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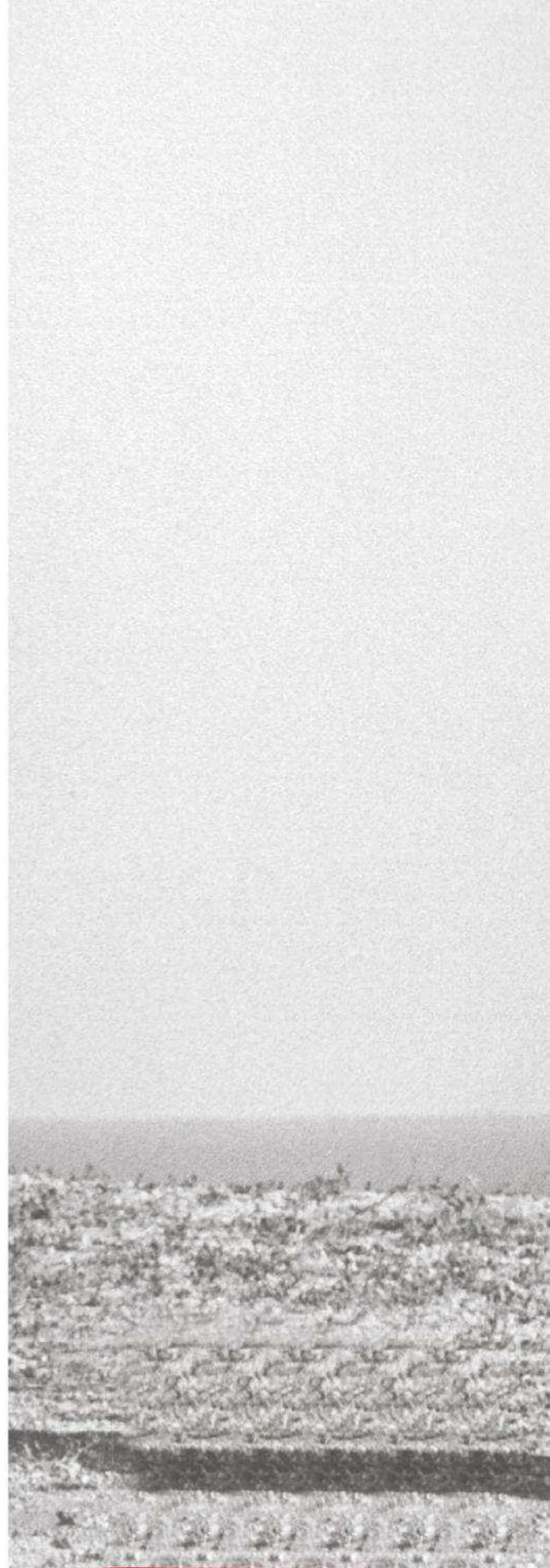
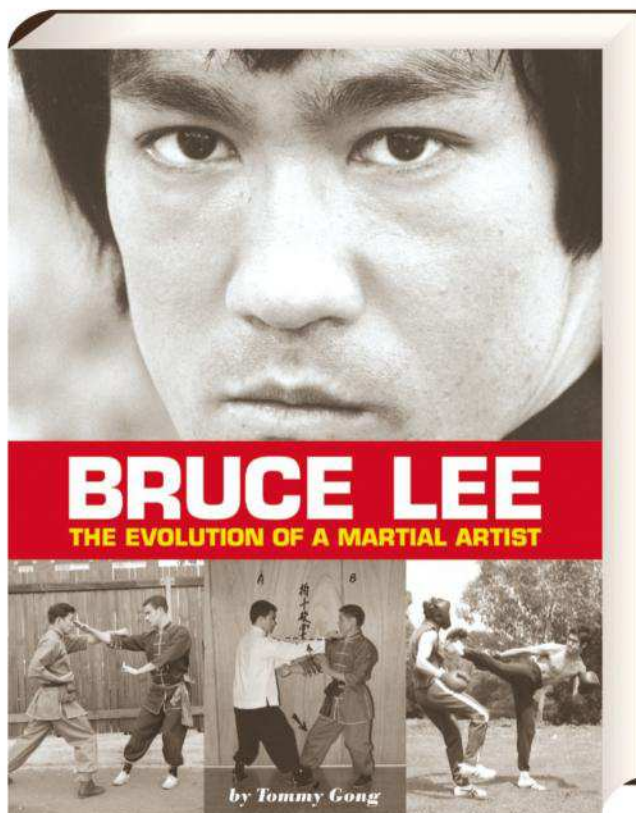
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Photo by Cory Sorensen

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There was a saying in old Japan: *Bushi wa kuwanedo taka-yoji*. "When he's hungry, the samurai uses a toothpick." What could that possibly have to do with the martial arts? Give Dave Lowry a chance to explain. You won't be sorry.

28 SCREEN SHOTS

Our resident media expert looks at *Wonder Woman* with Gal Gadot, *Kung Fu Yoga* with Jackie Chan, *God of War* with Sammo Hung and something called *Baahubali 2*. You know you're dying to find out what that last one is all about!

74 BETTER BUSINESS

Meet Raymond Garcia. Part Shoshone, he grew up in eastern California, where as an adult he was dismayed by the lack of interest young Native Americans showed in their roots. Then he mixed their ancient ways with martial arts and started changing lives.

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REMEMBER OUR ROOTS

Like many of you, I love riding bikes. I started on a road bike 40 years ago and switched to a mountain bike nearly 20 years ago. Back in my early days in the sport, it was us against them, with us being anyone who pedals around on two wheels and them being anyone who drives around on four. When mountain biking split off from regular biking and got big, it was us (mountain bikers) against them (road bikers). On the trails, it became mountain bikers vs. dirt-bike riders, quad riders and four wheelers. Here in California, things splintered even more, with equestrians taking sides against wheel users and trail runners hating on all who are bigger, faster and noisier. Now, with the growing popularity of battery-powered mountain bikes, traditional mountain bikers have a new opponent.

It's interesting how similar the bike community is to the martial arts community. In the early days of the arts in America, everyone stuck together. It was us (martial artists) against them (non-martial artists). Then tournaments popped up around the country, and it was martial artists who competed vs. those who didn't. And we got a dose of country-of-origin-based factionalism: "I practice *taekwondo*, and you practice *hapkido*. They're both Korean, so we're on the same side. Can't say the same about those folks who do kung fu."

To some extent, all that was pushed aside when MMA came on the scene. At first, strikers battled grapplers in the verbal wars. Soon it became all traditionalists vs. mixed martial artists. The whole time, the combatives guys have tended to look down on traditionalists and competitors but not on MMA guys. And there's a portion of the self-defense world that thinks any training you do without a gun in your hand is just dancing.

Why am I griping about this now? Because it seems to be getting worse. We can't run a story or post an article without someone being outraged. It's a sign of the times, I guess. On his podcast, Joe Rogan — I'm a fan, even though I disagree with much of what he says — has commented that people seem to be looking for things to get outraged about. Case in point: The cover of our previous issue featured a small photo of Conor McGregor along with five other martial artists. Inside was a piece about him being named MMA Fighter of the Year. A few people quipped that this was a sure sign *Black Belt* had gone MMA and no longer had anything to offer traditionalists. They're evidently unaware that we've published just one MMA-related cover in the past four years.

How can we end this divisiveness? On a national level, we can't, what with the network news doing its best to foster a state of general discontent. All we can do is think local, and I say we begin by remembering our roots. In the old days, we were all just martial artists. It didn't matter if we did this art or that, if we focused on *kata* or *kumite*, if we wore a white uniform or a black one. When one of us spoke, we all listened because we figured we could learn something from that person's experience.

The best thing about this prescription is it's easy to swallow. For starters, keep reading *Black Belt*. It's our mission to pick the brains of the best people from every corner of the martial arts world and present their best lessons to you. For evidence of how that works, turn to Page 46 and read Dr. Jerry Beasley's story on the lessons traditionalists can glean from MMA. You'll be off to a fine start. 🐯

— Robert W. Young
Editor-in-Chief

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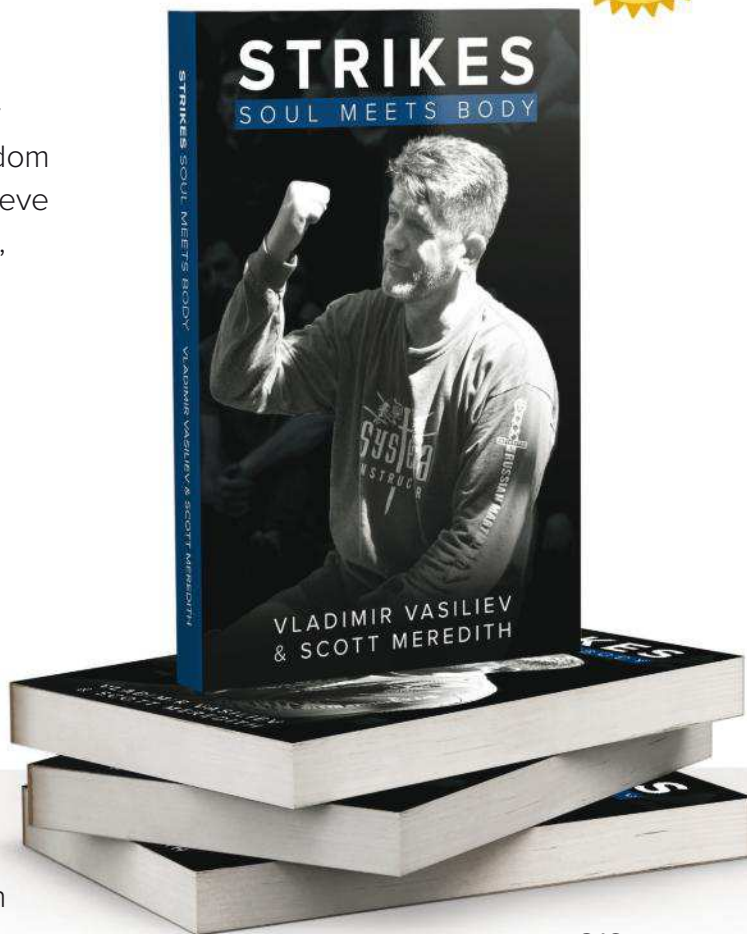


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► Listening to Maj. Gen. Tom Mullikin describe one of his more arduous journeys to the summit of one of the highest mountains is like reading about the late British explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, who led an Antarctic expedition in 1914 and was stranded there with his men until 1916.

