discourteous and disgraceful. Then he stopped coming to class. He had been arrested for armed robbery.

10. There was a period when I managed an apartment building and discovered one apartment full of deadbeat delinquents. They were the worst kind of vicious, drug-dulled

dropouts. I had to evict them ... personally. I read in the newspaper later that three of them are now in prison in connection with a murder-robbery.

11. One very significant episode occurred one evening when I was parking my car in front of my house. Just as I opened the door to get out a pickup truck came screeching around the corner and narrowly missed my open car door. Apparently the driver of the truck thought I had deliberately tried to cause an accident. He stopped his truck, jumped out, and came after me to teach me a lesson. It was fortunate, and somewhat amusing, that his wife collared him and dragged him back into the truck before he was able to carry out his intention. People who think they don't need self-defense because they avoid dangerous situations have not allowed for this kind of hot-headed person. All I did was to park in front of my own house.

12. Something similar happened to another close friend recently. He was driving to work in heavy traffic and made a lane change into a left-turn lane. For some reason this enraged the driver of the car behind him. The next thing my friend knew there was a very angry person trying to open his driver-side door. The door was locked. Frustrated, the assailant started banging on the window with a rock, trying to break in. That didn't work either. As a last resort this violent lunatic got back in his truck and deliberately rammed my friend's car. Then, satisfied, he drove away.

13. A former self-defense student of mine reported that he had been hitch-hiking along a country road when a girl picked him up and gave him a ride into town. When they arrived in town the student thanked the girl and got out of her car. Just at that point a truck pulled up and a wild-eyed redneck leapt out. "I'll teach you to mess with my girl!" he shouted, and swung a roundhouse right at my student's face. My student had seen thousands of similar punches coming at him in my class, and he simply ducked. The furious attacker fell flat on his face. My student wisely left the scene.

14. I had another self-defense student who didn't have as much sense. He habitually frequented a bar where the resident yahoo delighted in wiping the floor with him. Every time he came to class he had new bruises. I mention this person to illustrate the fact that some victims are born and not made. Most of us know someone in this class.

15. Then there was the time I was driving home on the freeway after a pleasant evening at the theater. There was some night construction going on, and the freeway abruptly narrowed from four lanes to three. As traffic was merging into the remaining lanes a station wagon cut me off and stopped suddenly in front of me. I was not able to stop my car in time to avoid hitting it. Both cars pulled off to the shoulder. Then, like a bad dream, six black teenagers climbed out of the station wagon. All male and all mad. There were some bad moments before they decided to be civil. Confidence really shows in a situation like that.

16. My wife remembers vividly the time she walked out of a restaurant and found a man smashing windshields with a 2x4 in the parking lot. She watched helplessly as he moved down the line of cars breaking each windshield in turn, including hers. She was lucky that his animosity was directed only at cars.

17. Another time my wife was waiting at a stoplight when a strange man opened the passenger-side door and got in the car. After she ran a couple of red lights at seventy miles

an hour he got out again ... in a hurry.

18. I was once camping with a friend in a state park when I noticed a shadowy figure lurking in the gloom beyond the edge of the lantern light. I kept an eye out for him all evening, and eventually caught him sneaking up to the back of the tent. The police weren't interested. He was the local peeping tom and they knew that they couldn't convict him. The judge thought he was harmless.

19. On three occasions I have awakened in the middle of the night and found a stranger prowling around in the backyard. This was at three different times, in three different backyards. Prowling must be fairly common.

20. My most vivid memory of the city of Denver has to do with a gas station in the downtown area. I pulled in for gas and couldn't get any attention from the employees. They were busy watching two mechanics slug it out with wrenches. Nobody was trying to stop the fight.

21. My grandfather had the unnerving experience of walking in on a burglary in progress in his own bedroom. He was lucky. The two young men ran instead of attacking him.

22. Speaking of burglaries, it's happened to me three times. There was also an incident in which my car was broken into by a thief in broad daylight.

23. A young friend was out bike riding one Saturday afternoon. She stopped at the side of the street to talk to a friend for a moment. As she was standing there holding her bicycle two men rode up on a motorcycle. One hopped off the motorcycle, knocked her down, and rode away on her bike. The two thieves were last seen threading their way through a crowd of pedestrians, none of whom would raise a hand to stop them.

24. I know a very gentle young woman who got into her car one day and found a man with a gun waiting for her. He had rape on his mind. He told her to drive him to a secluded spot he knew, but his plans went wrong. She started to cry and became so hysterical she couldn't control the car. He couldn't hold the gun and drive at the same time, so he gave up. Who says that crying doesn't help?

25. A neighbor lady answered her front door one morning to find a man with a gun, also intent on a rape/robbery. He was frustrated, too. She kicked him all the way down the front steps and chased him halfway down the block.

26. A third young female friend was the type who smiles at everybody. One day as she was walking down the street a tall black stranger engaged her in conversation. She was totally unequal to the situation. Getting raped is a terrible way to lose one's virginity, as she can tell you.

Those are my 26 reasons for being interested in self-defense. All of these stories are true, and all happened to me, to members of my family, to my neighbors or to my friends. And we live in a low-crime neighborhood! My interest in selfdefense is based on an appreciation of the violence found in real life. If you disagree and find me to be a paranoid person, you'd be well advised to p-ut this book down and read no farther. Black Medicine is a deadly art which does not spare the feelings of the squeamish.

N. Mashiro

June, 1979

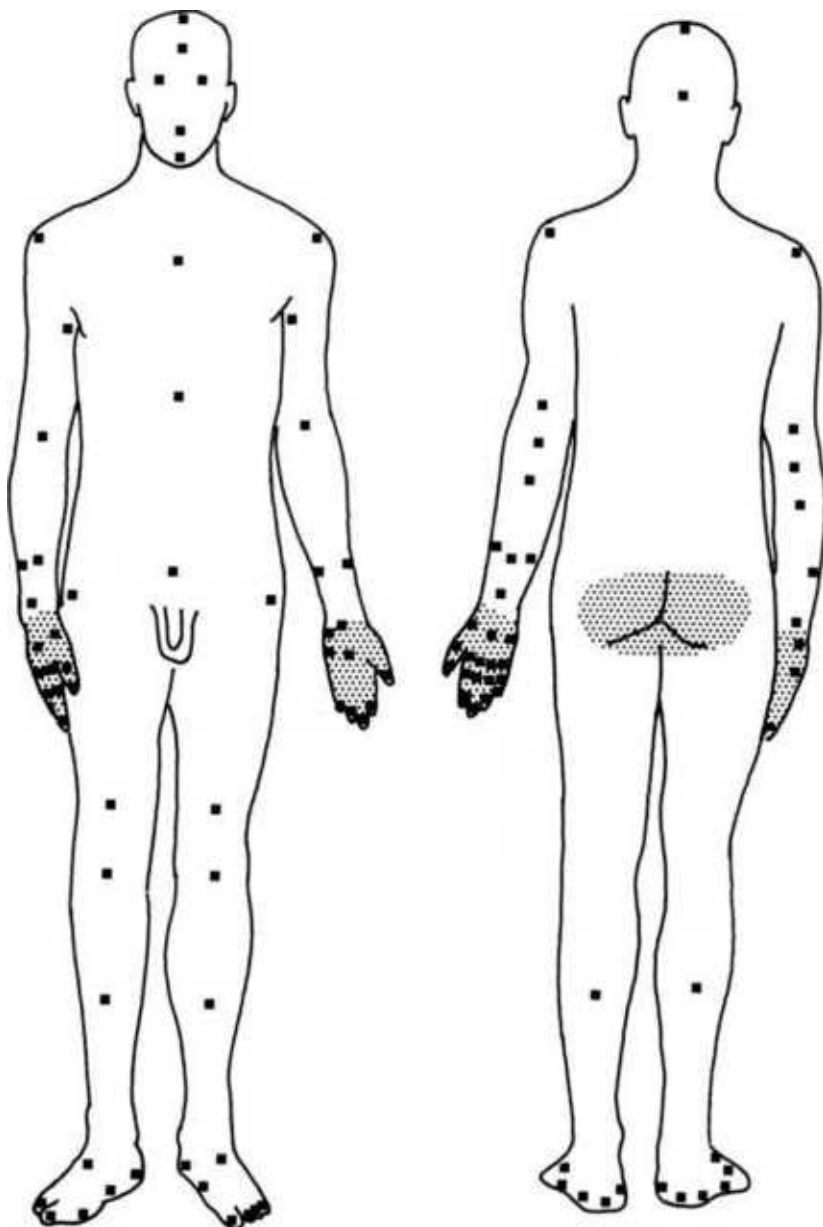


Fig. 1: There are natural weapons situated throughout the body. Although they are concentrated in the hands, it is literally true that if you can reach your opponent with any part of your body you can hurt him! (Compare this figure with the corresponding diagram of vulnerable areas of the body in Black Medicine, The Dark Art of Death.)

THE STRIKING POINTS

The striking points are the 112 parts of the body which martial artists use as weapons. Most of the striking points are concentrated in the hands and arms, but a substantial number are distributed throughout the body. Since you have natural weapons in every part of your body, if you can reach your opponent with any part of your body you can hurt him!

Figure 1 is a general overview of the parts of the body which may be used as weapons. These parts are discussed in detail on subsequent pages. The purpose of Figure 1 is simply to illustrate the point that there are natural weapons all over the body.



Fig. 2: The top of the head can be used as an anvil against which you may mash an opponent's face.

STRIKING POINTS OF THE HEAD

Top of Head: The very top of the cranial vault, centered on the anterior two inches of the sagittal suture. This is the area where you would balance a book on top of your head. This area is actually not a very good natural weapon because butting the opponent with your head places a severe strain on your neck, both in terms of lateral twisting and simple compression of the vertebrae. Butting is commonly seen in soccer and in football, but karateists see it most often in the movies. Still, such an attack can be effective if the opponent is taken by surprise in the lower abdomen or groin. If you were bound to a chair being interrogated you might be able to throw yourself (and the chair) forward and deliver this blow. (See Figure 2.)

Forehead: The striking point is the center of the frontal bone, about two inches above the eyebrows. The frontal bone is a dome-like shield in the front of the skull which can receive tremendous impacts without damage. One frequently sees karateists showing off by breaking huge blocks of ice or stacks of bricks by striking them with the forehead. In combat the forehead is most useful for striking the opponent's nose, mouth, jaw or collarbone when your hands are pinned or bound.

Back of Head: The occipital bone in the vicinity of the lambdoid suture. This is not as good a striking point as the forehead because too strong an impact here can fracture the lambdoid suture and depress the occipital bone into the brain. The back of the head is almost always used to attack the nose and face of an assailant who has pinned your arms from behind. This situation is frequently encountered when one person holds you while another beats you from the front. Ramming your head backward into the opponent's nose and mouth may cause him enough pain to break his grip on your arms and body.

Chin: The bony tip of the mandible. Although the jaw is extremely strong it is not normally used for striking a blow because it connects directly with the balancing organs in the ear. Any jarring of the jaw, therefore, disrupts balance. The chin can be used for gouging, however. In a desperate one-on-one fight when your arms and legs are otherwise occupied (as in the deadlocked wrestling or judo match) the chin can be used to gouge at nerve centers within reach of the head. There are many such centers in the neck and shoulders, for instance, and chin pressure against the inguinal region can effect an immediate release from a scissors hold (see *Black Medicine*, Vol. I for nerve pressure points).

Teeth: Usually the upper and lower incisors, but can include molars under rare circumstances. The human jaw and teeth can deliver shearing and crushing forces in excess of 400 pounds per square inch. The incisors exert the least pressure and are best adapted to cutting or tearing, while the molars in the back of the jaw produce the strongest crushing forces. It is obvious that an opponent who puts his hand over your mouth (to silence you) is in danger of a bitten finger, and if you can work one of his fingers into the back of your mouth you can crush it between the rear molars. In a grappling or wrestling

contest the teeth can be brought to bear on the opponent's ears, nose, lips, carotid sinus, thyroid cartilage and most nerve pressure points. Some karate schools teach a technique for attacking the throat which consists of butting the opponent in the face with your forehead, and as his head jerks back away from the blow you twist to the side and bite his Adam's apple. Tasty! (See Figure 3.)

Mind, Eyes and Voice: Your mind, eyes and voice are among your most powerful weapons, through which you can directly attack the opponent's mind without recourse to such crude methods as striking him physically. Training to use these mental weapons is the essence of true, traditional karate, and is one of the sad losses associated with the evolution of this art into a popular "sport." A master of this technique can paralyze you with the look in his eyes, or fill your mind with terror at the sound of his voice. This sounds improbable to the western mind, but the author has personally met many karateists who could knock a person off balance with a hostile facial expression alone.

My own mastery of the technique is limited, but I have employed it successfully in real life. On one occasion I con about coming back later, he led his gang away. He never bothered me again, but I heard later that he was in prison for murdering a defenseless storekeeper during a robbery. The look in my eyes had stopped him. It is a very valuable weapon.

Everyone has seen martial artists who shout insanely as they attack. This is a more obvious version for the same psychological intimidation. But a loud shout isn't enough. The shout must possess emotional content in order to be effective. You may imagine this in terms of a shout of rage, or a shout of hatred, but a trained karateist can produce the same psychological effect when his mind is actually calm and rational. This karate shout, or kiai, can force a whole room full of people to step back involuntarily if they are not expecting it. I've seen it happen. The effect of this shout when directed against a single opponent at close range can be devastating.

STRIKING POINTS OF THE ARMS & HANDS

Shoulder: The striking point is the acromial end of the scapular spine where it forms the bony “point” of the shoulder. The shoulder padding worn by football players is adequate testimony of the damage which this point can do when forcefully driven into an opponent’s body. The point of the shoulder is usually employed against an opponent’s solar plexus, floating ribs, bladder or genitals in a motion resembling a diving tackle. In judo contests one occasionally sees the shoulder being used to sneak in an illegal blow during an apparent throwing attempt. If the judges are not very alert such fouling can easily win many matches.

Armpit: Some high school wrestling teams boast that they win by “armpit power,” by which they mean that they suffocate their opponents by not bathing. Here the reference is to the axillary area when it is used to clamp an opponent’s arm or neck tightly against the side of the body. There are several elbow locks and throws which involve the armpit as a clamp or fulcrum.

Point of Elbow: The striking point is the olecranon, the sharp protuberance of the ulna where it forms the hard tip of the bent elbow. With the arm fully bent, the point of the elbow can be used to strike a very powerful blow either straight back into the opponent’s ribs, or straight down into a bowing opponent’s head and back. (Envision someone who is trying to tackle you around the waist. The elbow blow comes straight down into the back of his neck.) The point of the elbow is also used to strike straight out to the side, but this technique is rarely seen. It requires a lot of training to be powerful enough for serious applications. (See Figure 4.)

Front of Elbow: This term refers to the medial surface of the ulna within 3 inches of the point of the elbow. This is the hard, bony surface of the forearm just beneath the joint. This surface is used to strike an “elbow blow” directly forward into the opponent’s solar plexus, directly up under his chin, or horizontally into the side of his face. (Specifically, the attacker’s right elbow moves horizontally from the attacker’s right to left, hitting the left side of the defender’s face.) These are extremely powerful infighting blows which do not require any special training to be effective. The rising blow under the chin is especially noteworthy, and can break the opponent’s jaw or even his neck.



Fig. 4: The front of the elbow can kill when driven up under the opponent's chin (top left). It can also be used laterally, breaking the opponent's jaw (top right). The elbow point employed in a downward blow to the cervical vertebrae can easily break your opponent's neck (below left). The back of the elbow in a lateral strike to the opponent's head (below right).

Back of Elbow: The posterior, distal end of the humerus, within 3 inches of the trochlea. This is the back of the upperarm just above the elbow. The back of the elbow is used to strike horizontally at the head or ribs of an attacker who has embraced you from behind, leaving your arms free. You twist sideways and swing the back of the elbow horizontally into the opponent's face. It can also be used as a backhand elbow blow against an opponent who is in front of you. A typical attack consists of using the front of the elbow to hit the left side of the opponent's face, then recoiling back using the back of the elbow to strike his face a second time.

Bend of Elbow: The anterior surface of the arm within four inches of the cubital fossa. The bend of the elbow cannot be used to strike an opponent, strictly speaking, but as a choking or strangulating device it is unsurpassed. The purest form involves wrapping your arm around the opponent's neck from behind and catching his Adam's apple directly in the

fold of the arm. In this position the biceps in the upper arm and the many muscles of the forearm bear directly against the carotid arteries in the opponent's neck. A tight application of the hold cuts off the blood flow to the brain and the victim passes out almost immediately. The fold of the elbow is also used very often as a headlock, in which the opponent's head is held tightly at the side of your body while you strike him or otherwise deal with him.

Inside Edge of Forearm: The medial side of the forearm, especially the distal four inches of the ulna. This is the edge of the forearm on the same side as the little finger. A very common karate block (tettsui-uke) consists of deflecting an opponent's punch by striking his fist or arm with the inside edge of your forearm. The block consists of holding the forearm vertically (fist up, elbow down) and sweeping it across in front of the face or body to deflect the incoming punch.

Outside Edge of Forearm: The thumb edge of the forearm, especially the distal four inches of the radius. This surface is used for blocking similarly to the inside of the forearm, but the block begins with the fist in front of the opposite shoulder and sweeps back across the body.

Back of Forearm: The posterior surface of the forearm. This is the side of the wrist/forearm continuous with the back of the hand (where most people wear a watch). This surface is not commonly used in karate, the sides of the forearms being preferred for most purposes. The back of the forearm is most often used to break a front choke in which the opponent is squeezing your neck with both hands while standing in front of you. The release consists of clasping your hands together and driving the wedge formed by your forearms up between the opponent's arms. In this case it is the back of your forearms which strike the opponent's arms and break the hold.

Fingernails: We are all familiar with the fact that fingernails can be used for scratching, an ineffective technique at best. They can also be used for clawing, however, which is more practical. In this context the nails can be used to achieve deep penetration into the eyes, throat and especially the nerve pressure points on the back of the hand (see *Black Medicine*, Vol. I). Some dedicated karate and kung-fu artists allow their nails to grow 1/4 to 1/2 inch long, and strengthen them with nail hardener. Naturally they also sandpaper the tips to a sharp edge. The wound produced by four of these nails slashed across a person's throat (like saw teeth) is difficult to believe even when seen.

Tip of Thumb: The tip of the distal phalanx of the thumb, together with the sharp edge of the nail. The tip of the thumb is used for gouging, usually at the opponent's eyes but frequently involving the throat and other nerve pressure points. The trapezius muscle is especially vulnerable to a thumb gouge (see *Black Medicine*, Vol. I and Figure 5).

Foreknuckle of Thumb: The distal end of the proximal phalanx of the thumb. The foreknuckle of the thumb (immediately behind the thumbnail) can be used for jabbing into soft tissues. With the hand open, align the thumb in its natural position along the side of the hand. Now bend just the tip of the thumb in toward the palm, leaving the foreknuckle exposed. In this position you can use this striking point to attack the side of the opponent's throat. Jab your hand (palm down) along the side of the opponent's neck. Let your index finger slide along the angle between his throat and jaw. This will guide the thumb knuckle

directly into the carotid sinus. This is one of the most certain ways of hitting this small but very valuable nerve center.



Fig. 5: The tip of the thumb and the thumbnail are excellent for gouging at an eyeball.

Back of Thumb: Counting back from the thumb nail, the first joint is the foreknuckle, the second is the knuckle, and the “back of the thumb” is the bony area between the knuckle and the wrist. (The dorsal side of the first metacarpal bone.) When the hand is in the standard open attack position with the thumb pulled down into a tight knot next to the palm, the back of the thumb forms a hard bony ridge protruding at a 45 degree angle from the line of the forearm. This surface is usually employed in blocking, especially since the angle between the thumb and forearm can lock on to an opponent’s wrist (behind his fist) and not only deflect his punch but pull him off balance.

Thumb and Forefinger: Which of us does not know how to pinch with thumb and forefinger? This pinch can be very painful when applied in the lip or nose region, and can crush a testicle like a soft-boiled egg. When the pinch catches the thyroid cartilage in its grip it can actually be fatal. (See Figure 6.)

Sides of Thumb and Forefinger: When the thumb is held out away from the open hand the

“V” between it and the forefinger becomes a useful weapon for attacking the carotid sinuses in the throat. (See Figure 7.) The web of the thumb is rammed against the thyroid cartilage, and the sides of the thumb and forefinger strike against the sides of the neck in exactly the right location to shock the carotid baroreceptors and produce unconsciousness. (See Black Medicine, Vol. I for a discussion of the vulnerability of the carotid nerve centers.)

Tip of Forefinger: The tip of the distal phalanx of the first finger. Many karate schools teach a technique called *ippon-nukite*, the one-finger spearhand attack. In this attack the forefinger is held rigidly extended with the other three fingers partially bent beneath it, giving the forefinger strong support. This weapon is used to stab into the opponent’s eye, throat or solar plexus. The attack is effective in proportion to the attacker’s training. Anybody can poke his finger in someone’s eye with a reasonable chance of success, but the attack to the solar plexus requires conditioning and training. (See Figure 8.)

Tips of Forefinger and Middle Finger: The tips of the distal phalanges of the first and second fingers. The fingers are usually spread about two inches apart and are used for stabbing into the opponent’s eyes. This is the famous “Three Stooges” eye attack, but it is not formed in the common V-for victory finger position. The forefinger and middle finger are fully extended, but the ring and little fingers are only half bent and serve to support the middle finger. Sometimes the thumb is laid along side of the forefinger to give it additional support, too. A karateist trained in finger spearing techniques can stab through the eye sockets and into the brain with this technique. (See Figure 8.)

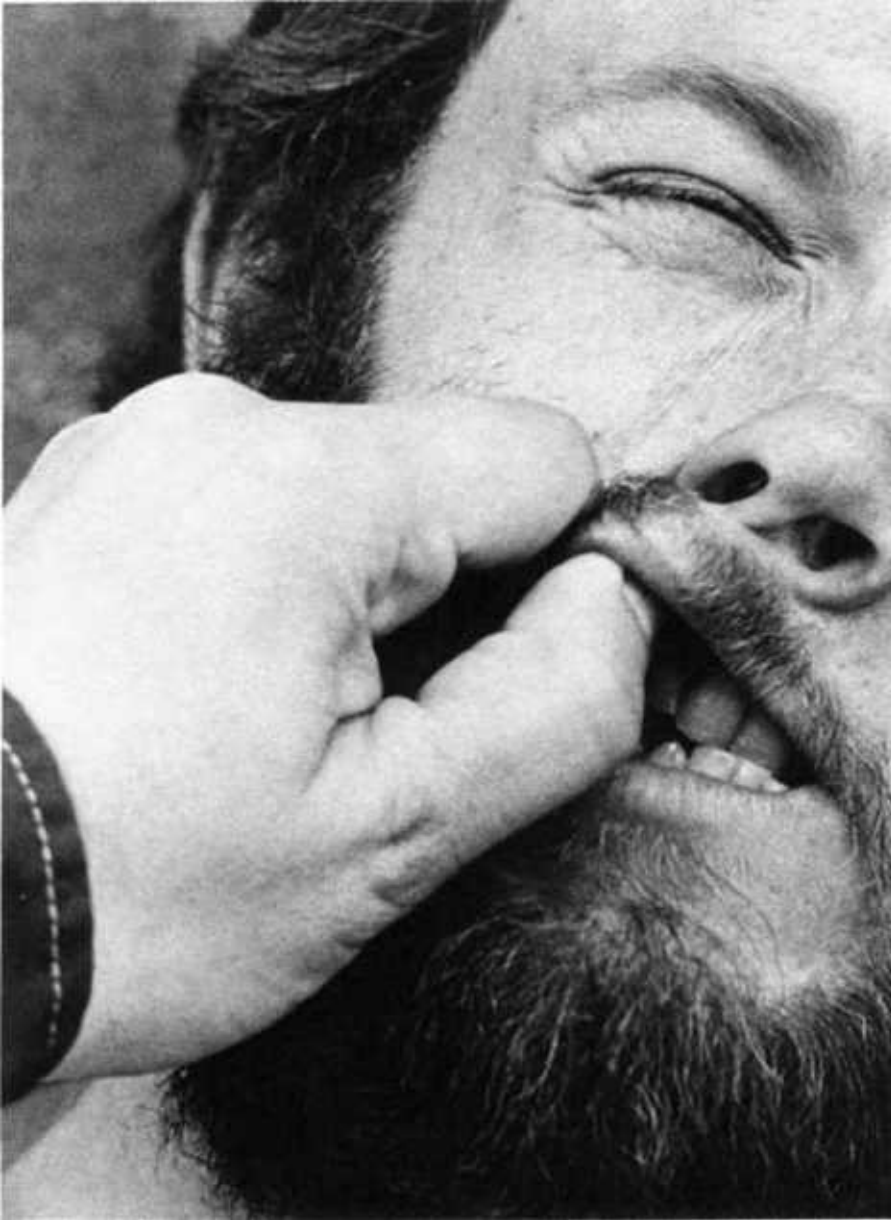


Fig. 6: The pinch of the thumb and forefinger is best applied to the lip, nose, or the Adam's apple.



Fig. 7: The 'V' between the thumb and the edge of the palm can be rammed up into a person's throat, doing damage to the thyroid cartilage and both carotid nerve centers. The result is unconsciousness or even death, but with little risk of injury to the hand.

Tips of Forefinger, Middle and Ring Fingers: The tips of the distal phalanges of the first, second and third fingers. This is the classic karate "spear hand" attack, which consists of holding the fingers, hand and wrist as straight and stiff as a board while ramming the ends of the fingers into the opponent's throat, solar plexus or even his ribs. There are several minor variations in the technique. In most cases the fingers are held tightly together with the middle finger slightly bent to make the three fingers about the same length. In another method the fingertips form a triangle, with the middle finger resting on top of the appressed fore and ring fingers. In yet another method the fingers are spread with about an inch of space between each finger tip. (This arrangement is for attacking the trachea or the eyes when you want to be sure you don't miss.) Another version involves bending the fingers into a sharp right angle with the hand. The wrist is also bent back slightly, which makes the position of the hand resemble a "Z" in shape. In the days of old when karateists trained for years to toughen their hands, it was said that a true practitioner of the art could stab through a man's body wall with this technique. There are only a few people today who can accomplish this feat, but they are sincerely respected. (See Figure 8.)

Tips of Fore, Middle, Ring and Little Fingers: Hold your hand open, with the fingers extended straight but with a one inch gap between the middle and ring fingers. In some karate schools this position is called an “extractor” hand, because it can be thrust palm-up into the opponent’s groin. The two groups of fingers pass on either side of his penis and direct all their force into the testicles.

Little Finger: In many Army manuals you will find the comment that the little finger is a lethal weapon. This is preposterous. The comment usually alludes to the knife-hand chop (discussed below) which uses the little-finger edge of the palm, which is not the same thing as the little finger at all. As we all know, however, the little finger is precisely the right size to insert into a nostril, and the effect on an opponent’s state of mind when you insert your finger into his nostril is devastating. The finger-in-the-nose technique is one of the simplest and most effective releases from an unwanted embrace.



Fig. 8: The one-finger attack to the eye (top left). Two fingers used to attack the eyes (top right). Three fingers in a stab to the throat. At least one finger will crush the trachea even if the attack is partially deflected (below left). The full spear-hand attack to the floating ribs. Some experts drive their fingers in under the ribs, then grasp the lower ribs and pull (below right).

Foreknuckle of Forefinger: The distal end of the proximal phalanx first finger. The “foreknuckles” are those which one uses to knock on a door. When the hand is clenched into a fist the forefinger can be unfolded slightly so that the foreknuckle forms a point. This point is used to gouge or stab sharply at nerve centers and other small vital points, such as the temple, philtrum, solar plexus and any of several nerve centers in the throat (see Black Medicine, Vol. I).

Foreknuckle of Middle Finger: The distal end of the proximal phalanx of the second finger. The foreknuckle of the middle finger can be allowed to protrude from a clenched fist similarly to that of the forefinger, discussed above. It is employed identically to the foreknuckle of the forefinger except that the middle finger is better supported and can confidently be used to strike a little harder than in the previous case.

Foreknuckles of Fore, Middle, Ring and Little Fingers: The distal ends of the proximal phalanges of all the fingers. Imagine jabbing at the opponent’s throat with your fingertips. Now fold your fingers as if starting to make a fist and jab with the foreknuckles instead (the knuckles you use for knocking on a door). These knuckles form a hard, penetrating weapon which is especially useful in slipping a punch in under the chin to the soft tissues of the throat. This technique is also used against the philtrum, temple, solar plexus and the subaxillary nerve bundle in the armpit. (See Black Medicine, Vol. I for discussion of these nerve centers.)

Knuckles: The distal ends of the second and third, or the second through fifth metacarpal bones. (The first metacarpal bone is in the thumb, the second is at the base of the forefinger, etc.) These are the knuckles we instinctively use when striking with a clenched fist. There are two ways to form the fist, depending on whether you prefer the boxing approach or the karate approach. In boxing the fist is formed with all four knuckles aligned to hit the target at the same time. The karate version concentrates force into the knuckles of the fore and middle fingers by folding the ring and little fingers farther back into the fist. The fist is used to punch at the opponent’s face, throat, abdomen, groin, kidneys and other soft parts of the body. Trained karateists can deliver extremely powerful punches even against hard parts of the body, fracturing the skull, sternum and ribs with equal facility. Do not make the common mistake of punching the opponent in the jaw, however, unless you really know what you are doing. It is much too easy to break bones in your fist when you strike such a strong, angular bone as the mandible.

Back of Fist: A very common karate blow involves a backhand strike using the knuckle fore and middle finger. This attack is usually directed at the temple of the face in a very fast snapping motion.

Bottom of Fist: The medial side of the fifth metacarpal, together with fleshy tissues appertaining. The little-finger side of a clenched fist can be used like a hammer to deliver extremely powerful blows, especially against the opponent’s head, collarbone, forearms, legs and groin. Japanese karate teachers call this the tettsui, or iron hammer. When used to block an incoming punch, the iron hammer blow can literally break the other man’s arm.

Palm of Hand: When the hand is open the flat palm is the natural weapon preferred for such non-injurious attacks as slapping and spanking. It produces less innocuous results, however, when directed at the nose, groin, or when clapped over the outer opening of the

ear canal.

Folded Palm: Touch your little finger to your thumb, and notice the fold which appears in the palm from the heel of the hand up to the base of the forefinger. This is the basis for one of the “sticky hands” techniques in which the opponent’s punch is not only blocked, but actually caught and held in mid-strike. The block is accomplished with the palm loosely folded. As the opponent’s left fist comes in toward your head, you block with your right hand, allowing his forearm to enter the semi-circle of your palm and fingers. The narrow “V” of the folded palm slides freely down his forearm, but locks tight when it encounters his wrist. This capture is usually seen in conjunction with a judo throw or footsweep. (See Figure 9.)

Heel of Palm: When the wrist is bent back the heel of the hand becomes a most formidable impact weapon. The palm heel can be used for punching attacks to the jaw, nose, solar plexus, ribs and groin. The advantage of using the palm heel is that it is less subject to injury than the knuckles, and there is no danger of spraining the wrist. Also, a person must be properly trained to punch correctly with his fists, but palm heel attacks can be learned almost instantly.

Back of Hand: When the hand is open, the bony back of the hand can be used for especially painful slapping, and in karate it is also used for deflecting incoming punches.

Edge of Hand: The “chop,” one of the most famous karate or judo blows, is delivered with the little-finger edge of the palm. The hand is held open with the thumb folded down tightly, almost as if you were trying to touch the thumb tip to the center of the palm. (Many military manuals show this position incorrectly with the thumb extended away from the hand.) The striking surface is the medial side of the fifth metacarpal, and the associated fleshy tissue. The “knife-hand” attack usually does not involve the little finger or the first inch of palm at the little finger’s base, but is focused on the fleshier two-thirds of the palm’s edge. This attack is especially favored among martial artists because it concentrates the force of the blow into an area of only two or three square inches. The “chop” is most effective against the temple, nose, throat, neck, collarbone, several points on the forearm, and the inside of the thigh.



Fig. 9: The folded palm position of the hand looks weak and loose, but in practice it is an excellent way to ensnare the opponent's arm in mid-strike. The V-shaped cavity formed by the hand slips easily along the opponent's forearm, but locks tightly when it reaches his wrist.

Ridge Hand: This is an "edge of the hand" technique which uses the second metacarpal bone instead of the fifth. With the hand held open and the thumb tucked down deeply into the palm, the edge of the hand at the base of the index finger can be used to strike at the temple, side of neck, floating ribs and groin. This technique is frequently seen in professional "karate" tournaments where it is delivered with a flailing motion. The attacker swings his shoulder past the target, allowing his arm to follow like a whip. Although striking with the inside edge of the hand would seem to be a very weak and limited technique, once mastered it is very powerful and can be employed frequently in karate matches.

Lower Edge of Hand: A modified form of the "knife hand" attack consists of bending the whole hand slightly back at the wrist and then slightly down (in the direction of the littlefinger). This special blow is designed to break the collarbone, and uses only the edge of the heel of the hand for striking.

Back of Wrist: The distal ends of the radius and ulna on their posterior (dorsal) surface. Bend your hand and wrist as if trying to touch your fingertips to the inside of your wrist. In this position the back of the wrist presents a hard surface which is used for several blocks and strikes, especially to the face. This striking point converts a simple backhand slap into a punishing blow.

Whole Hand: While discussing the many small parts of the hand which can be used as weapons, it is important to remember that the functions of the whole hand can be weaponlike, too. The simple act of grasping is used very frequently in combat, to hold and pull an opponent's wrist, clothing or hair. Some of the more heavily built karateists can break a person's forearm by grasping it around the wrist and squeezing! Grasping the opponent's sleeve during a block is very common, and controlling his head by grasping his ears or hair is an extremely effective technique. All depend on the use of the whole hand in its role as a grasping instrument.

STRIKING POINTS OF THE TORSO

Chest: The chest is not normally used as a striking surface, but in exceptional circumstances it can be quite effective. One thinks of a bully using his chest to push his victim around, but the chest can also be used as an anvil into which you can pull the opponent's face. The sternum seems very hard and unforgiving when your nose hits it at high speed. Also, the size of a man's chest is an effective psychological dominance asset. Large men who "puff up" their chests when annoyed are rarely attacked.

Abdomen: In karate, the abdomen is considered to be the center of all power. This concept is usually taught as a semimystical belief, but there is a sound anatomical basis for it as well. All attacks delivered with the arms and hands become much more powerful when firmly driven from a solid base. If the abdomen is not tense and inflexible at the moment of impact, much of the power of the attack is absorbed in rotating the upper trunk relative to the feet and hips (a recoil motion). The abdomen is not necessarily a source of physical power, but unless it is held rigid at the moment of impact it does act as a sink, draining power away from the blow. Mastery of the ability to "focus" an attack for maximum power involves considerable abdominal coordination, and is the single most valuable technique an unarmed fighter can possess.

Hips: Taken here to mean the lateral projections of the femurs, not the iliac crest. The extreme upper part of the side of the thigh, opposite the hip joint. The hip is a striking point in judo and jui-jitsu. It is used like a battering ram during the initial motion of many throws to break the opponent's balance and posture. The force of this blow can be appreciated by the fact that it is possible to break several boards with this hip impact alone. The effect when the blow catches the opponent squarely in the groin is very dramatic. Most people will dive right into the throw rather than try to resist the full power of this attack.

There is another meaning of "using the hips" which is more typical of karate. This meaning implies locking the hips rigidly at the moment of impact of a hand or foot blow. The reasons are similar to those discussed for locking the abdomen at the same time (see above).

Buttocks: The buttocks are among the strongest and most heavily padded parts of the body. This is the reason they are preferred for the ritualized striking of naughty children, since there is very little possibility of injury other than bruising. The buttocks, however, can actually be employed as a lethal weapon under the right circumstances. When held around the waist from behind, a person can bend down, grasp the attacker's ankle, jerk it up and spill him on his back. At that point if you violently drop your whole weight on his chest (buttocks first) you can squash him like a bug. A crushed rib cage is an extremely serious injury. Who would have thought that the lowly bottom could be so deadly?

Groin: One of the more colorful episodes of my karate training occurred when an instructor became confused one day and finished an explanation with this remarkable

statement: “Then you finish him off by slamming your groin into his knee!” Poor advice. In judo, however, the pubis bone (the hard bone you can feel just above the genitals) is commonly used as a fulcrum for various elbow locks. If you have thrown your opponent on his back you can lock his elbow by holding the back of his wrist next to your navel and levering back against his elbow. The back of the elbow is thrust forward by the pubis bone, locking the arm and producing considerable pain (for him, not you!).

STRIKING POINTS OF THE LEG & FOOT

Front of Thigh: The front of the thigh within eight inches of the knee can be used for a groin attack during very close infighting. The blow resembles that of a knee-strike into the opponent's groin, but is used when you are too close to effectively use your knee.

Knee: The knee is almost as versatile as the elbow when it comes to striking powerful blows in a variety of directions. The most obvious attack is the classic knee in the groin, which is usually a straight-in type of blow. The knee can also be used for a rising blow, as when you grasp the opponent's hair with your hands and pull his head down into your rising knee. Karateists quickly learn to deliver roundhouse knee attacks, in which the knee is cocked out to the side of the body and swept in a horizontal arc into the side of the opponent's body. In this case the targets selected are usually the abdomen or rib cage. In the case of an opponent who has been thrown to the ground, dropping on his body with one or both knees can be extremely damaging. Lastly, the knee is frequently used to ward off or deflect incoming kicks. Note that in this application the knee is fully flexed and held high in front of the groin as a shield. (See Figure 10.)

Shin: The front of the lower leg is sometimes used for kicks to the groin, rib cage, or side when the distance to the target is too great for a knee attack but too short for a proper kick. The attack against the genitals is especially effective, since the shin is very hard and the target offers no possibility of injury to the leg.

Calf: The back of the lower leg is used in some of the simpler judo throws in which you throw the opponent by stepping to his side and sweeping his legs out from under him from behind using the back of your leg. The back of the thigh is also used in this way.

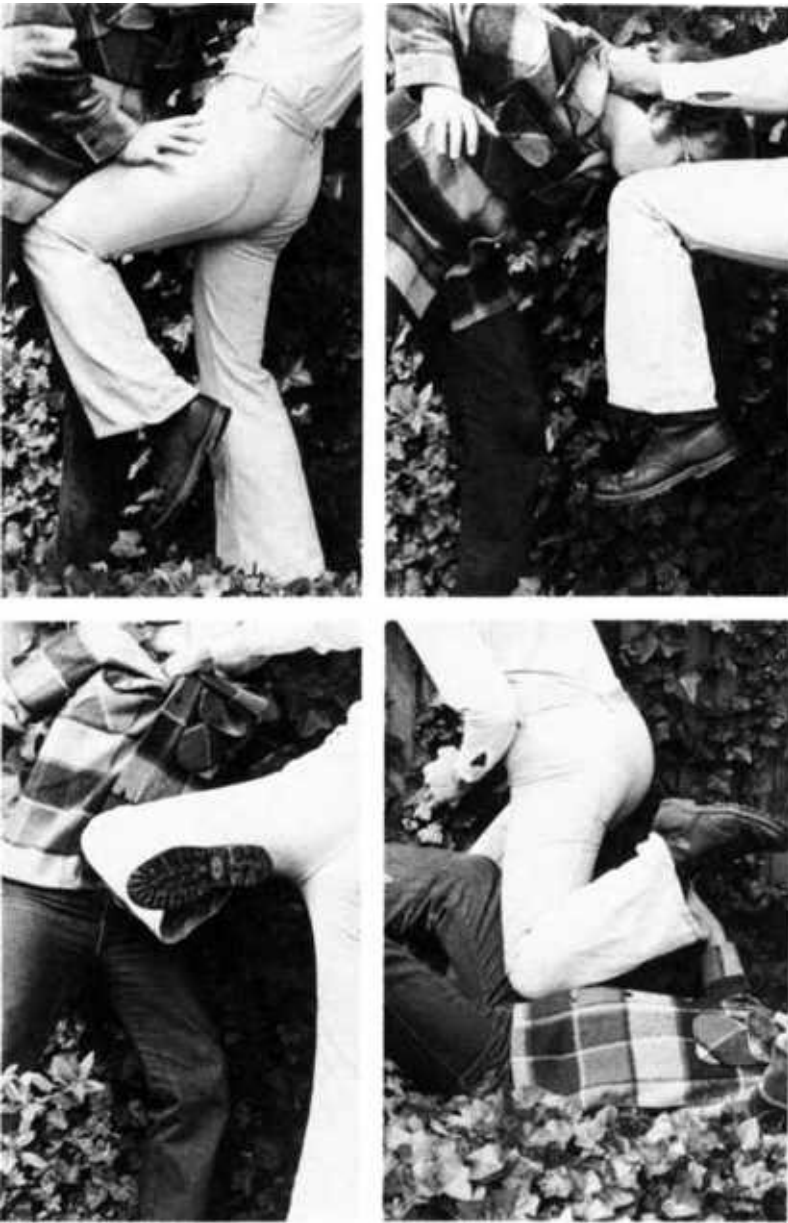


Fig. 10: The classic knee attack to the groin. Notice the ineffective block (top left). When the opponent folds after the groin attack, a follow-up attack to the face is easy to apply (top right). The knee can also be used in a roundhouse manner. Here the opponent is trapped between the incoming knee, and fence (below left). Finally, the knee can be used to strike a blow directly downward. Drop on the opponent, driving your knee deep into his chest or abdomen (below right).

Top of Foot: The tarsus and metatarsal bones on the dorsal surface of the foot. With the foot fully extended (as if standing on your toes) the bony upper surface between the ankle and the toes can be used to attack the groin, floating ribs, head and face. This is especially easy in terms of the groin, because like the thigh and shin the top of the foot does not require exact placement in order to damage the genitals. Attacks to the ribs and head usually involve roundhouse kicks. These kicks begin with the foot and leg cocked horizontally to the side, from which the foot is whipped in a horizontal or ascending arc to the target. More rarely a flying kick is used. This is similar to the roundhouse kick in general, and the biggest difference being that you lightly spring four or five feet up into the air first.