From his Mullikin Martial Arts studio, located in a complex that also houses his law practice and his nonprofit Global Eco Adventures in Camden, South Carolina, the 56-year-old instructor recalls a few of his summits as being harsh environments plagued by unimaginable cold and unforgiving winds. He remembers his feet cracking and bleeding while he and his men were burdened with extreme loads. At times, he struggled to maintain consciousness at the high altitudes, which bring lowered air pressures.

The fortitude needed to scale mountains like Alaska's Denali comes from somewhere deep. Some might argue it stems from Mullikin's experiences in the U.S. Army and the conditioning required to become an Army master fitness trainer. Others might surmise it grew out of the training he underwent to become search-and-rescue qualified in the all-volunteer South Carolina State Guard, the 1,000-person defense force he commands.

But to hear Mullikin tell it, his smile, his fortitude and, yes, his grit all come from the discipline he learned as a martial artist. For years, he's studied everything from *taekwondo* and *ninjutsu* to *tai chi* and karate.

"These ancient art forms — and, with them, the mental control, the mental focus, the stretching, the controlled breathing and the various stress-relieving techniques, as well as the disciplining factors — have served as key drivers in the success of my climbing," Mullikin says. "These things have also been key to my business success.

"It's doubtful I could effectively deal with the physical, mental and emotional stress in extreme sports and in the businesses I run — many of those business operations having to do with crisis management and finding solutions in time-sensitive and under tougher-than-normal conditions — without the physical, mental and emotional tools acquired through martial arts training."

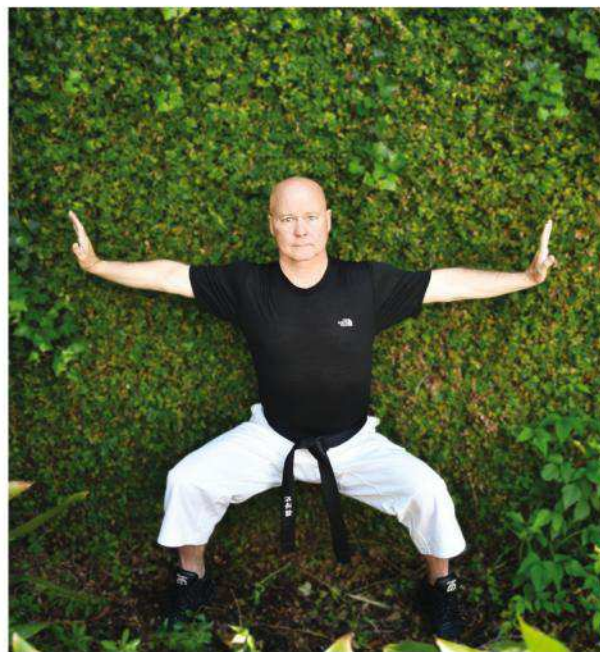
For instance, in the physical realm, Mullikin says it was the seemingly simple martial arts sub-discipline of stretching that enabled him to function efficiently as a wilderness expedition leader. Years of ninjutsu-based stretching not only prevented the tendons and ligaments in his legs and feet from degrading (he suffers from a congenital disease) but also developed those

tendons and ligaments beyond the strength of their counterparts in an average man.

"Many people suffering from the feet abnormalities that I had at birth often have serious lifelong degenerative tendon issues, and they wind up in wheelchairs as adults," he says. "Martial arts conditioning literally saved me from this, and it indeed took me to a higher plane in terms of physical fitness."

He also benefits from mental and emotional fitness. Like so many boys growing up in the 1960s and '70s, he was fascinated by the likes of Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris. Mullikin was an aggressive kid who loved to fight, and he wanted to learn to fight well. "I was extremely competitive in high-school sports and equally competitive as a fighter," he says.

Fighter, indeed. Mullikin tried to join the U.S. Marine Corps as a young man but was turned away because of his feet, which



Maj. Gen. Tom Mullikin, martial artist.

Photos Courtesy of Tom Mullikin



One of Tom Mullikin's goals is to dive in all five of the earth's oceans.

he no longer saw as an obstacle to anything. But the Corps held fast to its exacting physical standards when he attempted to earn a slot in Officer Candidate School. "A Navy doctor made the decision to reject my application," he says, "but that didn't deter me."

The U.S. Army gave him a chance, and he received a commission as an officer in the Judge Advocate General's Corps, where he served in a variety of capacities, including that of international legal officer for the 360th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne).

Mullikin sparred regularly until he was in his late 40s, when ruptured disks that resulted from a rough parachute landing brought his *kumite* to a close. Today, it's all about the art for him.

"It always has been, really," he says. "The arts of the various disciplines are what have enabled me in so many ways. There is so much to the mental, emotional and spiritual aspect of martial arts. And it's all tied together to make the whole person."

Mullikin says he's particularly enjoyed studying the contemplative and spiritual approaches to life propagated by the Shaolin monks and the Chinese and Taiwanese masters he's had the opportunity to train with.

"Though the Eastern artists may come from a different faith or worldview than my own, the way in which they come to a place of peace in their lives is something I've incorporated into my own life and work," Mullikin says. "Today, when I climb or scuba dive, my strength, my ultimate power [and] my overall life success all boil down to that which I learned from the great masters in the martial arts."

Mullikin often tells people, "There's nothing but blue sky and opportunity in front of us." It sounds a bit platitudinous. To those who know him, however, it's evidence of the never-surrender-never-quit philosophy he developed through decades of martial arts training. During that time, he was always striving, always perfecting himself and always guiding others toward that same "blue sky."

What's next for this black belt? In December, Mullikin plans to climb Chimborazo, a 20,548-foot mountain in Ecuador. Its summit is the point on the earth's surface that's farthest from the planet's center (because of the equatorial bulge). He's also on track to become the first human being to climb the world's seven summits and record scuba dives in all five oceans. In fact, he has already logged the dives — including certified ice dives — and has climbed four of the peaks.

"The things I have learned from the great martial artists — things like deep meditative practices, principles of relieving stress at the physical stress points, breath control and other particulars of the martial arts — are things I take with me everywhere I go," he says. "I take them up into the mountains."

— W. Thomas Smith Jr.



Martial arts training has enabled Tom Mullikin to explore the planet.

KARATE COLLEGE TRAINING CAMP BEGINS ITS THIRD DECADE



▲ The annual summer gathering of masters and students known as Karate College celebrated its 30th anniversary with something old, something new and its usual cavalcade of more martial artists than you can shake a stick at — although with bunches of *kali* and kung fu stylists in the house, you can bet there were no small number of sticks being shaken.

Voted “Best Martial Arts Training Camp” by the readers of this magazine, Karate College is the brainchild of *Black Belt* Hall of Famer Dr. Jerry Beasley, head of the Radford University martial arts program. Beasley organized his first event on the campus of Radford University in Radford, Virginia, back in 1988. It featured the talents of Joe Lewis, Bill Wallace and Jeff Smith, all of whom were world champions in full-contact karate and/or kickboxing.

“At first, the idea was to let students train with the three best karate fighters in the world at the same camp,” Beasley recalled. “As Karate College grew in popularity, we quickly took advantage of the opportunity to offer training in multiple arts with dozens of champions and masters.”

Indeed, even a short list of past Karate College instructors reads like a walk through the *Black Belt* Hall of Fame: Benny Urquidez, Kathy Long, Jhoon Rhee, Stephen K. Hayes, Fumio Demura, Anthony De Longis, Willie Johnson, Michael DePasquale Jr., Renzo Gracie — and the list goes on.

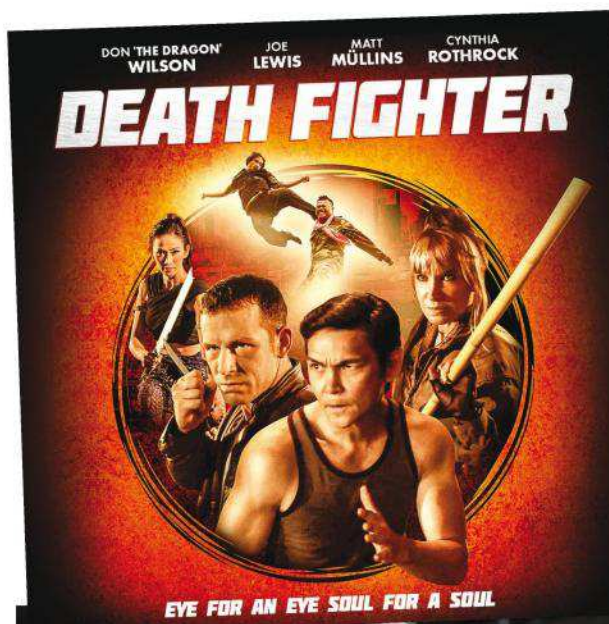
At Karate College 30, hundreds of students took advantage of the opportunity to train in an array of styles — Brazilian *jiu-jitsu*, karate, kickboxing, *kali*, *jeet kune do*, *sajido*, *aikijitsu*, submission grappling, *kuei jiao* (Chinese fast wrestling) and Fukien ground boxing — over the course of four action-packed days.

At this year’s Saturday-night graduation ceremony, amid the normal excitement of performances and promotions, as well as the induction of five people into the Karate College Hall of Fame, Beasley introduced an addition to the camp’s prestige: the Joe Lewis Cup. It’s designed to honor the co-founder of Karate College and the man who’s often called the greatest karate fighter of all time. Lewis, of course, passed away in 2012.

“The cup was donated by Barbara Leigh, who is both a highly successful Hollywood actress and a former Mrs. Joe Lewis,” Beasley said. “The cup was originally presented to Joe in 1975 when he was the PKA world heavyweight champion. Barbara had kept the Joe Lewis Cup at her home for some 40-plus years and decided that Karate College would be the best place to gift it where we can use it to remember Joe Lewis and honor the great legacy he left to the martial arts.”

For information about next year’s Karate College event, visit thekaratecollege.com.

— Jason William McNeil



JOE LEWIS' LAST MOVIE RELEASED ON DVD, VOD

◀ Full-contact karate champ and *Black Belt* Hall of Famer Joe Lewis may have passed away in 2012, but his fans around the world are just now being treated to an easily accessible version of the action flick that's being hailed as his last film. The title is *Death Fighter*, and the co-stars include the top names in the biz: Don Wilson (*The Martial Arts Kid*, *Paying Mr. McGetty*), Cynthia Rothrock (*China O'Brien*, *Lady Dragon*) and Matt Mullins (*Straight Outta Compton*, *Divergent*).

Death Fighter follows a young American cop with a bounty on his head. He teams up with a rage-filled ex-military outcast to avenge his mentor's death. The mission gets dangerous when the cop finds himself in a showdown with one of the most notorious and ruthless criminals in the country.

"The revenge plot, nonstop action and kick-ass authentic fight scenes in *Death Fighter* give a modern spin on classic martial

arts films," said Lise Romanoff, managing director/CEO of Vision Films. "Fans of the genre won't want to miss this one."

Death Fighter was written by Lawrence Riggins and directed by Toby Russell. Kazu Patrick Tang served as action director and stunt coordinator. Lewis starred in several motion pictures prior to this one, including *Jaguar Lives!* and *Force: Five*. *Death Fighter* is available on DVD and video on demand.

The *Death Fighter* cast includes Don Wilson, Cynthia Rothrock and Matt Mullins.



NEW IN THE WORLD OF BRUCE LEE

- The Bruce Lee Foundation and Google Arts & Culture teamed up to launch the Bruce Lee Online Museum. The website features classic and seldom-seen photos of the "Little Dragon" and his family, handwritten documents, video clips and more. Visit google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/partner/bruce-lee-foundation.

- ▶ The *Black Belt* staff spotted the official Bruce Tea van in Southern California in early August. For those who don't know, Bruce Tea is a beverage Shannon Lee is launching to make her father's energy-boosting and health-rejuvenating tea blends available to the public.

- The *Hollywood Reporter* announced that a Dan Inosanto biopic is in development. Although the film, if it gets made, no doubt will deal with Inosanto's *jeet kune do* connection, the article also mentioned that it would cover his work with the Dallas Cowboys.



NEWS BITES



• *Vanity Fair* reported that some of the actors from the 1984 hit **The Karate Kid** — including **Ralph Macchio** (Daniel-san) and **William Zabka** (Johnny) — will assemble to make 10 episodes of a new series that will follow the film's storyline. No word on whether **Martin Kove**, who portrayed **Cobra Kai** instructor John Kreese, will take part in the YouTube Red series, which will be called **Cobra Kai**. Kove recently had a small part in an episode of the ABC comedy series **The Goldbergs**, in which he played "Master John."

• A recent episode of the **Jocko Podcast**, hosted by former **Navy SEAL** Jocko Willink, offered an interesting examination of master swordsman **Miyamoto Musashi**. Willink analyzed the samurai's life from his perspective as a **military man** and a martial artist — in his case, **Brazilian jiu-jitsu**. It's available for **free** on iTunes.

• **Keanu Reeves**, that actor who won over tens of thousands of people in the martial arts community because of the **fight skills**, particularly on the ground, that he demonstrated in the **John Wick** flicks, is also an accomplished shooter. Watch him in action at wearethemighty.com.

• Self-defense authority **Bradley Steiner**, whose writings have been featured in *Black Belt* numerous times, was interviewed on a nationally syndicated radio show called **Coast to Coast AM**.

• The Will Ferrell/Kevin Hart movie **Get Hard**, recently shown on television, included a fun martial arts sequence accompanied by the soon-to-be-immortal whispered words, "**Your capoeira is strong.**"

• *Black Belt* attended **Dragonfest 2017**, the martial arts convention organized by monkey kung fu authority Michael Matsuda, head of the **Martial Arts History Museum** in Burbank, California. Watch for photos and a write-up in the **next issue**.

• The **UFC** announced that it will hold its **first event in China** on November 25, 2017. The venue will be in **Shanghai**.

• An obvious **martial arts connection** was evident in a recent episode of the rebooted TV series **Battle of the Network Stars**. Specifically, **Ronda Rousey** (judo and MMA star) served as a team coach, while **Lorenzo Lamas** (actor, karate practitioner and *iaido* practitioner), **Erik Estrada** (co-star of *CHiPs* and a *kenpo* student) and **Kelly Hu** (co-star of Sammo Hung's *Martial Law*) were among the **celebrity athletes**. ✖



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On a Question of the Day

BLACK BELT: What lessons have you learned from watching MMA?



Scott Marlow: Be comfortable at all ranges of fighting and understand how to work your angles.

Jon Cordova: It's OK to be a jack-of-all-trades (i.e., phases of combat). Grappling is underrated, but all ranges are important. Training against resisting opponents is key.

William Basean Ibarrrondo: I remember as a kid, most of us would imitate all of the basic BJJ chokes and

Subdue your opponent quickly. Bruce Lee would approve.

Salomon Pena: I have learned that all martial arts hold value. Anything can be effective; it is a matter of how it is applied.

Jayham Fernandez: That everything you trained and practiced should be pressure-tested. And I mean everything.

submissions. Though the technique was lacking, everyone [gained] more awareness of grappling.

Paul AP Duarte: Be well-rounded with less weaknesses so you can defend yourself against everything and so you can better attack your opponent's weaknesses — for both sport and self-defense.

David L Silva: I am motivated by the awesome physical condition of the athletes but find no merit in the trashy spectacle incited to garner ratings.

Jim Rendell: It proves that traditional karate-*jutsu* is valid and works. Ground work inspired by judo is obviously essential and just as valid, too.

Pete Micus: MMA is simple. Very direct.

On a Hypothetical Situation

BLACK BELT: If, for some reason, a doctor said you could no longer practice your current martial art, could you be happy doing a different art? What would it be?

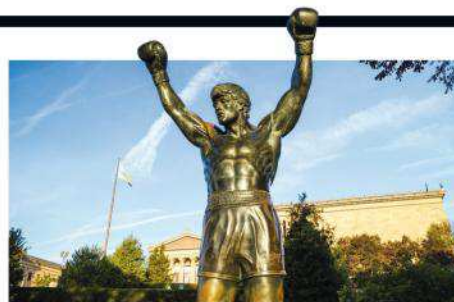
Chad Tower: Sure, why not? My goal is to age as well as possible and be functional as long as possible. If switching arts is what is needed, then so be it.

Ethan Naylor: If I couldn't practice *tang soo do*, my alternative art would either be *yang*-style or *wu*-style *tai chi chuan* or *ki gong* internal martial arts, along with getting the body back in shape using *chi* or *ki*.

Aloysius Stopheles: I was deeply in love with *aikido* and really good at it. But I had a chronic wrist injury prior to aikido, and if you are familiar with aikido, you know that wrist locks are a large part of the practice. That was in 1995. I have been doing *tai chi* since. I love *tai chi*, but I really miss aikido.

Arley Lange: Actually, after tearing up my knee in *taekwondo*, I was hesitant to ever go back to taekwondo. I don't feel like my knees are steady enough for jump kicks. But I couldn't stay away from the mat, so I switched to *jujitsu*. There's no jumping, so it's so much nicer for my knees.

Chris Krueger: I would switch to drunken style. Not the kung fu, just the drinking part.



On Martial Music

BLACK BELT: Are you old enough to know why *Eye of the Tiger* is the favorite fight song of so many martial artists?

Doug Melanson: Unfortunately lol.

Michael John Hardesty: *Rocky III*!

Blease Washington: Marines work out to it, as well.

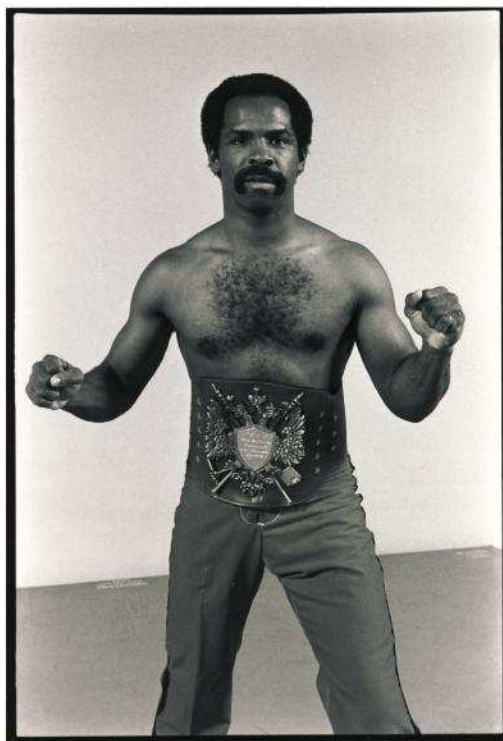
Tony Coates: They originally were gonna use *You're the Best* by Joe Esposito but went with *Survivor* instead. Then, of course, *You're the Best* went on to feature in *The Karate Kid*.