Ball of Foot: With the ankle and toes fully extended (as if trying to touch your toes to the

front of your shin) the ball of the foot becomes properly positioned for use as a natural weapon. Actually the position of the ankle varies from one kick to another, but the toes are always bent up as far as possible to avoid breaking them between the ball of the foot and the target. Kicks using the ball of the foot can strike upward into the kneecap, groin, solar plexus, armpit, throat or chin. If the knee is raised high during the kick the attack may come almost straight in, striking the abdomen or groin. When used with a roundhouse kick the ball of the foot can inflict very severe damage to the skull and rib cage. This is one of the most powerful and most frequently used of all karate weapons.

Toes: The toes are not usually involved in kicks because they are too easily sprained, dislocated and broken. They can be used in a kick to the genitals where reaching the target is more important than delivering a really powerful blow. A kick which hooks around the opponent's thigh and jars the testicles from behind is an example of this kind of attack. Of course the "toe" of a shoe is a perfectly respectable striking device. (See Figure 11.)

Bottom of Foot: The entire ventral surface of the foot, normally in contact with the ground while standing. The bottom of the foot is used in some simple backward kicks (think of a donkey) and in stamping attacks against the opponent's toes. When you are squared off against another karateist you can frequently nullify his tactics by stepping on his leading foot and pinning it to the ground. When he involuntarily glances down at his foot you can exploit his inattention with a hand attack to the head.



Fig. 11: The toes are rarely used as striking points because of their fragility. Against the genitals, however, the toes perform very effectively.

Sole of Foot: By “sole” is meant that part of the bottom of the foot which corresponds anatomically to the palm of the hand. In a crescent kick you swing your foot in a high rising arc which passes up one side of the opponent’s body, across his face, and back down to the ground on the other side. The blow is like slapping the face with the sole of your foot. Crescent kicks are also used against the opponent’s hands (to deflect weapons) and against his chest. The sole of the foot is commonly used in footsweep attacks, too, in which you “slap” the opponent’s feet out from under him using the sole of your foot.

Outer Edge of Foot: Stand with your foot flat on the floor. Turn your ankle sideways to roll the foot over onto its outer edge. This sharp edge of the foot is used in karate thrust kicks against the opponent’s instep, shin, knee, thigh, groin, abdomen, ribs, throat and skull (see Black Medicine Vol I. for details). The narrowness of this part of the foot concentrates the power of the attack into such a small space that all the force can be concentrated on one rib, for instance. With the entire mass of the powerful leg muscles behind it, such a kick produces astonishing penetration and internal damage.

Upper Edge of Foot: The “upper” edge of the foot is a narrow band of tissue roughly

overlying the fifth metatarsal bone. It is on top, running along the outer edge from the base of the little toe to the heel. When the edge of the foot is used in rising kicks against the chin, groin, armpit, elbows and hands the striking area is not quite the same as in the case of a thrust kick. (For the true karateist, the kick envisioned here is the side snap kick, or yoko geri keage).

Inner Edge of Foot: The inner side of the foot, running from the big toe back to the ankle, is not as effective in kicks as the outer edge, but its natural curvature helps the foot cling to the opponent's shin during an attack on the lower leg and foot. You swing your foot in to attack his shin, contacting with the inner edge of your foot and bruising the nerves in his shin. Then you drive your foot downward along the length of the shin bone until the bottom of your foot crushes his instep. A very effective attack, especially when wearing shoes.

Bottom of Heel: Persons who are especially limber can deliver a kick in which the blow is delivered with the bottom of the heel alone. This is accomplished by driving the foot straight in to the opponent's chest with the ankle bent as far back toward the shin as possible. At the point of impact the opponent is struck by a solid column of bone extending from the pelvis to the heel. It feels very much like running at full speed into the end of a battering ram.

Side of Heel: In a reverse crescent kick the outer edge of the heel can be used to rake across the opponent's face. The kick involves bringing your right foot in a rising arc up the right side of the opponent's body, rapping him across the face with your heel, and then completing the circle to your original position.

Back of Heel: The back of the heel is used in the back snap kick against an opponent who is behind you. If the attacker has grabbed you from behind and pinned your arms, the back of the heel can be used with great effect against his shins, knee caps, and even his groin. There is one specialty kick in which you swing your leg as if to strike the opponent's side with the back of your knee. Instead, at the last second you bend your knee and strike him in the kidney from behind with the back of your heel! (See Figure 12.)



Fig. 12: The reverse roundhouse kick, delivered with the back of the heel, is one of the most unexpected karate attacks. It literally wraps around the opponent's body and strikes from behind.



Fig. 13: This classic oriental weapon was originally a rice flail. The conversion of a farming tool to a weapon illustrates the essence of makeshift weaponry.

MAKESHIFT WEAPONS

The second half of the volume is devoted to a subject only one step removed from that of the body's natural weapons. This is the neglected topic of makeshift weapons. I call it a neglected topic because there has been very little effort made to refine our knowledge of makeshift weapons into a modern martial art. The most recent significant advances in this field are now over 100 years out of date.

The last period of creative development in the field of makeshift weaponry occurred in Okinawa in the 1800's. Conquering Japanese armies confiscated all "weapons" from the local population, including the household cooking knives! In response the Okinawans developed their knowledge of hand-to-hand combat and the use of makeshift weapons to a high art. Their new knowledge made their hands and feet very powerful, and their innocent-looking farming tools gradually began to serve double duty as surprisingly effective weapons. (This was a classic case of ploughshares forged into swords!) To this period of adversity we owe the development of modern karate and the development of several exotic oriental "weapons."

The best example of an oriental makeshift weapon is the nunchaku. This is a pair of wooden sticks, each about a foot long, which are joined at one end by a short length of chain or cord to form a formidable wooden whip or flail. (See Figure 13.) The nunchaku does terrible damage to an opponent, and has become popular in karate movies where the hero deftly pulls a nunchaku from his sleeve and uses it to defeat an army of attackers.

The nunchaku is a makeshift weapon. It is really an Okinawan rice-threshing flail, used to beat the grains of rice loose from the stalks on the threshing floor. The Japanese soldiers did not confiscate these threshing flails as weapons because they regarded them as harmless farming tools. The same situation applied to the sai, a short pitchfork used for handling bales of rice. It too became a very effective weapon, especially against sword-wielding soldiers.

Today, on the streets of many American cities, it is a felony to be found in possession of these oriental "weapons." The reason is simple. In modern America it is difficult to justify having a rice flail under one's coat for any purpose other than hitting people. The same can be said of carrying the pitchfork-like sai, the yawara stick (a former holy-water vessel carried by monks) or any of several other formerly useful makeshift weapons. These weapons were successful in their day because they were routinely at hand serving other purposes when trouble appeared. We would do well to emulate the ingenuity of the Okinawans and examine the perfectly legal objects we handle every day which might be developed into formidable weapons.

Makeshift weapons are common household items which can be used or converted into weapons on the spur of the moment. These objects are not normally thought of as weapons, and as such are usually available to a hostage or kidnap victim. Many of them can be placed near a door to repel an unwanted intruder, and others can be inconspicuously (and legally) carried about the person. The following list covers more than 180 such items, but should not be considered complete. The objects which can be used as makeshift weapons are limited only by the user's fighting skill and imagination.

selection of more than 180 makeshift weapons discussed in the following pages. Everything in the picture can be used to injure or kill when used correctly.

Axe: Remember Lizzie Borden? The edge of the axe is most effective if applied to the side of the skull, the back of the skull, the backbone just above the hips, and the area of the solar plexus. For the solar plexus attack try to catch the opponent as he is just entering the room. Stand beside the door and swing the axe horizontally like a baseball bat. That way the axe head will slip between the ribs on its way into the chest.

Axe Handle: A very convenient club, but best used for spearlike lunges with the end. The handle is actually a more versatile and handier weapon than the whole axe, so if you have time remove the axe head before using.

Bar of Soap: Sooner or later your captors will give you a bar of soap, if only to be relieved of the smell of you. Slip the soap inside your sock (or wrap it in a towel) and use it as a blackjack. Strike for the temple, for the mastoid process behind the ear, or for the collarbone. (See Figure 15.)

Baseball: Ever wonder why batters wear helmets, and umpires encase themselves in padding? A baseball is a very handy, very hard object which can do a lot of damage if propelled with enough force. Use it as a bludgeon or missile.

Baseball Bat: Used similarly to an axe handle, but the bat is heavier and slower. When fleeing from an attacker a very effective use of the bat is to sling it, spinning horizontally along the ground, into the attacker's legs. He will have a hard time avoiding a disabling shin injury. (Note: It is usually better not to throw away your weapon as a general policy.)

Basting Syringe: Who says that the terrorists won't come after you on Thanksgiving? A squirt of searing grease in the face from a basting syringe could be just the thing. The basting syringes with attached hypodermic needles can be used for injecting air or poison (drain cleaner and water) into the opponent's body. Air bubbles in an artery can be fatal.

Bath Towel: A bath towel can be used as a whip (visit any locker room and see for yourself), as a garrote, and as the handle for a soap blackjack. Tie the bar of soap in one corner of the towel and start swinging. Another possibility would be to fold the towel in half across its width and use it as a sling. Dump a can of hot pepper in the towel and sling the powder into your opponent's face.

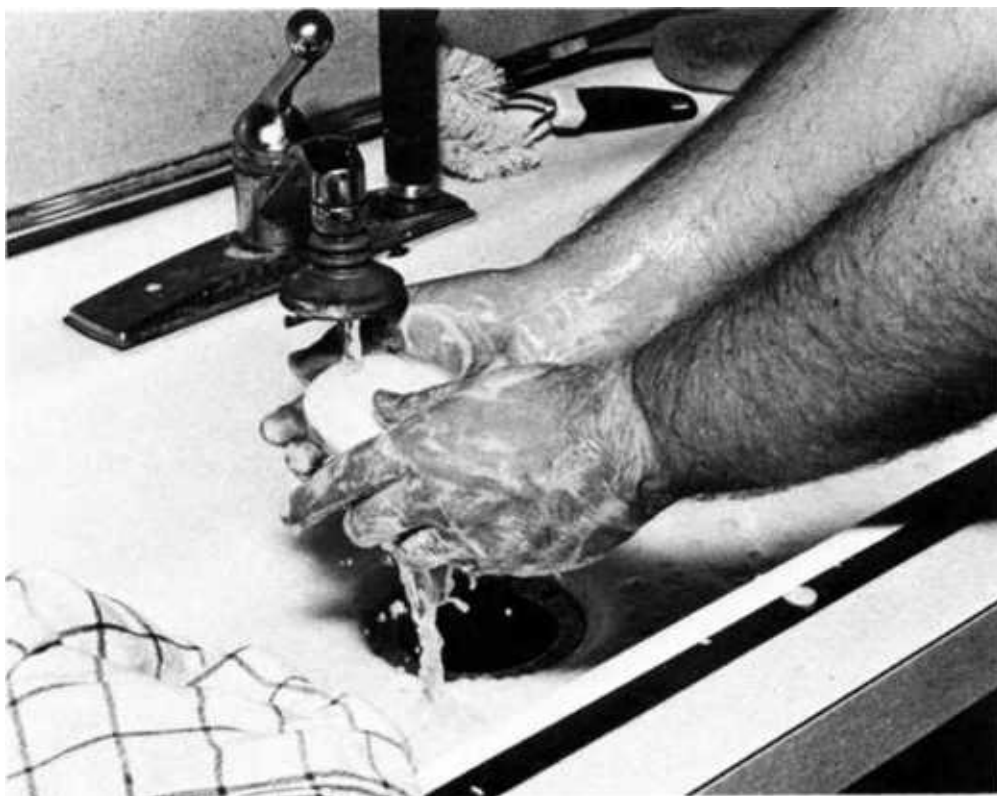
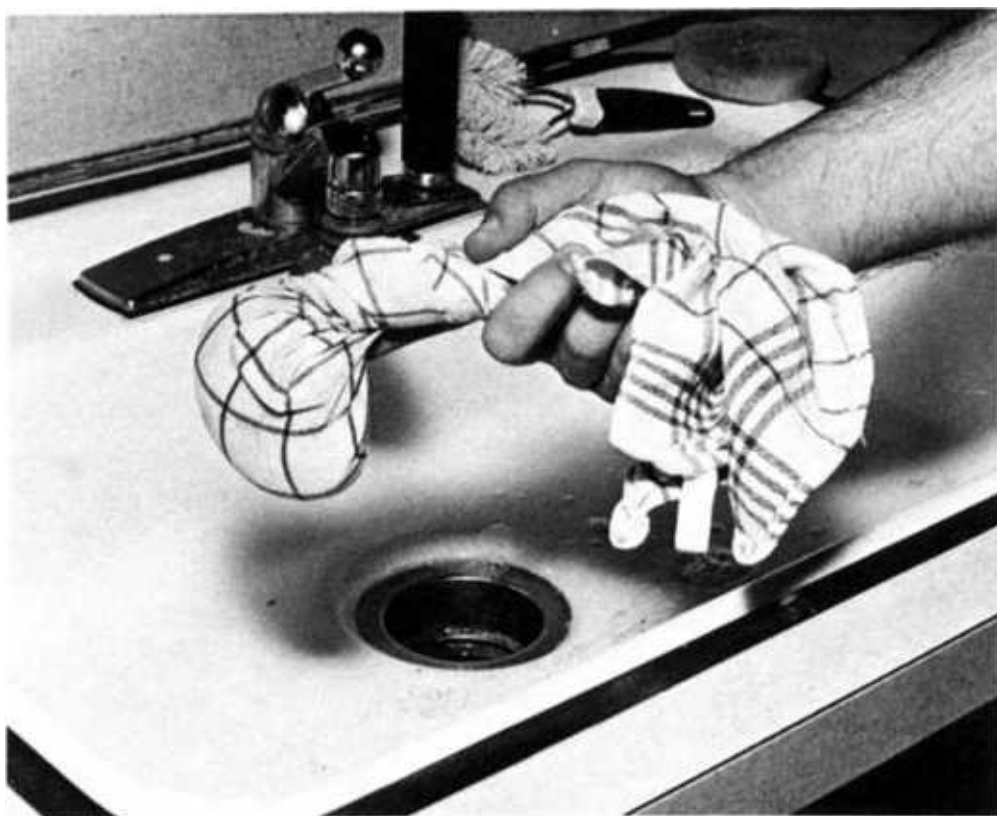


Fig. 15: If your captors allow you to wash your hands you will have access to all the materials you need for a soap-and-towel blackjack.



Baton: Is your daughter a cheerleader? Buy her a new baton after you rap the old one around the intruder's ears.

Beer Can: Shake it up a little and let it squirt into the captor's face as you pop the top. Then as he wipes his eyes you can dent the side of his skull with the bottom edge of the can. The cylindrical shape makes this edge surprisingly strong and hard even though the can itself is relatively flimsy. You can also crush the center of the can, bend it back and

forth, and finally break it in two pieces. Grip one in each hand and smash the ragged edges into the bad guy's eyes.

Beer Mug: A heavy glass mug. When the local bully starts to push you around in the bar, you can propose a toast in his honor. Hold your mug aloft in salute, dump the beer on his head, and break his collarbone with the heavy glass base of the mug. The mug can also be used against the jaw and the bridge of the nose.

Belt: A belt is normally used as a whip or flail, frequently with the buckle swinging at the free end. It can also be used to strangle, or to tie up a prisoner. As a last resort, you can hang yourself with it.

Bicycle: If someone tries to abduct or rob you while you are cycling, you should realize that your bicycle itself is a powerful weapon. Just pick it up by the center of the handlebars and the back of the seat. Turn rapidly through one full turn to build up momentum and fling it, sprocket first, right in his face. A bicycle is an angular, hard, sharp, heavy object to see coming at you through midair. No one can be hit by one without suffering several injuries. (See Figure 16.)

Bicycle Chain: A bike chain is an old street fighter standby, because it is light, easy to conceal, blindingly fast in use, and produces vicious superficial wounds.

Bicycle Pump: Mount a tubular bicycle pump on the frame of the bike beneath the seat. Then if you see trouble ahead you can casually reach down and unfasten this excellent substitute for a police baton. And no one can accuse you of carrying it to use as a weapon! A bike has to have a pump, right? (See Figure 17.) If you are improvising and have some time to spare, pour some powdered cleanser or bleach into the pump. Then blow the chemicals into the opponent's face prior to hitting him.

Bleach: A cup of Clorox in the face does wonders to a person's ability to defend himself. When his hands fly up to his eyes you can kick him in a tender place.



Fig. 16: A bicycle is both weapon and shield ... a dangerous combination for any attacker to face. And while his eyes are on the upraised bike, you can easily kick him in the crotch.



Fig. 17: A bicycle pump makes a handy nightstick when necessary.

Boiling Water: In the form of coffee, tea or soup. Slosh about a quart of it in the attacker's face or hands, then hit him over the head with the coffee pot (or soup pan).

Blender: When my editor first read over this manuscript he jokingly remarked that the only thing missing was the kitchen blender! "Stuff the kidnapper into the blender," he fantasized, "and set it for 'liquidate.'" After that remark I took a closer look at my blender, and found that the bottom of the blending chamber unscrews for cleaning the blades. The blade unit makes a nice, handy, "tiger paw" which would be very useful for slashing at an opponent's face.

Bones: Remember Samson and the jawbone of the ass? A soup bone can be a mighty club if necessary. If you have a whole skeleton to choose from (such as a horse skeleton) use the upper long bone of the foreleg, the humerus. Grasp the rounded shoulder end and strike with the knobby elbow end. The preferred weapon of our pre-human ancestors was an antelope humerus, but anyone you hit will probably fail to see the humer.

Books: Large, flat books make pretty effective shields against knife and fist attacks. Hold the book in both hands with the flat side facing the opponent. Alternately, a smaller book

can be used to strike punishing blows at an attacker's arms, neck, collarbone and face. You can even gouge his eyes with the corners of the book. (See Figure 18.)

Boots: Especially pointed, high-heeled cowboy boots. The pointed toes give great penetration to toe kicks, and the heels do the same for kicks using the bottom of the foot. I was once in a karate demonstration where I played the bad guy who got stomped in the stomach by the cowboy in the white hat. His heels were a little longer than he thought. It made for a very realistic demonstration.

Bottle: A soft drink bottle is very strong, and can be used to stab or club an opponent. A thin-walled wine bottle is more useful when the base is shattered. Grasp it by the neck and stab or slash with the jagged broken end. Broken glass is the sharpest edge known to man.

Bowie Knife: A heavy bladed, hook-nose hunting knife. There is a whole school of knife fighting associated with these knives, characterized more by axe-like chopping than by slashing or stabbing. See Styers' *Cold Steel* for further information (available from Paladin Press).

Broom: The handle of a standard sweeping broom is good for bayonet-like thrusts to the solar plexus and throat, and for deflecting incoming punches or knife attacks. The dusty straw end is very effective when jammed into a person's face. The stiff straws find their way into his mouth, nose and eyes all at once. To make that special impression, set fire to the straw first. (See Figure 19.)



Fig. 18: A simple book can make a surprisingly effective shield against a knife attack.

Buckle: A star-shaped belt buckle about 3 inches in diameter is deadly when swung at the end of a belt. Buckles can also be used when detached from the belt as knuckle dusters, or clenched in the fist to provide a hard edge for gouging. The Bowen belt buckle knife is outstanding for this kind of thing. It is a sheath knife disguised as a belt buckle.

Cabinet Door: An open cabinet door represents several possibilities for a sudden attack on a captor or guard. If he opens a cabinet and looks inside, slam the door hard against the back of his head. If he sticks his hand inside, slam the door on his fingers or wrist. Of course you can also slam a cabinet door open if you are looking inside the cabinet and the guard is standing next to you. If you are left alone in a room with wooden cabinets, wrench or kick a door off its hinges, split it by angling it against the wall and stomping on it, and use the resulting slats of wood as clubs.



Fig. 19: A broom is one of the most formidable household weapons. Not only does the handle possess all the qualities of a staff, but the dusty straws cause instant blindness when rammed into the eyes.

Calculator: Many hand-held calculators are small enough to be grasped tightly in the fist and used to attack an intruder. Use the corner of the calculator in a vicious blow against the temple for maximum effect.

Camera: Nobody in his right mind would ruin a good camera by striking someone with it, right? So, be a little crazy and surprise the hell out of the bastard. Depending on the model, a camera can be opened up and used as a hinged flail or as a simple “blunt object.” Detach the lens and use it to hammer on the other guy’s head. If the camera has a built-in flash be sure to fire it in his eyes at close range before attacking.

Candle: A thick candle about ten inches long makes an effective short club. Imagine being locked up for the night in a basement cell with only a straw pallet and a smoky candle for company. Set the straw on fire, shout “Help! Fire!” and brain the guard with the hard, lower end of the candle when he gropes his way into the smoke-filled cell. Alternately, you can ram the lighted end into his face and let him concentrate on hot wax while you duck out the door.

Cane: The kind with a curved, hook-like handle. Aside from rapping the bad guy on the skull, a cane is useful for hooking ankles (and necks), and for sharp little movements such as snapping the tip of the cane up into the opponent's genitals. This attack requires only a wrist motion and is almost impossible to anticipate or block.

Can Opener: The hand-powered kind with the sharp tine on the end. Excellent for striking into the eyes and face.

Car: The use of an automobile as a moving weapon is common in TV gangster movies. If the gangsters try to pull you over on the street you can use the same approach. If they are in a car you can sideswipe them and run them off the road. If they are on foot

Car Door: A car door presents possibilities similar to a cabinet door. If you are in the car you can thrust the door open violently with your feet, hitting your attacker in the shins. If you are the party on the sidewalk, let the adversary open the door and put one foot on the pavement. Then kick the door shut again. (See Figure 20.)

Car Window Handle: If you are abducted and thrown in the back seat of a car you may find that your captors have thoughtfully removed the door handles to hinder your efforts at escape. The window cranks may still be there, however. If you get the opportunity, you may feel the urge to pull the window handle free from the door and drive it solidly into the driver's head about an inch in front of his ear.



Fig. 20: When an angry driver tries to pull you from your car, use the door for a crippling opening move.

Cartridges: In those thrilling days of yesteryear the Lone Ranger used to toss a few .44 cartridges into the rustlers' fire to create a diversion. Some of the larger rifle cartridges are big enough to be used like daggers to stab at the eyes and throat. Three inch magnum shotshells are heavy enough to use as bludgeons when clenched in the fist. (Be sure to hit with the crimped end ... not the primer!)



Fig. 21: We do not normally think of a cat as an ally in a fight, but a cat as a projectile can be a ferocious thing. Aim tabby at the opponent's face and follow through with a kick to his groin.

Casement Window: Slam it shut on the opponent's head or hand. This might not sound too easy because of the difficulty of getting him to oblige by sticking his head in the window, right? Well, what if the opponent is a burglar trying to crawl in? Slam!

Cat: Have you ever had some inconsiderate person throw a frightened cat at your face? Twenty needle-sharp claws all try to fasten themselves in your skin at once. Even the most battlehardened warrior is put off his stride by this attack. (See Figure 21.)

CB Microphone: Hold it by the plug and swing the mike like a flail or mace-and-chain. Alternately, you can use the cord as a garrote or to secure a prisoner. But try out the radio first. You might be able to call for help. (See Figure 22.)

Chain: Such as a six-foot length of 3/8 inch case-hardened chain for locking up a bicycle. It takes two hands to swing it, and when it hits, every link does damage. It is a little-known fact that when a chain wraps itself around someone's head the free end moves faster and faster as it becomes shorter. Those last few heavy links really have an impact.

Chainsaw: Chainsaws are dangerous even when used just for cutting wood. A running chainsaw is a weapon no one can stand up to without a gun. Even the noise has an intimidating effect. A chainsaw isn't quite as effective when it is turned off, but in desperate hands it can still inflict some very ugly wounds. Lastly, by removing the chain itself, you can arm yourself with what amounts to a toothy bicycle chain. (See Figure 23.)

Chair: A chair is a very formidable weapon. Use the wooden straight-back variety and hold it lion-tamer fashion. Thrust the four feet of the chair at the opponent, trying to hit him simultaneously in the groin and solar plexus, or the solar plexus and throat. No matter which leg he avoids, one of the others will get through and hurt him. If you are defending against a knife attack, the seat of the chair forms a shield while the legs press the counterattack. In the movies you always see someone getting hit over the head with a chair. Don't try it. Such an attack is too slow and leaves you wide open for a pre-emptive punch, kick or stab in the body while your arms are holding the chair over your head.

Cigarette: A lighted cigarette isn't of much use for striking powerful blows, and it can't accomplish much in terms of serious burns, either. It can provide an excellent distraction prior to an attack, however. There are three possibilities. Drop the lighted cigarette in a waste paper basket in front of one of your captors. There will be a split second when he will be staring at the waste basket instead of at you. Hit him then. Second, you can try something as simple as blowing smoke into his eyes, then attack as he jerks his head away. Third, with a little luck you can drop the lighted cigarette down the back of the guard's neck (or even another prisoner's neck) and make mischief during the confusion.

Cigarette Lighter: The electric cigarette lighter in a car can be heated red-hot and casually applied to an unwanted passenger like a branding iron. Not only does it repulse him but it marks him, too. A pocket lighter is obviously a source of fire, and can also be the source of a blinding spray of fuel.

Cleanser: A handful of powdered tub-and-tile cleaner thrown in the opponent's face will assault his eyes, nose and lungs. Be careful not to breathe any yourself.

Cleaver: This eldritch device will take off fingers and split skulls if necessary. There's one in almost every kitchen.

Clothesline: Need a few feet of strong cord to tie up the bad guys, make a garrote, or tie ankle-high across the top of a dark stairway? Look in the backyard.

Coat: A coat or a jacket can be stretched tightly between two clenched fists and used as a shield against a knife, club or chain attack.

Coffee Cup: A hard plastic or ceramic teacup looks perfectly innocent in the hands of a kidnap victim. When grasped with the palm over the top of the cup, the narrow bottom can be used to strike a very satisfying blow for freedom. Aim at the temple or solar plexus.

Coins: What is a robber going to ask you for? Money. So pull out a handful of bills and change and let a few coins fall to the pavement in the process. It takes superhuman control not to glance down at the bouncing coins for a second. That's when you toss the rest of the money in his face and punt his groin into next week.

Comb: Any kind of comb will do, but a steel or aluminum rat-tail comb is best. Use the teeth to slash saw-like at the opponent's face and hands. The sharply pointed handle of a

rat-tail comb is excellent for stabbing at the throat, face and eyes. (See Figure 24.)

Crowbar: A crowbar is a lethal club, and the hook can be used as a penetrating edge which swung like a tomahawk.



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Curtain Rod: Check to see what holds up the window curtains. If it is a sturdy metal curtain rod you can use it for thrusting at the solar plexus or groin. You can also whip it across the opponent's face or snap it up into his testicles (see cane).

Darts: Toy darts can be thrown at an attacker's eyes, or clenched in your fist and driven into the side of his head with a hammer blow.

Deodorant Spray: Ever get any in your eyes or mouth? It's awful. If you are cornered in the bathroom by an intruder, deodorize him ...face first.



Fig. 23: The chainsaw is the modern broadsword. Nothing can stand against it except a gun.

Dirt: The old handful-of-dirt-in-the-eyes trick.

Diving Knife: A scuba diving knife is usually an oversized bowie or dagger design with a hammer-like pommel. Of course you can chop, stab and slash with such a knife, but you can also deliver skull-shattering blows with the pommel.

Dog: A loyal dog can be a surprising help in a fight. Even if not attack-trained, your quiet little shepherd may bare her teeth and charge if someone strikes you. I saw it happen under perfectly innocent circumstances. A guest choked on a bite of food, and her husband started to slap her on the back to help her. He landed one slap and the gentlest dog I ever met sank her teeth into his wrist and wouldn't let go. Of course, if you have a toy poodle it might be best to just grab it by the hind legs and use it as a club.

Door: As your kidnapper motions you into the next room, turn and slam the door into his face. Or, if someone tries to force his way into your apartment, slam the door on his leg or gun hand. (See Figure 25.)

Drain Cleaner: This is extremely caustic when thrown into an opponent's eyes, nose or

mouth. A solution of drain cleaner and water is even more effective because it burns the skin, too.

Drain Stopper: A bathtub plug with a chain. Detach it from the tub and use it as a flail. It will work better if you can slip some big steel washers on the chain, or gouge a hole through a bar of soap and slip it on to the chain first.

Drawer: A drawer can be kicked shut on the adversary's hand, pulled out and dropped on his foot, dumped on the floor for a distraction, or flung frisbee-like across the room at the opponent's head.

Drinking Glass: Toss the water in his eyes and hit him with the thick glass base. Strike for the bridge of the nose, the teeth, the side of the jaw or the temple. Or you can hold the glass by the base, shatter the top, and slash with it.

Enema Syringe: Give him a shot of hot water or rubbing alcohol, and then ram the syringe about three inches into his ear canal.

Extension Cord: Use as a garrote, a noose, a trip-cord, or to bind the hands and feet of a prisoner. You can also plug it into a wall and use it to electrify a door handle or some similar object which the kidnapper is likely to touch.



Fig. 24: A steel, rat-tail comb is perfectly legal to carry. The pointed handle and the saw-like teeth can do severe damage in the right hands.

Eyeglasses: Fold the stems in against the lenses and grasp the whole apparatus in your fist. Strike hammer-like blows with the sharp hinged corner between the frame and the stem. If you have time, crush the lenses and throw the glass fragments into the opponent's eyes before striking.

Face Towel: Fold the corners together to form a bag. Drop a new bar of soap into the bag and twist the towel to make a simple blackjack. (See Figure 15.)



Fig. 25: Even a front door can be a very effective weapon under some circumstances.

Faggot: A flaming bundle of wood or a flaming stick. A club is an effective and intimidating weapon. When it is on fire it is even more intimidating. Thrust the burning end of the stick at his face and let him bat at it with his hands. Get it caught in his clothing if possible.

Filleting Knife: All you fishermen take note. A typical filleting knife has a very long, narrow and thin blade which looks like it ought to be really good for stabbing. Unfortunately, such a blade is too flimsy for heavy thrusts. It can easily bend or break and

leave you defenseless. It is far better to use it for slashing only. Slash at the opponent's hands, wrists, face and neck for best effect.

Fire: The potential for fire as a weapon or a distraction is so great that we will return to it again and again in this list (for instance, see candle and faggot). Anytime you see fire in any form it represents an opportunity to injure or panic your captors. People have a natural fear of fire ... with good reason when it is used as a weapon. (See Figure 26.)

Fire Extinguisher: A pressurized fire extinguisher is designed to be snatched from its wall bracket and discharged easily. Discharge it in the kidnapper's face or use it to fill the room with clouds of dust and vapor as a smoke screen. Then hit him over the head with the heavy metal pressure bottle. For a more unusual application, stick a pencil or other sharp rod down the discharge tube of a CO₂ fire extinguisher. Voila! A speargun!

Fishing Line: Heavy monofilament nylon fishing line is nearly invisible. It's the perfect material for a trip cord stretched between a table and chair, or tied across the top of a staircase.

Fishing Rod: There is an authenticated case of a fisherman holding off an attacking grizzly bear by jabbing the tip of his rod in the bear's eyes. Against a person you can jab with the rod's tip or whip it (line guides and all) across his face.

Fishing Sinker: A large fishing sinker is deadly when swung at the end of a length of cord.

Flashlight: A 5-cell flashlight is a heavy, convenient club which produces enough light to blind an opponent temporarily as you attack. If you have to walk down a dark street sometime take your flashlight with you. No district attorney would press charges against you for carrying a flashlight at night, even if you kill a mugger with it. In the daytime, however

Flashlight Battery: A single D-cell is big enough, heavy enough, and hard enough to use for throwing or hammering on an opponent's head or collarbone.



Fig. 26: Fire Is a terrifying makeshift weapon. Here a disposable cigarette lighter and a can of spray lubricant are combined to create a makeshift flamethrower.

Folding Chair: A folding chair is used to block a knife attack just like a straight-back chair (see chair) with the significant exception that when you block a thrust with a folding chair you can clamp the attacker's arm by collapsing the chair on it.

Fork: A table fork is hard and sharp enough to give you a tiny edge in a fight.



Fig. 27: A garbage can lid is the frisbee of street combat. Aim at the attacker's shins.

Garbage Can Lid: Obviously useful as a shield, a garbage can lid can also be held by the edge for battering or thrown like a frisbee into a pursuer's shins. (See Figure 27.)

Gasoline: Suppose you are incarcerated in an abandoned garage, where you happen to find half a gallon of gas in an old can. Imagine the consternation of your kidnapper when you douse him with the fuel and dare him to shoot at you as you walk out!

Glass: As in windows. A sliver of broken glass is the sharpest edge known to science. Shatter a window, a glass cabinet door or a glass table and select a good sharp "blade." Don't pick one that is too narrow. A piece about three inches wide which tapers to a point is best. Wrap the "hilt" of your knife in cloth, such as a pillowcase or undershirt. Stab upward under the jaw. (See Figure 28.)

Gloves: A glove can be filled with rocks, change, sand, birdshot or any similar substance and used as a makeshift blackjack. Gloves are also very useful in terms of handling scalding hot pans, flaming sticks, live electrical wiring, and broken glass. And if you smash your knuckles into the other guy's teeth, the gloves will see to it that you don't cut your skin.

Golf Club: It's obviously a club, good for rapping on someone's head. It is also an excellent cane (see above) which can be reversed to use the handle as a whip or flail.

Guitar: The resemblance of a guitar to a baseball bat is too obvious to require much comment here. Offer to play a tune. Maybe he'll hear birdies while he is seeing stars.

Guitar String: Most guitar strings come with a little metal bead woven into the bridge end of the string. Pass the free end through the center of the bead and you have one of the simplest and strongest garrote nooses known. Tie the loose end around something you can use as a handle, such as a pen or a piece of silverware.

Hairbrush: The stiff bristles are painful when raked across the face and eyes. The side of a flat-backed brush can be used for striking blows at an opponent's neck and temple. The end of the handle is good for hammer blows against his skull, collarbone and ribs. If some character insists on bothering you, teach him a new meaning of "the brush off."

Hairspray: A woman can carry a small pressurized can of hair spray in her purse without exciting comment, right? Many brands are just as effective as tear gas when sprayed in an attacker's eyes and mouth. (See deodorant spray.)



Fig.28: Broken from a window, mirror or picture frame, a shard of glass has the sharpest

cutting edge known to man. Wrap the “hilt” in a scrap of cloth to protect your hand.

Hammer: The utility of a hammer as a short war club is obvious to everyone. For added psychological effect, hold the hammer with the claws forward. That way you get a cutting effect as well as a powerful blow.

Hard Hat: Hold it in both hands as a shield, or hold it by the rim and strike with the visor edge.

Hatchet: A small hatchet can be swung like an axe or used as a club. Always be ready to “bury the hatchet”... the head of the hatchet, that is. (See Figure 29.)

Hat Pin: The main defensive armament of little old ladies everywhere. A hat pin is of limited utility for defense because it is so likely to bend during the first stab. It can be put to good use against the eyes, the eardrums, or when jabbed up under the jaw into the base of the tongue, however. There is also a legendary assassination technique which involves a hatpin inserted into the brain through the brain stem. The technique is rumored to be almost impossible to detect, but has little application to the context of hand-to-hand combat.

Helmet: As in motorcycle. Swing it by the chin strap.

Hoe: Although you might be inclined to chop with the blade, it is better to lunge with the handle. Drive it deep into the bad guy’s throat or stomach.

Hose: A garden water hose will temporarily blind an assailant if you spray water in his face. Then grasp the hose about two feet from the end and crack him on the head with the nozzle. Alternately, a two foot length of rubber hose used as a club or flail produces the most excruciating kind of pain without breaking any bones.

Hubcap: Assaulted while changing a flat tire? It could happen in the wrong neighborhood. Use the hubcap as a shield or strike at the attackers with the edge. You can also hook your fingers inside the hubcap and smash it flat against the opponent’s face or skull. Lead off by using the hubcap to scoop dirt into the attacker’s eyes.

Icepick: This is another case where the weapon can be found in most kitchens, and in not a few workshops. Stab at the eyes and throat, or hammer with the butt of the handle. Stabbing to the chest is not likely to stop the attacker’s onslaught until too late. One diabolical application is to casually pick up the icpick and nail the opponent’s hand to the table as an opening gambit.

Iron: A hot electric iron can be used as a shield with special success because an opponent can’t easily grab it away from you. Use the point for blows to the head, or swing it by the power cord for maximum damage.

Jack Handle: Another convenient weapon when changing a tire on a dark and lonely road.

Kerosene Lamp: Shatter the lip of the chimney and slash with it like a broken bottle. Pour the kerosene in a cup and splash it in your abductor’s face. The glass base of a kerosene lamp is hard, heavy and easy to grip. Use it as a bludgeon. Lastly, you can smash the lighted lamp against the wall or floor and burn away the darkness.

Keys: A ring of keys can be dropped as a distraction, thrown in the attacker’s face, or used

as makeshift brass knuckles. For the latter, hold the key ring in the palm of your hand with keys protruding between your fingers. Strike for the nerve pressure points in the face and neck (see Black Medicine Vol. I for a description of a dozen such targets).

Key Chain: The reference here is to a key ring attached to a retractable chain attached to the belt. A perfectly legal device to have on one's person at all times. Unclip the chain from the belt and swing the keys like a mace-and-chain.

Kitchen Knife: It's amazing how many unarmed Americans die without a fight when every kitchen in the country is liberally stocked with deadly weapons. Grab a butcher knife or boning knife from the kitchen drawer as the intruder is coming down the hall. Hold it point down in your fist, with the edge facing forward. Hide it behind your back. When he gets close enough, whip it out and across his throat before he knows what has happened. Go for the carotid artery, and get a real slice of life. (See Figure 30.)

Knitting Needle: Many ladies carry a bag of knitting with them everywhere. What could be more natural than to include one or two especially large, sharp needles in the bag? If assaulted, hold one needle in each hand and make like a porcupine. Jab at the face, hands and body. If the needles are thick enough you can use them to whip the attacker across the face and hands, too.

Lamp: A typical electric lamp with a shade, found in most living rooms. Rip off the lamp shade and confront the intruder with the bare bulb, held like a bayonet. Thrust the hot, bright bulb in his face. If the bulb gets broken, so much the better. Then you can thrust the bare electrodes at him! Just don't wander too far from that electrical outlet.

Letter Opener: Suppose you come home early and find your wife in the arms of another man? This handy item will help you open her male.



Fig. 29: A hatchet is a tool whose potential as a weapon needs no explanation.



Fig. 30: When there is an intruder in the house, a kitchen knife concealed artfully behind the back could make all the difference.

Light Bulb: First see lamp, above. A light bulb clasped in the hand isn't too menacing until you hit somebody with it. Grip the base and smash the glass bulb into the side of the opponent's face. It will shatter, and in shattering it will slash dozens of cuts.

Lug Wrench: The "X" shaped kind are great for throwing, especially at the legs of an assailant in close pursuit.

Magazine: Roll it up into a tight baton, then stab and hammer with the ends. You can swat with it but the effect is minimal except against eardrums (and flies). If the magazine is too small to be effective, roll it up tightly and then bend it in half. The folded end is amazingly solid.

Matchbox: In Fai rbai rn's combat text *Get Tough!* there is an amusing suggestion that you can kill an enemy soldier by whacking him in the side of the head with a 2" box of wooden matches. Fai rbai rn says to clench the matchbox in your fist and strike a hammer-like blow on the soldier's temple. The blow could easily kill the soldier, but it is the fist, not the matchbox, which does the damage. This illustrates a very important point about

certain makeshift weapons. In many cases the real function of the “weapon” is to convince you that you are not hitting the enemy with your bare hand. If you believe that you are striking with some object (no matter how puny) you lose your fear of hurting your hand. As a result you hit a lot harder. Karate artists train for many months before learning to suppress their fear of self-injury, which then allows them to split boards, crack stones, break bricks and crush skulls with their bare hands. You can make this powerful advantage work for you simply by holding anything in your hand while you strike. Even a matchbox. It really works.

Mirror: A large mirror is raw material for a glass dagger (see glass). A smaller face mirror with a handle is a pretty good club. Use the narrow edge like a hatchet on the opponent’s wrists and face.

Mouthwash: Slosh it or spit it into the opponent’s eyes. Then hit him with the bottle.

Newspaper. Best when rolled into a tight cylinder about 15 inches long and 2 inches in diameter. A rolled newspaper is effective for swatting at incoming punches and knife attacks, but its real strength lies in jabs with the end of the roll. The end of a tightly rolled newspaper is very hard and strong. It makes a big impression when jabbed stiffly into someone’s groin, solar plexus, throat or eye. For variety, you can smack him over the ear with it and break his eardrum.

Notebook: The blue, canvas-covered 3-ring binder favored by high school and college students. Held with two hands it can be used as a shield to fend off fist, knife and club attacks. From the same position you can counterattack by ramming the spine of the notebook up under the attacker’s chin or nose. Onehanded, the notebook can be swung like an axe at the face, forearms, or side of the neck. Turned inside-out, the open half-rings of the binder form formidable claws when jammed into an attacker’s face.

Onion: Der gas warfare! Under the right circumstances a hot onion could provide an opening for an attack against your kidnappers or guards. A handful of minced onion forcefully applied to the face can blind and choke the victim temporarily. (At least long enough for you to blind or choke him permanently.)

Oven Cleaner: Especially the spray kind. Extremely caustic. Don’t get any on yourself while you are spraying it on everybody else.

Paint: Once again, it’s best in a spray can but an open bucket will do. Paint has all the advantages of other spray products in terms of blinding the opponent, but it also marks him. If you dump a bucket of orange paint on the kidnapper’s head and run outside into the street, he probably won’t follow. It’s very difficult to remain inconspicuous when you are bright green, for instance.

Paperweight: Almost any kind of paperweight is small enough, hard enough and heavy enough to be used as a bludgeon. You can smash a skull with it, to put it bluntly.

Paring Knife: A small, short-bladed kitchen knife should be used only for slashing at the face and hands, or possibly for stabbing into the throat. The blade is not long enough or strong enough for stabbing into the abdomen and rib cage.

Pen: Held like a knife it can be used for jabbing at the eyes, throat and the nerves under the ears (see Black Medicine Vol. I for details). When clenched in the fist it can be driven

through the cranial wall by a fist-hammer attack. For the adept, there are many nerve attacks which use the pen as a deep probe. One example would be to strike backward with the pen into the assailant's inguinal triangle when embraced from behind.

Pen Knife: A very small pocket knife. Useless as a knife, it can still serve as a weapon when wielded like a pen (see above).

Pencil: Like a pen (see above) but more pointed for deeper penetrating, and more brittle (which means less power). A pencil is best for stabbing at the eyes and the hollow of the throat. Also good for attacking the eardrum. Cannot be driven through the skull wall except occasionally at the temple.

Penlight: Almost as good as a pen for power blows (see pen). A penlight has the added advantage of its beam of bright light. If the fracas occurs after dark you can dazzle your opponent's vision by keeping the beam focused on his eyes. Squinting into the light he will have trouble seeing your kick coming until too late.

Pepper: What kind of brutish kidnapper wouldn't allow you some pepper for your food? Be casual. "Pass the pepper, please." Pretend there is something wrong with the shaker. Unscrew the lid and sling the contents in his face. Overturn the table in his lap or slug him with the shaker for good measure.

Picture Frame: A typical picture frame consists of four stout pieces of wood tacked together at the corners. Take the picture down from the wall and kick out the center. Smash the corner of the frame against the floor and pry off a nice club with a sharply pointed end.

Pill Bottles: The bottle itself can be clenched in the fist as a weapon, or you can dump the pills in the kidnapper's coffee. Improvise! Dump most of a bottle of aspirin down the toilet, and then claim you swallowed it. Act drowsy and increasingly uncoordinated. Then, while the kidnappers are frantically trying to revive you ... attack.

Pillow: In the movies you always see the bad guy suffocate the helpless hospital patient with a pillow. People who have really tried it will tell you that suffocation by pillow is a long and horrible process, involving pulmonary convulsions, vomiting, and the ever-present possibility that the victim may get in a lucky punch and turn the tables on you. My advice is to use a pillow only as a shield against a fist or knife attack (see coat).

Pingpong Paddle: Chop with the edge of the blade, or hammer with the base of the handle. Don't swat, it doesn't work.

Pipe (Plumbing): An 18 inch length of lead pipe makes a deadly bludgeon. It's slow to swing but it does appalling damage.

Pipe (Smoking): Hold it like a pistol and jab at the eyes with the stem, or grasp the stem in your fist and hammer with the bowl. Don't overlook the possibility of casting the coal or ashes into the opponent's eyes as an opening gambit.

Pistol: Here's some advice regarding taking a pistol away from your attacker ... don't. Unless you know exactly what you are doing, and the opponent is a total fool, such an attempt is suicidal. Then again, if it looks like you are going to die anyway, what would you have to lose? We'll assume that somehow you are engaged in hand-to-hand combat

and there is a pistol in your hand. If the pistol is loaded, shoot somebody. You can see that a revolver is loaded by glancing in the front of the cylinder ... not the barrel. In an automatic pull the slide back and look inside. Or just point it at the bad guy and pull the trigger. If it's loaded it will fire. If not you can use the pistol as a makeshift weapon three ways. Hold it normally and jab at the solar plexus, throat or eyes with the muzzle. If it's a revolver, you can hold it by the barrel and swing the butt like a hammer at the opponent's head. An automatic should be held by the slide to strike with the rear sight. (See Figure 31.)

Pitchfork: A man holding a pitchfork can be very intimidating. Just don't forget that the handle makes a more versatile weapon than the tines.

Phonograph Records: Can be thrown like a frisbee or a dinner plate, and can also be broken if you need something sharp and pointed.

Plate: A ceramic or heavy plastic dinner plate can be held to deliver vicious chopping blows with the edge. Keep this in mind when your kidnappers bring you your dinner.

Pocket Knife: The effectiveness of a pocket knife depends mainly on its size. A small knife (2 1/2 inch blade) can be used for slashing, but it is better to use the body of the knife like a pen (see above) for hammer-like blows to the skull, collarbone and ribs. A larger knife with a locking 4 or 5 inch blade can be used for actual knife dueling if you are so inclined.

Poker: If there is a fireplace in the room there is probably a cast iron poker, too. Most pokers are about a foot and a half long with an iron point and a recurved hook. You can swing a poker like a club or (obviously) you can poke with it. The most vicious attack is to snap the poker up into the opponent's groin, then rip it straight out with the hook turned up.

Pool Ball: The balls on a pool table can be used like baseballs (see above) for throwing, but the fact that they are usually found in groups of a dozen or more lends them to rapid-fire throwing. Aim at the face or groin.

Pool Cue: A hardwood pool cue is an excellent lance-like staff. Hold it with the heavy end forward so you can rap it sideways as well as jab with the end. Oriental stick fighting techniques are well documented, and you should study them if you spend a lot of time in sleazy pool halls.



Fig. 31: When your automatic pistol is out of ammo, don't hesitate to hammer with it. A blow to the temple is especially lethal (top left). Striking with the pistol's rear sights intensifies the power of the blow (top right). The hooked shape of a revolver can be useful for catching the opponent's hand, and the butt is well-known for its hammer-like qualities (below left). A very effective move is to ram the pistol barrel into the opponent's solar plexus (below right).

Powdered Soap: Powdered laundry detergent is even better than pepper as an eye and nose irritant. Throw a handful in the face of your assailant the next time you get mugged at the laundromat.

Purse: Even if you aren't in the habit of carrying a purse the odds are that someone close by will have one when trouble starts. Use it as a shield (see notebook and coat) or glance inside for a comb, pocket knife or pen.

Rake: The lighter the better. Use a rake like a broom to lunge and strike at the opponent's face, throat, and forearms. The teeth of the rake can be punishing when swept across the opponent's face, or they may be employed to scoop and throw a mixture of dirt and leaves into his eyes. Once again, remember to hold the rake with the handle toward the enemy. The handle is a better weapon than the teeth.

Rattail File: I once had a brief infatuation with knifethrowing, during which I discovered that a rattail file from the tool chest makes an excellent throwing spike. Throw it underhand with the sharp tang forward. At ranges of six to ten feet you can drive that tang up to an inch into a pine board. Aim for the opponent's face.

Razor Blade: A slash with a razor blade can sever tendons in the wrist, spill an impressive quantity of the opponent's blood, or even sever the carotid artery and jugular vein. Wrap a scrap of paper around the rear edge of the blade to protect your fingers while you attack.

Rifle: A rifle or shotgun is a deadly weapon even without any ammunition. As with the pistol the first thing to do is to bluff that the gun is loaded. Failing that, use the muzzle to drive lance-like attacks into the enemy's face and body. Follow through with smashing strokes from the butt of the piece. Don't forget that even the middle of a rifle can be used for blows up under the jaw or into the face.

Rocks: One of man's oldest weapons. Used for throwing and hammering like baseballs, paperweights and pool balls. Rocks have an added advantage of being found almost everywhere outdoors, usually associated with useful amounts of dirt. Use the two together for a combined diversion and attack.

Rolling Pin: The symbol of the domineering wife. Using a rolling pin as a makeshift weapon has a unique advantage. We have all seen the image of the wife beating the husband over the head so often that when you pick up a rolling pin your opponent will expect the stereotype attack. That's fine. Raise the rolling pin high in the air as if about to swing at his head. Then while he is staring at it you can kick him in the groin. If he succeeds in blocking the kick he'll have to look down first. That's when you swing the pin!

Rug: A small throw rug can be used like a coat or bath towel or you can try the old trick where you jerk the rug out from under the other guy's feet. It takes good timing but it can be done.

Salt: It isn't as irritating as pepper but it can be used in almost the same way. Another possibility is to substitute salt for sugar in the guards' sugar bowl. Be ready to move when one of them suddenly chokes on his coffee.

Safety Razor: The old-fashioned kind with the flat steel top should be gripped crosswise in the fist, the stem between the middle and ring fingers and the head forming a shield in front of the knuckles. Use like brass knuckles. Alternately, you can grip it with the head protruding from the bottom of the fist for hammer blows.

Saucer: A small plate. A saucer should be held edgewise for chopping to put a sharp edge on a palm-heel attack. Rest the edge of the saucer across the palm of your hand with your thumb on one side and fingers on the other. Now ram it up under the opponent's nose as hard as you can.

Saw: Any kind of handsaw. Slash with the teeth at the adversary's face, neck, and especially his hands.

Scissors: Best for jabbing. Hold the scissors locked open as far as they will go and stab with the sharply pointed blade. You can also hold the scissors normally, open them about 2 inches, and stab for the eyes.

Screwdriver: A weapon which can be found in most kitchens and all workshops. Hold it normally to stab with the bit or hammer with the base of the handle. Reverse your grip to swing the handle like a club.

Sex: Feigned sexual acquiescence to a rapist can be a powerful weapon for a young woman. I am reminded of one resourceful lady who “gave in” enthusiastically, and right in the middle of giving the rapist a good time suddenly yanked his testicles down to his knees and let them snap up again like a windowshade. She walked away unharmed.



Fig. 32: “What did you say, stranger?” Even though pictured here as a cutting implement, a shovel is more versatile as a staff. While the opponent is warily watching the blade you can rap him on the head with the handle!

Shit: There is an old story about an oriental warrior who made a mess in his pants, let it slide down his pant leg, and then kicked it into the face of his enemy as a diversion. Just keep in mind the fact that if your place of confinement doesn't contain any dirt to throw in the kidnapper's face, you can always make some!

Shoes: Shoes make any kind of kick more penetrating and effective. They can also be thrown, or used as clubs or hammers. High-heeled shoes are especially effective for

hammer-like blows. Ripping the heel off of a shoe gives you a convenient tiger-paw studded with short, sharp nails.

Shoestring: Use it to secure a prisoner by tying his thumbs together behind his back. If the shoestrings are strong enough you can use them to form a trip line or garrote.

Shovel: Unlike a broom or rake, a shovel has a strong cutting edge which can be used in combat. The shovel blade may be used for thrusting, sideways chopping, or blows with the flat side. Of course, it's only natural to scoop dirt in the opponent's face. For fast surprise attacks always use the handle, not the blade. The guy who is making you dig your own grave will be wary of the shovel blade, but will relax a little when you turn it away from him. That's when you ram the handle into his gut. (See Figure 32.)

Silver Dollars: Real silver dollars are heavy discs of metal which can be thrown hard at an opponent's face with a significant possibility of doing some damage. With a little practice you can lodge a silver dollar in a pine board (edge-on) just like a small knife. Some people carry their silver dollars in small leather drawstring bags which they hang from their belts. When swung by the drawstring this change purse becomes a formidable blackjack. And there is one big advantage. The government can't possibly outlaw carrying concealed money, now can they?

Ski Poles: Ski poles make good substitutes for rapiers, short lances, or canes. If you pry the basket off the end you can stab deeply with them, and they are easy to use in a whipping motion. Reverse the pole and strike with the handle for more powerful sideways or downward blows. (See cane.)

Ski Wax: Use it like a bar of soap to make an improvised blackjack.

Skis: You would think that a fighter wearing skis would be fatally handicapped, but it isn't necessarily true. The length of the ski gives tremendous range and penetration to both front and back kicks. You can kick the point of the ski into an opponent's groin or abdomen as much as six or seven feet away. And the effect which the sharp outer edge of a ski has on someone's shin is devastating. If you have time to take the skis off, you can use one quarterstaff style for lunging and battering at the opponent.

Socks: Can be used as a garrote if long enough. Best employed as part of a sock-and-soap blackjack (see bar of soap).

Spoon: Use it to gouge at the opponent's eyes and nerve centers.

Staff: When people go hiking in the mountains they frequently carry with them a hiking staff, a length of one-inch diameter branch or pole for leaning on or for clubbing snakes. It's very good for clubbing two-legged snakes, too, and in the hands of a skilled fighter it makes a man more than a match for half a dozen unarmed antagonists. No wonder the ancient Chinese monks carried them everywhere.

Stairway: If you are being escorted up a stairway pretend to trip on the risers. Catch yourself on your hands and kick viciously backward into the guard's groin or knees. Make him fall backward down the stairs, then leap down on him heels first. If you are being herded down the stairs, suddenly drop down on your heels and jerk the guard's feet out from under him. Lift them high enough to see that he catches some steps in the back of the head.

Stool: A small stool is used as a shield (see chair) or as a club. It is also possible to sling a stool along the ground into the opponent's legs.

Swimming Pool: Throw a body block and spill your guard into the pool. If he fires his gun with the barrel full of water he'll regret it. Deeply.

Table Knife: Unless it is a steak knife it won't be of much use for slashing or stabbing. The best approach is to use the base of the handle for striking hammer blows to the temple and collarbone.

Telephone: If you have the opportunity, call for help. If your captors force you to talk over the phone during ransom negotiations, use the handset as a club and brain one of them. You can also throw the body of the phone at an opponent, or whirl it like a bola, entangling the enemy in the cord.

Tennis Racket: Strike chopping blows with the edge, or jam the base of the handle into the attacker's abdomen or throat.

Toilet Brush: This innocuous item is found in most bathrooms, usually residing in a small pail beside the toilet. The end of the handle offers the usual potential for hammer blows, and the brush end is very effective when jammed into the eyes. For added effect, be sure that you smear the brush in something really repulsive first. (See shit.)

Toilet Paper: I wish that I could tell you to smack somebody in the side of the head with a roll of TP to kill him, but it just doesn't work too well. The roll of cardboard in the center, though, does have possibilities. Extract it from the tissue and roll it into a tight, hard cylinder. Use it like a pen to hammer at his face and temple. Then there is the "spit-wad" attack, in which you soak a fist-sized wad of TP in bleach and smack it into the opponent's eyes.

Toothbrush: What could be a more natural thing to demand from your kidnapers than to be allowed to brush your teeth? No harm in that, right? When the guards aren't looking, stroke the bristles across a bar of wet soap. Then use your thumb to flick the bristles into a guard's face, spraying soap droplets into his eyes. When he grabs his eyes ram the brush as far up his nose as it will go (or into his ear).

Umbrella: The best kind has a heavy wooden handle and a steel spike on the end. When closed an umbrella is used like a cane for slashing and jabbing at the throat, solar plexus and face. When open it takes only a small movement to ram the ends of the stays into the opponent's eyes.

Urine: Many pieces of light cloth (such as a T-shirt) are ineffective weapons when dry, but make formidable flails when wet. Use some of nature's fountain and get to work!

Wash Cloth: Dripping with scalding hot, soapy water. Throw it into the guard's face, then follow through with a kick in a tender spot.

Watch: Many people say that the band of a watch can be slipped over the knuckles to make a punch more punishing. In my experience this only works with leather bands. Otherwise the punishment is to your hand.

Windowshade Roller: An excellent, weighted club that is nearly always overlooked when clearing a room of possible weapons. Take it down off its brackets, strip off the paper

shade, and use the roller for jabbing or for powerful swinging blows to the head and body. Let the sunshine in!

Wrench: One of the most effective of all small makeshift clubs. Be careful, though. A steel wrench is so heavy and so narrow that it is possible to splatter someone's head with it when you only intended to tap him.

Yo-Yo: The lowly yo-yo was originally a hand weapon, something like a cross between a bola and a boomerang. You can throw it, swing it, hammer with it, or use the string as a trip wire or garrote.

**BLACK
MEDICINE**



**Volume III
Low Blows**

N. Mashiro, Ph.D.

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by

N. Mashiro, Ph.D.

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WARNING

The techniques outlined in this book are aggressive and violent and are not meant to take the place of qualified professional instruction. Attempting any of the techniques in this book could result in harm to life or limb. Therefore, this book is offered for information purposes only. Neither the author nor the publisher assumes any responsibility for the use of misuse of the information contained herein.

INTRODUCTION

The first two volumes in this series, *The Dark Art of Death and Weapons At Hand*, were intended to serve as exhaustive references on the vulnerable points of the human body, the body's natural weapons, and those common objects which can be pressed into service as makeshift weapons in an emergency.

The enthusiastic acceptance of these books by the martial community has been a source of great pleasure and pride to me, but readers have complained that the previous works did not discuss the all-important subject of how to use these weapons against an opponent's vulnerable areas. It is to this question that the present book (and the next one) must be addressed.

In my martial arts studies I have concentrated mainly on forms of karate, but with a very strong interest in that type of fighting commonly known as self-defense. Self-defense is a crude method of fighting, hardly an art at all, which is in every way inferior to any of the more sophisticated systems of hand-to-hand combat. It does have a single overriding virtue, though, which puts the others to shame. Self-defense techniques can be taught to novices in minutes, and if the novices are serious of mind and moderately sound of body, they can then perform the techniques with devastating effect.

By contrast, a karate student is shown how to punch during his very first lesson, but it may be years before he can deliver the lightning-fast, body-shattering punch which was once used for crashing through samurai armor. Some karate masters have studied the art for thirty years or more before becoming satisfied that they have mastered this punch.

This is the difference between karate and self-defense. A highly trained karateist could fight a room full of self-defense students and might well defeat them all. Similarly, a well-trained self-defense student might well prevail against a room full of barnyard (untutored) fighters. A ten-hour course in self-defense, or even a two-hour tutorial, can make a helpless person relatively formidable against most opponents. Ten years of full contact karate lessons can make you formidable against nearly anybody. Ten hours of karate training does almost no good at all.

And there is another important difference: you can't learn karate from a book. Karate training involves a rigorous physical, emotional, and mental discipline which simply cannot be captured in the written word. For one thing, traditional karate derives much of its devastating speed from mental processes related to Zen Buddhism, concepts which can be understood by dedicated students but which cannot be expressed in words at all.

Whether or not self-defense can be learned from a book is an open question. Certainly the general public thinks it is possible, judging from the large number of self-defense texts littering the bookstores. Unfortunately, most of these books have been written by good fighters who are not good writers. They are written by athletes who have forgotten how little speed, strength, and agility is possessed by the average person. Some of the books have been written by persons who can only be described as pathologically deranged. Such persons would rather kill than wound, rather injure than escape. To kill a man for the crime of trying to punch you in the nose (as these people advocate) is neither civilized nor

responsible behavior.

For these reasons, I have approached my own discussion of self-defense techniques with a pronounced sense of caution. I do not want to publish just another mediocre and unusable book, written by someone who does not need it for an audience which cannot understand it. I have tried to organize the material into natural families of techniques, each of which stems from a specific attack and begins with a specific, basic defense. The theory is that a student can amuse himself by practicing a variety of counters to an attack, but at the same time he is almost unknowingly repeating the motions of the fundamental reaction which may save his life.

As an example, while practicing defenses against a knife attack the student is encouraged to try various disarming techniques, all of which begin with a defensive side step to get out of the path of the blade. In this situation the simple act of getting out of the way is far more likely to save the student's life than any fancy disarming trick. This side step is presented as an integral part of all the disarming techniques, insuring that even those students who will never master any one of the tricks will still repetitively drill on the single motion which might really help them.

Low Blows concentrates exclusively on the use of the body's natural weapons, and only rarely mentions the use of makeshift weapons. This is quite deliberate. The study of self-defense through the use of knives, sticks, clubs, and firearms is a topic which I reserve for advanced students. This is partly a prejudice on my part, having learned from experience that a student who has become proficient in barehanded fighting can subsequently learn weapon handling by second nature. The opposite, however, seems not to be the case. An exclusively weapon-oriented student seems to fall apart when required to fight unarmed. Therefore, I like to teach my students the bare-handed techniques first. The next volume of the Black Medicine series, called Equalizers, will explore the more advanced subjects of fighting using kitchen knives, Bowie knives, bayonets and other daggers, yawara sticks, batons, canes, staffs, flexible weapons, pistols, rifles, and shotguns. I hope that readers will enjoy experimenting with these self-defense techniques and will never actually have any practical need for them. Self-defense techniques are by nature dirty, crude, damaging, and painful. They are also very, very effective. Good luck.

N. Mashiro

April 1981

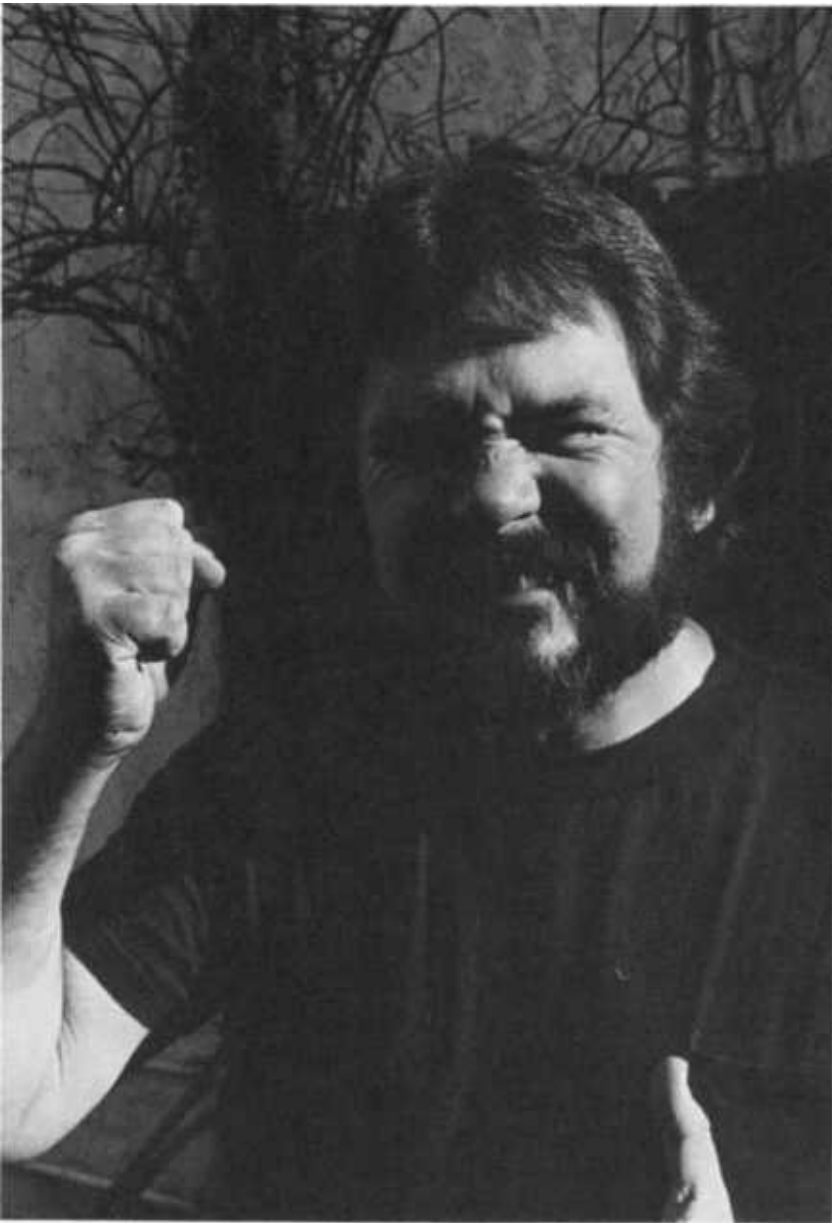


Figure 1: Everywhere you look, the ugly face of violence. Note the right arm cocked back ready to punch. This cocking motion is your signal to fight.

1. FISTFIGHTING

Fistfighting is the most common form of assault a man is likely to encounter, usually in the person of a demented longshoreman in a bar or an irate driver on the street. (Women have their own problems, which I will address later.) With a little nerve and determination a self-defense student can meet an attack from such a person with a reasonable probability of victory.

That doesn't mean that you can win every time—that only happens in Kung Fu movies. In my estimation a self-defense student has about a 50 percent chance of giving an assailant a severely painful surprise during the opening moves of a fistfight. The other 50 percent of the time you're going to get pounded like a tenderized steak. For most self-defense students, these 50-50 odds represent a substantial increase in their survival potential even if there is no guarantee of victory. If you want better odds than that you'll have to take up karate.

The key to success is the fact that most barroom brawlers and marauding motorists share a common failing: they're assholes. There are plenty of devastating ways to begin a fight, but these morons usually initiate hostilities with the old TV roundhouse punch. This attack is so common that you can actually anticipate it, guard against it, and if necessary you can use the punch as a wide-open invitation to dismember your opponent. That's where your chance to win lies. If the attacker uses a more sophisticated attack your victory or defeat will depend on luck, stamina, speed, and good sense. You will probably lose.

The first attack we'll consider is this typical right-hand, roundhouse blow to the face. Sometimes it comes as a punch, sometimes as a slap, but it always involves a fatal cocking of the elbow which can be the undoing of the attacker.

ATTACK # 1

Right-hand roundhouse punch (or slap) to the face. The attacker scowls, twists his face into a mask of hate, snarls "I'll just have to teach you a lesson," pulls his right arm back in a dramatic wind-up, and then throws a punch as powerful (and slow) as a piledriver. (See Figure 1.)

BASIC DEFENSE *1

The first thing is to recognize that you may be about to be attacked. Watch for that right-hand punch! Think about your response and get ready. The instant his right arm starts backward to cock the elbow, you must start to move.

Take a deep step back with your right foot. This backward step pulls your face out of range of the incoming blow. Then use a left knife-hand block to meet the attack. The knife-hand block uses the little-finger edge of the palm to deflect the opponent's arm out to your left. From this basic position you can select from a wide variety of counterattacks.

The following list of eighteen counterattacks all begin from the basic defense position just described. Try out each of these possibilities in practice and then really work on one or two as your special weapons. Don't try to become proficient with them all. If you learn just one well enough to use it in a fight you won't need the others.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #1

1-1: You have just completed the block and your left hand is in contact with the attacker's arm. Grasp his right wrist with your left hand, pull on the arm lightly to straighten it, and then slap up under his elbow with your right palm (breaking his arm). Show this one to anybody who thinks that self-defense requires strength! This technique must be performed quickly to avoid the inevitable left-hand punch.



Figure 2: The typical roundhouse punch is so slow that it is a simple matter to lance your fingernails into the attacker's eyes before he can finish his swing. It's usually quite a surprise to him.

1-2: Parry the blow with the left hand as before, then straighten your left arm suddenly in a vicious stab to his eyes with your fingertips. The motion is like that of a striking snake, extremely fast. If you succeed in hitting the eyes you may blind the guy, so reserve this attack for situations which really require it. Even if you don't succeed in reaching his eyes, a near miss will shake him up and distract him. That gives you another opening. (See Figure 2.)

As a variation, try stabbing your finger tips into his eyes without blocking first! Most

students can pre-empt this punch and end the fight with a lightning stab to the attacker's eyes. Try it! (For practice just try to tap your partner on the forehead-leave his eyes alone!)

1-3: Grasp his wrist with your left hand and pull him in as you stab your right finger tips into his eyes. This attack is similar to the previous one except that the right hand makes the eye-stabbing strike. It takes longer to do it this way, but some people prefer to use the right hand.

1-4: Grasp his wrist and pull him in as your right hand attacks his throat. Notice that there is a dynamic motion implied here. You pull him toward you so that he collides head-on with your outgoing blow. This can be a finger tip stab to the soft spot between the collarbones (possibly fatal) or a fist blow to the Adam's apple (also possibly fatal). Most people do not think of striking the throat due to watching countless TV heroes who always punch to the jaw. The throat is a large, soft, extremely vulnerable target which is not usually well defended. Practice a few attacks to the throat and see what you think.

1-5: Grasp his wrist and pull him in as your right hand delivers a karate chop to the left side of his neck. I don't normally advocate karate chops for self-defense students because it is hard to perform the cleaverlike blow correctly, but the side of the neck is so easy to hit and so vulnerable that even a completely inept blow there can produce significant results. Flatten out your hand, stiffen it up hard, and deliver the little-finger edge of the palm in an axelike motion against the opponent's neck, about three inches below the ear. If you succeed you'll make him dizzy at least. You may knock him out, and in rare cases you might just kill him. It's possible that the sight of a karate chop slicing through the air might give him second thoughts even if you don't hit anything ... but it's better to hit!

1-6: If you don't feel comfortable with the karate chop, don't worry about it. Self-defense students can usually do as well or better using a hammer-fist blow (like pounding your first on a table). Smack him in the side of the neck with a right hammer fist. He'll reel on his heel.

1-7: Grab his wrist and pull him in as in the previous techniques, but deliver the chop or hammer-fist blow to the opponent's left temple about an inch behind the eye. You'll definitely give him a headache, you might knock him out, and if you are strong you could kill him. Be prepared for him to fall to your left due to the spinning effect of your combined pull and strike.

1-8: Grasp his wrist and pull him in as you strike up under the nose or the chin with a right palm-heel blow. I favor the palm-heel attack for self-defense students because they can hit with vicious enthusiasm without any danger of injuring their hands. A punch to the jaw may look easy in the movies, but I have found that untrained fighters almost always sprain their fingers or wrists when attempting to deliver powerful punches. (Try it out for yourself on a heavy punching bag and see.) That can be disastrous in a fight. The palm-heel attack uses the fleshy heel of the palm as a battering ram, immune to any injury, with which to inflict powerful blows on an adversary. The blow up under the chin is especially violent and can have fairly unpredictable results ranging from a bitten tongue to a broken neck.

1-9: Perform the usual basic defense and then deliver a right palm-heel strike to the solar

plexus, which is the soft spot immediately beneath the breastbone. A sudden blow here will momentarily paralyze the opponent's diaphragm, knocking the wind out of him. There is also some chance of doing damage to the stomach, liver, or spleen. An extremely powerful blow, delivered by a muscle-bound karate expert, can bruise the heart itself. The palm-heel attack can be used successfully against the abdomen and ribs, too, but the solar plexus is the most vulnerable target even if it is also the hardest to hit. Aim for it in the knowledge that a near miss may still do some damage. Note that some people have natural immunity to this attack due to strong abdominal muscles, deep layers of fat, extremely heavy clothing or high blood alcohol level.

1-10: A variation on the basic defense is to use the left knife-hand block to knock the incoming blow upward instead of sideways (an up-block). Then slide in close to the opponent, pushing his extended right arm up high over his shoulder. This will tighten and extend the ribs on his right side. Finish with a right palm-heel strike to the lowest ribs on the right side of his chest. You'll break them easily.

Unfortunately, this attack is a little more difficult to perform than the others and requires speed and good timing. (The other guy isn't going to just stand there and wait for you to get into position.) I have included it here mainly to show you another possible application of the palm-heel blow. It is every bit as useful as a fist punch.

1-11: Block normally, deflecting the incoming punch to the side, then slide forward and deliver a right rising elbow strike under the chin. The rising elbow strike is almost as useful as the palm-heel strike because it is extremely powerful, easy for a novice to use, and offers little possibility of injury to the user. Receiving an elbow strike under the chin feels like you've been hit with a club, and can easily result in a bitten tongue, broken teeth, broken or dislocated jaw, unconsciousness, or instant death due to spinal injuries. The disadvantage is that you have to get right in there to deliver it. Most people reserve the elbow blow for those times when circumstances have left you too close to the enemy to effectively use another technique. Don't deliberately take the time to step in close just to use your elbow. Also, don't neglect to use it when the range is appropriate.

1-12: Defend as usual, then slide in and deliver an elbow strike to the solar plexus (knocking the wind out of him, possibly killing him if you are very strong). Elbow strikes don't have to be traveling up to be effective. This one drives straight in under the rib cage, with a slight rising motion during impact. Performed correctly, the tip of the elbow penetrates deeply under the breastbone. To the receiver this feels like having the end of a broomstick rammed into his gut.

1-13: Step back and block as usual, then deliver a right shovel kick to the opponent's testicles. A shovel kick is the easiest karate kick to perform, and consists of pointing your toe toward the floor and then smacking the flat top of your foot up under the enemy's crotch. The "V" of his legs will automatically serve to guide your foot to the target, so all you have to do is punt. If your distance is off you will still hit him with the toe of your shoe, the top of your ankle or your shin. All are damaging.

1-14: It sometimes happens that your initial step back does not even begin to match the attacker's step forward. In this case you wind up nose-to-nose with him after your block. To get control of this situation, bring your right knee up smartly into his groin.

I should mention, however, that the old knee-to-the-groin trick taught by countless fathers to countless daughters does not work very well. Countless fathers also teach countless sons how to avoid getting hit there! The attack has to be fast and has to come as a complete surprise or it will not work.

An amusing variation you should learn goes like this. Suppose that you try to knee him with your right knee, but he does the natural thing and pulls his left thigh up across his groin to protect it. This will effectively nullify your attack unless you are a karate master and can put enough force into the blow to break his thighbone. (It can be done.) Your response should be to instantly put your right foot back down on the ground and snap your left knee into his groin. Try it gently with a practice partner and you will find that the thigh block can frequently be circumvented by switching feet this way. Be sure to guard your own groin at the same time.



Figure 3: The left knife-hand block is common in the movies ... one of the few movie techniques which really works. The followthrough, where you grab the attacker's arm to keep him off balance and then stamp on his knee to break it-are not so frequently seen. Movie directors don't like this kick because it ends the fight too quickly and takes one of the villains out of the story for weeks. Serious fighters love it.

1-15: Perform the basic defense (step back and block) as before. Then shift your weight back on your right (rear) foot and deliver a left side-thrust kick to the attacker's leading knee. The side-thrust kick to the knee is easy to perform. Just think of leaning a stick of kindling against a wall and then breaking it by stamping your foot against the middle of the stick. Everyone has done something like this at one time or another. The only difference is that instead of a stick of wood you are stamping on the enemy's leg at the knee. The results are about the same. (See Figure 3.)

The knee is a preposterous joint in which two long, strong bones are held together by several sets of small ligaments. Heavy pressure against the front or side of the knee when it is straight will easily rip these ligaments out by the roots, breaking the knee. Take care, though. This is not an injury which heals well. The person you do this to will be crippled permanently, so save it for the guy who really de-seves it.

1-16: This technique presumes that the attacker steps forward into his punch with his right foot, putting his right knee within easy reach of your left foot. (Stepping forward with the right foot is fairly common but does not always happen, especially in practice where your partner may be "attacking" with stiff, unnatural motions.) As the punch comes in step back, block, and shift your weight to the right foot as before. Hook your left foot around the outside of his right knee so that the arch of your foot curls around to the back of the knee joint. In this position you can pull his knee forward, bending it, and then you can put your weight on your left foot and drive his bent knee powerfully into the floor. Depending on how hard you drive his knee into the ground you may simply humiliate him or you may shatter his kneecap, inflicting a very serious and long-lasting injury. (See Figure 4.)

If all has gone well, your opponent should now be kneeling on one injured knee directly in front of you. Let me point out two things about this position. First, notice how easy it is to use a hammer-fist attack to his face, skull, or neck. You may also be able to use a knee to rearrange his face depending on his exact landing position. Second, notice how easily he can attack your groin or grab your legs from his position below and in front of you. Better keep that in mind.



Figure 4: Stomping on the back of the opponent's knee is very effective because it is painful, unexpected, sudden, and it completely destroys the man's stance and mobility. It puts his head in reach of your knee, too.

This technique is not always appropriate (his foot may be in the wrong position) but when circumstances are right it can be irresistible. The takedown is fast, painful, and very surprising. Best of all, when properly done the opponent can't run very well afterwards. That's all you need for a clean getaway.

1-17: Now and then I teach my students techniques intended for display to relatives. For some reason relatives want to believe that you aren't really learning anything useful in your self-defense class! (They feel threatened, I guess.) The following technique falls into this class. Use it when your brother wants to see some "self-defense." Don't use it in a fight unless you feel very confident of your ability.

Meet the incoming punch with the same basic defense as before, but angle the block to deflect the opponent's fist upward. Duck down low, slide under his arm to the outside and throw him by hooking your bent right arm under his right leg while striking upward under his chin with your left fist. As his head goes back your right arm lifts his leg and he topples over backwards. (For sake of demonstration, push gently up under your brother's

chin with the palm of your hand. Don't clout him unless that's what you really want to do!)

ATTACK #2

So what happens if the attacker leads off with his left fist, like a boxer would? This isn't such an unlikely possibility, and after the 50 percent of all attacks which start with ride-side haymakers, left jabs come next in frequency. I train my students to be right-side specialists because they usually don't have the time (or the ability) to shift from right- to left-side defenses in mid-punch. Therefore I train them to parry the left hand and wait for the inevitable right-side attack.



Figure 5: With the palm block you can deflect a left-hand punch and still be ready for the following right. This technique lets superficially trained self-defense students concentrate on defending against right-hand attacks only.

BASIC DEFENSE #2

Step back with the right foot, and use a left palm-block to deflect the incoming punch. A palm-block is a solid, snappy slap. The idea is to slap the attacker's incoming left jab to your right so it misses your head, but not so much that you can't recover in time to meet

his right hand if it is coming in next. (See Figure 5.)

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #2

2-1: The best idea for a self-defense student is usually to block but don't counter. Just wait for the right hand strike and deal with it instead.

2-2: If you would rather strike back, not wait for a rightside attack, use the left palm-block as before and then slide in as you deliver a left knife-hand strike to the left side of his neck. Alternately, use a left hammer fist against the left side of his neck or temple.

Note that this is intended to be a coil-recoil motion. As you block your body twists to your right, then recoils suddenly to the left during the counterattack. This can be a very fast and powerful attack. Don't use it unless it feels very natural to you.

2-3: The palm-block used here is essentially a slap which hits the attacker's wrist and drives it out to your right. If your right hand slaps the back of his elbow to the left at the same instant you will dislocate or break his arm.

ATTACK #3

Right-hand punch (or slap) to the face. This is the same as attack #1, but the defensive response is different.

BASIC DEFENSE #3

Some students find that stepping back with the right foot feels awkward and unnatural for them. They would rather defend by stepping back with the left foot instead. Others would prefer to block with their right hands, apparently because they feel that the right hand is stronger and more coordinated. Since I try to use a student's natural inclinations to advantage, this section presents a few left-foot, right-hand defenses for these people.

There is an advantage to stepping back with the left foot in that you can then use a right hammer-fist blow as a block, a very powerful technique. Take a deep step back with your left foot, using the right hammer fist to meet the attack. A hammer fist applied to the soft inner side of an opponent's wrist can bruise nerves or actually break his arm.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #3

3-1: After connecting with the hammer block, raise your right fist slightly and deliver a hammer blow down on top of the opponent's right collarbone (breaking it). This is a sure way to end the fight, but there is a slight possibility of causing a fatal internal hemorrhage.

3-2: After connecting with the block, strike the opponent on the right side of his neck with a right knife-hand strike or a hammer fist. This blow will probably just make him dizzy, but again there is the possibility of a more serious injury in rare cases.

3-3: After delivering the block, duck down, slide in toward the opponent and strike him in the ribs with your right elbow (breaking the floating ribs and/or knocking the wind out of him). In this attack you are assumed to be at close range, as if he practically ran you over when you stepped back. Your right shoulder should be only inches from his chest. Bring your right arm down across your abdomen and point the elbow at the opponent's lower ribs or solar plexus. Now drive the sharp point of your elbow deeply into his body. You can hit harder if you use your left hand to push on your right fist as you strike.

3-4: After completing the block shift the weight to your left (rear) foot and deliver a right side-thrust kick to the opponent's knee, thigh, groin, or abdomen. This technique assumes that there is sufficient distance between you and your opponent to allow you to kick. The knee is by far the best target. Aim higher only to impress your friends during demonstrations. (See Figure 6.)



Figure 6: The hammer block is a violent hammerlike blow to the inside of the attacker's forearm which can stun nerves or even break bones. If you are fast you can also grab the opponent's (broken) arm and pull on it while you crush his bladder with your foot.

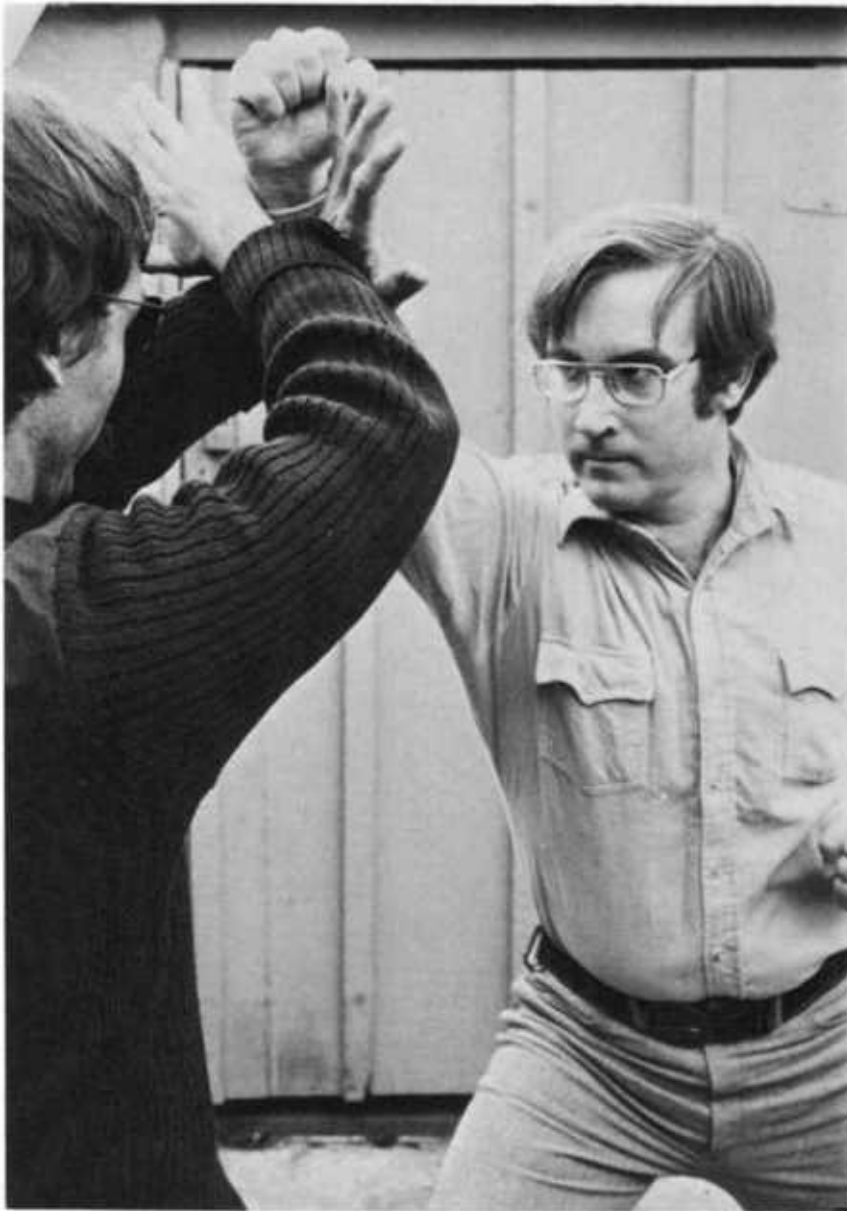


Figure 7: The “X” up-block is difficult to perform effectively but self-defense students like it because of the dramatic counterattacks it makes possible.