On the Virtues of the Plank

Meghan O'Connell: For the first time since I started reading him at the turn of the millennium, I disagree with something Mark Hatmaker said. It's in "3 Things to Avoid as You Seek to Become a Fitter Fighter" in the June/July 2017 issue. I do see planks as useful! For one thing, they provide underlying isometric strength for more dynamic core demands, similar to a boxer needing aerobic-level roadwork underneath the anaerobic demands of punch flurries. Also, planks give you an opportunity to find a good "home" position for your spine once it's challenged by movement. Finally, they develop muscle strength while the core is not in flexion, so they can counteract a lot of time spent doing desk work or texting, say, when we're not actually training. whatsyourstrength.com

On Our Post About Howard Jackson's Career



Jim Williams: When I managed the Chuck Norris karate studio on Wilshire Blvd. in Los Angeles, my good friend Howard was our studio's head instructor. In the afternoons when day classes were over, the great Joe Lewis would come in to spar, and we would all go at it for two hours. What a time it was back in 1973!

AP Smith: I trained under Howard Jackson. A wonderful man, friend and instructor, Mr. Jackson was a true champion!

Anthony G Price Sr.: One of my heroes, one of the all-time greats. Picked his brain many times. Rest in peace. You are missed, sir. *Tang soo!*

On Whether It's Good to List Martial Arts Accomplishments on Your Resume

Matt Stockeland: My martial arts background is my work resume. I have studied martial arts for over 25 years, in the Army and in professional security. Now I run my own security company and karate school, and I teach at a *taekwondo* school. This is my resume.

Natasha Murdoch Bridgen: My son is a 15-year-old first-degree black belt, Canadian bronze medalist in three divisions and off to his first world championship this summer. Oh, and he is testing for his second degree this fall (fingers crossed). He's in his 10th year in martial arts and at the age where he doesn't like to talk about the sport to anyone outside the sport — doesn't want to seem "braggy." I've told him to put his karate experience on his resume and to definitely put karate on his university application when the time comes. Commitment, hard work, grit, determination and passion are all things employers look for — good employers, that is.

Benjamin Caine: A former supervisor once recommended I put martial arts on my resume in the future. He said it shows commitment and that, when things get difficult, I have experience sticking it out and following through.

Joseph Olaya: Sometimes it helps, sometimes it doesn't. Being on an interview board, I've seen applications rejected due to people's ignorance and stereotypes about martial artists. There is a lot of skepticism about martial artists. Unless you own your own school, I don't see how any of the points apply.

Christine Marie: I do. It shows discipline and perseverance.

Lance Scott: Oh, yeah. Shows dedication. And a lifestyle you lead. 🐉

Avoid Rather Than Fight

For years, I've used the term "self-offense" to promulgate the notion that self-defense is a misnomer, that defending — by its very nature — is at best delaying an inevitable loss. To convince a predator to stop, you have to attack him and make him understand that he's at equal risk of sustaining serious injury.

by Kelly McCann



Photos by Robert Reiff

This is as true in combat sports as it is in fighting. When attacking opponents meet nothing but blocks and evasive movement, they won't be compelled to stop attacking. Why should they be? They're at no risk of being knocked out or hurt, so instead of stopping their attack and stepping back, they press forward, sensing that the end is near. And they're usually not wrong.

If you think about it, self-defense is actually a better term for all the things you do or should do before the manifestation of violence. It's doing all the things that are necessary to achieve the highest likelihood of avoiding the fight.

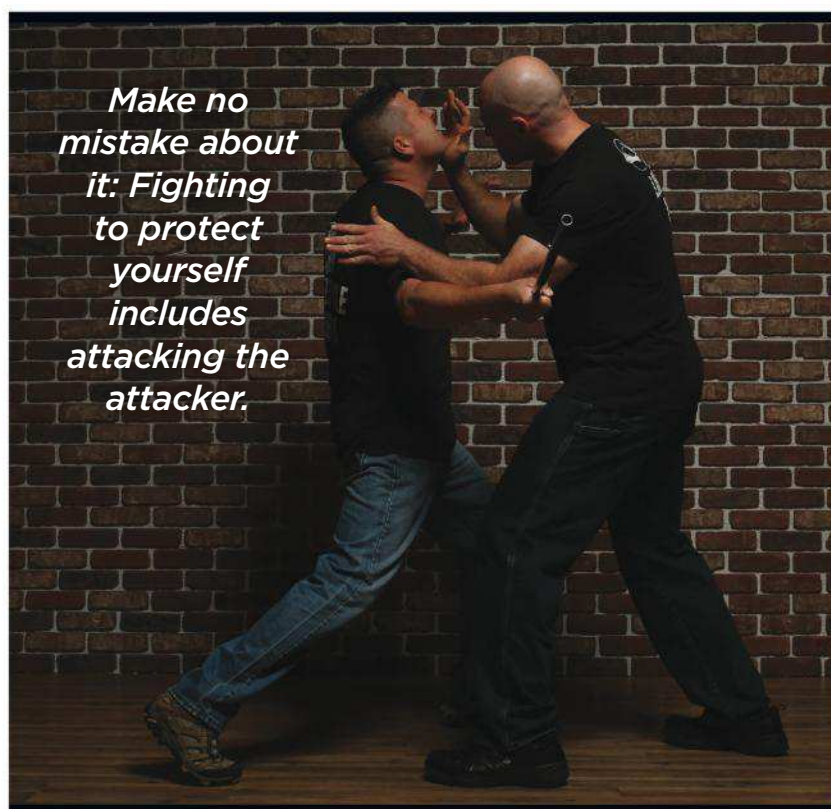
SELF-DEFENSE IS carrying a legal weapon at all times. It should be a weapon that, when circumstances make you think of it or touch it, acts as a trigger to remind you to leave the area, to remove yourself from the situation. Do that and you might get away without having to use the weapon.

Self-defense is making sound personal-security decisions with regard to where you park, where you choose to go and when you choose to go there. It also encompasses where you sit in public, where you stand on public transportation, which ATMs you use and scores of other decisions that aren't conscious decisions at all for those who are likely to be victimized.

Profiling people around you for possible weapons — looking at belt lines, checking pocket rims for knife clips, discerning the location of hands and being alert to the appropriateness of clothing that might be intended to conceal — are all examples of self-defense.

This category of smart behavior applies even more when you're on the road: carefully controlling your itinerary, choosing your hotels wisely, purchasing and using a portable lock to augment the lock on your hotel door, and using apps such as RedZone Map, which shows what crimes have occurred in an area and how you can avoid trouble spots.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS is a huge part of self-defense. The first step to upping yours is knowing what the components of situational awareness are. It's more than having your head



on a swivel. In my book *Combatives for Street Survival*, I wrote: "Situational awareness is a cumulative alertness to threat, environment, movement and anomalies. Being able to discern subtle pre-incident indicators is referred to as 'attack recognition' skill."

Attack recognition doesn't mean being paranoid or overreacting to just any stimulus. The term describes something that should become second nature. Practicing good attack recognition doesn't mean furtively looking for bad guys around every corner. In fact, finding any one pre-incident indicator is likely nothing. If you pick up two, however, pay attention. Three or more, and the situation deserves your complete attention.

In the pre-deployment courses I teach to military and government personnel headed to high-risk environments, I define pre-incident indicators as "unlikely circumstances that, collectively, indicate an attack could be imminent."

SELF-OFFENSE, on the other hand, is the physical component of protecting yourself. Once violence manifests — sometimes slowly and sometimes suddenly — you simply must engage at a