The next few fist-fighting techniques are not as simple to perform as the previous ones. They are presented for enrichment (for fun), and for use by those advanced students who have the inclination to master them. Although some of these tricks are flashy, they are also very risky. Use them when you choreograph the high school play, not when things get serious.

ATTACK #4

Right-hand punch (or slap) to face. This is the same attack as in the previous situations. It is the defensive response that is different.

BASIC DEFENSE #4

Step back with the right foot using an “X” up-block to parry the attack. The “X” up-block is formed by making fists, with the hands palm down and the right wrist crossed over the left one. This forms the “X” which is used to catch the opponent’s incoming punch and deflect it upward. When performed properly, the “X” block can actually trap his arm, giving you a split-second chance to grab his wrist and work mischief with it. (See Figure

7.)

Remember, these techniques are presented for your entertainment, not for practical use. Don't try them in combat unless you are very sure of your ability to use the "X" block effectively. It is not easy.

4-1: Step back and use the "X" block to trap his arm momentarily. Use your right hand to grasp his wrist, then pull it sharply down and back toward your right hip. Press against the back of his elbow with your left forearm to control him. This produces pain in the arm but no particular damage to the opponent's body.

The basic idea here is to get his arm straightened with the back of the elbow on top. Rest the bony ridge of your left wrist against a spot about an inch above his elbow (your practice partner will tell you when you have the right spot). This brings pressure against the radial nerve (the funny bone nerve) and produces severe pain with very little effort on your part.



Figure 8: One counterattack from the "X" block is to grab the attacker's arm and jerk him down past your right hip as you lift your knee.

4-2: Do exactly as described in the previous technique, but deliver a left hammer blow to

the back of his elbow to painfully dislocate the joint.

4-3: Grasp his wrist as before, then pull down and back really suddenly so he bends over at the waist. Finish with a left hammer blow to his kidney. The spot is about six inches up from the belt and two to three inches to either side of the spine. This is an extremely painful blow which can cause serious internal bleeding in some cases.

4-4: Grasp his wrist and yank it down past your right hip as described before. As the opponent starts to fall forward off balance, shift your weight to your left foot and bring your right knee up smartly into his chest. Your continuing pull on his arm will greatly magnify the force of the impact. A collapse of the cardiopulmonary system is a possibility here, due in part to a crushed rib cage. This is a very powerful attack even for a novice. (See Figure 8.)



Figure 9: The classic wrist-release technique consists of twisting your hand up and out against the opponent's thumb.

2. WRIST RELEASES

Envision a situation where someone is trying to limit your movements by holding your wrists. This could be any friendly or unfriendly situation, like having a few friends trying to hold you down to tickle you, or having a mugger trying to drag you into a dark alley. The ability to quickly and surely escape when your wrists or arms have been grasped is basic to any self-defense student's training.

The lack of such training can be very embarrassing to a martial artist. I recall a karate black belt who was grabbed by some friends and thrown into the ocean as a joke. He remarked later that he could have killed them easily at any moment, but he couldn't make them let go without injuring them! Since it was just a playful joke he had to let himself be dunked. A self-defense student might not always be able to kill with his bare hands, but he'd better be able to perform an effective wrist release!

The important thing, remember, is to get loose. If the situation is serious and you can incidentally maim, mutilate, and massacre the other guy as you escape so much the better. But be satisfied if the technique results in your freedom. Don't press your luck beyond that point without a very good reason.

ATTACK #5

Your right wrist has been grasped by the opponent's left hand. Usually this puts the palm of his hand against the back of your wrist with his fingers curling under your arm and his thumb on top. He then tries to hold you against your will or to drag you off in some direction where you don't want to go.

BASIC DEFENSE #5

To get free, twist your wrist in his grip until the narrow upper edge of the wrist is against his thumb. This is the weak part of his grip. Use a circular motion to pull your hand toward the center of your body, then up to shoulder level, and then out and down to your right. Make a complete, snappy circle and your wrist will pry itself free between his thumb and fingers. (See Figure 9.)

The key to success is to use your forearm as a pry bar, putting irresistible pressure against the tip of his thumb. There are very few men with hands strong enough to resist this simple release when performed by a person of average strength. Even these men can be overcome by some additional steps.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #5

If a simple escape isn't dramatic enough for you try one of these techniques instead.

5-1: Twist your hand counterclockwise in his grip until your palm is vertical (thumb down). From this position you can curl your fingers up over the top of his wrist. Grasp his wrist tightly. At this point your "imprisoned" hand is on top holding the attacker's wrist, while the attacker's hand is on the bottom still gripping your wrist. Clamp his fingers against your arm with your left palm so he cannot let go even if he wants to.

Now comes the fun part. Use the strength of your shoulders to twist his arm violently

clockwise. This will spin him around with his back toward you and his arm twisted up in a knot over his left shoulder. Finish by yanking the arm straight down toward the floor (dislocating the shoulder) or by delivering a knee kick to the base of his spine (breaking the coccyx). (See Figure 10.)

5-2: This technique sounds preposterous but it really works well. The attacker is holding your right wrist in his left hand as before. Turn and take a short half-step to your left with your left foot, followed by a deeper step through to the left with your right foot. As you make the second step, point at an imaginary object in the distance with your captured hand. Be sure to push your right elbow into contact with his left elbow as you turn and point. When the elbows touch your hand will come free from his grip. As you feel your hand slipping out of his grip squat down slightly and deliver a back elbow strike to his abdomen (breaking ribs or knocking the wind out of him).



Figure 10: This wrist release isn't really a release at all, but an unexpected counteroffensive. The victim uses her hands to grab and lock down the attacker's left hand, then twists it violently to her right. Performed with sufficient conviction, this move will force the attacker to spin around on his heel into a very uncomfortable position.

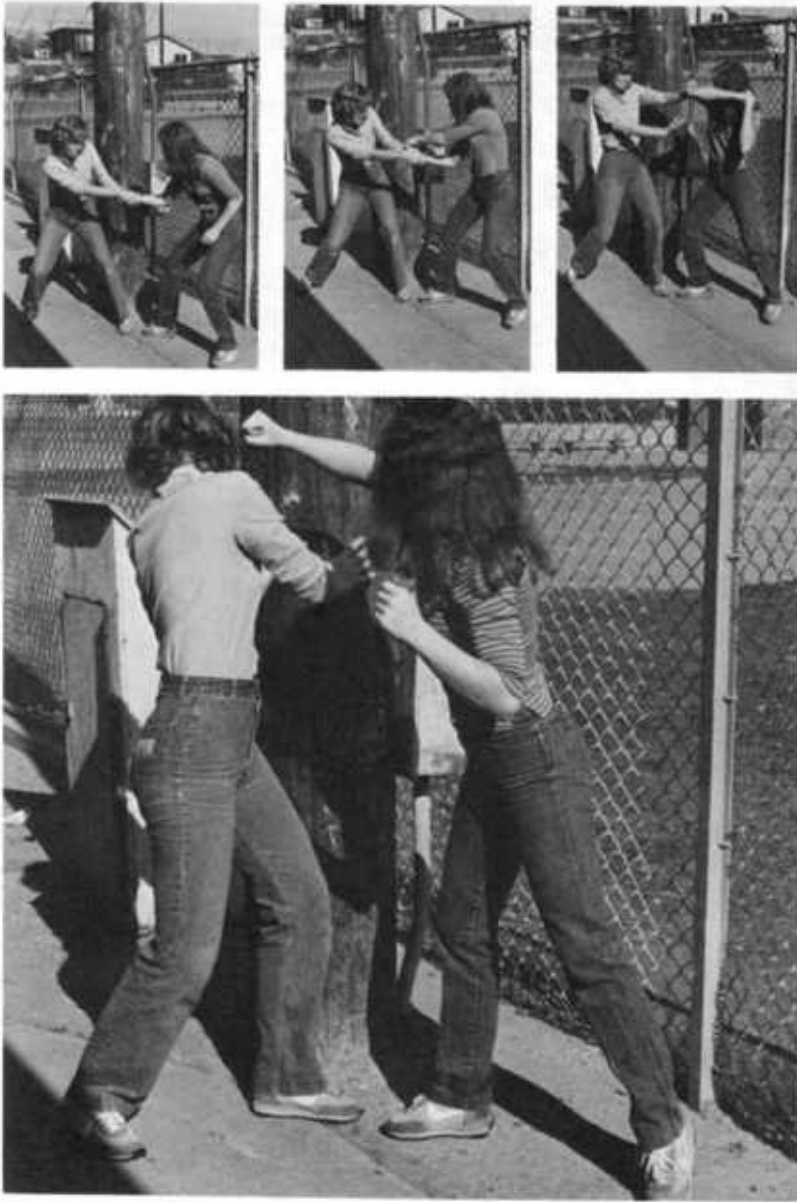


Figure 11: Another classic wrist release consists of grasping your captured hand with your free one and using the strength of both arms to tear your wrist free. The standard retaliation is a hammer-fist strike to the head.

5-3: For that special surprise, don't try to get loose at all! Step in toward him and drive the captured hand up in a palm heel strike to the chin. Or jab at his eye. Your hand will come loose from his grip as you strike. This attack usually succeeds quite well because the opponent suffers from the assumption that your hand is under his control. He can't believe the captured hand is coming up to hit him until too late.

ATTACK #6

Your right wrist is grasped by both of the opponent's hands. Usually this means that his thumbs are across the top of your wrist and his fingers are firmly clenched around the lower side of your arm. This is a more difficult situation to deal with than the previous one.

BASIC DEFENSE #6

Reach down between his arms with your left hand and grasp your own right fist. Use both arms to pull the tangle of hands up and back toward your left shoulder, using your right

forearm as a pry bar against the opponent's thumbs. In most cases you will be able to pry your arm free immediately.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #6

6-1: Perform the basic defense as described above. As your wrist comes free, retaliate with a right hammer blow to the face. Be sure to note the coil-recoil nature of the motion. You coil to the left as you pry your arm free, and then recoil to the right to put added force behind the hammer-fist blow to the face. (See Figure 11.)

6-2: If you can't seem to pry your arm loose, don't lose hope. If the attacker is so foolish as to immobilize both of his hands while holding only one of yours, go ahead and hit him with your free hand. A hammer blow to the nose might be a very effective distraction. I guarantee that he'll let go of your wrist with at least one hand as soon as you start raining blows on his face, jabbing at his eyes, or kicking his knees. The instant he does, move! That's your golden chance to free your hand and get out of there.

ATTACK #7

Your right wrist is grasped by the opponent's right hand. This looks like a perverted handshake where the opponent deliberately bypassed your open hand and grabbed your wrist instead. It's a common trick.

BASIC DEFENSE #7

As always, use your forearm as a pry bar to put pressure against his thumb. In this case push your arm down slightly and then snap it up in a tight counterclockwise circle around his hand. After your wrist passes over the top of his hand you will see that he is losing his grasp on you. You can make the movement more forceful by completing the circle with a little body weight added to the strength of your arm on the downstroke.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #7

Here are two methods of doing more than simply getting free.

7-1: Perform the basic defense as described above. Then, as your right arm comes free give him a short, sharp punch to the testicles. Don't bother with hitting him in the stomach; put your fist where it counts. For those of you who are using palm-heel strikes instead of punches, turn your hand palm up and rake the heel right down his zipper and through to the back. He'll get the message. You didn't like having your arm held! (See Figure 12.)



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Figure 13: When your fistfighting opponent uses his leading hand to grab yours, you can pin his hand and twist him around into a hammer lock. Be careful, though, since he may know how to escape from a hammer lock (see Figure 38 for the end of this sequence).

7-2: This technique is similar to 5-1. Twist your hand counterclockwise in his grip until your fingers can reach up around the outside of his wrist to grasp it. Your hand must pass under his wrist so that the fingers can curl up the far side with the little finger leading. Clamp his fingers against your forearm with your left palm (so he cannot escape) and twist his arm violently clockwise. This will spin him around into a hammer lock. Finish with a knee kick to the coccyx or a shovel kick up into the groin from the rear. He'll never see it coming. (See Figure 13.)

ATTACK #8

The opponent grasps both of your wrists from the front. This means that he is holding your right wrist in his left hand and vice versa. Notice that this is really a neutral stance, since as long as he holds on to your wrists neither one of you can do anything with your hands.

BASIC DEFENSE #8

First try a simple one-hand release such as basic defense #5. Just because he elected to

grab both of your hands doesn't mean that you have to free them both at once. Free one, then the other.

If you find that you don't have much success getting one hand free, try bringing your hands together to the point where your left hand can grasp his left wrist. Hold his wrist firmly while you twist your right hand free. Immobilizing his hand makes the escape much easier to work. (See Figure 14.)

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #8

8-1: The next three counterattacks form a natural group, each beginning with a sudden motion which spins the opponent around on his heels. Although this technique is a little difficult to coordinate at first, and although an alerted practice partner can frustrate it easily, you will find that it works very effectively against a surprised opponent. Believe me, he'll be surprised.

Free your right wrist by twisting out against his thumb (using basic defense #5 or #8). Now cup your right hand as if to drink water from it. Notice that the hand forms a natural hook when held in this position. Swing your left arm slightly out to your left to pull his right arm a few inches away from his body. Then swiftly hook him under the right armpit with your right hand. Your wrist will hit him in the armpit and the hook of your fingers will catch around the back of his shoulder or upper arm. Don't grab him, just hook his arm. Grasping takes too long, but hooking his arm with your cupped hand can be accomplished with blinding speed.



Figure 14: At times when someone has grabbed both of your wrists the easiest way out is to use one of your hands to help free the other.

The next step is to give his shoulder a short, sharp, and very powerful yank to your right. Use your torso to provide the strength for this pull, not your arm alone. The idea is to suddenly spin him around at least a quarter turn. It sounds difficult but if the pull is extremely sudden it really works well. In one self-defense class demonstration I used this spin on an unsuspecting assistant and actually spun him completely around like a top, which surprised us both and ruined the point I was trying to make to the class.

As your opponent is spinning on his heel with that welcome look of shock on his ugly face, you will find that it is very easy to twist your left hand out of his grip using basic defense #5. While he is turning just swing your left hand across in front of your body and up in an arc to your left shoulder. You will be amazed at how naturally your wrist glides out of his hand while his brain is preoccupied with catching his balance.

If all has gone well, your opponent should now be standing with his right shoulder toward you. Grab the hair at the back of his head with your left hand and yank it straight down (not backwards) to drop him on his back. If the hair is too short to grab, reach over the top of his head and get a hold by digging your fingers into his eye sockets. Yank his head

straight back so his face points toward the ceiling. To make the fall more violent throw your feet out from under you and drop on your chest, letting your weight drive his head down. He will fall violently straight down on the back of his head, with feet and arms flying in all directions. (See Figure 15.)

8-2: A variation of technique 8-1 is to spin the opponent all the way around with his back toward you and catch his neck in a strangle hold. Jerk him violently into the spin and then just let your right arm encircle his neck as he turns. Rest your left elbow on top of his left shoulder, and grasp your left bicep with your right hand. (Your little finger fits into the fold of the elbow.) Place your left hand on the back of his head and grasp the hair there if you wish. To apply the choke hold, force his head forward with your left hand while you pry the bony edge of your right wrist back into the center of his throat just under the jaw.

This choke is an attack on the windpipe and is extremely dangerous and painful. A violent application of this hold can sprain or even break the opponent's neck. An inexperienced application of the strangle hold is worse than no hold at all. While using such a hold you may be very vulnerable to a variety of throws and counterblows. The victim will become extremely agitated as soon as he feels the pain, and will attempt the most desperate countermeasures. If you are not willing to take the soldier's way out (snapping the neck) it may take from five seconds to two minutes to subdue the opponent. It could be a lengthy struggle.

8-3: A variation of the strangle hold described above is the carotid artery hold (called "the sleeper"). I find it more useful and less dangerous (to everyone) than the strangle hold.

Encircle his neck as before, pinching his throat in the bend of your arm. Hook your hands together on top of his left shoulder, and anchor them in place by pressing your left forearm tightly down his back. Squeeze the neck (just beneath the jaw) between your bicep and forearm to close the carotid arteries. Be sure to tuck your head down so he can't make a sudden stab back over his shoulder with his finger tips and put out your eyes!

This cuts off the supply of blood to the brain and produces unconsciousness in seconds. Holding this position for several minutes will produce severe brain damage or death. There is relatively little danger of damage to the spine or the trachea from this hold, and it is not especially painful.



Figure 15: One of my favorite maneuvers is the wrist release which suddenly becomes a spinning takedown. The motions required are complex, but with a little practice this technique is fast as lightning.

This hold is the magical attack which TV scriptwriters have sought for years, in which the victim passes out immediately and awakens as good as new a few minutes later. Unfortunately, the TV heroes usually pistolwhip the victim over the head or chop him on the back of the neck to produce this “anaesthetic” effect. Do not be deceived. Such attacks are frequently lethal, and carry with them the possibility of crippling brain injury if the victim is not fortunate enough to die immediately. People do not wake up smiling ruefully after being brained with a heavy pistol. Even this relatively safe judo hold can be dangerous if something goes wrong.

8-4: This technique is for those of you who cannot master the shoulder-spin described in the preceding paragraphs. Twist your hands in his grip and grab his wrists (similar to techniques 5-1 and 7-2). Pull his hands out to the sides and alternately butt him in the face with the top of your head and kick him in the groin until he submits. The beauty of this combination is that the blow to the face makes him throw his head back and his hips come forward. The kick makes him jerk his hips away which brings his face back into range

again. With good timing you can get him rocking like a seesaw! Note that it is not really necessary to grasp his wrists since you can use his grip on you to control his arms.

8-5: Use the basic defense to get one hand free, then immediately deliver a palm-heel strike to his nose or chin. That will get his attention! Or use your free hand to stab your finger tips at his eyes. He'll forget all about holding you the instant your dirty fingernails get near his baby blues. Of the five counterattacks in this group, this is the one I favor for actual use. Do not underestimate the life-saving value of simplicity.

ATTACK #9

The opponent grasps both of your wrists from behind.

BASIC DEFENSE #9

Unfortunately there is no simple wrist release to employ against an attacker who is holding your wrists from behind. You cannot simply twist against his thumbs because from behind your arms just don't twist in the right directions. This does not mean that you are helpless, however. It does mean that you will probably have to "resort to violence" to get free. If you are being assaulted this is not a problem, but against friends ...

The two following counterattacks both begin with the same motion which you would do well to study.

Rotate your body a half-turn to your left, so that your left shoulder is toward the enemy. This motion wraps your right arm around behind your back as you turn. You will find in practice that you can easily grab his wrists during the turn.

Through this simple motion you have turned the tables on the opponent. Suddenly he realizes that the situation is no longer under his control. At this point you must be ready to break away if he releases you, or to counterattack if that is your decision. Personally, I recommend a sudden and violent counterattack in all situations where the opponent's intentions are evil rather than playful.

9-1: Perform the basic defense as described above, then lean to your right and use left side-thrust kicks to stomp on the opponent's shins, knees, thighs and groin. The knee is the best target if the situation is really serious. Note that your pulling hold on his arms will magnify the impact of your kick by denying him the ability to give way before the blow. Also, your hold on the opponent will help stabilize your balance, making it easier to kick repetitively without getting your foot back down on the ground. (See Figure 16.)

9-2: This one is a little harder but it works well once you get the knack. Start turning to the left as you twist your hands in his grip and tightly grasp his wrists. Continue to turn to your left, using your right hand to pull him forward behind your turning back. Plant your left leg outside of the opponent's right foot to trip him. Your continuing turn will pull him across your outstretched leg. He will fall heavily on his right shoulder, possibly breaking his collarbone.



Figure 16: When an attacker grabs your wrists from behind it's hard to be clever about escaping. Usually a simple brute-force technique is the best bet here. Notice in these photos how the victim has turned the tables on the attacker by grasping the attacker's wrists before kicking.

This technique is best performed as a sudden spinning throw and requires either perfect timing or relatively great strength. Use it for demonstrations, but think twice about trying it in earnest unless it feels very natural to you.

9-3: Here's one for the more advanced students. This technique must begin with a stomp to the attacker's instep, to keep him from kicking too fast later on. Just glance down to find his right foot, lift your right knee to waist level, and then stomp down on the top of his foot about an inch in front of the shin. Think of it as if you were trying to stomp on a quart jar and break it. Now that you have his attention you can go on to the real counterattack.

Step slightly backward so your back brushes the attacker's chest. Then drop down on your knees (or into a crouch), bending your elbows and bringing your fists up in front of your shoulders. This motion will tear your wrists out of his grip. Twist immediately to the left and put your left forearm against his left knee, just below the kneecap. If you did any

damage with your instep attack his weight will be on this leg and there will be no danger of getting kicked in the teeth; but keep your arm against his knee anyway. Then jerk his left heel out from under him with your right hand. As he falls, keep your left arm ready to deflect a possible kick from his right foot. Retreat and rise. (See Figure 17.)

Buried within the above technique is an extremely effective throw, the violence of which you will appreciate as soon as you try it in practice. The key is to hold his knee stationary while you jerk his heel forward. Most students mistakenly try to hold the foot in place while pushing on the knee, which doesn't work. I'll return to this throw in another technique where its utility will be even greater.

9-4: Turn to your left, swinging your right arm high up over your head as you turn. The attacker's forearm will pass above your head at the midpoint of the turn and he'll lose his grip on your right wrist at almost the same moment. As you are turning, twist your left hand in his grip to grasp his wrist, and then pull his left arm out straight. Your twisting motion will naturally rotate his arm to put the back of his elbow on top. Strike downward with your right fist to dislocate his elbow, or you can just apply a straight arm bar as in technique 4-1.



Figure 17: When someone you don't want to hospitalize grasps your wrists from behind,

you can free yourself by stepping straight back and raising your hands to shoulder level. Then, if you wish, you can drop on one knee and yank the jerk's leg out from under him. Notice in the third photo that the defender is on guard against a possible kick as he drops into position for the throw.

3. ESCAPES FROM CHOKES & LAPEL GRIPS

The neck and throat form a conduit which connects your brain to the rest of your body. Through this conduit pass the oxygen you must have to stay alive, the blood without which your brain will die within brief minutes, and the many incoming and outgoing nerve impulses which govern your entire existence. When someone grabs your throat he literally takes your life in his hands, and even if he is joking you may be only a fraction of a second from permanent-lethal injury. There is no time to hesitate, no excuse for equivocation or delay. You must act decisively to free yourself and, if necessary, to render the attacker incapable of further violence.

Remember, when he has you by the throat it isn't a question of being humiliated or relieved of your credit cards. It's your life, your future years, which are on the line. Those future years will depend on your decisiveness, courage, and speed.

ATTACK *10

The attacker tries to choke you from in front, using both hands to squeeze your throat. He may place his thumbs on your trachea, or on the arteries beneath the corners of your jaw, or he may just squeeze in an unsophisticated manner.

If he crushes the trachea, which isn't difficult, you will strangle to death very unpleasantly as the windpipe swells shut, even if he releases you immediately. A few seconds of pressure on the carotid arteries will render you unconscious and helpless; a few minutes will leave you dead or brain damaged. The untutored squeezer may not manage to accomplish either of these objectives, but his grip will be terribly painful.

I suggest that you avoid using your thumbs on your practice partner's neck while trying these moves. It is too easy to make mistakes. Just clasp him around the neck with your palms and fingers, keeping your thumbs free.

BASIC DEFENSE #10

By far the best immediate defense against a front choke is the forearm wedge. Of course a finger in the eye or a good swift kick aren't bad responses either, but the wedge works well, is very fast, and gives you the option of escape without injuring the opponent if he happens to be your brother-in-law the jerk.

The forearm wedge consists of clasping your hands (palms together) and spreading your elbows slightly to form a triangular wedge of your forearms. Start with your hands at about waist level and then drive your arms up between his forearms with great speed and force. Pretend to yourself that you're trying to strike an invisible target in the arc over your head. On the way the wedge formed by your forearms will lift and separate the attacker's hands away from your neck.

This technique is a favorite of mine for three reasons. First, it is a brute force move with no need for fancy timing. Anybody can learn to do it in minutes. Second, the rising wedge derives its power from the muscles of your back and shoulders (not your arms), which makes the motion fairly powerful even when performed by a 105-pound stewardess.

Third, the forearm wedge takes advantage of your natural tendency to arch your back and pull away from a choke. I have found that the really successful self-defense techniques usually build on the student's first instinctive reaction to the attack. This one is a good example.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #10

10-1: Drive this wedge violently up between his forearms to tear his hands off your neck, then slam your clenched hands down into his face. This is the standard recommended technique in most of the military manuals and self-defense books, but in practice I have found it to be a little difficult to perform. Usually the opponent's face is just slightly out of reach, which forces you to lean forward awkwardly to deliver the blow. This robs the blow of its power.

I feel that the downward blow is best used when the opponent is pushing you backwards against a wall while he chokes you. In this case suddenly tearing his hands loose from your neck makes him lunge forward-directly into the path of your descending blow. If you can, use a hammer-fist blow (or its equivalent) against the bridge of his nose, and be satisfied if you can just rake your knuckles forcefully across his eyes, nose, and lips. A palm-heel strike up under his chin might be a good way to follow up. (See Figure 18.)

10-2: Here's one for the wrestlers among us. Use the forearm wedge as before, but separate your arms at the top of their rise, swing them out sideways and then back in to strike his lower ribs on each side. This is a simultaneous double hammer-fist attack. For extra power, strike downward at a 45-degree angle as if trying to bring your fists together at the level of his belt buckle. Finish by driving your shoulder into his abdomen as you encircle his thighs with your arms and pull up, throwing him on his back.

This technique has always seemed a little crude to me, since it depends on a wrestler's kind of strength and aggressiveness. This opens the question of who in his right mind would try to choke such a person, but then maybe the attacker isn't in his right mind. The key point to remember here is to avoid the tendency to bring the fists in horizontally toward his lower ribs. This weakens the blow. By angling the fists more downward as they hit the ribs you can add a lot more force to the attack.

10-3: This technique is one I learned from watching Bill Cosby do it on "I Spy" many years ago. It probably ought to remain in reserve for TV episodes where it would always work, but it is kind of fun and I'll pass it along to you.

Break the choke hold with the forearm wedge. At the same time take a slight step forward. When your hands reach the top of their rise, separate them, swing them out and down, and then bring them together again at waist level. Performed correctly, this technique traps the opponent's wrists under your armpits. Now perform another forearm wedge ... and dislocate both of his elbows at the same time!



Figure 18: The forearm wedge is a natural motion with a good chance of success against a front choke. The follow-up blow to the face, however, works best when the attacker is pushing you against a wall or fence as shown here. He falls forward into the blow.

10-4: Perform the basic defense as before. When you have knocked his hands free of your neck, reach out and grab his hipbones, then pull his pelvis toward you to meet your rapidly rising knee. Actually, this one will work just as well without the basic defense. When he grabs your neck, grab his hips and knee him hard in the genitals. He'll let go of your neck, do not doubt it.

10-5: Now for a simple throw. For some reason selfdefense students (and their relatives) expect that the class will involve throwing people on the ground with boneshattering results. I try to give them a little of what they expect now and then to keep them happy.

The first thing to understand about throws is that they require no strength. For novices this is very difficult to accept, but a properly timed, well-executed throw requires as little strength as punching someone backwards off a log. The principle is very much the same. All you do is set him up so he is tottering on the edge of an abyss, then you nudge him over. Of course, if the throw isn't timed right or the attempt is clumsy, strength begins to count a lot. In that case, the stronger you are the more likely it is that you will be able to

salvage the situation and complete the throw, after a fashion.

Use the forearm wedge to break his hold. Bring your left hand down and grasp his right wrist. Step in toward him with your right foot, put your weight on it, and begin a continuing pivot to your left. As you turn catch his neck in the fold of your right elbow. Continue the pivot until your back is toward your opponent. It will work best if you squat down slightly so that your hips are lower than his.

This is the tricky part. Use your hold on his neck and arm to pull his shoulders horizontally around to your left, straightening your legs at the same time. Don't try to pull him forward or down. As you pull his head across your body and around to your left, his body will rock up and balance on your hip or lower back. When you practice this move experiment a little and search for this teeter-totter position. Once you have achieved this critical balance, only a slight additional pull will drop him on the ground in front of you. You see? Like falling off a log.

10-6: Here's another throw, which is far more subtle. Break the choke hold as before, then bring your hands down and grasp the opponent's shoulders or upper arms. Snap your right knee up into his groin to get his attention. (Actually the idea is to distract his attention.) Now shift the position of your right leg to put the knee against his left inguinal fold (the crease between his left upper thigh and his groin), while you slip your right heel around to the left spot behind his right knee. Once in position, it is a simple matter to spin him down to the ground by pushing with your knee, pulling with your heel and twisting his shoulders around to your left. (Pull with your left hand as you push with your right.) (See Figure 19.)

This trick sounds really esoteric until you try it and see for yourself how well it works. The hard part is getting into position. After that it's all downhill.

ATTACK # 11

The two-handed front choke, just as in attack #10. It is the defense which differs.

BASIC DEFENSE # 11

There is another basic defense for the front choke which works almost as well as the forearm wedge.

Clasp your hands over your head. In one forceful motion, step back with your left foot and twist your body to the left, catching his wrists under your right armpit. For additional power bow slightly from the waist as you twist. This motion rips his hands free of your neck or at least makes it very difficult for him to continue to throttle you.

This basic defense leaves you in a highly contorted, lefttwisted stance at the moment your neck becomes free. Counterattacks from this position tend to take advantage of the coil-recoil effect by using the body's natural tendency to whip back to the right from this position.



Figure 19: The inguinal fold throw is a specialty item best suited to relatively friendly scuffles ... as you'll notice by the short distance from the opponent's knee to the defender's crotch.



Figure 20: One excellent release from a front choke is to raise your right arm and twist violently to the left. Then, if you prefer, you can go on to a painful wristlock.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #1 I

11-1: Perform the basic defense as described above. If the attacker has been pulled off balance toward you (which can easily happen) snap your torso back to the right and catch him in the face with the back of your right elbow. This can be an extremely powerful blow, equivalent to striking him with a club.

11-2: The next technique incorporates a wristlock. Wristlocks are extremely useful little techniques which allow a small, unmuscular person to control and subdue a much larger assailant. This ability is usually of the greatest interest to police officers, but occasionally the rest of us discover a need to immobilize someone without breaking his leg or knocking him out. Wristlocks are the key to this kind of control.

Use the basic defense to free your throat, but make an effort to trap his wrists by clamping them under your right arm as you turn. To perform this technique you need to keep at least a minimum amount of control over his hands during the twisting stage. At the completion of the leftward twist, when your neck is free, take his right hand in your hands.

Pay close attention because this works only one way. Your right hand should grasp the little-finger side of the attacker's palm. Your fingers will be in his palm and your thumb will be on the back of his hand near the knuckle of his middle finger. Your left hand grasps the thumb side of his hand, with your fingers in his palm and your thumb on the back of his hand near the knuckle of his middle finger. (Some military manuals show the thumbs crossed in an "X" but this is not necessary.)

Now you have him. Keeping your hands in close to your chest, twist your body back around to the right until you are facing him again. Keep his hand turned so that his finger tips point up. To apply pressure against his wrist joint, simply pull his arm toward you with your fingers while pressing the other way with your thumbs. The pain is very sharp and impossible to ignore. By applying pain with the wristlock and simultaneously twisting his hand to your right, you can make him bend over at the waist and beg for mercy. If you feel no such emotion, a swift kick in the teeth will take the fight out of him. (See Figure 20.)



Figure 21: Another response to the front choke is to break the hold as in Figure 20, and then use the wristlock to set up this very brutal takedown. Once you have captured the opponent's arm (third photo) all you have to do is lean back and throw your feet out to

drive his head into the bricks.

11-3: If the finesse of a wristlock seems a little feminine to you, here's a good, crude, brute-force variation which the male macho types can sink their teeth into. Twist free and grab his right hand as described in the previous technique. Turn back to your right, twisting his arm to keep his finger tips pointing up. This will result in rotating the back of his elbow upward, too.

Let go with your left hand, retaining your grip with your right hand. Pivot to the right on your right foot and catch his captured arm under your left armpit. Try to catch his arm just below the shoulder. Put your left hand under his wrist, maintaining your grip with your right hand.

At this point you can exert pressure against his wrist by pulling with your right hand. You can put painful pressure on his elbow joint by levering upward on his wrist with your left hand (the right hand helps, too). But most people prefer the final option. Lever up on his wrist with both hands as you throw your feet out from under you and let your entire weight hang on his upper arm. (The motion is like sitting down on the ground very suddenly.) Unless your opponent has superhuman strength and resistance to pain, he'll crash headfirst to the pavement. He'll think he was hit by a passing truck just as he was about to choke the life out of you. (See Figure 21.)

11-4: A very simple counterattack which derives from basic defense # 11 consists of breaking the hold by spinning to the left (as always), but then you continue the spin and perform a complete 360-degree turn. As you are coming around stick out your left elbow and hit him in the face or ribs, as appropriate. A hammer-fist attack can also be of use here under some circumstances.

ATTACK # 12

The two-handed front choke, just as before.

BASIC DEFENSE #12

There is one more choke escape which I want to tell you about because it is very elegant and it also works quite well. It appeals to nonviolent types more than to the machos, but then again, "self-defense isn't just for jocks anymore."

The attacker has both hands on your neck choking you. Place your hands together in front of your chest in an attitude of prayer. Raise your hands to a point between his wrists. Bow forward slightly and place your chin between the tips of your fingers. As you continue to bow forward, slide your hands up along either side of the edge of your jaw, under your ears, until they meet again behind your neck. Bow low, turn to one side, and step away. You're free. (See Figure 22.)

I really ought to point out to inexperienced readers that you are very vulnerable to a knee in the face during the bow, so make it fast if you can. You can't bow faster than he can kick, but you can bow faster than he can think of kicking, which is just as good.

I offer no counterattacks to go with this escape, because it just wouldn't be in keeping with the humble spirit of the technique. One simply bows in deep respect and steps away. Of course one simultaneously makes the attacker look like a total fool, but there is no need

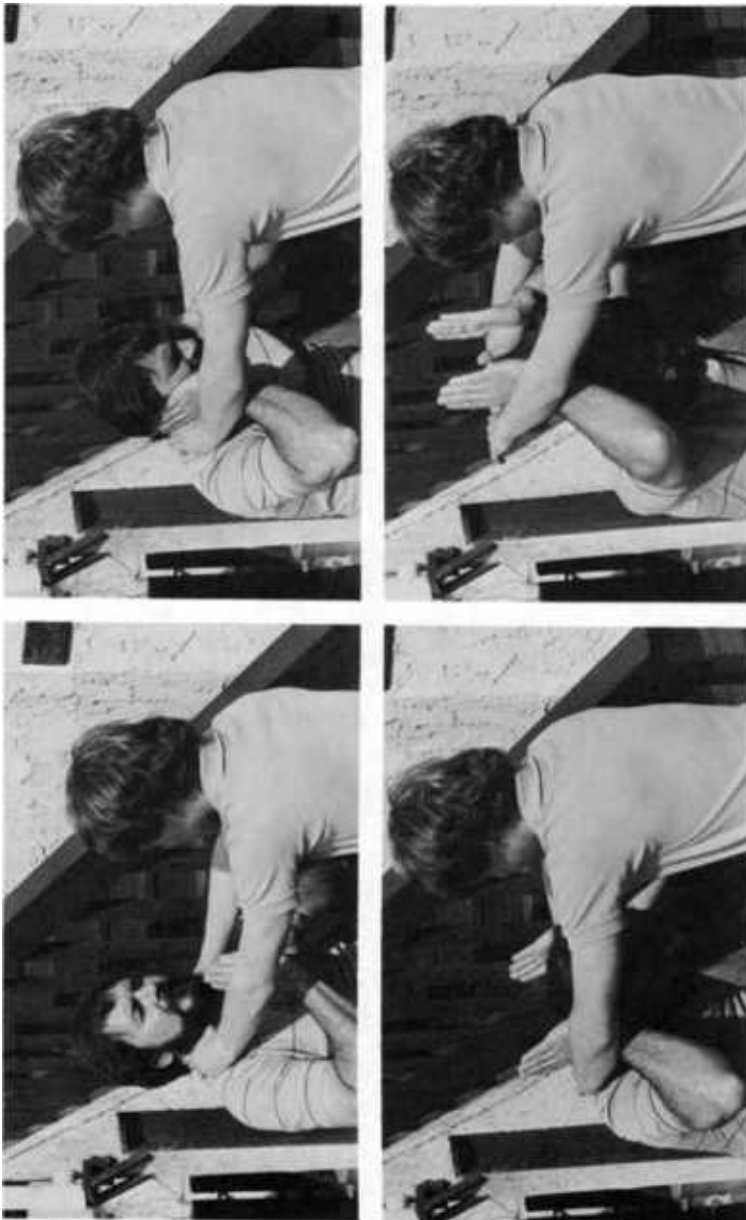
to be arrogant about it, is there?

ATTACK # 13

At this point we shift from front chokes to lapel grips. A lapel grip is that classic TV confrontation where the bad guy grabs you by the shirt front and snarls, "Smile when you say that." Okay, now you can smile and simultaneously make him wish he had never laid eyes on you.

BASIC DEFENSE #13

The following two counterattacks serve as their own basic defenses, but both require that you keep your cool and stay on guard to parry that ominous right fist the adversary is certainly shaking in your face. Also, when you see that he is reaching for your shirt, you must naturally and smoothly bring your hands up on either side of his wrist. If you do this as an immediate reaction he won't really notice it, but if you wait too long and then reach for his arm he'll know that something is up.



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Therefore, in this case your basic defense is simply to get your hands on the fist that is tearing your shirt.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #13

13-1: The attacker grasps your lapel with his left fist, thumb up, and threatens to punch you with his right fist. (You'll be able to feel the position of his fist with your hands. If the palm of his fist is facing up, not the thumb, use the next technique instead.)

Pass your left hand over the top of his fist, curling your fingers around the little-finger edge of his hand. Use your grip to twist his fist to your left (counterclockwise) so that the back of his fist is uppermost. Clamp his fist securely against your chest with your left hand, forcing his wrist to bend enough to get the heel of his fist pressed tightly against your chest. Turning slightly to the left, raise your right elbow over the attacker's arm and then smash it down against the back of his forearm just behind the wrist.

The leverage of this motion is so extreme that you may be able to snap the bones of his arm like a pair of matchsticks. Note that there is a scissoring motion implied here. The back of your upper arm and the lateral edge of your chest form the blades of the scissors. As you bring your elbow down his arm gets "cut" between them.

A milder application of this hold will bend the forearm bones, which is just as painful as it sounds. He'll drop instantly on his knees to relieve the pressure. At that point you can casually snap your right fist out in a reverse hammer blow to the face. Of course, the really appropriate thing to do is to force him to kneel and then say, "On your knees, dog, when you speak to your betters." (See Figure 23.)



Figure 23: When someone threatens you by grabbing the front of your shirt you can trap his fist and snap the bones in his forearm quite handily. If he makes any threatening moves with that upraised fist do a hammer-fist attack to his face instead.

At any point you may defend against a right-hand punch by blocking with the left hand, or, when the hold is applied by delivering a pre-emptive hammer strike to the face.

13-2: This technique is for those times when the attacker's grip on your collar leaves his fist with the palm up. In this case you can't establish the proper hold for technique 13-1, but never fear. There is an equally effective alternative.

Grasp his fist with both hands, curling you fingers around into his palm and putting you thumbs on the back of his hand near the middle knuckle. (Do you recognize the wristlock again?)

Take a step back to pull his arm out straight. Apply pressure against the wrist joint by bending his fist toward the inside of his forearm. He won't be able to maintain his grip on your shirt. To drop him on his back, pull his hand toward your hip as you twist his arm sharply to your right. To relieve the pain in his wrist and arm he'll obligingly flop right over on his back. If you are not feeling charitable, your next move is to wafflestomp his

face with the sole of your hiking boot. If you are feeling charitable, perhaps a kick in the ear would be sufficient.

4. ESCAPES FROM HEADLOCKS

A very common event in a barnyard-type fight is for one of the opponents to catch the other in some kind of headlock. You see this especially among kids and a few men who haven't learned anything about fighting since they were in grade school. It is also very prevalent on TV wrestling shows. Although headlocks look very effective to a novice, when one of these bovine bullies puts a headlock on a knowledgeable self-defense student he places his dignity, and his life itself, in deadly peril. It should go without saying that self-defense students are advised to avoid the use of headlocks under most circumstances. The only exceptions are those locks which result in instant unconsciousness or death, and therefore offer little opportunity for retaliation.