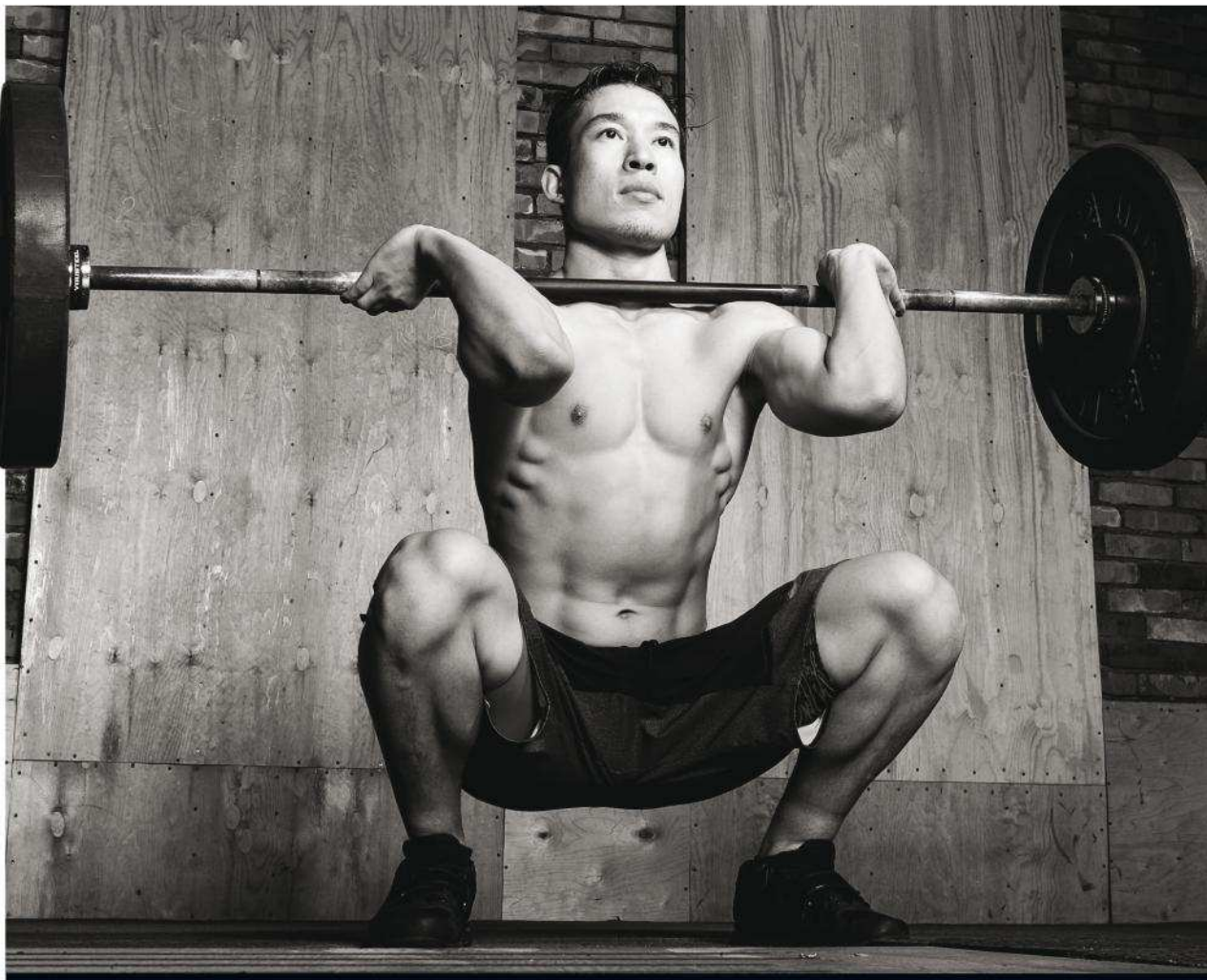
level that breaks the momentum of the attack in progress.

And yes, to accomplish that effectively, you must apply the combatives principle of simultaneity, which refers to remaining able to protect yourself from strikes while you strike back. Make no mistake about it: Fighting to protect yourself includes attacking the attacker.

In an age when it's considered tactless or undiplomatic to ask a victim, "What did you do that may have contributed to being attacked?" it's hard to change behavior for the better. Nowadays, too many people incorrectly assume that the police can create a safe environment in which they don't have to be especially watchful and don't have to protect themselves. This is a ridiculous notion if for no other reason than bad guys don't behave badly when police are present.

We all have a personal responsibility to do these things as part of our self-defense so we never have to resort to self-offense. ✖

For information about Kelly McCann's newest combatives courses, which can be streamed anytime, anywhere to your digital device, visit aimfitnessnetwork.com/blackbelt.



Pros and Cons of Randomized Training for Martial Artists

I recently read an article that was critical of randomized training as it relates to the CrossFit Games.

by Mark Hatmaker

My immediate response was: A) I agree that the randomized CrossFit protocol does not “tunnel in” — that is, adhere to specificity to create skill mastery in a given sport. Such mastery comes only from sport- and skill-specific training.

B) It's not surprising that the majority of CrossFit Games winners, as well as those who excel there, don't adhere to the randomized protocol. Instead, they “gamify” their training to do better in competition. The Games are no differ-

ent from any other sport in that they ask athletes to perform specific tasks and the athletes must gear their training to those tasks or fall to competitors who have focused on those tasks.

THE CONCEPT behind randomization — and the reason it should appeal to martial artists — is to prepare for real-world situations rather than competition. In the real world, we have no specific task on the horizon, yet we may be called on to perform virtually any skill on any given day.

We have no idea if we might have to sprint to escape a dangerous situation, draw from a steady reservoir of go-to stamina in a mass attack or pump out an inordinate amount of power in a battle with a heavyweight. For martial artists, real life is not a game with a guaranteed task list. It's unpredictable. It's randomized.

The article's critique pointed out that randomized training does wonders to a point, but then a plateau is reached. Is that a bad thing for us? Not necessarily.

A plateau will affect us only if our goal is to compete in, for example, powerlifting, Olympic weightlifting, marathons or the CrossFit Games. If our goal is to make the performance of an exercise our “sport,” then randomized training is for naught once we pass the acclimatization stage.

ALL PRACTITIONERS of the combat arts — traditional martial artists,

Once we hit the plateau, we want to maintain our level and use it as a jumping-off point for our combat training.

competitive grapplers, kickboxers, even operators in the military and law enforcement — have it different. As the true first responders, we need a plateau of robustness built by randomized training. What we desire to engage in after reaching that plateau is not more and more push-ups, heavier and heavier lifts, or longer and longer runs.

Once we hit the plateau, we want to maintain our level and use it as a jumping-off point for our combat training. Our goal is not to be the elite doer of exercises. We see clearly that exercise, no matter how elite the performance of said exercise, is a preparatory action and no more. Exercise is a

means to prepare our body and mind for the rigors of our martial art.

To spend the rest of our lives getting better at our preparation is a bit of wheel spinning on par with getting better and faster at writing our ABCs or reciting the multiplication table as opposed to taking the alphabet and creating new sentences or applying mathematics to real-world needs.

That said, the article was correct: To excel at any given sport, we must groove that sport, so to speak. But to prepare for chance or chaos — which is precisely what martial artists train for — we must build a randomized base.

To all my combat brothers and sisters, I say go ahead and create an

admirable randomized plateau. Then, instead of dumping all those extra hours into climbing to the next plateau, spend your time polishing your martial arts skill set.

In short, CrossFit is great for you, both because of the workout you get and because the short duration of the sessions leaves plenty of time for the *dojo*. Just don't let the pursuit of a Hero WOD — that's Workout of the Day for the uninitiated — distract you from your designated grappling WOD or heavy-bag WOD. 🐱

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** For more information about Mark Hatmaker, visit extremeselfprotection.com.

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Poverty vs. Professional Fighting in Southeast Asia

A 14-year-old boy should be riding his bike and playing video games. A 16-year-old should be preparing for his high-school exams and flirting with the girl across the way. But on a dark day in 2004, 16-year-old Chhu Thon died, and a 14-year-old learned that he'd killed him in a *muay Thai* match in Cambodia.

by Antonio Graceffo

That was 13 years ago, but I'm sure similar incidents have happened since. I feel comfortable saying that because Thon's death wasn't the first I'd heard of. Two years earlier in Thailand, a young kickboxer named Chatchai Phaisithong died after collapsing in the ring. A quick survey revealed that at

least two other deaths have occurred since 1996.

IN DIVERSE CULTURES from the slums of America to the hill-tribe villages of Thailand, poor boys often see sports — and, more specifically, combat sports — as a means of climbing out of poverty. The myth is wrapped

in bright packaging and fed to them in the form of success stories, which are the rule rather than the exception on the silver screen.

The truth is, however, that very few fighters ever make it to the top. And the ones who do rarely keep their money, their fame, their reputation or even their health. In *King of the World*, author David Remnick reminds us that Muhammad Ali was an exception to most of boxing's stereotypes. He spoke eloquently and was seen as a social and political leader. He opposed the Vietnam War and eventually defeated the U.S. government in court. But for all his success, his end was typical — typically bad. He battled Parkinson's disease for years until he succumbed in 2016.

The life of an up-and-coming boxer or kickboxer in Thailand is, in many ways, even more difficult than that of a Westerner who's trying to fight his way out of poverty. First, Thai boxing is infinitely more damaging to the body. Years of blows to the legs can cripple them. Repeated knees to the torso can cause tissue wastage and organ damage. Elbows to the face can open wounds that need to be stitched — and still can lead to permanent scarring. Thai fighters begin training as young as 7 or 8. They start fighting for money at 14, as opposed to 18 in the West. With the body being subject to so much stress, it's no wonder most muay Thai competitors are finished by the time they're in their mid-20s.

IN AN INTERVIEW with MSN, Chhoeung Yavyen, doctor for the Cambodian Boxing Federation, said he worried about boxing's damaging effects on boys. "The teenage body is just not strong enough," he said.

The sport is obviously damaging to teens and adults, as well — which is perhaps why the Thai government outlawed muay Thai in the 1920s. The fight sport was brought back in the 1930s, and today approximately 60,000 professional Thai boxers live in Thailand.

Several years ago while training at a rural boxing camp there, I spoke with an assistant coach about how the boys came to be at the center. "That one is Jakoi," the coach said, pointing. "He was addicted to *yaba* (meth) before coming here. He is 20 years old and can neither read nor write."

Photos Courtesy of Antonio Graceffo

He pointed at another boy. “His mother remarried,” the coach said. “The new husband didn’t want the children from the previous marriage, so she brought him here.”

The stories went on. “That one is the oldest of 13,” the coach noted. “His parents couldn’t afford to feed him, so they gave him away. That one — both parents are in jail for drug charges. This one is a rarity: He is actually an orphan. His parents are both dead, so he came here.”

Most of the boys never had much of a chance in life. Many were from hill tribes, which meant they didn’t have a Thai passport. The lack of proof of nationality would bar them from pursuing an education, obtaining a good job, going abroad or even becoming a soldier, which many would gladly do to escape the poverty.

IN THE EARLY STAGES of a young fighter’s career in Thailand, he’ll earn 300 *baht* for a fight. That’s about \$9. In the U.S., a low-level boxer will take in at least several hundred dollars for a bout. In Thailand, it can be worse. Sometimes there isn’t any prize money — just tips from the audience. To risk one’s health for such paltry sums may seem ludicrous to us, but the alternative would be to do agricultural work, which at best might pay 100 *baht* per day. And in the hill tribes, many agricultural workers receive no cash compensation at all, just room and board. Compared to that, 300 *baht* can seem like a decent wage.