ATTACK # 14

Attack # 14 is a classic under-the-arm headlock, in which your opponent has clamped your head under his right arm. In this position you are both facing the same direction, your left ear is against his body and your left shoulder is against his right kidney. Notice that his left hand is free and may be used to strike you in the face. Both of your hands are free. The retaliatory potential of this situation is enormous. So is the danger.

BASIC DEFENSE *14

In this case the fundamental defense is extremely simple. The key is to immobilize his left arm so he can't hit you with it. After his left arm is neutralized you can take your time and pick one of several effective counterattacks.



Figure 24: A headlock is a common but ludicrous hold which puts the attacker at a severe disadvantage. First you have to pin the attacker's left arm to protect your face from punches. Then grab his private parts and pick him up by them! You can easily turn him upside down and drop him on his head with this technique. It doesn't take as much strength as you might think.

To immobilize the attacker's left arm, just reach around his back with your left arm and insert your hand between his chest and upper arm. Turn your palm outward and grasp his bicep just above the elbow. You'll find that he'll have a hard time breaking loose from this simple hold. While he is trying, he won't notice the beginning of your counterattack until too late.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #14

14-1: If the attacker has tried to punch you in the face use the basic defense described above to neutralize his left arm, otherwise use your left hand to reach up over his right shoulder and get your fingernails into his eyes. This will force his head up and back while simultaneously distracting him from all other thoughts other than getting his eyes away from your fingers.

Use your right hand to reach between his legs from behind and firmly grasp his genitals. (He will be having sudden second thoughts about the fight at this point.) Straighten up, lifting him by the genitals and driving his face backward and down with your left hand. His body will rock backwards over your left hip like a teeter-totter. All you have to do is raise his feet up high and then fall backwards to bring his skull into violent contact with the pavement.

If your left hand is busy immobilizing his arm just grab his genitals and forget about clawing at his eyes. It isn't as easy to throw him without a hand on his face but it can still be done. Try it and see. (See Figure 24.)

14-2: A variation of the above technique is to hook your right arm under his right knee, catching the leg in the crook of your elbow. (Do not grasp his leg with your hand!) If you straighten up he'll rock back across your left hip as before, and if you are fairly strong you will be able to lift him right up in the air (the leverage is tremendous). At this point you'll be holding him horizontally across your chest, belly up, with his feet about as high as his head. To bring the situation to a sudden and permanent end, kneel suddenly and let him drop across your bent left knee. Drop him so that your knee catches him just above the base of the spinebreaking his back. Even if his back isn't broken the whiplash of his fall will slam his head into the ground very forcefully. He might not survive it.

14-3: What if you just can't lift him? Some women and frail men are so convinced of their weakness that they just won't give a throw a decent try. I think it is important to give people alternative techniques they can believe in, even if the problem is really in their minds. Therefore, here is a throw which does not require any dramatic lifting.

Put the sole of your left foot against the back of the opponent's left heel. Claw at his eyes with your left hand and hook your right arm under his right knee as before. Use your attack on his eyes and your hold on his leg to encourage him to lose his balance to the rear. He'll try to recover by hopping back on his left leg, but your foot prevents this. He'll fall heavily to the rear.

14-4: It is possible that the opponent may release you as he falls. This is pretty common and it is to be hoped for. If not, you will almost certainly wind up on top and then have to continue the fight from the ground.

The preceding techniques tend to leave the attacker lying on his left side, with you poised over him on your hands and knees. We assume that he still has your neck encircled with his right arm. Otherwise you would have escaped by now.

To get free, grab his hair or gouge his eyes with your left hand, driving his head back and forcing him to arch his back. Once you have him distracted, grasp his right wrist with your right hand and start backing up with your knees, pulling your head and his arm back behind him to the point where your head slips free and you have him in an arm lock. This technique works well because you can use the strength of your legs and torso against his unassisted right arm. (See Figure 25.)

Note that if he holds his right hand with his left, you will not be able to pull his arm back until you gouge his eyes. If he is human he'll use his left hand to protect his eyes and you can proceed with the escape. Another little trick which can be useful here is a snappy knee kick into his kidney. A couple of these kicks will certainly give him second thoughts about

continuing to hold your head.



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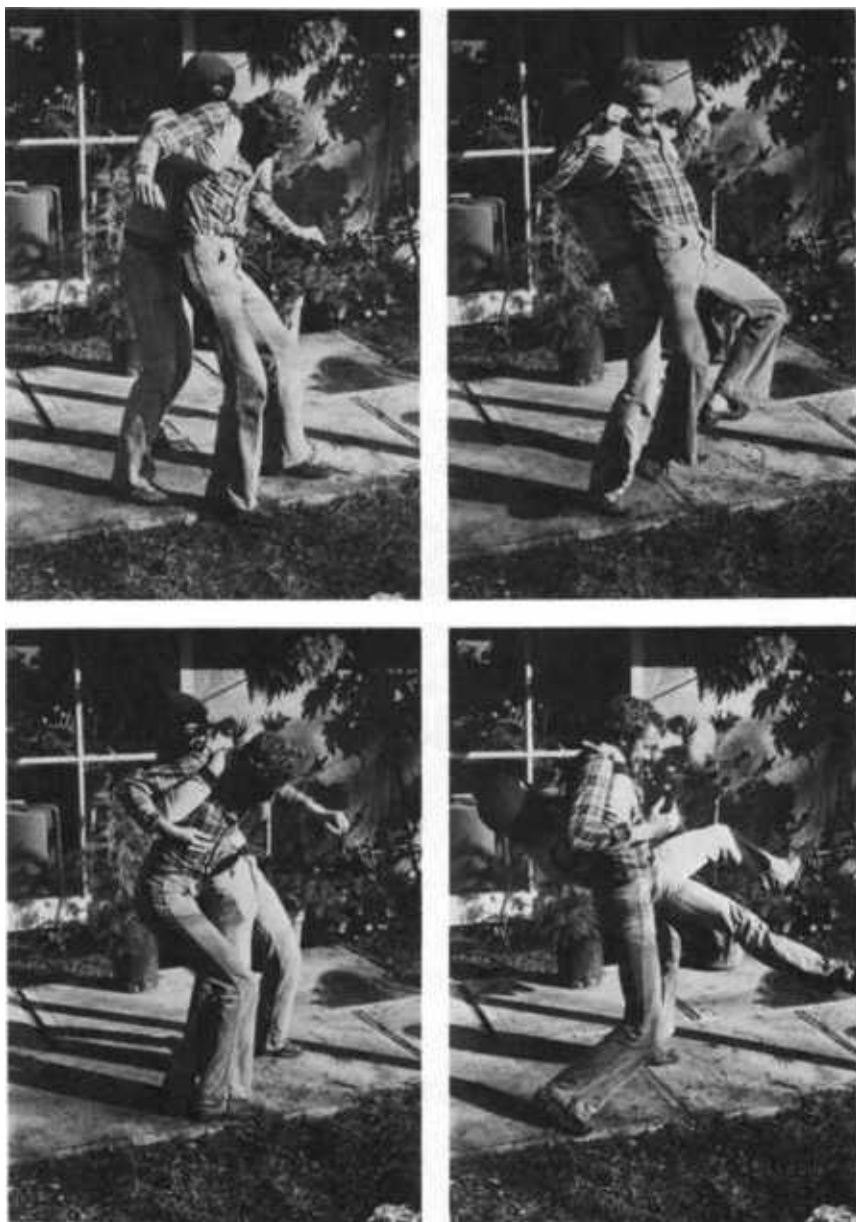


Figure 26: The standing full nelson is a common hold that is both dangerous and difficult to escape from. The escape begins by stomping on both of the attacker's insteps at once. Then step around to get your leg behind him and throw him on his back.

14-5: If you still can't get loose, or if you fouled up and the bad guy is on top after the throw, simply start using elbows, knees, teeth, fingers, and fists as viciously as you know how. This is supposed to be dirty fighting, not a wrestling match. No one will disqualify you for doing unmentionable things to the opponent's kidneys, solar plexus, groin, eyes, throat, and ribs. Force him to let go of your head just to defend himself. You will find that it is a very effective technique.

ATTACK # 15

The attacker has placed you in a full nelson hold from behind, and is using the strength of his arms and the weight of his body in an attempt to break your neck. In a full nelson hold the attacker stands behind you, slips his arms under yours, and then laces his fingers together behind your neck. In this position he can exert severe pressure against your cervical vertebrae. It is vital that you relieve this pressure immediately.

BASIC DEFENSE # 15

This situation is a little different from the others in this book in that the basic defense technique can only be applied after one of the counterattacks. In the previous techniques the basic defense has opened the way to a selection of responses. This time, however, the various responses all lead to the same ending position and final release.

A defense against a full nelson requires that you relieve the pressure on your neck. The only unfailing way to do this is to drop the attacker flat on his back and land on top of him. In this position he cannot exert maximum pressure against your neck because he can't use his weight against you.

At that point you can break the hold easily by reaching behind your neck and prying up one of his fingers. Bend it backwards until it snaps. He'll let go.

A word of caution. Don't try to reach for his fingers before dropping him on his back or you will make your situation worse instead of better. Reaching up behind your neck while still standing raises your elbows and lets him consolidate his hold. Remember: until you have him on his back you must keep your elbows pulled down tightly against your sides. It is the only thing you can do to interfere with his leverage against your neck.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #15

15-1: Try a back snap kick to the groin or a stomp on the instep to get his attention and distract him from pressing on your neck. A back snap kick consists of snapping your heel up behind you as if to hit yourself in the hip pocket, only you make sure that his groin is in the way. If you happen to hit his shin or kneecap instead, the distraction will still be sufficient to increase the probability of overall success.

Step back between his legs with your right foot. Throw your weight back into his left shoulder, and as his balance shifts to the left, use your right foot to hook his right leg and swing it forward and up as far as possible. Let your weight shift to the right and brace yourself for a jolt. He'll fall like a felled tree and you'll land on top. If you can, land hard. (See Figure 26.)

It may be that the shock of the fall will be sufficient to free you, in which case your momentum will naturally lead to a backward somersault out of the hold. If not, resort to the basic defense to break one of his fingers and force him to release you.

Please be cautious when practicing this technique. You could hospitalize your practice partner very easily by dropping on him too hard by mistake, and there is some potential for injury to your neck, too. Practice partners sometimes hang on tighter than real opponents because they know what is coming and can't be surprised. In this case it can be dangerous.

15-2: Keep your elbows clamped down tightly against your sides to keep him from getting too much leverage against your neck. Start the festivities by suddenly picking up both feet and stamping your heels hard on the tops of his feet just in front of the shins. He'll be stunned and immobilized. Leap to the right and swing your left leg around behind him. Plant your left foot behind and between his feet.



Figure 27: If the technique shown in Figure 26 doesn't quite get you free you may wind up in this unenviable position, on all fours with the neck hold still in place. To escape, clamp his right arm under yours and do a shoulder roll. With the attacker on the bottom you can reach back and break one of his fingers to get free. An elbow to the face is a good parting gesture.

You are now in a position in which you can rock the opponent backward across your left hip just by straightening up and shoving back with your left shoulder against his chest. To drop him on his back drive your hips forward into him as you smash your left elbow back into his face. He'll fall heavily, but you'll land on top. Use the basic defense to break the hold and roll away.

15-3: It is possible that you may find yourself subjected to a full nelson hold while on your hands and knees. For one thing, one of the previous two throws may go slightly wrong, ending with you on all fours and your opponent kneeling over you with the neck-breaking hold still intact. (For the sake of discussion, we'll assume that your opponent is kneeling on your left side.)

The basic idea is the same as before. You must get your opponent on his back before you can break the hold. To do this, lift your right hand and grasp his right forearm. Clamp his

arm tightly between your arm and chest. Now roll forward and to your right, tucking in your right shoulder. Your attacker will be irresistibly drawn over your back and rolled onto the floor. The ending position leaves him on his back with you on top. Wrench one of his fingers out of its socket and roll free. (See Figure 27.)

5. DEFENSE FROM THE GROUND

It is easy to imagine a situation in which you have been knocked off your feet but your opponent is still upright. It is therefore very important that you understand how to fight from the ground against a standing opponent, and especially important to know how and when to try to get up again. If you try to rise prematurely you'll get kicked in the ribs, teeth, or groin every time.

I think you'll find this section to be somewhat unusual. I have never seen the techniques of supine fighting against a standing attacker expressed in a book, and it may be that this is the only treatment of the subject in print. This is difficult to understand because these are among the most effective and reliable techniques in the self-defense field. They are devastating against even a highly trained fistfighter, and they leave a knifeman feeling helpless and distraught. Obviously this section is well worth your close attention.

ATTACK # 16

This could be one of several situations in which you have wound up on your back while a single opponent stands threateningly over you. Maybe you were knocked down, or maybe you dropped onto your back deliberately. The latter course would be wise if the attacker is brandishing a knife or club, or if he has shown signs of having significant skill with his fists.

BASIC DEFENSE #16

The first rule of fighting from the ground is never to get up while your opponent is capable of kicking or striking you. Curl up with your knees raised in front of your chest, your elbows tight in against your sides and your hands held above your chest in front of your face. Stay on your back, using your hands and elbows to pivot your body around on the base of your spine, keeping your feet directed toward the opponent.



Figure 28: Fighting from the ground can be very effective. Here the defender catches a would-be kicker in the knee ... a very painful and disruptive block. Notice that the defender is using his other foot to cover his groin in case the kick gets by.

You may find that you will have to use one of your feet now and then to assist in spinning your body around as the attacker desperately tries to outmaneuver you and get past the guard of your feet and legs. Just be sure that you keep at least one foot cocked and ready to kick at all times. Two is better.

This defensive position is nearly impregnable once you have given it a little practice. Nearly everyone can spin around on his back much faster than an attacker can run in a circle around him. This forces him to attack you over your legs, which are not only immensely strong but also partially armored. Think about trying to stick a knife blade through the sole of your shoe and you'll see what I mean.

Remember to keep your shins up high enough to block any attempted kick to your abdomen, but also low enough to protect your groin, too. It isn't hard to do this, but you do have to think about it. Your hands serve as a second line of defense ready to catch or deflect a kick or an object thrown at your head.

You can test the efficacy of this defense in practice by taking the position and then asking your partner to try to touch your head with his hand. Make a lively contest of it and you will soon see that no matter what direction he dodges you will be able to keep up with him. He will always find your ready feet between him and his goal.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION # 16

16-1: The most obvious counterattack is actually an integral part of the basic defense itself. Kick the bastard! Every time he comes close lash out with a foot and kick him in the knee, shin, groin, and even in the hands if he reaches out for you. Don't be hesitant about it. Kick fast and viciously, and don't stop until he is obviously hurt. As usual, the knees are the best target. (See Figure 28.)

16-2: You can carry the attack to the opponent by rising up crab-style on your palms and heels and scuttling toward him, lashing out with your feet at his shins. I know this doesn't sound like what your favorite TV hero would do, but when the bad guys aren't getting paid to fall down it's nice to have a tactic that is both effective and unusual. You'll be amazed to see how wildly your practice partner has to dance and scramble to keep out of your way. The effect on an actual attacker is to demoralize him very quickly and, incidentally, to make him look foolish in front of spectators. Bullies can't stand being laughed at.

16-3: If you don't actually injure him with one of your kicks (which you may well do) you will certainly enrage him to the point of recklessness. He'll try to jump you ... and he'll sing soprano for life.

You will have plenty of time. He'll brace himself, set his face in a mask of rage, give a big yell, take a running jump and come in at your face heels first. Don't worry, your hands can bat his feet far enough to the side to protect your head. Concentrate instead on positioning your foot in the path of his descending groin. Lock your knee and brace for the shock. He'll feel like he jumped out of the back of a pickup truck and accidentally straddled the top of a fence post on the way down. No matter, choirs need men with high voices.

If your opponent happens to be the reckless type who dives over your legs headfirst, you will have an opportunity to kill him with a kick to the throat. Failing that, your kick to the face, chest, collarbone, or abdomen will surely destroy his interest in continued combat.

16-4: A brighter than average opponent may try to kick you instead of attacking you with his hands. He may even try to kick your calf muscles to cramp them and cripple your defense. Your response to this tactic is to roll slightly to one side and use a side-thrust kick against his incoming shin.

This means that you wait until he cocks his legs for the kick, and then you intercept it by thrusting the outer edge of the sole of your shoe at his shin. Hold your foot horizontally to maximize your chances of intercepting his swinging leg. From his end it will feel like slamming his shin into the edge of a coffee table. One application of this block and he'll abruptly stop trying to kick you.

16-5: The next two techniques are takedowns, or throws, with which you can drop your opponent flat on the floor even though you are lying on your back and he is standing up. The throws work best if you have already succeeded in hurting him with a couple of shin

and knee kicks, but if executed skillfully they will bring even an uninjured opponent into sudden and violent contact with the floor.

Assume that your opponent turns his right side toward you as he approaches, presenting the outside of his right leg to you. Roll on to your right hip and hook the top of his right foot (at the point where it meets the shin) with the back of your right heel. Use the top of your left foot to kick hard into the back of his knee. This will fold his leg. Roll violently a complete turn to your right, maintaining your holds on his knee and ankle as you roll. The combined effect is to buckle his leg and bend his ankle up behind his thigh. He'll either fall flat on his face or he'll drop heavily on his kneecap, either of which would be a welcome development.

This throw is best performed in a single, snappy rolling motion which rolls up the opponent's leg and also propels him forward off balance into the fall. If he lands on his belly and you still have his leg under control, this identical hold can be used to subdue him. Use your right ankle to keep the pressure on, forcing his heel down toward the back of his thigh. Since your other foot is caught in the fold of his knee, this pressure produces a nutcracker effect where your left ankle is the nut. In this case, however, the nut is far harder and bonier than the cracker. He'll yell for mercy. (See Figure 29.)

Of course this technique, like many others in this book, can also be used on the other side of the body. If he presents you with the side of his left leg you can just roll to the left and proceed from there.

16-6: There is another throw which works even better than the last one. It is used when the opponent steps in directly toward you, not when he is facing to the side as before.

Assume that he has taken a step toward you with his left foot. Roll to the right and hook the top of your right foot around behind his left heel. Use your left foot to push firmly against his knee as you yank his heel toward you. This will drop him right on his butt with considerable force. He may not land on his back, but he'll be off his feet and badly shaken for several seconds.

Check back to technique 9-3 where this throw is performed using your hands instead of your feet.

16-7: Only after you have injured the attacker or dropped him on the ground can you attempt to get up again. This is essential. Unless you want him to go through the inconvenience of picking your teeth out of his shoelaces, you'd better hurt him enough to make him keep his distance before you rise.

When the time is right, turn your body so that your feet are pointed toward the attacker and then cautiously roll over on your hands and knees. Keep a weather eye out over your shoulder, and keep one foot cocked for a kick in case he tries to jump you. If the opponent does attack at this critical instant just lash out at his legs with your foot and roll over on your back again. Continue fighting on your back as before. Otherwise you may continue to rise. At this point I would strongly suggest a discreet retreat.

16-8: Another method of getting up is to half-face toward your wounded adversary as you sit up and carefully rise to your feet. Make sure that you are out of his reach, though. If he tries to rush you simply roll backward on to your back and fight as before.

ATTACK # 17

The techniques examined so far for fighting from the ground are not effective in two specific situations. The first is when you are fighting more than one person, and cannot possibly keep both at bay at the same time. The other situation is when your opponent is too close to kick, i.e., when he is sitting on your chest.



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Suppose you get knocked down in a fight with two opponents. You can keep your feet toward one of them but the other is perfectly free to circle around and attack from the side or rear.

BASIC DEFENSE *17

First of all, if you are fighting more than one opponent you must not fall. Once on the ground you will certainly be kicked into submission unless you can roll and immediately spring back on to your feet. This kind of tumbling becomes second nature to judo students (and to the better karate students) but self-defense people usually don't have the time or

the agility to spare on it. If possible, it is a skill well worth cultivating. Speed is your salvation in this situation.

If they close in on you too quickly for you to regain your feet, try to protect your vital organs by lying on your back. Clasp your hands behind your neck, tuck your head down, pull your knees up to your chin, and cross your ankles over your genitals. Rock your body around wildly as they kick you in an attempt to spoil their aim. An absolutely essential point is to yell and scream as if in great pain. Not only will this summon aid, but your attackers may decide that they have punished you enough and quit before actually injuring you seriously.

Obviously this is a last-ditch defense, only to be used in desperation. In this situation your chances of “winning” are minimal, and your application of self-defense concentrates mostly on limiting the amount of damage the attackers can do to you. If you get the chance, however, don’t hesitate to lash out with a foot and dislocate somebody’s knee. If you can work the odds down to one-on-one you can go on the offensive and emerge victorious.

ATTACK # 18

This is that familiar playground situation in which you have been knocked on your back and the attacker is trying to hold you down by sitting on your chest. Although this holddown is crude and unsophisticated, it is also very common. The utility of this hold-down in an attempted rape is too obvious to require comment.

For the purposes of discussion, we’ll assume that the attacker may be trying to choke you with his hands as well as simply hold you down. If he is choking you, your response must be immediate. On the other hand, if he is just trying to hold you down you may have additional time to get your wits together and launch a more coordinated counteroffensive.

BASIC DEFENSE #18

In this case the basic defense is extremely simple. There will be a moment, perhaps as much as two or three seconds, during which the attacker will be busy trying to grab your arms and get on top of you. You should have ample opportunity to cock your leg and reposition his nose back between his ears. The kick could as easily be directed into his ribs, abdomen, or groin, and don’t overlook a good solid stomp into the center of his thigh. In other words, the best defense is a pre-emptive kick wherever it will do the most good. Two or three of these will make him lose all interest in holding on to you.

If for some reason you can’t employ this defense (maybe you’re being tickled instead of raped) you’ll have to rely on one of the following escapes or counterattacks. But be advised. None of them works quite as well as that boot heel in the eye.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION # 18

18-1: You are lying flat on your back and the attacker is straddling your abdomen, possibly intent on rape (if your gender is appropriate, or even if it isn’t!). Draw your knees up until they touch his back, then dig in your heels, arch your back, and thrust yourself violently along the floor in the direction your head is pointing (out from under him). You may not make much progress on the first try so be ready to repeat the effort over and over as rapidly as you can. You’ll find with a little practice that you can scoot yourself along on

your back considerably faster than he can stump after you on his knees.

It will be an awkward contest, but at some point you'll get far enough ahead to get a foot free. At that point, without even a split second of hesitation, you must place the ball of your foot on his abdomen and viciously rip the sole of your shoe down his belly, between his legs, and out behind him. His heart and mind will follow.

18-2: This technique is a little less destructive than the last one. Pull your knees up as far as you can while keeping your feet flat on the floor. Plant your left foot firmly and let your right leg extend slightly. At the critical moment, use your left foot to heave your body off the ground, arching your back to lift and tilt the attacker forward. At the top of his rise slam your right thigh as hard as you can into his butt. It will also be helpful if you can strike him up under the armpits with your hands at the same instant.

The net effect is to catapult the opponent over your head (and slightly to your left). A naive, surprised enemy can find himself thrown a good eight or ten feet by this technique. I've seen it happen. Usually, though, you'll be doing well to knock him off at all. If you do succeed in spilling him to your left don't miss the opportunity to get in a kick or two. If you have time scramble to your feet and run.

18-3: The attacker is sitting on your chest choking you. Grasp the hair at the back of his head with your left hand (so that he cannot pull away). Then drive your right thumb into his left eye, pressing the thumb toward your left hand. He will try to pull his head away from the thumb. By pulling his hair to the left as your thumb explores his eye socket you can roll him off your chest. You'll find that this technique works even better if you use your thumbnail instead of the ball of your thumb.

18-4: Break the choke with a forearm wedge (basic defense # 10). It works almost as well when you are lying down as well as standing up. Then grab his head (hair, ears, neck, shoulders, collar, or lapels) and yank his face down as you tuck in your chin and drive your bony forehead up to meet him. Sure, you'll cut your forehead, but a couple of stitches will fix you right up. The guy on top, however, is going to have some difficulty adjusting to his missing teeth, cut lips, and broken nose. Smack him in the face again just for luck, being sure to take the blow in the center of your forehead, and if he hasn't gotten the idea by then stick your thumb in his eye and roll him off as described in the previous technique.

18-5: This one is very satisfying because of its stunning speed. The attacker is sitting on your chest and choking you with both hands. Cross your wrists in front of your face and break the hold by pushing his hands out sideways from your neck. This requires a pair of snappy palm-heel strikes against the inside of his wrists. Note that this is not a slapping motion, but a short, sharp thrust with the heel of the hand. Do it with conviction and his hands will rip off your neck with no difficulty.

At this point your neck is free and your arms are crossed above your chest. The opponent's face is about two feet away, but is descending in response to having his arms knocked out of position. Uncross your forearms suddenly in a scissoring motion (one forearm sliding along the other like a pair of scissors blades) until your fists come to a jarring halt on opposite sides of his neck. For added power make the strike by spreading your elbows apart rather than by lashing out with your hands.

This strike to the neck can be made even more damaging by using a double knife-hand strike (chop) instead of your fists. The fist strike jars the nerves of the neck (see Black Medicine Volume I) but the knife-hand attack also injures the organs of the throat. Envision the knife-edge of your right hand smearing the top half of the opponent's larynx to the right, while your left hand in a scissoring motion drives the bottom half of his larynx violently to the left. The resulting anatomical shearing of the fellow's windpipe and vocal cords is left as an exercise for the reader's imagination.



Figure 30: People tend to overlook the most obvious solutions to simple problems. Here no elaborate escape is necessary because the attacker's groin is within easy reach of the victim's fist!

If you take advantage of the coil-recoil motion implied here you can execute the whole technique, choke release and neck strike, in about half of one second. He'll never see it coming.

18-6: The attacker is sitting on your chest choking you as before, except that in the rictus of his frenzy he has hunched his shoulders and straightened his arms until the elbows locked. If you can see that his arms are held unnaturally straight, you can break the choke hold by clapping your hands sharply on the backs of his elbows. Hammer-fist blows work

even better.

18-7: This technique is especially elegant, simple, unexpected, and effective. Use a fist blow or a palm-heel attack to his groin. It's right there within reach and he's not thinking about defending it. One lightning blow will take his mind off worldly affairs for a long time. (See Figure 30.)

18-8: Since your legs are free, you might as well see if you can use them. If you are limber you can pick up your right foot and dent his skull with the back of your heel. Try it and experiment a little to see what you can do. Remember, he'll never see it coming.



Figure 31: Here's a simple way to mash a masher. Reach behind his head and yank his hair straight down. Then, if you really want to hurt him, use your other hand to hammer on his windpipe.

6. ESCAPES FROM AN UNFRIENDLY EMBRACE

The techniques in this section are especially appropriate for women since it is rare that a man falls victim to a masher or a rapist. Male self-defense students study these techniques so that they can teach them to their female friends, and also in case of a confrontation with a bear-hugging lumberjack who likes to hear vertebrae popping.

I am using the term embrace to indicate a far-from-tender encircling of your body by the opponent's arms, in this case exclusively from the front. (Rear embraces are handled differently in a later section.) The nature of this situation dictates that the attacker will grab you in one of two ways. He'll either reach over your arms and pin them to your sides, or he'll grab you around the waist and leave your arms free. In the odd case where only one arm is pinned suitable variations of "arms free" techniques will prove effective.

ATTACK # 19

The attacker embraces you from in front (belly to belly), leaving your arms free. This position could represent anything from a drunk trying to steal a kiss from a winsome lass to a carnival weightlifter trying to see how many of your ribs he can snap (because you tried to steal a kiss from his winsome lass ...).

BASIC DEFENSE #19

This may not seem like much of a basic defense, but the essential key in this situation is simply to keep your wits together. Consider-the idiot left your hands free. There's his head not more than a foot away and you have two free hands. The basic defense is to remember to use them.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #19

19-1: This is the point in my class where I like to underline the differences among karate, judo, and self-defense. Here you are locked in an unwelcome embrace. To escape, a karate student would break the attacker's pelvis with his knee and crack the man's skull with the edge of his hand. A judo student would twist to the side and throw the attacker on the floor, possibly dislocating the man's shoulder or elbow for good measure. But what would a self-defense student do to get loose? What kind of devastatingly effective technique can a poorly trained, out-of-shape self-defense student use to break free from this hold?

Simple. Take your index finger and ram it up his nose. If he doesn't let you go, curl your finger into a hook and yank it out again. He'll let go, all right.

19-2: An option which is far more destructive is to clap your palms smartly over his ears, breaking his eardrums. This must be a very sudden, very forceful double blow which cups the palms directly over the openings of the ear canals. The pain inflicted is so severe that the attacker may actually pass out right before your very eyes. Be aware that you are doing irreparable damage to his ears, so it wouldn't be a tactic to use in fun. Also, it is possible to cause a concussion if your hands meet his head with sufficient force. It isn't much more than a hearty slap, but hitting both sides of the brain case at the same instant puts the blows in opposition to one another and magnifies the effective impact.

19-3: Attack the opponent's eyes. Stick your thumbs in them. Claw at them with your fingernails. Spit in his eyes. Slap your open palms hard over his eyes. Pound on them with your fists. Just remember, it will be sufficient to force him to release his grip in order to protect his eyes. Blinding a man by popping his eyeball with your thumb is an act reserved for times of the greatest desperation.

19-4: If you would like to assault his face with a few really powerful, clublike blows bring your elbows into play. Snap the front of your bony right elbow across his face (from your right to left), and then smack him with the back of the same elbow on the return trip. Alternate with the left elbow. The odds are that he'll drop you after the first blow when he finds his teeth rattling around inside his mouth like dice in a cup.

19-5: The following technique comes in two flavors, hard and soft. Reach around behind the opponent's head and grasp the hair at the back of his head with your left hand. Yank his hair straight down. This will rock his face back and put his chin in a vulnerable protruding position.

For the soft version, place your right palm under his chin and start to push his head backwards. You will find that your finger tips just about reach his eyes when the heel of your palm is braced under his chin, so why not poke around a little and give him something more to think about? He'll find it a painful and embarrassing position to maintain, and will release you fairly quickly. If he doesn't, use your knee.

The hard version of the technique is to use a powerful palm-heel strike up under his chin, knocking him out and possibly breaking his neck. If you need to kill him (some of my readers are military men) you can just use a right hammerfist blow to the Adam's apple. It is splendidly exposed when the opponent's head is rotated back like this. (See Figure 3 1.)

19-6: This one really only works for women. The more macho among us won't even try it.

Throw your arms around the attacker's neck and hug him, pulling yourself up into a cheek-to-cheek position as if in a passionate embrace. (No amorous drunk will suspect that anything is wrong, and the tactic might even lull a would-be rapist momentarily.)

Then suddenly lock your teeth into his ear, lift your feet off the ground, and let go with your arms. You'll drop about two feet and land on your knees, but in the meantime your entire weight will be suspended from the big fellow's dainty little ear. Be ready to block his fists when he lets go of you. He's going to be pretty mad.

You can see why male students are reluctant to try this technique. A man just feels inhibited about giving a passionate embrace and ear nibble to some 260-pound lumberjack who is squeezing the life out of him. But look at it this way, gentlemen. What would happen if you were to give that hulking lumberjack a big wet kiss? Would he release you? You bet he would!

ATTACK #20

In situation #19 the key to a successful defense was to remember that your hands were free. In this case your hands are pinned, a development which makes most people feel perfectly helpless. You must fight that helpless feeling by reminding yourself that, hands or no hands, your feet are still free. Your knees are free. Your head itself is available as a weapon. And last but not least, those pinned hands are only inches away from the

attacker's groin. Remembering these points will be the difference between success and failure when your arms are pinned to your sides.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #20

20-1: Use your legs to throw your body weight from side to side, working your hips backward slightly with each lurch. Soon you will have opened up a wide enough gap to get your palms braced against his hipbones. Lurch and shove until an eighteen-inch gap develops between your pelvis and his. That's when you suddenly dig in with your fingers and yank his hips toward you into your rising knee. For added power, push outward against his hips sharply and watch for his natural reaction to oppose your thrust. As soon as he pushes his hips forward you yank them in toward your knee. This kind of thing is what people mean by the phrase "using the opponent's strength against him."

20-2: Another alternative is to use your head. Tuck your chin down against your chest and rap his face with the top of your forehead. You won't have to hit him very hard to hurt him. While he is concentrating on avoiding getting hit in the teeth, you can pick up one of your feet and stomp heavily on his instep, kneecap, or shin.



Figure 32: "A bird in the hand ..."

20-3: There you are, caught in an unfriendly embrace with your hands pinned only inches from his groin. Does that give you any ideas?

One possibility is to make a fist, lock your arm rigidly, bend your knees suddenly, and ram your fist into his groin as your body drops. This groin punch is one of the fastest karate attacks of all due to the extremely short distance your fist has to travel to reach the target. My punch in this situation was once electronically timed at 0.04 second, start to finish. This is five times faster than a normal person can even begin to react.

20-4: Another idea would be to reach in there and grab a fistful of the fellow's most precious possessions. Don't apply any pressure, just get a good snug grip on them. Then look him in the eye and see if he gets the message. He'd have to be pretty stupid not to. (See Figure 32.)

20-5: A variation which works for the ladies is to reach into the fellow's groin and fondle him. (This is a little like putting an alligator to sleep by rubbing his stomach!) He may decide that he's made a lucky catch, until you sort things out, catch a testicle between your thumb and forefinger, and squash it like a ripe grape. Duck and shield your face at the same time. Don't worry about him getting up and running after you. He won't.

7. ATTACKS FROM THE REAR

The coward's standard stock in trade is the surprise attack from behind the victim. Although a blow on the back of the skull gives you little opportunity for retaliation, many muggings begin with a sudden choke, strangle hold, or embrace from the rear instead. If such is the case you can make the mugger wish he had chosen a less hazardous profession.

But the attack from behind is not limited to muggings. Barroom brawls occasionally involve one combatant choking the other from the rear. In the movies, and too often in real life, one thug pins a victim's arms from behind while an accomplice beats him. In all of these situations the ability to speedily dispatch a person who has attacked you from behind could be crucial to your survival.

ATTACK #21

The attacker embraces you from behind, encircling your waist with his arms but leaving your arms free.

BASIC DEFENSE #21

In this position the attacker's arms are fully employed in holding you, and his legs have to be strongly braced to prevent you from pulling him around or overbalancing him. You, on the other hand, have complete freedom of movement with your head, arms, and legs. You can't walk away, it's true, and it is difficult for you to turn around to face your attacker, but otherwise you can do anything. The only portions of the opponent's anatomy that are out of your reach are his back and his groin. His face, hands, legs, and feet are extremely vulnerable.



Figure 33: The rear bear hug is easy to deal with. In this sequence the defender performs a basic leg lift on the attacker, and then zeroes in for a crushing stomp to the testicles.

The key defensive principle to remember is that the attacker has immobilized himself by grabbing you this way. There is little that he can do to hurt you without releasing you first. That means you have some time to think before acting. It also means that a second attacker approaching you from the front is by far the more dangerous of the two. Deal with him first.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #21

21-1: The classic trick to pull on someone who is holding you around the waist from behind is to step back and bump into the attacker, knocking him slightly off balance, and then bend sharply at the waist to reach back between your legs and grab one of his ankles with both hands. Straighten up using the strength of your back to yank his foot right up to eye level. (You wind up straddling his leg almost as if you were sitting on his thigh.) (See Figure 33.)

A typical attacker will fall flat on his back as his foot rises above waist level. If you happen to get a limber one, just pick up your feet and let him try to balance both your

weight and his own on one foot. (If he can do it, give up!)

Usually the attacker will let go of your waist as he starts to fall, leaving you standing there holding his foot. The fellow's hips land on the ground just behind your feet. For that little something extra, use your heel to stomp backwards into the opponent's groin.

21-2: If you attempt the preceding technique but the attacker does not let go of you as he starts to fall, throw yourself back on top of him so that you land (sit) heavily on his chest or abdomen. He'll wind up with ruptured internal organs or a crushed chest, so don't do this for fun.

If you happen to miss him with your butt (as happens occasionally) immediately shift to a flurry of blows using your elbows, heels, and anything else that becomes available. He'll have to release you to protect himself.

Notice that even in the case of fighting two attackers this technique is still valuable. By throwing yourself backwards to squash the rear assailant you simultaneously drop out of reach of the attacker in front of you. At that point it is best to shift to the techniques described previously for fighting from the ground. Just be sure that you don't bend over to grab one attacker's ankle while the second attacker is within kicking range of your face.

21-3: This technique is similar to 14-2. Take a forceful sudden step out to the right and in the same motion step around behind the attacker with your left foot. Properly executed this move will leave you standing to the right rear of the opponent, with the front of your left hip against his buttocks. Bend forward from the waist and scoop up his knees with your hands.

Straighten your back, lifting his knees straight up. His body will rock back over your left hip and balance there like a teeter-totter. You will find that you can turn him completely upside-down and hold him that way with very little strength or effort. Needless to say, even if you stop here you will have gravely discomfited your opponent.

If embarrassing the opponent is not sufficient to meet the demands of the situation (there might be another attacker to deal with) just bend your knees and fall back as you yank his knees upward. You'll whiplash the back of his skull into the pavement.

21-4: This one is a short, sharp technique for people who don't like the idea of falling on the ground. Look down at your waist where the attacker's hands meet. Grasp his right wrist with your right hand. Using the heel of your left palm, force one of his right finger tips away from you, opposite to its natural direction of bending. You can make this a slow bend, giving him time to let go of you and save his finger, or you can just snap the finger back and break it like a green bean. Either way it will break his hold on your waist.

An appropriate optional finish would be to turn slightly to one side and stomp the sole of your foot back against his knee.

21-5: This is one of the simplest and most effective selfdefense techniques, but surprisingly few students discover it spontaneously.



Figure 34: An even simpler solution to the rear bear hug is the classic elbow blow to the jaw. This technique is very simple, very powerful and very effective.

When someone grabs you around the waist from behind (leaving your arms free) all you have to do is twist your body about 90 degrees and smack him in the face with the back of your elbow. If the attacker is too tall to reach with your elbow, use a hammer-fist blow instead. He won't be able to stand up to your blows for long, but in order to escape or retaliate he first must release you, and that was the basic idea anyway. (See Figure 34.)

ATTACK #22

The attacker embraces you from behind, pinning your arms to your sides. This situation is fundamentally similar to attack #21 but your freedom of movement with your hands is greatly diminished.

BASIC DEFENSE #22

This time the attacker has again immobilized himself by using both arms to hold you while bracing for a struggle with both legs. Your legs are still free, but your hands are trapped at your sides.

What can you do in this position?

The key thing to remember is that you are not helpless. For one thing, there are your hands only inches from his groin. The fact that you can also attack his face, legs, and feet seems almost superfluous in comparison. If the idiot wants to pin your hands between his legs, you might as well go ahead and give him what he deserves.

The basic defense in this case is to shift your hips rapidly from side to side, striving to work your hands back behind you into striking position. From this position there are several devastating options.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #22

22-1: Shift your hips to one side, then strike straight back into his groin with a hammer-fist blow. If he blocks the attack by turning his hip in to catch your fist, just shift to the other side. His retreat from your right fist will set him up perfectly for an attack by your left fist.

22-2: Shift your hips to the side. Reach back with one hand and grasp his genitals in your fist. He will probably let go instantly. If not, lock your arm as straight as a ramrod and throw your feet out from under you. Let your weight rip his private parts down to his ankles. (See Figure 35.)

In actual practice it is impossible to maintain a grip tight enough to tear the opponent asunder, but there is a striking “window shade” effect which is sure to get his attention. His genitals stretch down as far as they will go and then pull free of your grip-to snap back into place like a windowshade rolling up. It feels just as sickening as it sounds.

22-3: Here’s a variation for those of you who just couldn’t bring themselves to perform the previous two techniques. (Teen-age girls sometimes refuse to even pretend to perform the windowshade trick.) Snap your head backward, striking him in the face (nose, lips, and teeth) with the back of your skull. Stomp on his feet and kick back into his knees and shins to distract him with pain. Shift your hips to the side, then drive your elbow straight back into his solar plexus. Mix and match these attacks repetitively until the attacker’s grip on you loosens.

As a parting gesture turn around to face him, grab him by the hips and knee him convincingly in the groin.

ATTACK #23

The attacker chokes you with his hands from the rear. Note that this choke is performed with the fingers only, since the attacker’s palms and thumbs are appressed to the sides and back of your neck.

DEFENSE AND COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #23

23-1: Most self-defense teachers do not cover this attack at all. The few who do tend to rely on the following classic technique. Their confidence is well justified, since there are few other alternatives which a typical self-defense student can work as well.

Reach up to your throat and find the attacker’s fingers. Pry and gouge at them until you can get a good grip on one (and only one) finger. The little finger or ring finger is usually

the best choice, but take what you can get. (Don't use his thumb.) Snap the finger sideways to break the hold (and the finger).



Figure 35: When your arms have been pinned from the rear there are still a few things you can do to ruin the attacker's day. This, the "window shade trick," is one of the best.

Do not release his finger. Your firm grip on that dislocated finger will do more to control your assailant than a whole squad of police could do. If you like, you can finish with a kick to the knee or groin before releasing him.

23-2: Another way to break this hold is to bend sharply forward at the waist and turn around to face the attacker, ducking your head under his arm as you turn. Straighten up and finish with a palm-heel strike to the chin, or you can stand up with a forearm wedge technique and counterattack (see basic defense *10).

23-3: Probably the simplest release from this situation, if you are up to it, is to bend forward from the waist and launch a back-kick into the attacker's groin, abdomen or chest. The back-kick might be best described to a layman as a "donkey-kick," in which you lift your knee up to your chest, bend forward, and stomp straight back (horizontally) against the opponent's body. Most men will let go of your neck instantly to avoid a repetition.

23-4: There is another response to this attack which I suggest only to more advanced students, and especially to karate-trained individuals.

Sit down suddenly just behind your heels and roll backward on to your back. As you go down reach up and grasp the attacker's wrists as they twist free from your neck.

He will bend forward in an automatic attempt to follow you down. This leaves you on your back with your head roughly between the attacker's feet. To effect the counterattack, pull down on the attacker's arms while driving the soles of both your feet smartly up under his chin. Properly executed this blow is extremely vicious, and can easily break his neck.

I recommend this technique only to more advanced self-defense students because the roll back and kick must be performed very quickly, with no false moves or wasted motion. Otherwise the frustrated opponent will surely realize that he can stomp on your face, and he will do so. Your defense against this is speed, a commodity which beginners tend to lack.

23-5: Here's an especially effective technique which many people adopt as a favorite. The opponent has grasped your neck from behind as before. Lift your left arm up high as you forcefully turn to your left to face the attacker. Your arm will sweep across over his arms, tearing his hands from your neck. Drop your arm down tightly against your left side to trap his wrists under your armpit. This leaves you with one fist free while he has both wrists trapped. It will take him a moment to get his wits together, so use that right hammer fist quickly in a strike to the temple, side of the neck, or collarbone. (See Figure 36.)

ATTACK #24

The attacker encircles your throat with his right arm, strangling you from behind. This attack is similar to the two chokes described in sections 8-2 and 8-3.

BASIC DEFENSE #24

When you feel someone's arm snaking around your neck from behind, your basic defense is to hunch your shoulders and tuck in your chin. Try to turn your chin into the fold of the opponent's elbow and burrow it in deep. In this way you can keep some of the pressure off your throat. This gives you a little time to think as well as a minor degree of relief from the pain of the attack.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #24

24-1: Grasp his forearm near the elbow with your left hand, and grasp his upper arm near the shoulder with your right hand. Bend sharply at the waist as if to touch your head to your knees, and your opponent will sail right over your head and land on his back. Nine times out of ten he'll release your neck and use his hands to try to break his fall. The tenth guy will give your neck a pretty severe twist as he goes over.

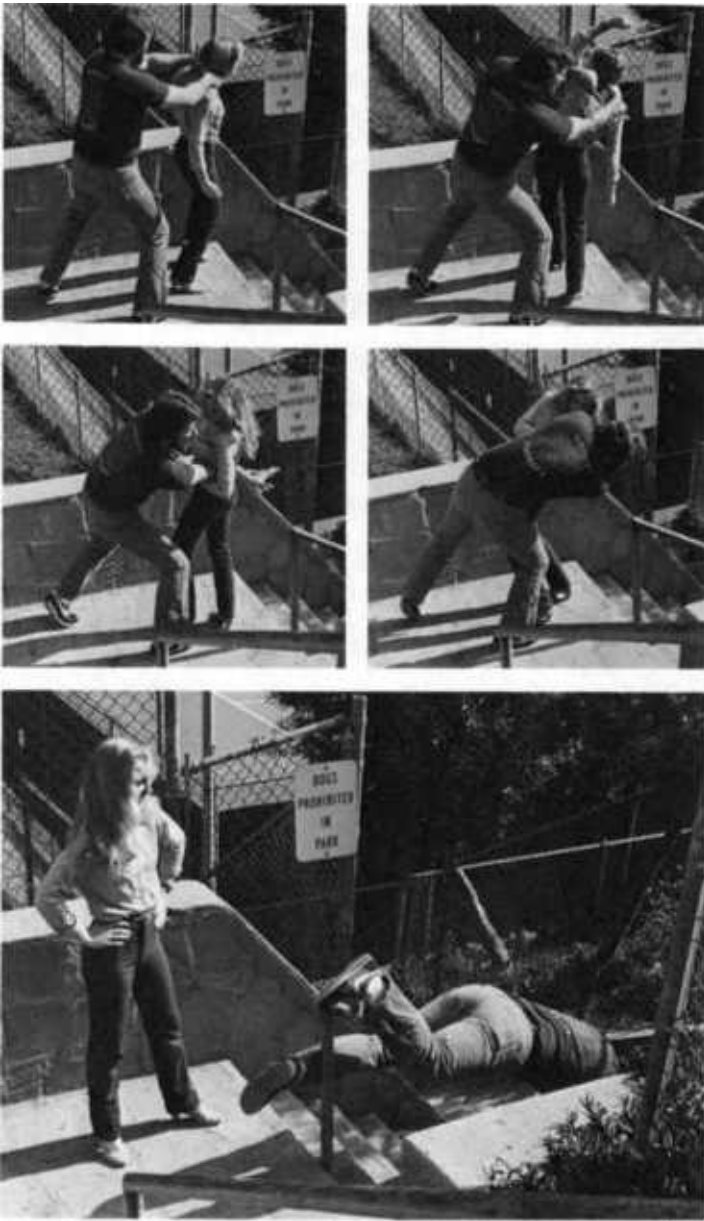


Figure 36: When you are being choked from behind, this simple windmilling spin effectively and reliably turns the tables on the attacker. Of course, a handy stairwell helps.



Figure 37: The simplest solution to the strangle hold is a fivefingered stab at the eyes ... which are usually within easy reach.

A word of caution. Most practice partners you may encounter will gracefully perform a somersault when you use this throw on them, but a few awkward people will just dive straight into the ground headfirst. I nearly killed a student this way one time and the experience has made me very cautious. Usually I refrain from teaching this trick except in the case of the occasional student who is athletically inclined.

24-2: If his body is held straight and stiff so you can't throw him, use a hammer-fist blow to the groin, an elbow into the ribs, and/or a stomp on the foot to loosen him up a little. As soon as he is hurt or distracted, try the throw again.

24-3: Spread and stiffen the fingers of both hands and suddenly stab backwards over both shoulders in search of an unsuspecting eye. In practice just reach back gently and feel for your partner's face. Get used to the idea that you can reach his eyes with your fingers from this position. (See Figure 37.)

ATTACK #25

One of the most familiar attacks from the rear is the hammer lock. In this classic attack the

opponent bends your right arm up behind your back until you writhe in pain. Usually he will grip your arm at the wrist with his right hand. His left hand will either grip your arm, your shoulder or possibly your neck.

BASIC DEFENSE #25

When your right arm is in a hammer lock the basic defense is to bend forward at the waist and twist to your left in an attempt to straighten out your captured arm. By bowing and twisting in this manner you relieve most of the pain. Then you can decide what to do next.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #25

25-1: Use the basic defense to relieve pressure on your arm. After bending forward and twisting to the left, look back at your opponent and use your left leg to stomp at his knee, groin, or abdomen. To magnify the effect, use your captured right hand to grab the opponent's arm as you lean forward. This way you can actually pull him into the kick, and keep him from escaping while you wind up for another kick ... and another ... and another

25-2: Twist sharply to your left until your left shoulder is toward the opponent. As a part of the same motion, use your left hand to deliver a hammer-fist or knife-hand attack to the enemy's temple or neck. Let your arm trail behind your swinging shoulder like a ball on a chain for added power. (See Figure 38.)

25-3: If the attacker uses his left hand to hold your collar or hair so that you cannot bend forward away from him, try twisting to the left and striking the back of his left elbow with the thumb side of your left fist (a ridgehand attack). Another possibility would be to use a hammerfist or knife-hand attack against his left ribs. The principle is much the same.

25-4: One of the worst possibilities is that the attacker may encircle your neck with his left arm while pressing the hammer lock with his right hand. In this case you will not be able to bow or twist at all. Your only option is to use your feet and your free arm creatively to force him to let you go.

This will be a battle of endurance, since the pressure on your right arm will immediately increase as soon as you try to resist. You must succeed instantly in injuring and distracting him or you will sincerely regret the attempt.

My suggestion is to start with a left hammer fist back into the opponent's groin, followed immediately by a couple of bone-shattering stamps to the instep of the foot. If you are successful he'll release your neck and step back away from you, but he'll probably try to maintain the hammer lock. At that point you should bow, twist and kick as described in technique 24-1.



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8. DEFENDING AGAINST KNIVES & CLUBS

The subject of weapon defenses is probably the single most controversial topic in the self-defense field. I cringe at some of the published self-defense guides which show how “easy” it is to disarm a knifeman. I can only conclude that the authors just haven’t had very much experience sparring with knife duelists. Otherwise they would not be so overconfident on behalf of their readers.

It is essential for a self-defense student to be aware of his own limitations when facing a man who is armed with a knife or club. A stiletto in the hand is easily worth five years of karate training, a fact which scores of karate students have given their lives to prove. I do show my self-defense students how to disarm a knife or club fighter, but I only present these techniques to prove that most people cannot make them work. In my experience a self-defense student has about one chance in twenty of defeating such a person without getting killed in the process. When confronting a weapon the only safe course is to escalate, to produce a more powerful weapon. I prefer a .45 automatic!

There is another dangerous misconception about disarming techniques which is almost never mentioned in selfdefense books. This is the fact that military hand-to-hand combat manuals sometimes show techniques which just don’t work, apparently in an attempt to raise the morale of bootcamp trainees. This is a psychological effort to convince disarmed soldiers to keep fighting in spite of the odds-an admirable quality in an army but stupid in the street. Don’t be taken in. Read those military manuals with more than a little skepticism. You must never use real weapons in practice! Use rubber knives and plastic baseball bats-never the real thing. It’s far too easy to kill your practice partner otherwise.

ATTACK #26

The attacker holds the knife point down like an icepick with the sharp edge facing inward toward himself. He then raises the knife over his head and stabs downward toward your chest. This attack is the classic way in which an ignorant person handles a knife. It usually, but not always, implies that the attacker is naive and may fall for one of the simpler defensive techniques. It may also mean that the attacker is sophisticated and is trying to deceive you. It’s a dangerous business.

The following discussion will also apply to situations where the attacker is swinging a short club down at your head. In general the defensive moves are about the same, but there are differences which will be noted where appropriate.

BASIC DEFENSE #26

Starting with either foot, and making the first step in any appropriate direction, run for your life! Unless there is some vital circumstance which prevents flight the best defensive tactic is to run away. Knives and clubs are terrible weapons which most people do not respect sufficiently. A knifeman can kill you every bit as dead as a gunman and almost as quickly. Don’t be a fool. Live to fight another day.

Now that the sensible advice is out of the way we’ll get down to the terrifying possibility

that you cannot flee. Your pregnant wife is with you. She's holding your two-year-old daughter in her arms. Your aged mother is cowering behind you. Flight is out of the question. You must stand your ground and protect them. Now what do you do?

First you utter a silent prayer that your wife will have the sense to help you and not just stand there shrieking hysterically like they do in the movies. If she just throws a bag of dirty diapers in the attacker's face or starts whipping him over the head with her coat you will have a good chance of coming out of this alive. One outrageous tactic is to throw the baby in the attacker's arms. I know that there isn't a mother in the world who could actually do it, but think of the look on the knifer's face!

The basic defense when meeting this attack is to step backward and to your left with your right foot in an attempt to pivot your body out of the path of the descending blade. That way you may survive even if you fail to block or parry the weapon. We'll examine three counterattacks from this posture.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #26

26-1: First I want to describe the classic response to this attack as taught in many military manuals. As the attacker steps in to stab, perform the basic defense by taking a long step back and to the left with your right foot. Use an "X" up-block to catch his forearm and block the attack. An "X" block consists of crossing your right wrist over your left wrist, palms down, and raising your arms over your head to meet the attacker's descending forearm (not the knife!). If all goes well you will trap the attacker's wrist in the top of the "X" between your wrists. (If all does not go well you get the point of the knife stuck in the top of your skull.)

Assuming that you have been successful with the block, the next step is to grasp his forearm with your right hand and pull it down past your hip, twisting his arm to bring the back of the elbow up as you do so. With a little experimentation you will find that this is a simple, natural, and powerful motion. Finish by using a left hammerfist attack to the back of his elbow to dislocate the joint and force him to drop the knife.

I have a couple of comments about this technique. The first is that you should only attempt it against a total fool who happens to be both drunk and blind. Most self-defense students can't make a strong enough "X" block to stop the downward plunge of the knife anyway, and even if they could the block leaves them wide open for a disembowling stroke if the first attack was a fake.



Figure 39: Here are two examples of how not to use the “X” upblock. No matter what the military manuals say, knives and clubs come right through it!

On the other hand when the “X” block is properly executed it is extremely effective. I can speak from bitter experience. One time I was playing the part of the attacker when a very serious student really let me have it with an “X” block. There was a loud snap, the knife dropped to the floor, and we all looked with amazement at the new bend that had appeared in my arm. Incidentally, we were both wearing protective padding on our arms at the time, the kind some people now use for full contact karate practice. The only effect of the padding was to lead us into using dangerous amounts of force during practice.

If you try this technique against a club you’ll discover a very disconcerting fact. When you use the “X” block to stop the attacker’s downward swing, his forearm stops but his wrist just bends and the club comes right on down to rap you on the head. This effect is almost guaranteed to occur whether the attacker intends to do it or not. I know this from repeated experiences with practice partners who didn’t really intend to hit me, but did. Don’t be taken in by self-defense books which confidently suggest using the “X” block against a club. (See Figure 39.)

26-2: For those of you who like flashy knife defenses that don’t necessarily work, there is

a variation on technique 26-1 which will amuse you. Perform the basic defense, block, grab and pull as described above. Then, instead of using the hammer-fist attack on his elbow, turn to your right and pass your left arm over his upper arm. Grasp his wrist with both hands as you trap his upper arm under your armpit (effecting a straight arm lock). In this position you can put pressure on his shoulder and elbow by levering his wrist upward. Hold his wrist up high, throw your feet out from under you, and hang your whole weight on his shoulder to smack his head into the pavement. (Notice the similarity to technique 11-3.)

This is a very dramatic finish which seems “to serve him right,” but don’t get too attached to it. Remember that in order to get this far you first have to work the minor miracle of catching his arm during the initial attack. Otherwise it will be you on the pavement. Good luck.

26-3: The response I favor in this situation isn’t very dramatic but it has the virtue of working pretty well. As the attacker steps in with knife upraised, perform the basic defense to get your body out of the path of the blade. Use your left hand to slap-block the attacker’s arm (not the knife) to your right, which simply knocks the knife (or club) a little farther away as it passes.

In the split second before he can recover his wits and launch a second attack he will be vulnerable. Be alive to any chance to stomp on the attacker’s right knee with your left foot at this time. Your relative positions won’t always work out correctly for this kick, but if circumstances permit all you have to do is rock back on your right foot, lift your left leg, and stomp down to rip apart the ligaments that hold his knee joint together. Then you can walk away as slowly as you like.

If this approach doesn’t seem to fit the situation shift into the general defense advocated later in this chapter.

26-4: There is a fun variation of the previous technique with which more advanced students like to experiment. As the knife or club attack comes in toward your upper body, sidestep and slap the attacker’s wrist to the right as before. This time, however, use your hand to grab his wrist and ride it down. By adding your downward force to his own, you can encourage the attacker to stab himself in the groin or thigh. If he is using a club he winds up whacking his knee. Either way he deserves it. This trick requires timing and confidence on the part of the defender, but beyond that it is not especially difficult to perform. (See Figure 40.)

ATTACK #27

During a knife holdup, the attacker holds the knife in his right hand with the point at your throat. He grips the knife like a fencing foil, and seems to delight in shoving it in your face to see you flinch. This kind of behavior is fairly common among teen-aged terrors whose confidence in their own manhood is not very great. Alternately, you can sometimes provoke a more cautious robber into this kind of behavior by judicious insults. Of course, that can also get you killed.



Figure 40: If you have good timing and a lot of nerve you can convert an overhand knife attack into a devastating surprise for the attacker. This is one of the techniques which works better in real life than in practice because of the power which a real assailant puts into the attack.

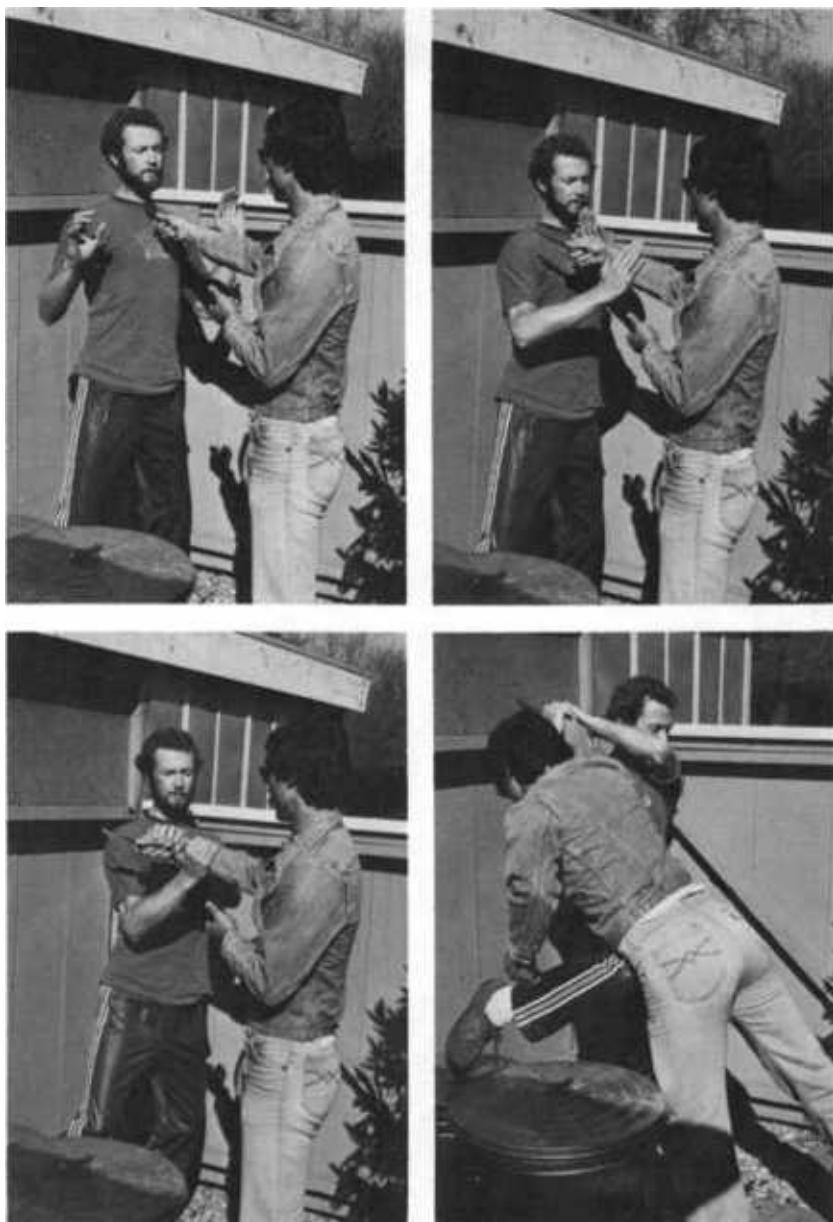


Figure 41: One of the few knife defenses which really work is this response to a hold up. The slapping motion shown in the second photo usually breaks the attacker's grip and sends the knife spinning to the ground, but if not there is always the knee.

BASIC DEFENSE #27

The basic defense in this situation is to raise your hands in the classic "hands up" posture, but hold them no higher than your head. Now take a look at the attacker's hand. If he is holding the knife so that the point almost touches your throat or face you have a respectable chance of disarming him without getting hurt. If he's holding the knife farther away the odds are against you.

The following technique is best applied when the attacker's attention has been distracted a little, but in many cases even average students can perform the trick faster than the opponent can react, distraction or not. Bring your hands together hard in a clapping motion, catching the back of his fist with the palm of your left hand and striking the inside of his wrist with the palm of your right hand. If you succeed in bending his wrist in toward the inside of his forearm it will involuntarily open and release the knife.

This is one of the few knife disarming techniques which actually seems to work well

enough for me to recommend it without conscience pangs. If you can just tease the robber into raising the blade to your face you can clap your hands on his fist and disarm him faster than he can react. Unfortunately, not all knife-bearing attackers are content to threaten before attacking, nor are they stupid enough to hand the weapon to you on a silver platter like this. But just in case you get lucky, this one seems to work now and then.

COUNTERATTACKS FOR SITUATION #27

27-1: Use either your left or right hand to deliver a knife-hand chop to the attacker's throat, or a hammer-fist attack to his temple. Executed with enough force these attacks can be lethal. You don't mess around with a guy who is threatening your life.

27-2: Here's a risky back-up technique in case your initial clap doesn't knock the knife out of his hand. If you fail to bend his wrist far enough to make his hand open up you'll probably wind up holding his fist in your hands. Quickly shift your grip so that both of your thumbs are on the back of his fist and your fingers curl around either side toward his palm. This is similar to technique 11-2. Now pull his hand toward you with your fingers, press it away from you with your thumbs (putting painful pressure on the wrist joint), and twist his hand violently to your left. If everything works he'll drop the knife and fall on his right shoulder.

This technique is fun to practice but heaven help you if you ever really need it. I just can't see that mythical attacker standing still and allowing you to play with his fist like that. All he has to do is rip his arm back out of your grip before you get the hold applied and he'll be free-and you'll lose a couple of fingers in the process. Not a good situation.

27-3: As an alternative to 27-2 I suggest the following counterattack. If you didn't succeed in disarming him with the clap just let your hands get a good tight grip on his arm instead. Your right hand in particular can get a powerful grip on his wrist, and your left hand can obtain a less effective grip on the back of his fist. Note that this does not involve fumbling around for new holds after the clap. Your hands just grab whatever they catch.

With this two-handed grip established the attacker will have a much harder time yanking his hand out of your control. Be assured that he will try, however, and that his whole attention will momentarily reside on getting his knife hand free. This is your opportunity.

Yank his hand to the side over your right shoulder as you step in slightly to the left of him with your left foot. He'll never see your right knee coming up. (He'll feel it, though.) (See Figure 41.)

ATTACK *28

The following techniques are for any time someone threatens you with a knife or club in any way, but particularly for those times when the attacker really seems to know what he is doing. This section contains a miscellaneous collection of techniques which have seemed more effective than most. One of them might save your life.



Figure 42: The best expedient defense against a knife attack is a straight-backed wooden chair. It is every bit as effective as it looks.

BASIC DEFENSES #28

28-1: Don't wait for him to attack! Sling things at his legs-lamps, stools, garbage can lids, fire irons, chairs, golf clubs-anything in reach that can hurt his legs and slow him down. If you can reduce his mobility enough, you may be able to walk away in safety.

28-2: Don't wait for him to attack! Pick up a light chair and rush him with it, lion-tamer fashion. Aim one foot of the chair at his throat and the opposite foot at his groin. The seat of the chair serves as a very reliable shield to protect you from the knife. Remember to thrust or charge with the legs of the chair. Don't make the TV mistake of swinging the chair like an axe or club. (See Figure 42.)

This technique is remarkably effective against a knife, partly because the chair serves as both an offensive and defensive weapon and partly because very few knifemen have ever confronted an opponent with a chair. It disconcerts them, to say the least. Against a club it's better to use the chair primarily as a shield and kick under it at his legs and groin. This defense is highly recommended.

28-3: Use a book, purse, pillow, or coat as a shield by holding it stretched tightly between your hands with your arms fully extended in front of you. After a little practice you will find that it is remarkably easy to block all kinds of attacks using such a simple shield. Incidentally, the block does not have to intercept the knife. Blocking his wrist or forearm is easier and is just as effective. (For the club it's better to block the hand and base of the club rather than the forearm, and best to catch it right at the beginning of the swing.) Be alert to any opportunity to deliver an incapacitating kick to his knee or groin.

This technique of blocking a knife or club attack works best during the first few lunges, but after that an opponent will back off a little and try to get clever. You'll see the difference. Once he gets his wits together he'll feint with a false attack to draw your block, then he'll shift suddenly to another attack. If you're quick you'll be able to frustrate even this approach, but sooner or later the attacker will realize that he can grab your shield with his free hand. If he succeeds you must instantly-instantly-release the shield. If you follow your instincts and try to pull back on the shield he'll kill you for sure.

This is a very effective defense and is highly recommended.

28-4: Possibly the best way to meet a weapon attack is to fall flat on your back and use your feet to fight off the attacker. This puts your most vulnerable vital areas out of reach of the opponent's weapon hand, and puts your bestprotected area (your feet inside your shoes) between you and the weapon.

Fight the standing opponent from the ground as described earlier in the book but be very aggressive, scuttling in at him and kicking viciously at his knees and shins. Yell loudly and fiercely to distress the attacker and to summon aid. Don't be afraid to take a few shallow cuts across the bony part of the shin if necessary in order to get within striking distance of his knees. Club blows across the shins are to be avoided, however! When he swings at your legs counter by kicking directly at the inside of his wrist. You won't get more than one good chance to break his arm this way so make it a good one.

This tactic is so unusual that even very experienced attackers are likely to be taken aback by it. (In fact, they may collapse in laughter.) Try it out with your practice partner. You'll be amazed at how well the tactic works.

BLACK MEDICINE

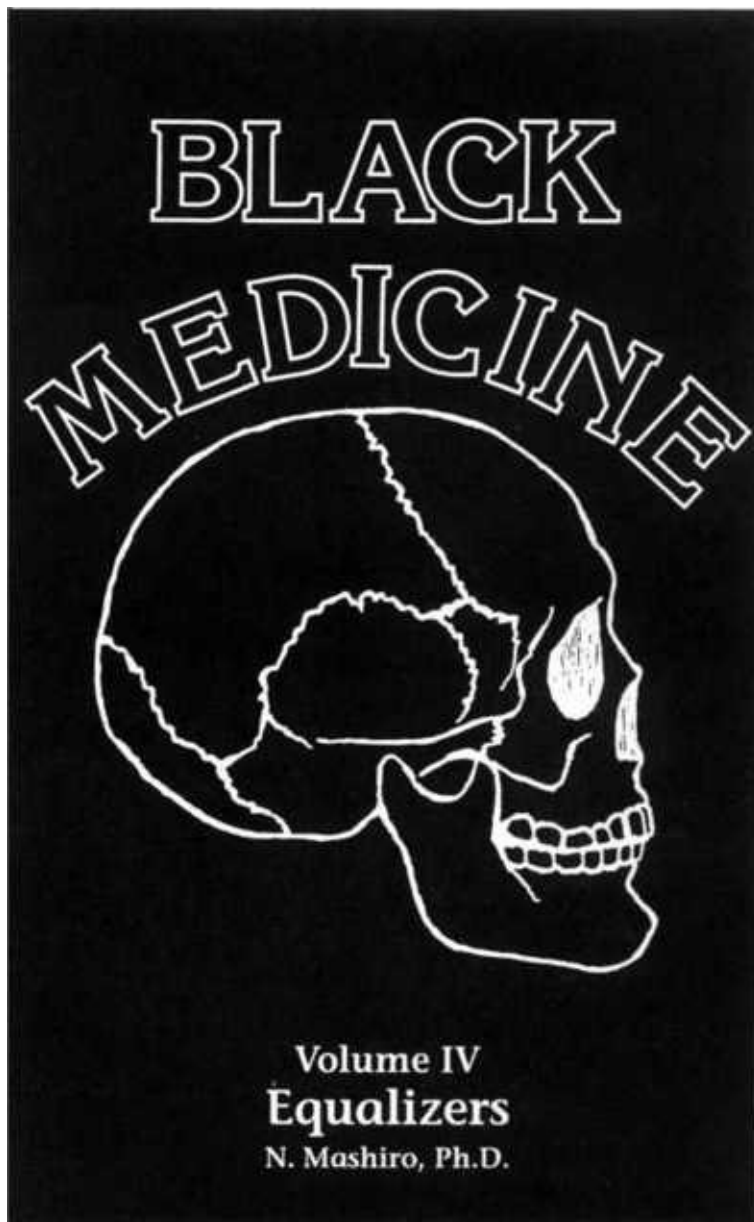


Volume IV
Equalizers
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Also by N. Mashiro:

Black Medicine: The Dark Art of Death

Black Medicine, Vol. II: Weapons at Hand

Black Medicine, Vol. III: Low Blows

“God made all men, but Sam Colt made them equal.”

—Traditional American saying

“They eye of a man is the prince of deadly weapons.”

—Owen Wister, *The Virginian*

***Black Medicine, Volume IV:
Equalizers***
by N. Mashiro, Ph.D.

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Warning

The self-defense techniques described in this book can be extremely dangerous. These techniques, particularly the use of weapons and firearms, inevitably reflect the author's individual beliefs and experiences that the reader cannot duplicate exactly. Therefore, they are presented for academic study only. The author, publisher, and distributors of this book disclaim any liability from any damage or injuries of any type that a reader or user of information contained within this book may encounter from the use of said information.

Introduction

Hello again. I have been away for a long time, but my unfinished business has finally brought me back. Fifteen years ago I set out to write down my personal philosophy and research on self-defense in this series of little books, the Black Medicine volumes. For over a decade my conscience has nagged at me to finish this project with the fourth volume of the series: Equalizers. At last I have the opportunity to fulfill this ambition.

I proceed on the assumption that you are a responsible person, and that this information will not make its way into undisciplined hands. This volume, much more than the previous ones, contains information that can be quickly and easily put to use, whether for good purposes or bad ones. My comfort comes from the certainty that a person who hurts people for fun (or profit) is too busy prowling the streets to stay at home reading books. Most of my readers are police officers, soldiers, and private citizens who want to learn more about self-defense. It is those of us who will never draw blood except in a moment of desperation who need books and teachers. The criminals just experiment in the field on hapless victims. It is their chief advantage over us, and also their greatest weakness. They think we don't know how to fight.

I began the Black Medicine series with a simple essay on the vital points of human anatomy. These are the special spots on the body that are uniquely vulnerable to attack. Everybody knows that a man can be taken out of a fight by kicking him in the groin, for instance. All fathers instruct their daughters about this technique. In Black Medicine, Volume I: The Dark Art of Death, I discussed about 150 other parts of the body that are especially vulnerable to particular weapons and attacks. For example, there are nerves in the neck below the angle of the jaw that control blood pressure to the brain. A light blow into this delicate spot can make a person faint, since it has the effect of slowing the heart down for long seconds. I would be willing to bet that very few daughters leave home on a date with this anatomic off button in their kit of emergency techniques! Since the publication of The Dark Art of Death, at least some of them now do.

In the second volume of the series, Weapons at Hand, I enjoyed making a tour of the body's natural weapons. How many natural weapons can you name? Fists? Feet? Knees? Keep going. There are about a hundred more. One of my favorites is the back of the wrist. It makes a bony club to snap into a mugger's face. On the hand alone, the heel, palm, thumb tip, fingertips, first and second rows of knuckles, and outer and inner edges of the palm all have unique applications in self-defense. The soft palm, for instance, has stunning impact on an eardrum.

This was all very interesting, but I soon seduced myself into writing about makeshift weapons, too. Why? Because I didn't want any of my readers to lose a vital fight, and the fact is that picking up any weapon gives you a tenfold advantage against an unarmed attacker. Could you take on a professional heavyweight boxer with your bare hands? Probably not. What if you walked into the ring with a baseball bat in your hand? Feel better already? Even a simple weapon gives you an enormous advantage.

Now we must digress briefly. I promise to keep it interesting.

As I have explained in the earlier volumes of the series, I have great admiration for the Okinawan peasants who suffered under the rule of Japanese warlords about five centuries ago. This was a culture and a time when weapons were of edged steel, and the warlords confiscated every kind of blade, leaving only one knife per village for kitchen work. This knife was chained to a post in the center of the village and was guarded by soldiers in armor. Most of this is legend, but it has the ring of truth.

Of course there were atrocities against the peasants. Of course there was resistance. And in the fields at night, men practiced and perfected techniques that would permit them to crush samurai armor with their bare hands and feet. They called it *te*, *to te*, and later *kara te*, all implying combat using the empty (weaponless) hands. They learned to concentrate enormous force in their blows and to move swiftly to deliver lethal attacks to two, four, or even six attackers in rapid sequence. They devoted their lives to combat excellence, and no doubt many of them died perfecting the art. I have personally suffered broken bones in practice, and my need is not as great as theirs was. (I was not practicing in the dark, either.)

My admiration for these men lies in their creative use of the few tools and implements that the conquerors let them keep. The warlords had to let the farmers, carpenters, cobblers, smiths, and other tradesmen keep their tools or risk bringing the economy to a halt. It should not surprise us that a man's tools became his weapons. This period saw the evolution of the *sai* (pitchfork), *tonfa* (a millstone handle), *kama* (sickle), *eiku* (rowboat paddle), *bo* (staff), and *nunchaku* (threshing flail) as deadly weapons.

The ancient Okinawans deserve our respect and admiration for their courage and resourcefulness. But what about today? When was the last time you got out your rice flail and threshed a few bushels of grain for dinner? Never, I bet. Even so, there are people on the streets of major cities this very minute carrying *nunchakus* and *sais* hung inside their jackets as weapons of personal defense.

They might as well carry stone axes and obsidian knives.

In *Weapons at Hand*, I explained why it is stupid to carry ancient weapons in the street. Would you carry a broadsword on the subway at night? How about a lance, or mace and flail? A tomahawk? A claymore sword? A bola? Maybe you should go all out and get a crossbow! That will keep the bastards in line!

The Okinawans were thinking clearly about their choice of weapons, but many of us today are not. They knew that they could be attacked at any time. They knew that they would probably be outnumbered and unarmed when it happened. They knew that their opponents would be armed, armored, and murderous. Their response was to learn how to reach out to nearby household objects and use them as deadly weapons.

Our course is plain then. On the day that you are attacked by muggers, rapists, bigots, or gang members, what objects will be within reach of your hand? Those objects are your weapons. Throw away the rice flail and pick up your fountain pen, your deodorant spray, your telephone handset, your rake, your cane, your flashlight, your tire iron, your curtain rod, your newspaper, your broom ... and learn to use them as weapons.

I made a long list of such makeshift weapons in *Weapons at Hand*, and I invite you to examine it for ideas. I listed about 200 common household objects that lend themselves to

deadly uses in a crisis. As I sit here at my desk I note that the desktop is littered with pens useful as yawara sticks. There is an X-Acto knife only inches from my right hand. At arm's length on the right is a fire extinguisher. On the left, where I have to lean only a little to reach, is a can of spray cleaner. Either would blind an attacker for crucial seconds. There is a small brass sculpture on the desk, almost the same size and weight as brass knuckles. I could pick it up in my fist and hammer on someone's skull with it. There is a telephone handset nearby (the proverbial blunt object), and the phone cord could be quite useful as a garrote or for binding a prisoner.

Of course, because of my hobbies, there are more conventional weapons only a step away. Two swords and a tomahawk hang on the wall behind the desk, along with a Vietnam-era Randall fighting knife. They are really just for display, but they might be useful in a crisis. The shotgun, loaded and ready in the rack on the other side of the office, is not there for display, but I may not be able to reach it when the time comes. In a crisis my weapon is likely to be some innocent object lying quite by chance within reach of my hand.

In *Black Medicine, Volume III: Low Blows*, I described a wide selection of dirty fighting techniques for those ugly situations where you must fight kara-te, "empty handed."

In this volume I present the weapons course. I will teach you about the many classes of hand weapons and will present the basic, elementary techniques for bringing them into play. It is not necessary to be a great weapons master in order to give a thug an agonizing surprise. Just a little sophistication goes a very long way in weaponcraft.

In fact, confidence is such a factor that simply picking up anything and facing your attacker with it in your hands will in the majority of cases end the fight immediately. The bad guys don't like getting hurt. They don't like it one bit.

There are always weapons at hand. The trick is to know just a few simple techniques that transform these innocent household objects into deadly weapons. It is the knowledge that makes all the difference.

Let's get busy. It is good to be back.

N. Mashiro, June 1994



The foot is powerful and relatively armored. Roll back on the ground and kick.

When There Is No Weapon

This is a book about how to use the families of expedient weapons. An organized approach demands that we begin with the fundamentals, that is, what to do when you are caught off-guard and knocked down, or when you have to fight in the locker-room showers when you are stark naked and there isn't anything at all to use as a weapon.

If all you have is your own body, what parts of it make the best expedient (emergency) weapons?

Use Your Feet

Here is a piece of advice you will not see just anywhere. For the untrained person, one of the most effective fistfighting techniques is to sit down on the ground, roll on your back, and stomp-kick the opponent's shins and knees when he comes close.

In *Black Medicine, Volume III: Low Blows*, I discussed this technique in some detail, even to the extent of showing some very effective throws that can be applied using your feet against the attacker's lower legs. The essence of this unique style of fighting, however, does not require even that level of sophistication. Simply drop on your back. Use your hands to pivot your body so that your feet are always pointed toward the attacker. Kick anything that comes within reach. Don't get up unless it is clear that you have hurt him.

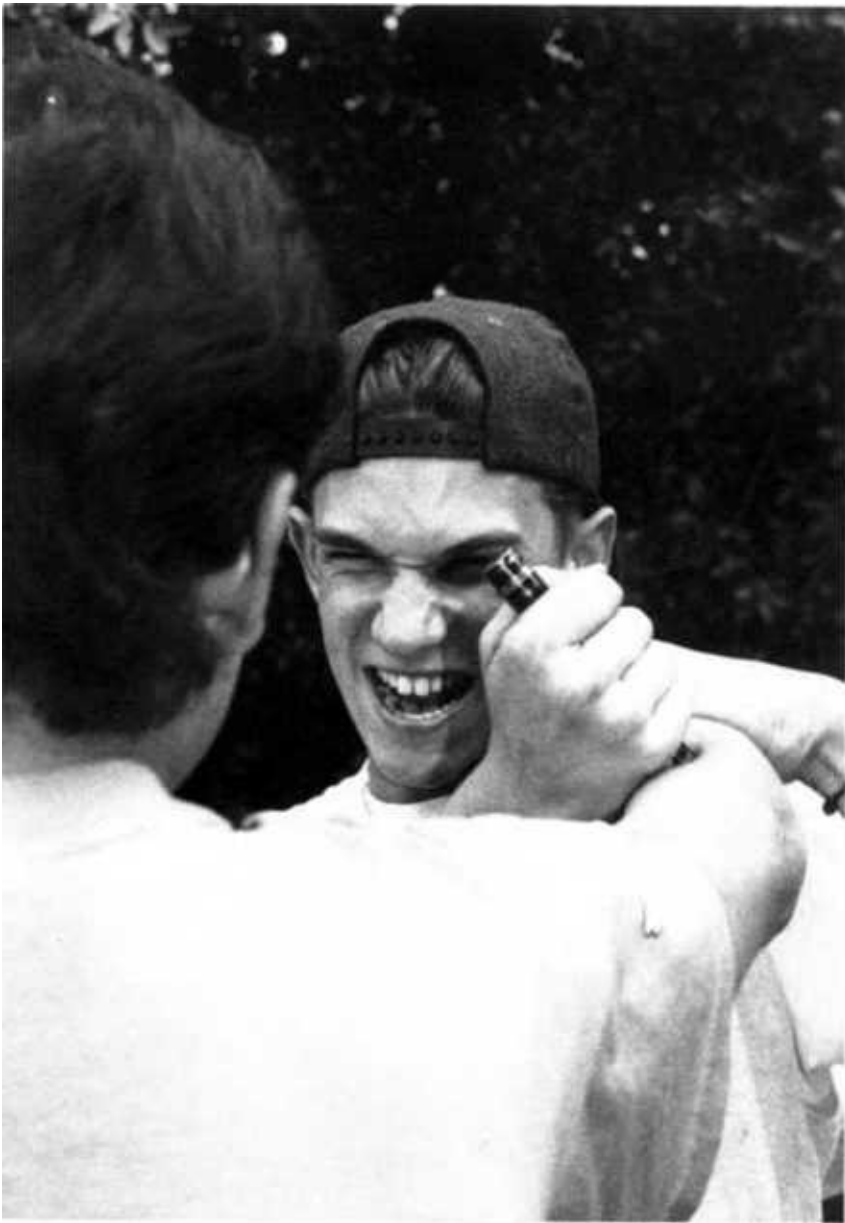
Here's what will happen. The guy throws a punch at you and, hit or miss, you fall down. He laughs and sneers at you. Can't you take a punch? You scuttle in toward him, scooting your butt along the ground and using your palms and heels for support. About the time he thinks "What the hell?" you lash out with the bottom of your right foot and really bruise his nearest knee or shin. You scuttle back just a foot or two, keeping your feet toward him. Usually at this point you will have one heel on the ground and the other foot raised and "cocked" to kick again. If you want to hasten his undoing, you can say something very rude at this point.

The pain in his leg will make him swear loudly. He will angrily try to penetrate your defense by sidestepping and circling. Just pivot on your back to keep that cocked foot toward him. This is a style of fighting that one never sees on TV or in the movies, let alone on the street, and the average person is just baffled by it. As the attacker, you can't do anything with your hands because the defender is out of reach, and when you lean in and try to grab a foot your hands get kicked. This hurts. After a few seconds the attacker will get really angry (due to both pain and frustration) and will lose his composure. Since he can't reach you with his hands he will try to kick you. Watch for it. Expect it. When he decides to kick, he will blunder.

The blunder is easy to anticipate. Maddened, the attacker will step in toward you with his left foot, swinging the right leg back for the kick. This puts all his weight on the left leg, and it also puts the left leg within reach of your striking foot. Stomp as hard as you can against the front or side of the rigid left knee. This will tear the ligaments that hold the knee together, dropping the attacker on the ground and, perhaps permanently, crippling his leg.

Next Steps

When fighting from the ground, the kick to the locked knee produces an anchoring injury, one that does not kill the opponent or render him unconscious but which makes it very hard for him to walk. When he goes down, screaming and clutching his knee, you can get up and walk away. My advice is to use the chance to trade up to a more impressive weapon as you seek to disengage.



A karate block is much more effective when you use a small flashlight or pen to drive your point home.

Pens and Small Sticks

No one will ever accuse you of carrying a concealed weapon if they pat you down and find a pen in your pocket. Yet you can kill a man with that pen.