Well, it might be a good wage if the boys were allowed to keep the money. Often, however, the parents show up the day after a fight to congratulate their child — and then collect most of the winnings.

If a young fighter does well, he can move up the ranks and earn more money, but unless he relocates to Bangkok or possibly Chiang Mai, it’ll be difficult to advance. There are fighters in rural Thailand who subsist by competing for tiny sums of money and have done so their entire life. Even in the big leagues, fighters don’t earn very much. Mike Tyson’s biggest paydays were in the \$30 million range. Forbes says that UFC star Conor McGregor could net \$75 million for his fight with Floyd Mayweather Jr. In contrast, the top prizes in muay Thai

run about 200,000 *baht*, or \$6,000. In tournaments in Phuket, foreigners — who earn more than Thais — can win 20,000 *baht*. Translated, the winner gets \$600, while the loser gets nothing.

ALTHOUGH BARE-KNUCKLE boxing has been illegal in Thailand for many years, such fights still take place in Mae Sot. Burmese boxers cross the border to challenge Thai fighters in these no-holds-barred matches. Injuries are a given. Two referees are stationed in the ring; they’ll intervene only if a downed fighter is unconscious and his opponent is stomping on his head. Not surprisingly, deaths have been reported.

The injury rate for Burmese fighters is difficult to ascertain because they disappear back over the border, often carried out by comrades. Desperate Thai fighters will make their annual pilgrimage to Mae Sot for a shot at a purse that’s reported to be \$22 for Thai nationals. Burmese winners collect half that, while the pay for a draw is \$4. Again, losers get nothing.

With such paltry wages, even good fighters often live hand to mouth. Economic necessity forces them to compete more frequently, increasing the probability of injury. According to the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, the most common injuries among pro Thai boxers are to the lower extremities. Head injuries are No. 2.

A single broken bone can end a fighter’s career or bring about financial ruin. Hospital bills can wipe out savings in a heartbeat. Recovery time can result in weeks or months of lost income. Facing such prospects, there’s great pressure to return to the ring prematurely, which may lead to additional injuries.

THE ROAD TO THE BIG PAYDAYS is much longer in Thailand than in the West. I’ve heard stories of young boxers fighting as often as three times a week — and in a lifetime never earning a purse over \$50. Muhammad Ali had 61 professional fights in his career and held the title three times. In Thailand, there are unknown kickboxers with 75 fights to their credit. That’s 14 more fights, with a lifetime earning record of less than what Ali made for one bout.

When a boxer’s career winds down, it happens the same way in Southeast

Asia as anywhere else. A few lucky ones become trainers. Of these, a very few become good trainers and actually help talented youngsters achieve their dreams. Most face the challenge of finding employment while lacking job skills.

Ex-boxers are everywhere in Thailand. When I was there, all I had to do to find a few was walk through the lobby of my hotel, wearing a muay Thai shirt. I did that once, and within minutes, the handyman came over to tell me of his glory days. “Grab my neck,” he said, insisting that he still possessed the strength that carried him through countless matches.

A guy unloading water bottles put down a crate and joined us. “My specialty was the knee to the kidney,” he said, proudly, before throwing several strikes too close for comfort. A third man appeared out of nowhere, and suddenly the fight talk was flying like machine-gun bullets. Their other engagements were forgotten, and they headed to the bar, dragging me along. Over beers, they all talked about how muay Thai had changed and how, if they were young today, they’d all be champions.

Young, of course, is a relative term. I’d bet money that they all were younger than I was at the time, but in muay Thai years, they might as well have been 65.

Sitting on that bar stool, I listened to the same stories from these former Thai boxers as I’d heard from fighters back in Brooklyn. It sounded like the Marlon Brando speech from *On the Waterfront*: “I could have been somebody. I could have been a contender.”

One of the Thai men pointed to two thin lines running across his face. One stretched from the top of his eyebrow to his hairline. The other started at his lip and went across his cheek. They were the result of the elbow strikes that ended his career. “Look at these scars,” he said, proudly. “I was a boxer.”

The sad truth is that for many boys in Southeast Asia, scars are all they’ll have to show for a lifetime of effort in the ring. If they’re lucky. ✕

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Antonio Graceffo is the first American to be awarded a Ph.D. in wushu from Shanghai University of Sport. His book *Warrior Odyssey* is available on Amazon.com.

Don Wilson



Don Wilson Is Playing a Hit Man?

Don “The Dragon” Wilson, the kickboxing legend who became an action star, is back on the screen, and this time the movie is a quirky action comedy with a twist for the former fighter: He plays a hit man.

by David J. Moore

Titled *Paying Mr. McGetty*, the new film comes from Traditionz Entertainment, the same company that produced *The Martial Arts Kid* with Wilson and Cynthia Rothrock.

The plot of *Paying Mr. McGetty* reflects the madcap style that’s often used in Hong Kong cinema. After a night of drinking and gambling, Tyrell

(played by R. Marcos Taylor, who appeared in *Straight Outta Compton* and *Baby Driver*) is awakened by an angry call from his girlfriend Meena. Turns out, Tyrell is in bed with a strange woman — who happens to be the daughter of a local mob boss. Once the mobster finds out, he hires hit-man Shota (Wilson) to take out the transgressor.

To make matters worse, the reward that’s placed on Tyrell’s head drives dozens of others to look for him, too. Further adding to Tyrell’s troubles, Meena, the love of his life, is put in harm’s way. Tyrell must make a stand by taking on the mob, dealing with Shota and finding the money to pay his landlord — the eponymous Mr. McGetty — before the day ends.

PRODUCER JAMES WILSON said the concept for *Paying Mr. McGetty* began more like a Jackie Chan movie than an urban action drama. “There [was supposed to] be more comedy than action, but the star R. Marcos Taylor was injured in the first scene on the first day,”

Photos Courtesy of James Wilson

James said. "So we changed it right away. We went in a quirky different direction. We knew the movie would be risky from the beginning. We tried to make this a very unique and unusual movie."

Don Wilson, who's starred in more than 30 feature films, enjoyed the challenge of playing an anti-hero in *McGetty*. "In my other films, I usually work very heavily on story, casting and editing, but on this one, I just had more input on my own character," he said.

"I'm not used to being the bad guy, so I tried to make this character like Leon in *The Professional* and a little like the villain from *No Country for Old Men*.

"But I had scruples. I did not want to take out Marcos because he did not do what they thought he had done. I'm not just a hit man who will do anything for money — I actually have a code."

BECAUSE OF HIS martial arts training — which includes karate, *muay Thai* and *taekwondo* — Taylor was up to the task of squaring off with Wilson. "I always seem to play the heavy, the thug or the tough guy, so Tyrell was really interesting to play physically," he said. "Going from confusion, stress, frustration, depression and fear to courage, determination and happiness was a challenge, but one I loved doing. There was plenty of action to keep things interesting."

In an interview with *The Action Elite*, fight coordinator and stunt performer John Kreng said he was honored to collaborate with Wilson on *McGetty*.

"He was amazing to work with because he has a certain understanding and a logic; he let me create what I needed to create, and he would take it and make it his," Kreng explained. "He would watch what I had choreographed with the stunt crew [and] he would say, 'OK, I see why you're doing this and this, but I just need to change it to work for me,' so it was a great process."

Changing things so they better match his skill set is something Wilson is used to. "If you do anything for over 30 years, you should be comfortable doing it by now," he said. "I am much more comfortable now on a set in front of a camera, doing my dialogue, engaging in action and becoming [different] characters."

The action scenes that Wilson and Kreng crafted draw from both men's backgrounds. "Don wanted something along the lines of *The Bourne Identity*, where it was simple yet forceful," Kreng said. "So I started looking more into it, and I incorporated a little more Japanese *jiu-jitsu*, *aikido* locks and stuff just to change it up a bit. I wanted to add something that I hadn't seen Don do yet. He was totally up for it and thought it was really cool."

THE LIKELIHOOD that *McGetty* will be a hit with the martial arts community is boosted by the fact that the producers are firmly enmeshed within that community and have subtly inserted respected fighters into the film. It's a nod to fans of the genre. Former kickboxing legends Jeff Smith and Orlando Rivera have roles. Former top-rated competitor James Sisco, grandmasters Glenn C. Wilson and Sergio Barriga, and masters Kevin Bergquist, Doug Zimmer and Mark Liverio also make appearances.

Clearly, the film is designed to appeal to those who have devoted their lives to their martial arts. But it offers so much more. "*Paying Mr. McGetty* is for anyone who loves romance and action," said Michael Baumgarten, the film's director. "This is the type of movie that can be a fun little cult film for a lot of audiences. We want a diverse crowd. We want to plug into those markets and give them a film that they don't get every week." 🐉

IF IMDB IS TO BE BELIEVED ...

The extended cast list for *Paying Mr. McGetty* includes other martial artists whose names may be familiar to *Black Belt* readers:

- Cynthia Rothrock
- Tayari Casel
- Alan Goldberg
- Maurice Elmaleh
- Robert Goldman

The film is designed to appeal to those who have devoted their lives to their martial arts. But it offers so much more.





A Toothpick When You're Hungry

There was a saying in old Japan: *Bushi wa kuwanedo taka-yoji*. Roughly translated, it means “When he’s hungry, the samurai uses a toothpick.”

by Dave Lowry

There are layers of meaning to this. Understanding them gives us insight into the warrior culture that’s had such a direct effect on the martial arts we practice today.