In this modern world, which of us does not habitually carry a pen on his or her person? We write checks, sign credit card slips, jot down phone numbers, sign receipts for packages,

make lists, and leave hasty messages for our spouses. We would be lost without our writing implements. Usually it is a cheap ballpoint tucked in the checkbook or in the shirt pocket, but if you are well-to-do it may be a sturdy fountain pen with a screw-on top. If you are like me, you may be able to pat your pockets and come up with multiple pens, a highlighter, a six-inch aluminum pocket flashlight, and maybe even a penlike tire-pressure gauge. There are at least ten such objects within reach of my right hand at this moment.

This is fortunate because there are martial arts techniques based on the yawara stick, a 5-inch rod about 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter. There is nothing special about “real” yawara sticks, so you can just use a fountain pen or any other similar object that happens to be at hand.

How to Hold the Pen

Take the pen and grip it in your strong hand so that about an inch of the rod protrudes from both the upper and lower sides of the fist. If you happen to have two pens, put one in each hand. Make fists and get ready to fight.

The beauty of the yawara stick is that it takes all the force delivered by your fist and concentrates it into a much smaller area. As it happens, the bottom of my fist makes an imprint of about 5 square inches on whatever I strike. When I hold my pocket flashlight so that about an inch of the aluminum barrel sticks out below my fist, the force normally spread out over 5 square inches suddenly becomes concentrated into the end of the flashlight, which is about 1/4 square inch. In effect, this magnifies the power of the blow about 20 times ($5 \div 0.25 = 20$). Driven into the fleshy belly of a muscle (the pectoralis major in the chest, for example), this concentrated force tears and crushes tissue, leaving the muscle stunned and temporarily paralyzed. Directed against a hard target like the temporal bone of the skull, the spikelike yawara stick can shatter and penetrate.

And it looks so innocent.

Blocking and Attacking with the Pen

The yawara stick (or pen) requires no great sophistication to use. When the attacker reaches out to grasp you or tries to punch or kick you, just hit whatever you can reach. Hammer down on his forearm, hand, shoulder, ribs, thigh, shin, or foot. Drive the blunt “point” of the stick deep into thick muscle or in between ribs, or use it to dent hard bone. Any of these actions will cause serious pain to the attacker.

Suppose the attacker reaches out and grabs your left arm, then starts dragging you toward a waiting car. A martial artist would make short work of an assailant who did this, but we assume that you have not had the training. Instead, use your free hand to grab a pen from your shirt pocket, grasping it in the approved yawara style. Raise up the pen like a dagger and drive it down very hard into the top of the assailant’s forearm. Aim at the muscular mound just in front of the elbow joint. There is a nerve plexus in this region. If you hit it, you will paralyze the arm for several minutes. If you don’t quite hit the nerve plexus, the stick will still crush enough tissue to weaken his grip and let you break away.

Suppose he punches at you instead. Just block the attack by hammering on the inside of his wrist or forearm with the protruding end of the stick. I guarantee if you connect solidly just once, he will not throw another punch at you. That little stick penetrates deeply, and it

really hurts.

Attacks to the Body

How many times have we seen a girl in the movies trying to beat off an attacker by pounding ineffectively on his chest with her little clenched fists? He just flexes his pecs and laughs. (That is when we all know he is going to die horribly in the final reel.)

If you take a pen, hold it like a yawara stick, and hammer it into somebody's chest, he will not laugh. At the very least, the blow will crush muscle tissue and temporarily paralyze the muscle. Depending on circumstances, a yawara blow to the chest can easily crack a rib since the force is all delivered against one rib alone. Every breath becomes agony. Even worse, to my way of thinking, is the possibility that the stick will penetrate half an inch or so between two ribs, crushing an intercostal nerve and tearing a hole through the muscles that bind the ribs together.

It won't kill him, but he isn't going to laugh. Not without pain.

Attacks to the Face and Head

In the martial arts, the normal progression is to break an opponent down by neutralizing his long-range weapons (hands) and his short-range weapons (elbows) before driving in the ultimate attacks on brain, breath, and blood. Blocking a punch may leave you momentarily inside the opponent's guard, literally between his arms and only inches from his face. Now it is time to do something serious with that little stick.

By now you understand that you can hammer down with the yawara stick (pen) and do substantial damage. You can also punch at the opponent's face and let the protruding end of the stick rake across his mouth, nose, and eye. This is not a killing blow, but you can imagine the pain and disorientation it causes. Once you have raked up, you can quickly rake back down again. Or you may "brush his teeth" with it, raking the end of the stick quickly back and forth across his mouth, ripping his lips against his teeth, maybe even breaking some teeth. Got the picture? Try to see it in your mind. It will help you remember the technique in a crisis.

The killing blow with the pen is the hammer blow to the side or top of the cranial vault. By "killing blow" I don't mean that the opponent is actually likely to die from the injury, but a good solid concussion or skull fracture will put him right out of the fight, and in martial arts terms this is a "kill." The implication is that you could have gone ahead and killed him if you had wanted to.

To set up the blow to the side of the skull, rake his face as described above. If you do a good job he will cry out and grab his face with his hands. That's your cue to kick him in the groin while he is distracted by the loose teeth in his mouth. The groin kick will bend him over and pull his hands down low. That is the instant when the stick can be hammered against the cranium with one swift blow. Put your whole body behind it.

Next Steps

Unless you can get in the skull attack, your opponent will not be incapacitated by the pen attacks. He may be neutralized in that the deep bruises or cracked bones may make it impossible for him to fight, but he might still have a surprise or two left. You have to

watch him as you disengage, trading up to a more effective weapon if you can, and trying to attract help or reach it on your own.



Leave your pepper gas at home? How about using that fire extinguisher in your car instead?

Spray Weapons

What is a “spray” weapon? If you take your cue from television, a spray weapon would be some kind of fully automatic firearm fired by an ignoramus from the “spray and pray” school of marksmanship. I had the opportunity to try out a fully automatic shotgun once.

That one “sprayed” with a vengeance. It took about one second to turn a 2 x 3 foot target into a huge doily.

People who learn about violence from television know nothing.

A spray weapon is simply some kind of pressurized container that shoots out a stream of liquid or powder that you can aim at the attacker’s face. Did you immediately think of the little tear gas or pepper gas canisters that people carry in their pocket or purse? That is correct, but the little tear gas bottles are just the beginning, and they are not especially effective. Their major claim to fame is not the incapacitation they cause, but the fact that they cause no actual eye damage. There are plenty of things you can spray in a man’s face to disorient and blind him. Unfortunately, quite a few of them cause permanent eye injury. If you are fighting off a rapist in your own bedroom, of course, you may not care how permanent the injury is.

Have you ever accidentally gotten a face full of hair spray or spray deodorant? The effects are similar to tear gas, and the container is good for a couple of minutes of spraying, not just the 10 seconds available in a typical purse tear gas canister. Better yet, have you ever discharged a dry-chemical fire extinguisher? I assume that there is one in your kitchen. It ejects a flowing, billowing cloud of sticky yellow powder. Imagine discharging it in the face of an intruder. Do you think it would blind and disorient him, at least temporarily? You can bet your life it will. I don’t say that lightly.

How to Use a Spray Weapon

A certain school of knife fighting insists on extending the open left hand out in front of the body to ward off the opponent while the knife is held in the right hand near the right hip. The idea is to block, punch, grab, and otherwise fence with the opponent with the left hand, then lunge forward with the knife when an opening appears.

The whole idea is to keep the knife out of reach of the opponent so that he cannot grab it and disarm you. The same principle applies to tear-gas pens and other small spray weapons.

Don’t hold the canister out in front of you like a fencing foil. If you were to hold it out toward me, I would take it away from you faster than you would believe. Instead, I’d suggest holding it above and behind you. Tear-gas devices usually project a stream (like a child’s squirt gun) instead of a spray, and you can easily direct it into the assailant’s face without actually looking at the canister. Fend him off with your left hand, or better yet hold him so he can’t break away, and paint his face with the tear-gas liquid. It will run into his eyes, never fear.

If your weapon is a can of hair spray, you need to be a little more careful about how you spray it. A spray can projects a billowing cloud of droplets and propellant instead of a stream, and this gives it shorter range as well as an alarming tendency to blow back in your face if the wind is in the wrong quarter.

I’d suggest holding the can above and behind you, as before, to prevent having it taken away. When the opening appears, bring the can forward suddenly, spraying the opponent’s face from about 24 inches away. If you connect with the spray he will close his eyes, gasp for air, and turn away. If he blocks the spray instead, his attention will be 100 percent on

that can, which is your signal to knee him in the groin while he is looking up. In essence I am suggesting that you use the spray to distract him so you can deliver a low kick.

A fire extinguisher has more robust possibilities. As a rule, the little ones you can hold in one hand only shoot for 4 or 5 seconds before they are exhausted. Two-handed extinguishers will fire for 15 seconds or so and can literally fill a room with an opaque yellow cloud. Both kinds project a thick stream of powder 8 or 10 feet. This gives you some range to play with. Just bear in mind that you need a way out of the room or the billowing cloud will engulf you too.

One interesting possibility offered by a large fire extinguisher is the ability to lay down a smoke screen behind you as you retreat. For instance, if someone breaks into your kitchen and attacks you, it might be possible to grab a small extinguisher and flee down the hallway toward the bedrooms. Discharging the extinguisher in the confined hallway will simply plug it with a yellow cloud. The intruder may bull his way through, but he won't be quite the same man coming out as he was going in. For one thing, he will be completely painted yellow, and the powder does not brush off easily. If he gets a breath of it he will be coughing. If he wears glasses they will be coated yellow and he will have to take them off. Altogether, the experience will slow him down, giving you a few extra seconds to trade up to a better weapon or to bolt out the back door.

Next Steps

The purpose of all spray weapons is to blind and disorient the attacker. Usually your next move should be to disengage, flee to a safer location, and call for help.

There are circumstances, however, where fleeing is out of the question. There might be other people in the house (a sleeping baby, for instance), or there might be more than one attacker. This puts a premium on taking the man completely out of the fight, rendering him unconscious if possible. How would you do that?

If you are using a tear-gas pen, use the pen like a yawara stick and hammer his skull with it. If it is a hair spray canister, you can hit him with it, but it might be better to take a second and trade up to a cast-iron frying pan. Use the edge of the pan, not the flat bottom, to dent his skull. If you are using a fire extinguisher, simply hit him over the head with the canister itself. They are hard and heavy, and results are guaranteed.

The key is to be ready to step in and deliver the blow during the first couple of seconds after the spray hits his eyes. The window of opportunity is brief, and it does not stay open forever.

Electric Shock Weapons

So far, no one has invented a working “light saber” that will sizzle an intruder into smoking pieces at one blow. In the meantime, we have to be satisfied with the so-called “stun guns.” These are hand-held devices that take the electric current from a 9-volt battery and transform it up to 100,000 volts. Pressed against an attacker’s body (even through thick clothing), the electricity is very painful and disorienting, but the current is so low that it is not actually dangerous. Many women carry these devices in their purses.

There is a problem with stun guns that you should be aware of. They have been designed to arc brightly, making a miniature lightning storm between the electrodes when the salesman presses the button. “All that power in the palm of your hand,” he says. “A mugger takes one look at that and runs for his life!” This line of patter sells a lot of stun guns. All you have to do is scare the guy off, you see. You don’t actually have to fight him.

This leads to a very poor mind-set in a crisis. Confronted by the mugger, the victim pulls out the stun gun, holds it out like the salesman did, and pushes the button. The little sparks zap across the electrodes. The mugger smiles, slaps the unit out of the victim’s hand, and proceeds with the mugging.

How to Use a Stun Weapon

Never hold your weapon out for the enemy to admire. He may decide he likes it.

My advice is to fend off the attacker with your left hand while keeping the stun gun hidden behind your right hip. Don’t let him see it. Don’t let him hear it. Just keep it a secret until the moment when you grab his jacket with your left hand, step in nose-to-nose with him, and ram the stun gun into his groin. Grind the electrodes into his genitals and hold the button down. Don’t let him get away. Ride him down to the ground. Don’t just zap once and stop.

If he throws his hips back to avoid the groin attack, just swing the stun gun up and ram it into his throat. Again, hold the button down and ride him until he falls.

Next Steps

If you get in a good, solid shock, there should be no need for a “next step.” One-hundred thousand volts is fairly convincing. Just walk away.

If you carry a stun gun, you should be prepared for the possibility that the battery will be dead the night you need it. If you push the button and nothing happens, what do you do?

A stun gun is a lot like a yawara stick. You can hammer with it against face, arms, shins, and so forth. Pound him with it. Sometimes trading up to a different weapon simply means using the weapon in your hand a different way.

5 Telephones

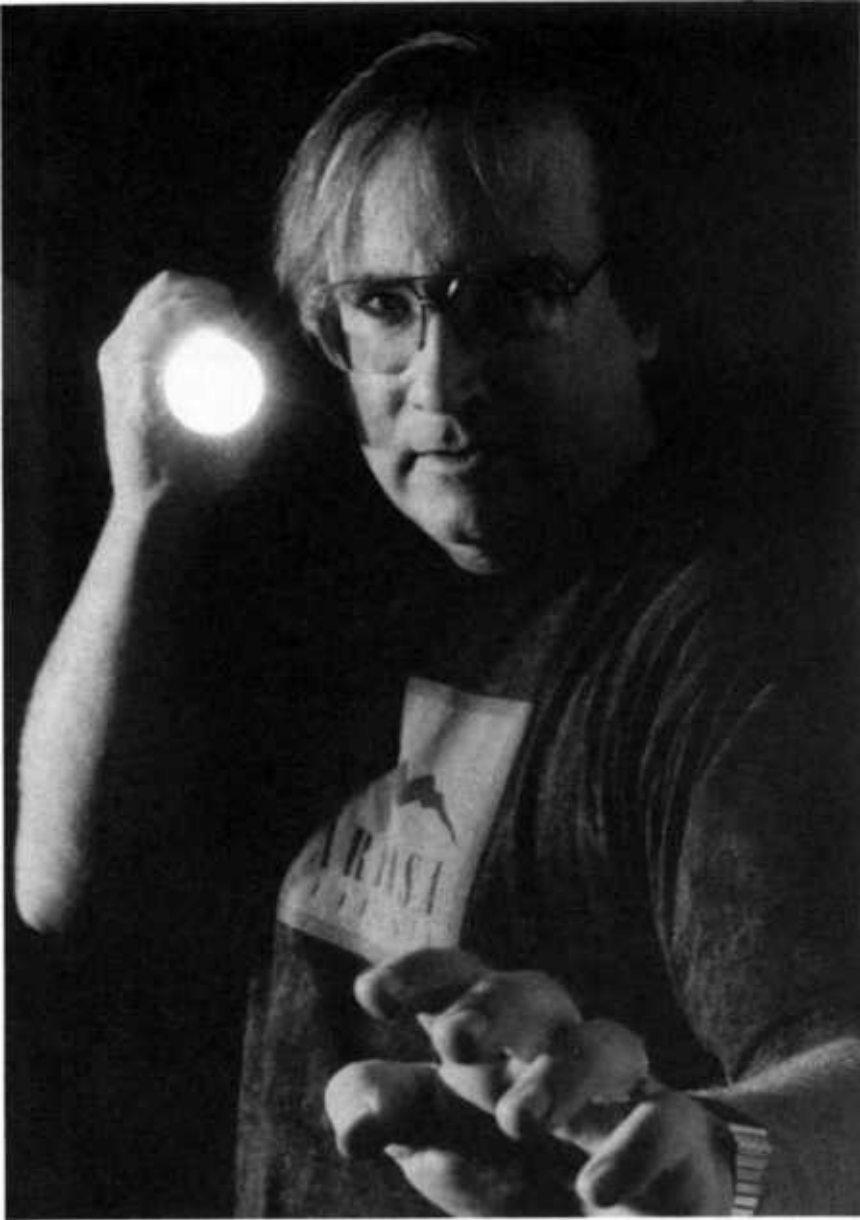
Cellular telephones.

There you are, walking down the sidewalk late at night on your way home from a hard day at the office. You notice a couple of hoods following you and getting closer. What do you do?

At the next street light or lighted doorway, you stop and pull out your cellular phone. Dial 911. Put the phone to your ear and look right at the thugs. Start to talk. “Yes, officer. There are two of them ...”

Watch the goblins run for cover.

If you can call the police for help, do it.



To use the five-cell flashlight as a club, first shine it in his eyes and then smash a collarbone with it.

Clubs

What exactly do I mean by a “club”? A club is an object that is about the same length, thickness, and weight as a police nightstick. A 5-cell flashlight qualifies, and so does a rolling pin. You might also think of a fireplace poker or a large crescent wrench. A club is

any object that will produce a satisfying impact against an attacker's body when swung with one hand.

A baseball bat, alas, does not qualify. Neither does a golf club. Neither lends itself to a heavy one-handed impact. A hammer or hatchet comes close, but we really need something that will strike and slide off rather than dig in.

How to Hold the Club

This is going to surprise you. The "club" I favor for casual nighttime strolls in the "hood" is a 5-cell aluminum flashlight. You can get them in any hardware store these days. Sometimes they come with a little sticker on the side that says, "NOT to be used as a nightstick." It violates the warranty, I suppose!

Hold the flashlight (club) in your strong hand. The lens of the light protrudes from the little-finger side of the hand, and the length of the barrel sticks up out of the thumb side of the hand. Turn the flashlight so that you can work the switch with one of your fingers. On my flashlight the switch is a rubber push-button I can work with my middle finger. Now casually swing the flashlight up so the barrel rests on your shoulder, lens pointed forward. Click the light on.

These lights are bright, and when you point it in an intruder's face you will destroy his night vision immediately. One good flash in the face, followed by darkness, and he will have a very hard time seeing your attacks in time to parry them.

Attacks Against Hands and Arms

Again we presume a basically defensive situation. You heard a noise at night and went to investigate. You have your 5-cell flashlight in hand. Suddenly you are confronted by an intruder who attacks you. What do you do with the flashlight to fend off the attack?

When the assailant reaches for you or throws a punch, try to crack the flashlight against his hand or wrist. Aim for bony structures rather than meaty ones. It is not that difficult to fracture his wrist with a sharp, solid blow. Rapping the flashlight hard against his hand can easily break or dislocate fingers.

Try to hurt him. If you can stop the attack by doing no more damage than breaking a finger, you have won with moral bonus points. A half-hearted effort, however, will not win, and there are no moral bonus points for losing.

Attacks Against Legs and Feet

Most people have a very limited idea of how to use a club. When they see you holding a club they assume that you will swing at the head. Don't do it. You can take advantage of their expectations, however, by raising the club for an attack and then swinging it down into the side of the thigh or the knee. In a fighting stance the attacker usually has one leg or the other forward, within easy range of your club. A solid blow will bruise and cramp his thigh muscles, giving you a chance to disengage and escape.

If the attacker kicks at you (in imitation of popular karate movies), you can give him a very nasty surprise. Strike his foot, shin, or calf with the club-hard. The club can break toes easily, and a fractured ankle or shin is possible. Either will make it easy for you to run away.

Suppose the incoming kick is more like a football kick than a karate kick. Smacking the club downward against the front of the attacker's shinbone bruises the nerves that control the position and motion of the foot. The foot just goes limp. There is a great deal of pain, too. Trust me, I've been there. It was 10 minutes before I could walk again, and then only painfully.

For both foot and hand attacks against you, simply use the club to "punish" whatever hand or foot, arm or leg comes within reach. This very quickly saps his will to continue as well as reduces his ability to fight. Bad guys don't like to get hurt. Nobody does.

Attacks Against the Torso

The club offers four effective attacks to the torso. The problem is that you have to get past the attacker's punches and kicks first. These techniques are best thought of as counterattacks you can shift to after landing a good, solid block.

Here's a simple example borrowed from saber play. The attacker throws a right-hand punch at your face. You block it with the club, hitting the inside of his wrist and knocking his arm off to the side (to your left, his right). This "opens" him up for a moment, exposing the right side of his body to attack. Raise the club up slightly just above head level and snap it down sharply on his right collar bone. The bone is about the size of a chicken drumstick bone, and a solid blow will break it. You may actually hear it snap. If the bone breaks, the attacker will definitely be out of the fight, since the fracture effectively paralyzes both arms.

Here's a more aggressive move for those situations where you cannot afford to take a purely defensive role. Raise the club up over your head as if you were about to swing down at his skull. Fake him out. Make him fling his arms upward to ward off the blow. Then make a fast semicircular swing that brings the club in sideways at about waist level. Hit the last few ribs on the opponent's left side. Alternately, strike sharply at the opponent's hip bone. Just aim for the belt where it crosses the side of the body and swing as hard as you can.

One of my favorite techniques is to hold the club down by your leg loosely during the initial confrontation with the opponent. Let it dangle a little. When the action starts, simply snap the club directly forward and up between his legs. This move is every bit as sudden and painful as it sounds, but it has to be delivered very suddenly and with absolutely no warning.

Attacks to the Head and Neck

I said before that the opponent will expect you to swing at his head with the club. I think this is an actual human instinct springing directly from our genes. Modern anthropology has shown that our ancestors had a merry time killing baboons using bone clubs. The piles of fractured baboon skulls in ancient South African caves bear mute testimony to the effectiveness of the club in prehuman hands.

I hesitate to recommend club attacks to the head simply because it is too easy to kill the opponent or to do permanent brain damage. Part of my reluctance is due to police baton, nightstick, or tonfa training, in which swinging at the head is discouraged. Too brutal, you see. Damage to the suspect's head is considered evidence that the officer lost control. Let's

face it, if you can whack him on the head you can choose to break his collarbone instead with less risk of permanent damage. And the damage is not nearly as photogenic, in case the spectators are filming you.

On the other hand, I have alluded to situations where you have no choice but to do something immediate, decisive, and potentially lethal to put an opponent completely out of the fight. If I were attacked by a gang, for instance, I would not hesitate to fracture a skull or two in the first moments of the melee. In that kind of situation you have to reduce the odds quickly and permanently. Snapping that heavy flashlight straight forward into the attacker's forehead will do that, and it will free you to turn your attention to the next guy. There is nothing more merciless than a mob attack on a lone individual. You have to be just as ruthless to survive it.

Next Steps

If you are using a club for self-defense, the “next steps” are pretty obvious. You block the attack, counterattack against the collarbone or the thigh, and stand back. Put the flashlight back on your shoulder and turn it on again. Stay out of reach, but stay close enough so you can step in suddenly with that skullcracking blow to the forehead if necessary.

Why? Because the sucker may reach in his pocket and pull out a pistol. So step back, watch his hands, and if a hand dives into a jacket pocket, step in and send him to dreamland. Then check the pocket and see what's in it. Under the circumstances, you might be better off swapping him the flashlight for the pistol.

Flails and Chains

A flail is a flexible weapon like a chain or an extremely lightweight stick like a metal curtain rod or automobile radio antenna. You use it to “whip” or “cut” at the opponent's face and hands. The actual damage depends on the weight of the makeshift flail itself. A heavy chain can break bones, afterall. The amount of pain inflicted can be large even when the weapon is very light and insubstantial. Even a piece of clothesline raises painful welts when whipped across the face or hands. Imagine what a fishing rod can do!

The essential characteristic of a flail is that stabbing with it is out of the question. You can't stab at someone with a bicycle chain. Also, you cannot club someone with a flail. Clubbing a person with a length of extension cord isn't going to break any bones. The only way to do damage with a flail is to swing it so it cuts exposed flesh.

Attacking the Face and Hands

It is very hard to incapacitate an opponent with a light flail, so the goal is to intimidate him and/or set him up for an unexpected counterattack instead.

The basic technique for a flail is to swing it in a horizontal figure-eight in front of you. Start up high on your right side. Cut diagonally down and across in front of your body.

Let the flail swing up again on your left, then cut back handed down and across in front of you again. Let it swing up on the right side and start over again.

Just swing the flail in this figure-eight pattern. Both the left and right downward cuts can be used as attacks. Aim at the face, the side of the neck, the upper shoulder, and the exposed hands. If you get a chance, slash hard at extended fingers. They are easy to break and are very sensitive to pain.

Defending Against Multiple Attackers

One of the really nice things about the light flail is the sound it makes as you swing it through the air. It “hums.” People who hear that sound usually back off. Make it sing for you. It will sap their determination even before the first blow is struck.

From the basic figure-eight pattern you can easily shift to a round-and-round pattern where you swing the flail horizontally above your head. This makes the striking end of the flail whistle by at eye level in a complete circle around you. Speed up and slow down a little to keep the attackers off balance. Turn to face this one, then that one. Take every opportunity to cut down on an exposed face or hand.

Next Steps

The flail is very intimidating, and this intimidation can be used to your advantage. If you cut suddenly at a man’s face, he will react in one of two ways. If he is brave, he will throw up his arms to protect his face and try to catch the flail. If his nerve is not as strong, he will turn his back, flinching away from the flail.

The swinging flail is not the real attack. It is only the distraction. Whip him across the face and when his hands fly up, kick him in the groin or knee. If he flinches away, ducking down and turning his back, kick him in the testicles from behind. It will surprise him severely.



Makeshift shields, such as this notebook, are remarkably effective against an angry attacker.

Shields

Shields? Have I lost my mind? Well, not entirely.

Have you ever read the medical examiner's report on someone who has been beaten or knifed to death? One of the first things the pathologist looks for is the presence of "defensive wounds" on the forearms. These are bruises, cuts, scrapes or even broken

bones caused by raising the arms to shield the head and torso during an attack.

These people desperately needed the information in this chapter. Their battered bodies bear mute testimony to the fact that throwing up your arms to ward off an attack doesn't really work very well.

What could they have done instead? What could you do?

Using a Shield in Self-Defense

A shield is any object you can hold out in front of you to ward off a punch, kick, or stab. There are hard shields, like notebooks and briefcases, and soft shields, like sweaters and pillows. My favorite shield is a straight-backed wooden chair used lion-tamer fashion.

Imagine yourself holding a three-ring binder, a large book, or a wooden cutting board as a shield. Grab it in both hands and hold it out in front of you. As the opponent attacks, just follow your instincts and use the shield to meet the blows and deflect them away. Try to use the edge of the shield rather than the flat side, because this digs into his arms and hurts quite a bit. If he kicks, bring the board down and let the edge chop his shin. You get the idea. These are very natural motions.

The soft shield is more difficult to use than the hard shield. You have to grasp the sweater or towel (or chain or extension cord or belt) and pull it tight between your two fists. Use this band of tight material to deflect or block incoming blows. You can see the use of this technique more clearly if you have a friend take a rubber knife and stab down at your chest. The tight band of material stretched between your two hands really does help you intercept this attack and hold it off.

By the way, only an idiot practices with a real knife. If you don't have a rubber knife, use a wooden spoon. Use a ruler. Use a rolled-up magazine. If you use a real knife in practice, you will be explaining yourself to a doctor and probably a law officer, and you will look like a damned fool. Use some common sense and avoid this situation.

Using the Chair as a Shield

I said that my favorite shield is the straight-backed chair. I love it. Bad guys don't usually practice fencing with chairs, and it takes them quite by surprise. The seat of the chair forms the shield against their attacks, and the four legs become formidable secondary weapons. This technique is especially useful when someone pulls a knife on you.

When I pick up a chair to use as a shield, I put my right hand on the back. Then I grasp the seat of the chair in the front with my left hand and lift it up with the legs pointing directly at the opponent. Turn the chair slightly so that one leg lines up on his face and the diagonally opposite leg lines up on his groin. Now drive the chair forward sharply and see whether you catch him in the testicles or in the teeth. Either will put him off his stride. Keep up the pressure until he is stumbling backward, frantically avoiding your repeated thrusts.

Next Steps

Here is where I have to alert you to a fighting maxim that dates back thousands of years. You cannot win a battle by fighting defensively. No matter how good your defense is, the opponent will eventually get lucky and break through if you don't go on the offense and

press your advantage.

Shields work really well in fist-fight situations... for about six seconds. The attacker seems to try about three attacks before he realizes that he has to find another solution. It only takes another second before he reaches out and grabs the shield. Then he forces the shield down and uses it to pull you into the next blow.

There are two things to say about this. First, when the attacker grabs the shield you must let go of it immediately. You are better off without it. Step back and try something else.

Second, you should not let the situation get this far. Use the shield to block the first blow (and maybe the second), and then shove it right in his face. If you get a clear shot you can use your notebook or cutting board to break his nose, but that is not the real purpose of the move. All you really want to do is to cover his eyes for a second so he can't see your legs. Shove the board in his face and, without hesitation, kick his testicles into orbit. It works every time. When he bends over in agony, crack him on the back of the head with the shield. Then turn and run.

The shield buys you time to make a counterattack. Don't waste the time. Use it. Fight for your life.



A broom in the face is unexpected, dusty, and painful. The straws lance into the eyes, mouth, and nose.

Staffs and Spears

Spear. Pike. Halberd. Bayonet. Quarter staff. Bojutsu staff. Pilum. Hastatum. Tales of the Bengal Lancers. Knights jousting on horseback. The romance of metaltipped hickory slicing through your opponent's vitals!

Nonsense. Go get your kitchen broom and we'll get started.

This chapter is about the "pole" weapons that might be at hand when you need a little help. Brooms, mops, shovels, rakes ... any light polelike object 5 feet long and about as heavy as a broomstick or shovel handle will do.

The great virtue of the staff as a weapon is that you can attack with either end. This is very bewildering to an opponent who has never experienced a quarterstaff assault.

How to Hold the Staff

For our purposes, hold the staff the way you would hold a rifle with a fixed bayonet. Let's say your weapon is a broom from the kitchen. Step forward a few inches with your left foot. Hold the broom horizontally about waist level. Point the handle toward the attacker's face and let the straw end hang behind you.

Same thing with a shovel or rake. Point the handle at the opponent and keep the awkward tines or blade behind you. For now, anyway.

Blocking with the Staff

Imagine an opponent who attacks you with his fists and feet. You grab your handy broom and get into your fighting stance. He throws a right punch at your head. What do you do?

You have the handle of the broom pointing at his face. If you want to block the punch, just snap the broomstick to your left, meeting the attack and deflecting it to the side. Then, instantly, jab the end of the broomstick into his face, throat, or belly. Drive it in there and then yank it back so he can't grab it.

The same thing works on the other side, of course. Just use the broom handle to rap his wrist or fist off to the side. It is an effective block, and it hurts.

Now the attacker tries to kick you in the groin. Imagine a typical cowboy kick, like

kicking a football. To block it, simply hold the broomstick horizontally in front of you and thrust it down so it catches him across the shin as he kicks. Most people won't kick a staff twice.

Basic Bayonet Drill

Staff fighting is an ancient and honorable art known to both eastern and western cultures. It takes years to learn properly, but you don't have the time. For you, basic bayonet drill can be adapted to the broom, shovel, or rake, and you can learn it in seconds.

Pick up that broom and get into your fighting stance. Your left foot is forward. Hold the broom as described before, with the tip of the handle pointing toward the attacker and the bushy brush behind you.

One! Jab the tip of the broomstick into his face or throat. Make it snappy!

Two! Whip the "butt" end of the weapon (the straw brush) around at head level and hit him right in the ear with it. This doesn't sound like much of an attack in terms of a broom, but suppose you were holding a shovel? Bonk!

Three! Keep the butt end of the broom pointing at his face as you pull back a foot or two to set up the next attack. Now lunge at him again, driving the butt directly in his face. A typical broom used in this manner drives splinterlike straws into the attacker's mouth, nostrils, and eyes simultaneously. The dust alone is choking and blinding.

Four! Return to your starting position with the tip pointing at his face and the brush behind you. On the way, be sure to "cut" the tip across his face. Rake it across an eye if you can. Raking across the lips is painful, too.

Next Steps

Next? If he still wants to fight, do it again.

The staff is a weapon that lets you stand out of range of his fists and deliver really punishing jabs to his face and body. The end of a broomstick does damage no matter where it digs in. That trick of ramming the broom bristles into the attacker's face is very effective and stands a good chance of blinding him, at least temporarily. If his hands fly up to his eyes, step in immediately, kick the groin, and run.



The “light” knife is best hidden, then used suddenly to block an incoming blow.

Light Knives

10

Here is a tip that might save your life someday. Think about it, memorize it, act it out, and remember it.

You are staying at a friend’s house and are home alone one evening. Suddenly you hear a sound and realize that an intruder is inside the house! You peek into the bedroom and see a

burglar searching the drawers. He looks up and sees you. What do you do?

Most people in this situation will turn and run. On impulse they simply race away. With just a little more presence of mind they dart into the bathroom and lock the door. Now there are some interesting weapons in a typical bathroom, but it is a mistake to hide there. The door is flimsy, the lock is easily broken, and usually there is no second way out. You have trapped yourself.

Instead of the bathroom, run for the kitchen. The kitchen is the natural armory of the house. In most kitchens you can cast an eye around the counters and walls and immediately see a knife caddy full of big knives. Grab a nice big chef's knife, carving knife, or bread knife. Turn and face the intruder. Now if he comes after you, all you have to do is ... what?

How do you use a kitchen knife to ward off an attacker? Most people know nothing about knife fighting. Let's start learning.

The Invisible Knife

This chapter is about light knives used for self-defense. By "light" knives I mean any knife whose blade is thin enough that it is likely to bend or snap off if you try to stab with it. This would include most kitchen knives, steak knives, small pocket knives, folding razors, filleting knives, and similar blades. They are great for slashing but poor for stabbing.

The light knife can be used to jab at the face and eyes, and if you connect with an eye you can pretty much do whatever you want afterward. Even so, it is mainly useful for slashing, and this means it has the disadvantage of all edge weapons-it is slow, and the opponent can see it coming and block or dodge it. Worse, a skillful opponent can beat you to the punch, stabbing or punching directly at you while you slash in return.

Therefore I advocate a sneaky style of light-knife technique. The principle is that the opponent should not see the knife at all until it is coming out of him. This robs him of his advantage and permits the edge to carry the day. This is a good trick. How do you make it happen?

How to Hold the Light Knife

Take the knife in your strong hand. Hold it with the blade pointing down, like an ice pick. Turn the knife so that the sharp edge of the blade faces forward, away from you.

Any trained fighter who sees you hold the knife this way will immediately tell you that you are doing it wrong. Ignore him. The world is full of people who know half the story.

A person who holds a knife point-down is almost certainly an ignoramus who intends to stab downward into the opponent's chest. This move is not particularly sound since it is easy to block the descending hand, and the point of the knife has trouble penetrating the ribs from this upward angle. And the attack is slow, very slow.

But we know that the light knife is not really useful for stabbing anyway, so we must have something else in mind. Here it comes.

Drop your knife hand to your side in a relaxed manner. Twist your wrist slightly to place

the blade up against the back of your forearm. Cover the pommel with your thumb and fingers. This makes the knife almost invisible from the front, and it isn't any too easy to see from any other angle, either. If the situation is dark or lit by strong lights that cast deep shadows, you can rest assured that the knife will simply disappear from the attacker's point of view.

That's how you set up the magical knife trick. You keep the knife hidden until the opponent is within reach.

Then what do you do?

Attacking the Forearms

The opponent may reach out to grab you or to punch at your face. Block the move with your forearm. This is pretty simple if he is trying to grab you, or you might get hit a couple of times before you manage to block a punch. It all depends on how much karate background you have (and maybe on how drunk the attacker is).

The trick, of course, is to block with your knife hand. You can throw up your arm in a natural defensive gesture to ward off the attack, and this motion puts the knife blade solidly between your forearm and the attacker's forearm. If you have been following directions, the edge of the blade will be facing out and will slice through the skin, muscles, and tendons of the inside of his wrist.

The muscles of the forearm operate the fingers the way a puppeteer operates a marionette. Muscles in the forearm contract, and the fingers dance due to tendons that run down the forearm, through the palm of the hand, and out into the fingers. Just hold out your right hand and press the fingers of your left hand against the inside of your right wrist. Now wiggle your right fingers. You will feel the tendons wiggling around under the skin.

This attack severs these tendons and renders the hand useless. It also causes a lot of pain and a spray of blood, and it comes as a total surprise. Best of all, the attacker will probably use his uninjured hand to put pressure on the injury, effectively putting both hands out of action.

But it has to be a surprise! Keep the knife out of sight until the last possible second. Then slash hard, and make it count. Make the edge scrape against the bone. After all, you didn't start this.

Attacking the Face and Neck

There are two other obvious applications for this hidden knife. Assuming that you have the knife in your right hand, you might block his punch as described above and then immediately counterattack by punching him in the face with your right fist.

If you deliberately miss his head so that your fist sails forcefully past his right ear, you will note that the blade of the knife slashes the side of the neck or the face (lips, nose, or eyes). The slice to the neck can be fatal if you cut the carotid artery just under the angle of the jaw. The face attack is very painful, carries with it the fear of scarring, and causes vision problems if you cut an eyebrow or eyelid (blood gets in the eye).

Freeing the Knife Hand

Suppose the attacker grabs your knife hand (your right wrist) before you can get the knife into play. What do you do then?

Experiment with a friend using a rubber knife, ruler, or some other harmless object instead of a real knife. You will find that it is fairly easy to bring the edge of the knife into play against the attacker's forearm. Just twist your right fist up and to the side (either side) of the attacker's arm and grind the knife edge into his skin. He'll let go.

If he uses both hands to immobilize your knife hand, you can easily escape no matter what the difference in size and strength. Most karate students would just kick the guy in a tender spot, since he has obliged by pinning down both of his own hands to hold one of yours. Or you could just take your free hand and stick a finger in his eye. This works well. Best of all, though, is to reach over with your free hand and take the knife out of your trapped hand. Then slash his face with it. It amazes me how many people simply do not think of this obvious move.

Next Steps

These slashes are not killing moves. It is true that the attacker might bleed to death from the neck cut or from a slashed wrist, but it won't happen very fast. You should be prepared to seize your initial advantage and follow up decisively either to defeat him or to run away.

For instance, if you slash his forearm, the attacker will experience two or three horrified seconds as his mind adjusts to the knowledge that you have a knife and that he is badly cut. In this "shock window," you have ample time to turn and run. If this is not possible, it is a great moment for a kick to the groin or a stomping attack to the side of his knee.

If he attacks you again, remember to let him feel the edge of the knife every time he sticks out a hand or foot. He will soon stop hitting and start shouting. At that point you know you have won.



A “heavy” knife can sever a frozen chicken in one clean blow. If you use it for self-defense, aim at fingers.

Heavy Knives

Heavy knives are a special class of weapons that don’t come to hand that often. The original, full-size Bowie knife is a “heavy” knife. A kitchen cleaver comes close. A machete is a little long for our purposes, but it has the same sense of chopping power. During World War II the British issued a short machete they called a “smatchet” that is exactly what I have in mind. A large, heavy chef’s knife will do in a pinch.

Suppose we offer this criterion for a heavy knife: if the knife can chop a chicken in half with one blow, it’s a heavy knife. (For the anal-retentive, I mean a 2-pound supermarket

fryer, unwrapped and thawed, on a wooden chopping block, cut crosswise through the back between the wings and the legs.)

How to Use a Heavy Knife

A heavy knife is a club with a sharp edge. You chop with it. The feeling is like chopping at a piece of firewood with a hatchet. The heavy knife can cut or break bone where the light knife can only slice soft tissue.

Defending Against Punches and Kicks

If the attacker tries to kick you, step back away from the kick and chop down hard at his shin bone. Be prepared to yank the knife back out of the wound. It may sink into the bone and get stuck.

Punches are deflected by chopping at the wrists and forearms. Don't expect to cut off a hand like they do in the movies. According to legend, Jim Bowie could literally "disarm" a man with his knife, but most people should not expect the same results.

Attacks to the Hands, Shoulders, Neck, and Head

You probably can't cut off an arm with this knife, but fingers are another matter. If the opponent sticks out a hand toward you (holding a weapon, for instance), you can chop at it with a good chance of cutting, breaking, or even severing one or more fingers. This tends to be very distracting to the severee.

The chop to the hand (or forearm) usually opens up an opportunity to attack the shoulders, neck, or head. The heavy knife is capable of severing the collarbone, and this is my preferred target. A broken collarbone ends the fight, and for self-defense purposes that is enough.

For more serious situations, the heavy knife can be used against the neck or skull. A solid blow against the side of the neck just below the angle of the jaw can cut deep and sever the carotid artery. (Remember, this is a knife that can divide a chicken with one stroke.) Make no mistake, this is a lethal wound. A man with an open carotid artery drops to the ground within seconds and unless someone gives him immediate first aid, he passes the point of no return (exsanguination) in about a minute.

The heavy knife is a club with an edge. A traditional Bowie is heavy enough that either the blade or the pommel can crack a skull. I would aim at the center of the forehead and try to split the frontal bone. Even if the blade just bounces off, the opponent will be stunned by the blow. Again, this is a technique reserved for times when it is justified to kill.

Next Steps

Wipe off the blood. It rusts the blade.

Throwing Knives

I put in a chapter about throwing knives because people are dreadfully misinformed about them. Bear in mind that my remarks are addressed to beginner self-defense students who need practical advice about expedient weapons. For this audience, the undisputed policy is never, never, never throw away your knife.

There are people who can take a very heavy knife, throw it powerfully, and stick the point deeply into a wooden target at 16 or 20 feet. It is impressive to watch. I have done it myself from time to time. Maybe you have, too. If you happened to have your knife at hand in a crisis, and if there happened to be an attacker at just the right distance, and if the attacker didn't flinch or dodge the knife, and if the point of the knife was not deflected by heavy clothing or an inconvenient bone, then the knife might drive home between two ribs and create one of those chest-sucking wounds so popular with the ancient Romans. Before keeling over, however, the wounded enemy would be very likely to pull it out and make you eat it.

Of course if the knife does not wound him but only bangs him in the mouth and knocks out one of his teeth, your situation is even worse. You've thrown away your weapon, made the opponent angry, and armed him all at the same time. Try to think of something that is more self-evidently stupid.

This situation does not have the makings of a good selfdefense technique. Knife throwing is fun (if you take precautions against the knives that bounce back in your face), but it is unwise to try it in a fight.



She isn't Errol Flynn, but she knows how to handle her weapon. Stab, don't swing.

Swords

Let's clarify a point. If you are afraid that someone will attack you with a sword and you want to know how to fight back, the answer is simple. Use a shotgun.

In recent years, most of the swordplay we have seen in the movies has been utterly incompetent. I concede that it was dramatic, but it was not effective. As an example,

consider the “light saber” fight in the Star Wars film, *The Empire Strikes Back*. There was some excuse for the callow Luke Skywalker to swing his saber wildly from side to side like that, but the more seasoned Darth Vader should have been able to drive the point of his weapon through Luke’s throat about two seconds into the fight. Unfortunately, George Lucas intended to make a third Star Wars movie, so the fight could not end like that.

The point beats the edge. Never forget it. Stabbing into your enemy’s face, throat, chest, abdomen, or thighs is much faster and far more damaging than slicing at him with the edge of the sword. This is a classic principle of personal combat with edged weapons. Using the point of the weapon is faster than using the edge.

This principle was drilled into Roman soldiers more than 2,000 years ago. They carried the gladius, one of the most ruthlessly efficient man-killing devices ever invented. The gladius was a short sword hardly more than 2 feet in length. The blade was as much as 2 inches wide, and the edges of the blade were straight. The last 5 inches of the blade tapered into a wicked triangular spike. It had all the grace and beauty of a tent peg or a hoe. It was just a stout, sharp, deadly tool for killing soldiers.

Roman recruits were trained never to swing the sword. The gladius was for stabbing only. Soldiers were taught that a single jab into the chest, penetrating no more than 2 inches, would kill an enemy. Just jab the point in lightly anywhere in the chest. Then deflect the enemy’s attacks for half a minute while his lungs fill with blood. Wait for him to collapse. Finish him off with a thrust to the throat, then step over him and jab at the next guy. The Romans were very cold-blooded about combat. They were also very good at it.

For our purposes, though, there is a problem with this philosophy. It takes too long. For personal defense we need techniques that work immediately, that put the opponent out of the fight suddenly and definitely. We can’t afford to wait for him to drown in his own blood.

For our purposes, a “sword” is any object that is roughly 2 feet long and sharp on the end. “Sharp” may be a relative term. The basic idea is that this object is more effective as a thrusting, stabbing weapon than as a swinging, clubbing, or cutting weapon. For instance, a stout umbrella with a steel ferrule is much more effectively used as a stabbing tool than used as a club. The same might be said of a large screwdriver, a skewer, or a long kitchen knife such as a boning knife. An arrow qualifies, of course. Or you might have real swords hanging on your walls as decorations. I have two hanging over my desk. (One is a gladius!)

Once you have armed yourself with a sword for selfdefense, what do you do next?

Attacking the Face and Throat

With the sword, you have a weapon that gives you longer reach than you normally have and which must be stabbed solidly into a vital spot in order to incapacitate this felon who is trying to rape or murder you. To obtain immediate results, there are really only two useful targets: the eyes and the throat.

Here you are facing an “urban gorilla” (sic) on a dark sidewalk. He may be alone or he may have a couple of buddies who are circling around trying to get behind you. It rained earlier and you have your umbrella with you. He’s closing in.

You swing the umbrella overhead as if to club at his head, yelling defiantly to get his attention. His hands will go up to ward off the ineffective blow. Instead of clubbing him, however, you kick him in the crotch, knee, or thigh. Now his hands snap down to protect his privates and to try to catch your foot. That's okay. Let him catch your foot. That will keep his hands firmly down out of the way as you ram the steel spike on the end of the umbrella deep into his left eye socket. Try to sink all 4 inches of the ferrule into his eye. This is no time to be squeamish.

Will he let go of your foot? You can count on it. Will he fall to the ground unconscious? Very likely. Will he continue the fight? Hardly a person on Earth could continue to fight after receiving this blow, but if he does you can always take aim at the other eye. Will he die? Yes, he just might. This is not a technique you use on friends who are just fooling around.

The alternate target is the throat. You want to hit the Adam's apple or the soft area just below it. If you can ram the umbrella into this area, or better yet impale this area with something sharp, you will give the attacker far more immediate things to think about than the momentary pleasure of plundering your wallet. If you crush the larynx or windpipe with the ferrule, his pain will be intense and he will begin to gag and choke. If you impale him here (as with the point of a big screwdriver), he will be choking on blood. Either way, his hands will go to his throat and his mind will focus on his own survival. Throat injuries are life-threatening.

Attacking the Thighs

The idea is to use the sword for personal defense. One strategy for self-defense is to injure the attacker's leg(s) and then run. It is a good strategy, being both tactically and morally sound. It is usually fairly easy to accomplish, too.

I would not go after an opponent's thighs with a blunt spike like an umbrella ferrule, but a sharp screwdriver, wood chisel, icepick, or long knife might work pretty well. A wound in the belly of a muscle tends to paralyze (weaken) it, and it seems to paralyze the same muscle on the opposite leg for good measure. You can thrust the point of the weapon pretty much anywhere in the top of the attacker's thigh, but the really sensitive spot is on the inside of the thigh up near the genitals. There are important muscles, large nerves and blood vessels there. Cut or bruise that nerve bundle and you can just walk away without a further concern. Your enemy may not walk normally again ... ever. If you cut the femoral artery, he may die right there on the sidewalk in a matter of minutes. These are not games for kids.

Blocking Attacks with the Sword

The point beats the edge. It is a subtle distinction, but most untrained punches are "edge" attacks. They wind up, swing out in an arc, and strike at the face with a distinctly sideways, slashing motion. Think of any movie fight you ever saw John Wayne in. Those swinging punches are powerful, but they take almost a full second to deliver. What should you be doing during that endless second?

Stab at something. Anything. Dig that umbrella ferrule into his chest muscles. It will hurt him. Jab at his face or throat. Jab the point into his groin or belly. Just poke him good and hard every time he cocks his elbow back and starts to punch. He will quickly decide that

he doesn't want to do that anymore. He will try to grab the umbrella (or whatever you are using). That's okay. If he grabs the umbrella, just hold on to it tightly with both hands and kick him in the groin. He'll let go and grab his crotch. That's when you get your shot at his face or throat.

Next Steps

I assume that you have scored a telling blow with your sword or with a kick to the groin. If the bad guy has fallen to the pavement, you should just run away (or turn to fight the next guy).

If he is still on his feet, however, you may need to cripple him so you can run away. You have to make a judgment call. There he is, preoccupied for the moment with his new adventure in pain, but you may have only seconds before he lunges at you again. What should you do?

Step quickly to his side and stomp as hard as you can on the side of his knee. Try to break the knee by making it bend sideways. Even a poorly executed kick will cause enough pain to put him on the ground. That's when you take off running. Your job is to protect yourself, not to "finish him off" with your sword. You can't mount his head on the den wall anyway. Just clear out.



The “hook” of a hatchetlike weapon is used to deflect and control incoming blows. The next move is a backhand that removes teeth.

Hatchets

I suppose it is apparent to you that I find personal combat very interesting. This is no secret. On the subject of hatchets, however, I have to make a confession. Hatchets horrify me. The main purpose of a hatchet as a weapon is to spill a man’s brains. I prefer my brains left where they are, thank you.

For our purposes, a hatchet is an axelike object heavy enough to crack or split a skull but small enough to wield with one hand. Also, a hatchet has a head that protrudes to one side (or both sides) of the handle. This gives it added penetration as well as a “hook” you can use to catch the opponent’s arm or weapon and yank on it. A claw hammer fills the bill. A one-handed pick or mattock (for weeding the garden) will serve, too. Of course, this category includes classic battleaxes and tomahawks, if you happen to have one lying around. (Yes, there is a tomahawk on the wall above my desk.)

How to Hold the Hatchet

Hold the hatchet just like you normally would. The intuitive grip is exactly appropriate.

Defending Against Kicks and Punches

By this point, it should be apparent how to deal with kicks and punches. Just use the hatchet to punish any limb the attacker presents to you. It doesn’t matter whether you hit him with the edge, back, side, or handle-it will hurt. The main difference is that if you swing a hatchet or hammer at his shin, you stand a decent chance of breaking his leg. If you do, you won’t have to run very hard to get away.

Attacks to the Face

Everyone thinks of using the edge of a hatchetlike weapon to chop and cut. That’s OK, but why be obvious? Is it to your advantage to do what the attacker expects?

The hatchet is another weapon that gives you that golden opportunity to wave it overhead and, when the attacker throws up his hands, to kick him in the groin. This technique is simple and really works well. Don’t underestimate it.

Remember the lesson about “the point beats the edge”? Try this. Instead of swinging the hatchet at him, jab it straight in under his nose. Punch him in the face with the top of the hatchet head. The weight of that steel head makes a serious statement to a person’s front teeth. This is an attack people simply do not expect.

Using the “Hook”

Unlike a club, the hatchet has a head on it, and there is an L-shaped angle between the bottom of the head and the handle. This angle, or “hook,” has utility.

There are two things a beginner can do with the hook of a hatchetlike weapon. One is to catch a kick and hold it. As the kick comes in, you deflect it by chopping at the ankle with the hatchet. The critical difference is that you let the head of the hatchet pass beneath the ankle. Then you yank on the handle to hook the ankle and pull it toward you. Make the attacker do the splits as you pull him forward, off balance, with his kicking foot held up high. Most people are not equal to this challenge. They go down hard.

The second hook technique is very good for knocking a weapon out of the opponent’s hand. Chop down at his forearm, hooking the arm between the head and handle of the hatchet. Without losing momentum, let the hatchet rake down the length of his arm. The hook will track right down the arm to the hand. Do this with vigor and it is almost guaranteed to injure the hand and/or dislodge any weapon he may be holding.

Next Steps

Are you disappointed that I didn't suggest cleaving his skull down to his teeth? You can do that, of course, but our context is self-defense, and it is morally repugnant to kill a man when you don't have to. A hatchet or hammer is such an effective weapon that you really ought to be able to incapacitate an attacker without splitting his braincase. If you do more, your local district attorney is likely to regard it as murder.

Show some restraint here.

Pistols

For the purposes of this book, we must now discuss the pistol as an expedient weapon. I have to assume that you don't know a lot about pistols but may get lucky in the fracas and scoop up your assailant's pistol off the sidewalk. We can't know ahead of time what kind of pistol it is, how it works, what caliber it is, or even whether or not it is loaded.

What do you need to know to scoop up a strange pistol and use it to defend your life?

Revolver or Automatic?

A revolver has an obvious rotating cylinder that holds five to nine (usually six) cartridges. Most of the revolvers you will find in general circulation are double-action weapons. This means that the weapon is carried with the hammer down, and you can fire it simply by pulling the trigger very hard. You can also cock the hammer and fire the weapon by pulling the trigger very lightly. A few revolvers have a safety lever that must be pressed downward with the thumb before firing. It's just a little black lever to the left of the hammer. Snap it down, then shoot.

Automatics have no cylinder, but you'll see a squarish "slide" that runs along the top of the pistol. Cartridges feed up out of a magazine inside the pistol grip. The magazine holds 5 to 14 cartridges, depending on the model of pistol. The slide snaps back during the recoil of each shot, ejecting the spent brass, stripping a new round from the magazine, and placing it into the chamber for firing. An automatic is usually carried with a round in the chamber, the hammer cocked, and the safety lever on. To fire it, you depress the safety lever with your thumb, aim, and pull the trigger lightly.

If you pick up an automatic in the street, the smart thing to do is to grasp the slide firmly with the left hand and rack it all the way back, then let go of it so it snaps forward. This ensures that there is a round in the chamber (assuming a loaded magazine is seated in the pistol), that the hammer is cocked, and that the safety is off.

How to Hold the Pistol

These days anybody who is serious about pistol combat uses the Weaver stance. For the novice, this means use both hands to hold the pistol. This will make a tremendous difference in your accuracy. Firing with one hand is for actors in Civil War epics.

How to Aim the Pistol

It is really simple. The sights are on top of the pistol. The one in front is a single blade. The one in back is a crosspiece with a notch cut in it. Look through the notch at the front sight. Line up the pistol to put the front sight on the target. If you hope to actually hit anything, keep your eye focused on the front sight. If you focus on the target you may miss it. It is not intuitive but it is true. Front sight!

What to Aim For

It is really easy to miss with a pistol. Even people who are very good shots can lose their cool in a fight and shoot badly. Therefore the universal rule of thumb is to fire at the center of the enemy's chest. This gives you a chance of hitting something no matter how you screw up.

When to Shoot

There have been a lot of people who died holding a pistol because they could not make up their minds to shoot when it was necessary. They apparently got into paralyzing mental debates with themselves, hesitating on the brink of decisive action. While hesitating, they let the other guy get off the first shot. These people are looking at the beautiful spring wildflowers from the wrong side now.

Tell him, "Don't move!" If he moves, shoot. It's that simple.

How Many Shots?

Fire twice in rapid succession. Pistol bullets are not reliable fight stoppers, no matter what you see on TV or in the movies. Put two rounds into the bad guy's chest and pause. If two in the chest did not stop him, most pistol experts advocate a followup shot to the head. Just don't empty the pistol wildly in the felon's general direction and disarm yourself. There may be a second bad guy in the shadows, and you may have only five or six shots total. Use two, then pause and evaluate.

What to Expect

I love the scene in Sudden Impact (a Clint Eastwood "Dirty Harry" film) where two cops spit out the following macho bullstuff:

"[With this shotgun] they'll have to strain the body to find the fingerprints."

"[With this .44 magnum pistol] there ain't gonna be no fingerprints!"

This is the "pink mist" myth. If your gun is powerful enough, one shot will turn the attacker into bloody froth. Like hell.

The effect of pistol bullets on the human body is studied scientifically as wound ballistics. This is not the place to discuss the relative merits of various calibers and bullet designs, but as a novice you should be aware of a few simple facts:

- A little bullet that hits does more damage than a big bullet that misses. Watch that front sight.
- There are documented instances of people who, when fired at, collapsed unconscious even though they had not been hit.
- There are documented instances of people who, shot seven times in the chest with a .45 automatic, continued to fight until beaten over the head with the gun and knocked out.
- There is no such thing as a pistol bullet that knocks a man down. He may fall down or collapse when shot, but there is not enough energy in a pistol bullet to push a man off his feet. Simple physics.
- A pistol bullet creates a wound channel that is about the same diameter as the bullet. Even the hollowpoint “expanding” bullets, when they actually do expand, don’t make a channel much bigger around than your finger. The bullet actually has to hit some vital organ in order to take the enemy out of the fight. You fire twice to increase the odds of hitting something important.
- A pistol shot in the brain or spinal cord will put an enemy out of the fight instantly. A shot that breaks a femur (thighbone) will put a man on the ground instantly. A pistol bullet through the lungs, guts, or even the heart is not guaranteed to be a fight stopper. He may accept the wound and still fight on for several seconds or minutes before collapsing.

Fire twice into the chest. Pause and evaluate. If the fight is not over, aim carefully for the brain and fire single shots until you hit it. That’s all you really need to know.

If the Pistol Doesn’t Fire

So there you are, clutching the felon’s pistol in your hands. He lunges at you and you pull the trigger. Nothing happens. Now what do you do?

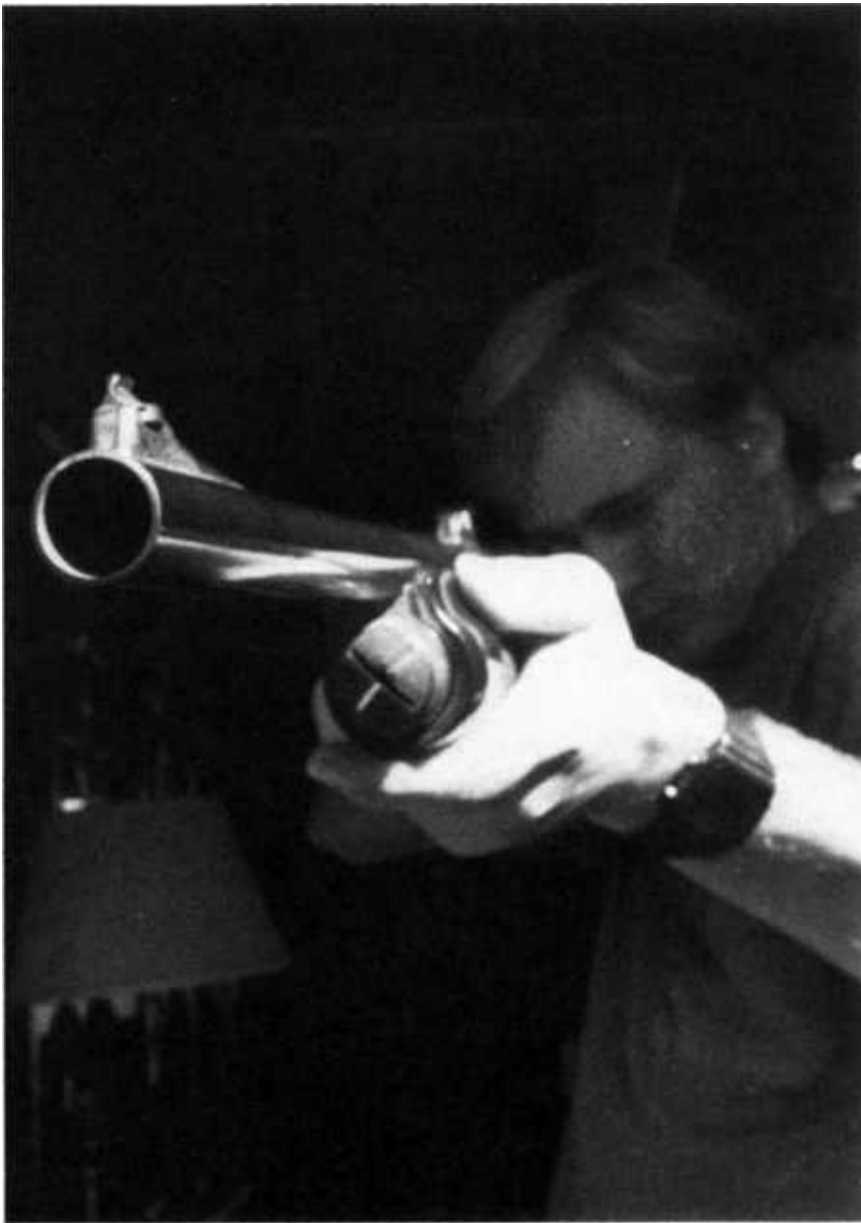
If you throw the gun at him I will track you down and kill you myself. A person who is that stupid does not deserve to live. Just because you could not get the pistol to fire does not mean that he cannot get it to fire! It’s his gun. Don’t give it back to him!

If he reaches for you, strike his hands and forearms with the pistol. If he kicks, crack it down on his shinbone. Jam the end of the barrel, very hard, into the pit of his stomach or into his throat. Keep your finger off the trigger, and bear in mind that the pistol might discharge unexpectedly at any time.

Next Steps

I assume that you are a law-abiding citizen in extraordinary circumstances. Bear in mind that if you have to shoot somebody in the street, the police will not be far behind. If the patrol car pulls up and you still have the pistol in your hand, there could be a fatal misunderstanding with the officer. When you see the patrol car arrive, put the pistol on the ground, raise your hands, and do what the nice officer tells you to do.

Then hire a lawyer before questioning. It’s just common sense.



Nobody argues with a shotgun. It is easy to see why.

Shotguns

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In what situation would you need to use a shotgun as an expedient weapon for self-defense? You don't usually see shotguns lying around like paperweights and kitchen knives.

Well, I could imagine a supermarket holdup gone sour. Two felons are holding the police at bay while keeping you and several other people as hostages in the meat locker at the back of the market. You take up a frozen chicken and coldcock the dumb one with the buck teeth. His 12-gauge shotgun clatters to the floor. You snatch it up. The smart one with the skull tattoos whirls around to see what the noise was. Now what do you do?

What do you need to know to scoop up a strange shotgun and use it to defend your life?

What Kind of Shotgun?

There are a lot of different kinds of shotguns. For our purposes let's limit ourselves to the three most common designs: pump action, semiautomatic, and double-barrel.

Any fool can recognize a double-barrel shotgun, either side-by-side or over-under. There are two big holes in the business end. It means you have, at most, two shots. (Use them wisely, unless you just happen to have extra shells in your pocket or purse.)

Semiautomatic and pump-action shotguns feed shells from a magazine tube lying parallel to and beneath the barrel. Depending on the gun, they fire three to eight times. Bet on three. The semiautomatic chambers a new round following each shot. You just pull the trigger three times to get three big bangs. The pump-action requires you to pump the sliding fore-end all the way back and then all the way forward to chamber a new round.

There is such a thing as a single-shot shotgun, too. It is hard to picture it being used in a holdup, but nobody said robbers were bright. Well, just release the safety button and pull the trigger. Make it count.

Where is the Safety Button?

This is a critical piece of information, isn't it? You just picked up somebody else's shotgun and you need to fire it. You yank on the trigger and nothing happens. Where is the safety button?

Hold the shotgun in the natural way, with the right hand around the neck of the weapon (so your right forefinger can reach the trigger) and the left hand grasping the fore-end (the wooden piece under the barrel).

The safety is most likely a transverse button mounted in the trigger guard. Typically you push it to the left (i.e., push it with the trigger finger) to release it and make the weapon ready to fire. You have to reach around to the left side of the trigger guard and push it back (to the right) to lock the mechanism again.

Some shotguns have the safety on top of the receiver about where your right thumb rests. Push it forward to shoot.

How to Hold the Shotgun

The recoil of a pistol is overrated, in my opinion. Anybody who holds on with both hands and is more than 12 years old can fire most pistols without discomfort. A shotgun, however, really kicks. You have to hold on tight with both hands and press the stock tightly into your shoulder for best results. If you hold it loosely, you may lose it when it fires. If you don't really pack it into your shoulder, it will slam back and hit your shoulder, and that hurts.

It is not going to tear itself out of your hands if you do your part. Just hang on tightly.

How to Aim the Shotgun

Bring the shotgun to your shoulder and look along the top of the barrel. If you see iron sights (notch in back, post in front), use them. Most shotguns just have a brass bead out at the end of the barrel. Look down the length of the barrel and put the brass bead on your target.

It is not essential, but I should warn you about checking the position of your right thumb. It is very easy to lay the thumb on top of the shotgun, and then position your aiming eye about an inch behind it. Can you imagine what will happen when the shotgun slams back in recoil? This is the old thumbnail-in-the-eye trick. Consider yourself warned.

What to Aim For

Aim for the center of the chest. We are picturing using the shotgun at very short range (across a room). At this distance the individual pellets have not yet spread out into a wide pattern. They all arrive at once in a mass about the size of a C-cell battery. You have to aim or you may miss the guy entirely.

When to Shoot

“Don’t move!” If he moves, shoot.

How Many Shots?

Assuming that the weapon is fully loaded when you pick it up, you may have as few as two shots or as many as eight. Under the circumstances, and because a shotgun wound is very convincing, you should fire only once. Shoot, then stop and reevaluate. If necessary, shoot again.

What to Expect

Suppose this shotgun is loaded with 00 (“double-ought”) buckshot. When you pull the trigger, it launches twelve .38caliber lead balls. The effect is like shooting the guy twelve times in the chest with a .38 pistol. Shotgun wounds have a reputation for ending fights. You can see why.

If the bad guy is 50 feet away, you may hit him with only a few of the pellets, possibly only one or two. This is not likely to take him out of the fight immediately, although it might.

If he is standing across the kitchen from you, 6 feet away when you fire, the shot mass will make one big hole through the center of his chest. It is very difficult to imagine a man staying on his feet after receiving this wound.

What if the shotgun is not loaded with buckshot? It might be loaded with #8 birdshot. At ranges of several yards this load is not going to be a man stopper, but remember that the size of the pellets is irrelevant at short ranges. Six feet from the end of the muzzle, the birdshot all hits in one lump and makes that same ragged hole. Count on it.

Oh, one more thing. If you fire a 12-gauge shotgun inside a small room, it is going to be loud. Your ears will ring for a long time.

If the Shotgun Doesn't Fire

You might not be able to get the gun to fire at all, or you might quickly use up your supply of shells (there might be only two). Then what do you do?

That's an awfully heavy hunk of walnut and steel there in your hands. I suggest you review the section on basic bayonet drill. The butt stroke (step number 2) is very effective when applied with the stock of a shotgun.

Jab into the face or abdomen with the end of the barrel. One particularly nice technique is to slam the butt forward into the opponent's groin.

I'd recommend against the untutored approach of grabbing the weapon by the barrel and swinging it like a baseball bat. If you hit the guy you will hurt him, true enough, but I distrust a technique that begins by pointing the muzzle of the weapon at me. What if you crack him over the head and the gun discharges? Ouch.

Next Steps

Hire that lawyer. If you shoot a man through the chest with a shotgun, you will have a lot of explaining to do.

Rifles

I had a little difficulty picturing a situation involving a rifle as an expedient weapon. In what kind of situation would an inexperienced person have to pick up an unfamiliar rifle and use it for self-defense?

The first thought that came to mind was defense of a ranch house or hunting lodge where rifles are normally expected, though you might not normally be the one who uses them. A woman home alone might get into that situation.

Or you might stumble on marijuana growers while hiking in a national forest and get lucky enough to grab one of their rifles. They tend to be very touchy about intruders.

How about this one. Your date gets amorous and won't take no for an answer. In desperation you grab a deer rifle from behind the seat of her pickup truck.

Well, this is the 90s, you know. Get with it.

I should restate my premise that you are engaged in a short-range personal confrontation. The enemy is only a few feet away. You have a rifle in your hands and you need to use it.

What do you do?

What Kind of Rifle?

There are many kinds of rifles. There are bolt-action single-shot rifles, bolt-action magazine-fed rifles, lever-action magazine-fed rifles, pump-action magazine-fed rifles, and semiautomatic magazine-fed rifles. Also, there are centerfire rifles and rimfire rifles. What did you grab from the rifle rack?

Basically, if the rifle is not semiautomatic, there will be some kind of handle or lever present which opens the action and simultaneously cocks the hammer. You have to cycle this lever between shots to eject spent cartridges and to chamber new ones.

Semiautos chamber a new round after each shot. Usually there is a relatively small handle on the bolt, about big enough to get one finger around, that is used to cycle the bolt to load the first cartridge from the magazine. Just yank it all the way back and let go. You've seen them do it a thousand times on TV.

What is the distinction between centerfire and rimfire rifles? I have to assume that you don't know, so here it is. A rimfire rifle is a .22-caliber weapon. It is terribly underpowered for fighting. A centerfire rifle is likely to be a rifle for big-game hunting or for military use, firing large, heavy bullets with a lot of energy behind them. One of these can tear off a man's head or arm as it passes through.

Where is the Safety Button?

All the rifles I have handled have had safety levers, buttons, or other safety devices. Some engage the safety automatically each time you cycle the bolt. It pays to know where it is.

Just like with the shotgun, first look for a transverse button built into the trigger guard. Push it to the left to unlock the safety.

Look for a sliding switch on top of the receiver where your right thumb rests. Push it forward to release it.

If it is an "assault" rifle (one with a pistol grip in addition to a shoulder stock), look for a lever on the left side of the receiver, where the right thumb rests. Push it down.

I have one rifle where the safety is a lever that intrudes into the forward part of the trigger guard. You push it forward, out of the trigger guard loop, to release the mechanism for firing.

Safeties tend to be well-marked, easy to work, and within reach of the right forefinger or thumb when the piece is grasped naturally. Just keep your wits about you and you will find it.

How to Hold the Rifle

As with the shotgun, seat the rifle butt firmly against your shoulder before firing it. The big centerfire rifles kick quite sharply. Pressing the stock hard against your shoulder before firing helps avoid bruises.

Remember to keep your thumb away from your eye, too.

How to Aim the Rifle

Just line up the sights on what you want to hit. If the rifle has a telescopic sight, look through it and put the crosshairs on the target.

Compared to a pistol, a rifle is easy to shoot accurately. Even a novice can pick up a rifle and hit a man-sized target 20 or 30 meters away. I dare say that you will be able to strike your target all the way across the bedroom if you apply yourself.

Be advised that most centerfire rifle bullets will pass completely through a human body at short range and will still have enough power left to penetrate walls and injure people at some distance from where the shot was fired. It is hard to keep this in mind when your life is on the line, but it must be a part of your thinking any time you handle a firearm.

What to Aim For

With a heavy, centerfire rifle, aim for the center of the chest. There just isn't any better advice.

If it is a .22 rimfire rifle, aim at the chest first and be ready to switch to the head if that doesn't get results.

When to Shoot

"Don't move!" If he moves, shoot.

How Many Shots?

For a centerfire military or hunting rifle, one shot in the chest is all it takes. Pause and reevaluate. Use a second shot if necessary. Hunting weapons contain one to five cartridges, depending on the model, so use them wisely. Military weapons use 5- to 30-round magazines. Some boltaction rifles contain one shot and that's all. Make that one shot do the job. Fortunately, a single chest wound from a heavy rifle bullet is devastating.

If your expedient weapon is a .22-caliber rimfire, it probably fires from a 10-round magazine. Treat it like a pistol. Put two shots in the chest and pause. The next shot, if necessary, goes to the head. A .22 may bounce off his skull, so aim for an eye.

If it is a single-shot .22, do I have to tell you where to aim?

What to Expect

A .22 rifle has about the same wounding potential as a .22 pistol, which is to say, not much. Put a bullet in his brain and he will go down unconscious. Put a bullet in his lung or even his heart and he might not notice it for awhile.

The large centerfire rifles are a different matter entirely. They fire big, heavy bullets traveling a two to three times the speed of sound. They produce an effect called "hydrostatic shock" in living tissue. This simply means that the flesh splashes away from the bullet so hard that it makes a temporary wound channel that is inches wide. A high-velocity rifle bullet passing through a man's thigh makes an instantaneous channel wide enough to put your fist through. The flesh is very elastic and snaps back to form a narrow permanent wound channel, but organs and tissues nearby are pulped and ruptured. The impact can break nearby bones even though they were untouched by the actual bullet. If this high-velocity bullet hits a fluid-filled cavity, like the heart or braincase, it simply blows it apart.

From two steps away, one high-velocity rifle shot through the center of the chest really ought to end the contest.

And be advised that the muzzle blast from a full-size hunting rifle or military rifle is awesome. In a small room it could literally be stunning.

If the Rifle Doesn't Fire

You know what to do by now.

Next Steps

Lawyer. Also, you may want to see an ear specialist if you fired that shot inside a closed room.

Tactics

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There is a story told of a karate master in Japan who was challenged to fight by a belligerent sailor in a bar. The karate master reluctantly agreed to the contest, but first walked over to a nearby table and picked up a large bread knife. He dropped it on the floor and kicked it across the room to the astonished sailor. "Pick it up," said the martial artist quietly. "You are going to need it."

The sailor looked at the karate master for several seconds and then abruptly turned tail and ran out the door. Psychology prevailed. You might think that this is the moral of the story.

You might also note that a karate master can cross a room and break your neck a lot faster than you can bend over and pick up a knife from the floor. If the sailor had been stupid enough to go for the knife, he never would have reached it. The master altered the tactical situation to create a game he could control. That's the idea we want to explore in this chapter.

When your person is under assault, it is hard to keep your cool and use your brain. It pays to have thought about it a lot ahead of time. "Tactics" are tricks and techniques you can apply to manipulate a violent situation in your favor.

Aggression and Confidence

Let me tell you about a purely psychological tactic that works extremely well. Thugs are greatly unsettled by confident opponents. The mugger threatens you and you don't look scared. In fact, you start to grin and circle closer to him. He decides he has made a

mistake. Sometimes this will end the situation with no further action.

If they were brave they'd be holding down jobs like the rest of us.

Use of Lighting

Most street crime occurs after dark. One usually pictures a scene where a few bright lights cast deep shadows. Think of a lonely sidewalk illuminated by an occasional street light. If traffic is heavy on this street, there will be a continuous stream of bright headlights coming down the street. Here come the bad guys. They move to cut you off.

If you have your wits about you, it is a very simple trick to shift position so that the brightest nearby light is behind you. For instance, you can back up against the flow of traffic so they have to look into the passing headlights to see you. This illuminates them but turns you into a black silhouette. The light in their eyes contracts their pupils, making you even harder to see.

Why is this helpful? You can see their faces and hands, but they can't see yours, at least not clearly. They can't see the expedient weapon in your hand. It is much harder for them to see your fist or foot attacks, so they can't dodge or block very well. Untrained fighters (you) tend to telegraph attacks through heroic facial expressions. They won't see those either.

Another variation on this theme is to carry a pocket flashlight. When somebody confronts you late at night in the street, shine it in his eyes deliberately. Shove it right in his face and he'll never see the low-level kick coming.

Shouting

Everybody who studies self-defense recommends shouting loudly for help. They also recommend screaming loudly whenever you get punched or kicked. The whole idea is to attract attention, and criminals just don't like attention.

Karate students shout when they attack. This has morale effects on both the shouter and the shoutee and would be valuable for that reason alone. In addition, however, the karate yell, or kiai, contracts the fighter's abdominal muscles at the instant of impact. This makes a very solid connection between your shoulders and your hips, passing a measure of your leg strength into your hand blows.

Shout when you fight. Shout something very loud and, if possible, very obscene.

Using Cars as Barriers

Look around when you are on the street. What do you see that is almost always present by the side of the road or in nearby parking lots?

Cars. Parked cars.

There are five tactical possibilities offered by parked cars. Think them through so you will remember them.

- If you can get a car between yourself and a lone attacker, he will have a hard time getting at you. It is very hard for a big, ungainly guy to play ring-around-therosy like this and catch the quick young lady on the other side of the coupe.

- Many cars these days, particularly in upper-class neighborhoods, have sensitive burglar alarms. Rocking the car, or even touching it, can set off the alarm. As you run from the attacker, kick a few cars. Find one that honks, wails a siren, and flashes its lights. Use that one for your ring-around-the-rosy game. The owner will either show up on the sidewalk with a gun or will call the cops.
- Many cars still have those convenient tubular metal radio antennas that are so easy to snap off at the base. Pull it out to maximum length, break it off, and then use it as a flail to cut the attacker's face and hands.
- If there are multiple attackers, get into the narrow lane between two parked cars. This channels the attackers into single file as they come after you. At worst, only two can reach you at a time (one from each direction). This is a lot better situation than simply standing on the sidewalk with six people punching and kicking you.

In the chapter on shields, I warned you that the shield is effective only until the attacker realizes that he can grab it, at which point you must let go of it. Making a stand between two cars works only until the attackers realize that they can climb on top of the cars and jump you from the side. At the first sign of this attack, you must break out or your fortress may become a trap.

Keep in mind, however, that you can get up on top of the cars, too. If you are adroit and are wearing rubber-soled shoes, you can run across a crowded parking lot by leaping from the top or hood of one car to the next, probably setting off many burglar alarms in passing.

- A lot of people don't lock their cars. Find an unlocked car, jump inside, and lock the doors. Then turn on the emergency flashers and the headlights. Lean on the horn. Look in the glove compartment and under the seat for expedient weapons. For that matter, look for a cellular phone! Dial 911.

Fight One, Dodge One

One of the essential principles of tactics is to concentrate your strength against the enemy's weakness. Suppose you are beset by two attackers. Would you be smarter to fight them both at once or one at a time?

When two men try to fist fight you at the same time, it is relatively easy to swing around to the side and get one of the opponents between you and the other opponent. Then you play ring around the rosy again, keeping the second bad guy always on the far side of the first one.

Run your best tricks against the man in the middle, and try to hurt him so badly that he folds up and falls on the floor. I'll leave the details to you.

Now dance left and right to keep the second opponent on the far side of his crippled (or unconscious) partner. Most people will not step over the body of a fallen comrade to press the attack, but if they do, they look down to avoid stepping on him as they cross. Expect this downward glance. That's when you launch your attack at his head.

Using "Coward Psychology"

When you contend with a mob or gang of attackers, their group psychology can be used against them in a fight. It is not uncommon for the big scary guy to face you and threaten

while some sneaky weasel darts in from the side or the rear to cut you down. Once you are hurt, everybody joins in.

It is a good principle of tactics to expect an attack from behind. Karate students practice endlessly at knocking out an opponent and turning immediately to the rear.

So here you are in the tight space between two parked cars. Thug #1 is closing in from your left. Thug #2 is coming in from your right. You are getting dizzy looking back and forth, wondering which one will attack first.

Here's how to take control of the situation. Take a big step to the left, jumping right in the face of Thug #1 with a big, angry yell. Make this so sudden and loud that he hitches back half a step in surprise.

You can bet that Thug #2 will leap in toward your back. Cowards are irresistibly drawn to backs. After spooking Thug #1 you immediately turn around and attack #2, catching him by surprise in the middle of his step. A high attack followed by a near-simultaneous low attack are best. If you get in his face fast enough, you can be through his defenses and doing damage while he is still in mid-gasp. You have about two seconds before you have to turn away from #2 and leap back at #1 again. Make the most of it.

Somebody is going to jump in at your back. The trick is to draw him in on cue and catch him unprepared.

Coordinated Defense

What if you are not alone when the fight starts? Maybe your best friend is with you, or your brother, or best of all a friend from your self-defense or martial arts class. Martial artists inevitably learn to fight alone. There is much to be said for fighting as a team instead. It doesn't take much practice. The trick is for at least one of you to understand how to do it.

Here you are walking to high school with your brother. Four members of the local gang, the Smelly Frijoles, block the sidewalk. It is not just your lunch money they want this time. The big Frijole doubles up his fist and punches your brother in the mouth.

It doesn't matter how many bad guys there are. The only ones that count are the ones within reach. You and your buddy need to stay close together and fight the same guy at the same time. Double-team the opponents one at a time in rapid succession.

Your brother is trading punches with Numero Uno. Instead of grimly taking on the other three Frijoles, you should step up to the side of Numero Uno and stomp the side of his knee. You will probably be able to grab one of his arms at the same time. Uno will be severely handicapped for the one long second it takes your brother to kick him into submission.

You will only have a second, but that is all it takes. One or the other of you will suddenly have your hands full of Mr. Dos. Even if you both have an opponent now, you can dodge and dance, looking for a chance to step in and double-team your buddy's attacker. Break the knee first. Then use the knee or foot to the face, or even the ungracious groin kick from behind.

The key is to put two attackers on the pavement, screaming and moaning. The odds are

that the other two will suddenly start shouting “OK! OK! We don’t want any trouble!” Back off and get out of there. If I were you I’d find a new route to school. Or a new school.

Running Away ... At First

Let’s say you are alone and are confronted by several bad guys. If you are in pretty good shape, my advice is to turn and run.

Why? Aren’t they likely to catch you? Sure they are. Cowards can’t resist backs. They will chase after you, but they will not all run at exactly the same speed. They will string out along the sidewalk. Each one will be alone, and not at his best, when you suddenly scoop up an expedient weapon, turn around, and attack the man in the lead.

This is another technique for changing a many-against-one fight into a series of one-against-one fights. Put the first guy down, then turn and run another block. Some of the attackers will stop to “help” the guy on the pavement. Make another stand and take out the new leader. If you can put him down and then take off again, the odds are that the chase will be over.

In any case, you don’t just run. You run and look for weapons. You look for tactical advantages. You look for any way to seize control of the situation and turn it around.

How to Win a Footrace

So here you are again, looking for your car in the company parking lot. It is late at night. Shadows are deep. The parking lot seems deserted until Mongo steps out from between two parked cars and waves a big knife in your face.

“Gimme your wallet, motherfucker, or I’ll cut your gizzard out.” He looks like he means it, too.

Well, it’s only a knife. Maybe you can outrun him. Maybe not. He looks in pretty good shape. You hesitate.

How do you win a footrace with somebody who is more athletic than you are? Simple. You break his leg and then run.

Take one long step to the side away from the knife. Usually this means you step forward and to your right. You raise up your left knee and stomp down viciously on Mongo’s left knee. It doesn’t matter exactly how much damage you do. A kick in the leg hurts, and the pain saps strength and coordination from the leg.

Now run. Don’t just stand there and admire your handiwork.

Places to Visit While Being Stalked

One frequently hears stories about the lone woman who is walking down the street at night when she suddenly realizes that shadowy figures are following her. She walks a little faster. So do they. They are gaining on her. She sees an inviting dark alley and tries to run down it and escape.

This is a mistake. You already knew that.

The first thing on your mind should be, “How am I going to get to a phone and call for

help?”

While you are working on that one, you should also be thinking, “How can I arm myself?”

At this point all kinds of ideas should present themselves to you. What is normally in your pockets, purse, briefcase, or backpack that could be used as a weapon? You should be an expert at this by now.

In your pockets, right now! What do you have? Take a look!

So far, so good. I want to suggest a further possibility for those situations where you think you are being followed. If you have the opportunity, you should stop for a minute and explore the friendly neighborhood arsenal on the cornerthe convenience store.

One of the best photos in *Black Medicine, Volume II: Weapons at Hand* shows a flamethrower made by squirting WD40 spray lubricant through the flame of a Bic lighter. The flames shoot out 4 or 5 feet. You can buy aerosol spray cans and lighters at a convenience store.

Liquor stores stay open all night, too. You can buy ice in liquor stores. You can buy ice picks, too. Carry the ice pick out of the store in a brown paper bag. Wrap the bag around the handle and let the point hang down inside the bag. Try to give the impression that you have a bottle of liquor in the bag. Then if you have to fight, ignore the bag and stab right through it. The same trick works with knives and screwdrivers.

Many supermarkets are open all night. There are knives in the housewares aisle. There are flashlights. Sometimes there is a tool section with hammers and screwdrivers. There is spray oven cleaner. There may be cans of spray paint. There is pepper by the pound. There is change for the phone.

To someone who understands expedient weaponry, a supermarket is a weapon-rich environment. So is a hardware store, automobile parts store, or even a corner gas station. Don't hesitate to pay a visit if the situation calls for it.