IT’S FOOLISH to talk about samurai as if they were a monolithic, never-changing institution in Japanese history. The samurai class varied widely

in its makeup, influence and behavior. There were periods when they were almost constantly at war and times when they were little more than foppish dilettantes. Clearly, generalizations are impossible.

However, over the centuries, a discrete culture began to take form. In part, probably, because of the class stratification that dominated social and political life in Japan, the samurai

came to see themselves as different. To be sure, they didn’t always live up to their own collective sense of self. It’s doubtful they were entirely aware of that sense in any comprehensive way. They did, however, understand that their role in society was unlike that of any other class. How an individual reacted to that, how he embodied it — or perverted it — said much about him.



The samurai were looked up to by those of the lower castes. They were also models of contempt.

rai were looked up to by those of the lower castes, to some extent, as exemplars of virtue and selfless bravery. They were also models of contempt, regarded as parasites. They were held up as figures of ridicule, and the toothpick proverb can be interpreted that way. It winds up being about a haughty buffoon pretending to be well-fed and satisfied when in reality, he's nothing but a starving failure.

There's another layer of meaning to be found in the image of the hungry samurai with his toothpick, though.

JAPAN, THROUGH MUCH of its history, has dealt with famine. The last of these occurred in the late 18th century, caused by bad weather and disastrous government policies. Even in good times, hunger was a frequent part of daily life in Japan. Major riots occurred when farmers and other producers objected to high taxes, paid in rice, on dwindling food supplies. (Incidentally, in virtually all these riots, farmers armed with rakes, hoes and other tools put the samurai to rout.)

During periods when hunger plagued Japan, others could grumble and complain. The samurai, however, often projected an air of calm stoicism. Think of an inn of the sort frequently depicted in samurai films. Farmers, merchants, the *katsugi* men who haul products up and down the highway — they're all complaining about the cost and scarcity of food while longing for a meal that will leave their belly full instead of pinched. And there sits a samurai, toothpick in mouth, saying nothing. His imperturbable self-control has an effect on the crowd. "Look at that samurai," they say. "He must be as hungry as we are, but see how he conducts himself."

IN THIS WAY, we can see how a samurai could be a model for others, displaying coolness, refusing to complain. This is a kind of leadership that

came naturally to at least some of the samurai class. They saw themselves as special, as people who needed to serve as exemplars, as men who had a duty to live up to the expectations of their position. If we look at the saying in this light, we can see where a samurai would have pretended to be full when he was actually hungry because he believed behaving in that manner would make others consider their own behavior.

Today's martial artists are not samurai, however. Samurai are so far from modern society that it's impossible to think of our being related to them any more than we could identify with a galley slave on a Roman ship. Life is just too different. Nevertheless, it's useful for us to reflect on our own roles, in the *dojo* and in life.

Do we think of our status as black belts, masters or experts as a sign of how special we are? Do we saunter about the dojo as if we're elitists, possessing some remarkable talents? If so, we can expect that, like the pretentious samurai with the toothpick, there are people who will be quietly ridiculing us. We will be seen as arrogant, grandiose clowns.

If, on the other hand, we regard our training as a means to become more honest and to polish our integrity, we should see, as well, that there must be expectations of us. We can set the standard for good, unselfish behavior. We can act in such a way as to make others look up to us.

Everyone knows, if not true hunger, at least some level of discomfort in life. How we react to it, like the samurai with his toothpick, says much about the seriousness of our martial arts training. 🐉

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dave Lowry has written *Karate Way* since 1986. For more information about his articles and books, visit blackbeltmag.com and type his name in the search box.

TO USE a toothpick — as if one has just eaten a sumptuous meal, even though one's belly is empty and aching — can imply many things. It can be pretense. Think of the guy who purchases a new luxury car on an already maxed-out credit card and then drives around as if he's financially flourishing even though the creditors are already gathering at his door.

There were samurai with toothpicks who absolutely fit this behavior. They would swagger about with their twin swords, arrogant in their position over the commoners who, ironically, were the source of every bite of food that went into their mouth. Yes, the samu-



Woman of Wonder, God of War, Shortcomings of Yoga and Hero of India

For decades, Hollywood-generated publicity campaigns hinged on coordinating magazine articles so they would hit the newsstand in time to benefit a movie's release.

by Dr. Craig D. Reid

To make that work, writers like me would visit film sets, interview stars long distance and chat with filmmakers months before anything debuted in a theater.

With the rise of the internet and video on demand, all that changed. Set visits and print coverage designed to coincide with a movie's theatrical run are things of the past. Many critics still rush to get their reviews posted online, but here in the print world, we have the luxury to write what hasn't been written, and that helps convey the film's true spirit and feel. With that in mind, here are the movies we're covering this time.

WONDER WOMAN This movie exudes an uplifting, almost healing spirit, and consequently it's being heralded as one of the best superhero origin stories ever. It's refreshing to watch a non-brooding superhero who doesn't wrestle with inner demons and god complexes. Instead, *Wonder Woman* makes us empathize and encourages us to believe in love and the possibility of changing humankind for the better.

Before I begin, it's worth noting that the Wonder Woman character, aka Princess Diana of Themyscira, born to Queen Hippolyta and taught to fight by her aunt Antiope, may be fictional, but in a sense, the Amazons were real.

The historical warriors lived not near the Amazon River in South America but near the Terme River in northern Turkey. There, scientists have excavated graves and discovered pottery shards that point to the existence of their warrior culture. (By the way, those scientists also disproved the far-fetched theory that these female fighters were lesbians who killed baby boys and cut off their own breasts to be better archers. But that's a different story.)

Back to the movie: Although the comic-book origin of Diana's ascent into Wonder Womanhood is rooted in World War II, the film is purposefully set during World War I. Director Patty Jenkins commented that World War I marked the first time that modern civilization was contemplating its roots while not being clear about which side was in the right.

Wonder Woman, portrayed by former Israel Defense Forces combat trainer Gal Gadot, travels to France with a fighter pilot/spy, convinced she can end the hostilities by kill-

ing Ares, the evil god of war. At the Western Front, she learns that a million people have died in No Man's Land, the space between the trenches of the opposing factions. When she's told there's nothing she can do to aid a defenseless village behind German lines, it's time to act.

Removing her disguise and revealing her true ancient-armor-clad warrior self, she climbs out of the trenches and into No Man's Land. The ensuing emotionally charged fight is a fan fave. I shed a tear for two of my uncles who actually fought in the trenches, especially the one who didn't come home.

Wonder Woman is full of Hong Kong-style battles. However, the influence of the movie *300* is also apparent — for example, as the heroine crashes out of a belfry, we see a slo-mo, wide-angle shot of her body floating through the air, sword held high. It's beautiful.

Black Belt Hall of Famer Caitlin Dechelle, who got her start in Jackie Chan's *Chinese Zodiac* (2012) after he saw her in a U.S. Open martial arts tournament on television, served as Gadot's stunt double. Damon Caro, stunt coordinator for *Wonder Woman*

and *300*, also has a Chinese connection: He worked as a stuntman in Sammo Hong's *Martial Law* TV series, which ran from 1998 to 2000.

GOD OF WAR This motion picture is set in 1557 during the Ming dynasty, specifically in the middle of the Wokou Wars, which pit China against Japanese pirates. The marauders pillaged the Middle Kingdom's coastal regions, which gave rise to two real-life heroes: Gen. Yu Dayou (played by Sammo Hung) and a military strategist named Qi Jiguang (played by Vincent Zhao). In the movie, the younger man replaces the general after the general's battle strategy is revealed as outdated. The plot focuses on Qi's cat-and-mouse game against the pirates' cunning and combat-hardened leader Kumasawa (Yasuaki Kurata).

Qi concludes that the Ming army is composed of poor soldiers who fear the pirates, so he creates a new fighting force made up of miners from local villages who will do anything to protect their land and loved ones from harm. When Qi convinces them

that the wokou are a real threat, they transform themselves into China's most competent fighters.

Although the battles reflect the strategies of Qi and Kumasawa in an entertaining way, the Yu-vs.-Qi pole fight and Kumasawa-vs.-Qi sword fight are worth their weight in gold. Both were filmed at normal speed using many medium shots. That can be challenging for actors because if they make a mistake, the audience will catch it. The advantage here is that viewers can see the different pole styles and the contrasting Japanese and Chinese sword skills.

God of War subtly pays tribute to Qi and kung fu actor Jimmy Wang Yu. The only other wokou-inspired movie starring Yu is *Beach of the War Gods* (1973). Yu's breakout film was *One-Armed Swordsman* (1967), in which he fought with a broken weapon. At the start of the duel between Kumasawa and Qi, an expert with the short sword, Qi uses a long sword. Then his blade is cut in half by Kumasawa. In a nod to Yu, the broken blade matches the weapon Yu used in *One-Armed Swordsman*. In a



Photo Courtesy of Well Go USA Entertainment

nod to the real Qi, the length of Qi's sword is now historically accurate.

KUNG FU YOGA Jackie Chan is back in a film that's something of an anomaly because it has little to do with yoga except for a few poses and a blasé explanation of yoga breathing. Yet when we think of yoga, we think of India — which makes *Kung Fu Yoga* an India-na Jones in-search-of flick that has an archaeologist (Chan) helping a good-natured descendent of Indian royalty find a lost treasure before her power-hungry enemy does.

Compared to Chan's previous films, *Kung Fu Yoga* is inadequate. However, based on fight creativity and the way the action is shot — we can clearly see every move he makes — the battles are better than those in most of the martial arts movies produced outside of Asia. Chan may be 63, but we still expect more from him in every film he makes. In a way, his success has become a hindrance.

The fights and stunts in Chan's movies typically escalate until the finale, at which point he lets go and creates an engaging battle we hope never stops. End-credit outtakes reveal the dangers associated with the stunts. However, *Kung Fu Yoga* has no fight escalation, and Chan's finale duel against the bad guy is weak. Even worse, there are no outtakes.

Chan's next motion picture, which co-stars Pierce Brosnan, will be something completely different. Titled *The Foreigner*, it



Kung Fu Yoga

represents a change for Chan, one in which age will mean nothing. More on that to come.

BAHUBALI 2: THE CONCLUSION This Bollywood hit is so outrageous, wacky and stunning that I laughed at the action's audacity. I first caught wind of *Bahubali 2* when *Kung Fu Yoga* reviewers wrote that the Chan flick's opening fight was influenced by *Bahubali: The Beginning* (2015). My initial thought was, Since when does Jackie Chan need to be influenced by anyone's fights? But now I believe he was — and *Bahubali: The Beginning* was superior.

The second *Bahubali* movie can be described as the *Ten Commandments* meets *Ben-Hur* in ancient India. In the first film, we learned that Amarendra Bahubali (Prabhas) and Bhalla (Rana Daggubati), orphaned at birth, are

cousins raised by the queen of Mahishmati. Although Bhalla is her son, the more virtuous warrior Amarendra became king. Bhalla's venomous deceit caused Amarendra to be exiled. Fearful of his return, Bhalla ordered Amarendra's trusted mentor to kill him.

Audiences had to wait two full years to find out exactly what happened — and that Bhalla's scheming couldn't stop the return of Bahubali's son Mahendra.

The action choreography in the second movie is so illogical that it's logical as each technique, special effect and over-the-top wire-work scene functions like clockwork. For example, when lackeys attack Amarendra and his girlfriend, the couple shoots three arrows at a time while leaping, ducking and rolling. Amarendra then says, "Four at a time!" and he proceeds to show her how to do it. It's artfully convincing. Another example has Amarendra leading a stampede of bulls, their huge horns on fire, to destroy a dam and wash away the army that surrounds the city. Holy cow!

The fights make liberal use of "speed ramping," Zack Snyder's patented camera-choreography technique that was highlighted in *300*. It involves speeding up and then slowing down the tempo of martial arts scenes to accentuate the emotion of the moment.

Bahubali 2 makes me think that Hollywood filmmakers had better watch out. Bollywood movies are here, and the Indians are learning fast. 🐃



Bahubali 2: The Conclusion

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dr. Craig D. Reid's book *The Ultimate Guide to Martial Arts Movies of the 1970s: 500+ Films Loaded With Action, Weapons and Warriors* is available from Amazon.com.

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SHOT ACROSS THE BOW, KUK **국술원** SOOL STYLE

6 Precision Kicks That Will Stun an Attacker Long Enough for You to Escape! (And You Can Crank Up the Power If You Need to Do More Damage)

BY ROBERT W. YOUNG • PHOTOGRAPHY BY CORY SORENSEN

A martial art

is a thinking person's self-defense tool. We all know that. In part, it's why we wield our natural weapons like a scalpel, not like a machete. We're taught that precision is an essential component of mastery, that our goal in a fight is not merely to blast a kick into our opponent's leg as hard as humanly possible and then hope for the best. Rather, it's to aim for a specific spot on that leg using a specific part of the foot to make contact. That's the definition of efficiency with respect to energy expenditure, technique choice and target selection.

In the case of the Korean art of *kuk sool*, that quest for efficiency inspired founder In Hyuk Suh, who was *Black Belt's* 1984 Man of the Year, to turn to pressure points. Whether it's a precision kick or a surgical strike, he teaches that the best target is a pressure point or a similarly vulnerable spot on the body. The founder's son, ninth-degree black-belt Sung Jin Suh, concurs. In fact, he's made it his mission to spread knowledge of the efficacy of pressure-point strikes wherever he goes.

I met with Sung Jin Suh, whose official title with the World Kuk Sool Association is *su suk kwan jang nim*, for the purposes of the photo shoot that yielded the images you see here and the interview that led to the training tips. In this issue of *Black Belt*, Sung Jin Suh covers kicks. In the next issue, he'll address hand strikes.

Using the ball of his foot, kuk sool master Sung Jin Suh front-kicks his opponent in the solar plexus. The blow usually makes the recipient unable to continue his attack for at least 30 seconds, Suh says.



TECHNIQUE: FRONT KICK

Target: The solar plexus. "It's a pressure point that kuk sool practitioners call *goo mi*," Sung Jin Suh said. "It's the perfect target because it leaves the attacker unable to move — and probably on the ground — for at least 30 seconds. And the solar plexus is not too high, which means most martial artists can reach it with their front kick."

Tool: The ball of the foot. "Make sure all five toes are pulled back," Suh said. "Otherwise, you might jam a toe when you make contact."

Tutorial: "When you get hit in this spot, it feels like you're out of breath," he explained. "That makes it great for self-defense because it gives you a chance to get away without causing him permanent injury or death."

Precision is important, but a minor miss isn't a deal breaker, Suh said. "In general, pressure points are tiny. Fortunately, the area you can hit with the front kick is bigger than the point. In this case, the target is about 1 inch in diameter."

"Even if you miss *goo mi* with your kick, you can still be very effective. For example, you can break one of your opponent's ribs. If you kick too low and miss the pressure point, however, you probably won't be effective, especially if the person has well-developed stomach muscles."

It's fairly easy to build enough power in your front kick to accomplish your self-defense goals, Suh added. "That's one reason we break boards. It develops a part of the body that's already solid and makes it better for kicking the solar plexus."

TECHNIQUE: ROUNDHOUSE KICK

Target: The pressure point called *hohn soo*. “It’s in the middle of the side of the neck between the bottom of the ear and the collarbone,” Suh explained. “Like the solar plexus, *hohn soo* is considered a deadly pressure point. What that means is you can hit it with medium power and get the expected result, or you can hit it with full power and potentially cause death. But as I said, as martial artists, we’re interested in self-defense, doing just enough damage to stop the attacker. Most of the time, we don’t need or want to kill the person.”

Tool: The ball of the foot. “It’s preferred for self-defense because it has better penetration than the arch of the foot,” Suh said. “Of course, you can also use the arch for the roundhouse, but the ball is better because you can hit the specific point. The arch is bigger and rounder, which means you can only hit the general area.”

Tutorial: Execute a medium-power roundhouse to *hohn soo*, and the immediate effect will be disorientation, Suh noted. “The neck will immediately stiffen up. The attacker won’t be able to move his head well. He’ll also most likely fall down. If you use more power, momentary unconsciousness — or worse — can result.”

Any discussion of the roundhouse kick should include mention of two alternative targets that can be struck, Suh said. “The temple, which is also a pressure point, is a great place to land a roundhouse that uses the ball of the foot. Hitting it with the right amount of power will knock down the opponent. Using more than that risks death.

“The jaw is also good because it’s very weak. It can be severely damaged even by someone who doesn’t know martial arts, so you must exercise care. You don’t want to send the person to the hospital; you want to take him out of the fight so you can escape.”



Using the ball of his foot instead of the arch, ninth-degree black-belt Sung Jin Suh takes advantage of the roundhouse kick's improved penetration to strike a pressure point on the side of his opponent's neck.



In this precision kick of kuk sool, Sung Jin Suh targets a point just above the man's Adam's apple using the blade of the foot driven by a side kick. Note how his hands are positioned for protection.

TECHNIQUE: SIDE KICK

Target: The front of the throat. "There's a pressure point called *yum chun* on top of the Adam's apple," Suh explained. "That is your goal with the kick."

Tool: The blade of the foot.

Tutorial: "When the attacker gets hit there, it feels like he's being choked, and it becomes hard to swallow," he said. "That's why you always want to hit this point with control. If you hit it too hard, it can kill. You just want to give him a warning. That warning might make him feel like he just received a concussion even though he didn't. He'll probably fall, too. And he'll stay down for a short time because it will be hard to breathe."

Executing this technique can be challenging, he said. "It can be hard for some people to do a side kick high enough to hit

the throat. In general, doing a high side kick is harder than other kicks like the roundhouse kick and hook kick because you have to get your foot up there and stop its motion. Other kicks are always moving, which is easier for most people to handle. If you have to struggle to get your side kick up to this height, you're probably going to miss the target."

The key to avoiding that fate entails stretching and fine-tuning your body mechanics, Suh said. "Most people can learn how to do it. They have to pivot, bend the knee, chamber, bend the body [backward] and then [extend] the leg. It can take years of training before they're capable of delivering a controlled side kick to the throat with confidence, however. That's why regular training is important."



To enhance his effectiveness with the knee strike, Sung Jin Suh grasps his foe's uniform and pulls him into the technique, but the pressure point on the ribs that's being targeted also can be hit while the opponent is standing upright.

TECHNIQUE: KNEE STRIKE

Target: A pressure point known as *jahng moon*. "It's located on the lower part of the rib cage," Suh said. "Hitting this area is very effective. It doesn't make the attacker feel like he just got a concussion like some of the kicks, but it's very serious. You can easily break a rib, which will make it hard to fight, hard to breathe and hard to stand. He'll probably be recovering on the ground."

Tool: The bony part of the knee, ideally the kneecap. "The knee and the elbow are the strongest natural weapons a human has," Suh noted.

Tutorial: The knee strike is versatile enough to work against a variety of targets. "When the opponent is standing upright, the knee is perfect for hitting jahng moon because the point is low on the ribs, and that makes it easy to reach with your knee as your knee is moving upward," he said.

The solar plexus is also a valid target for a knee thrust, Suh said, but it's higher and it's on a vertical surface. "That means if you want to hit it with a rising knee, you'll probably have to bend your opponent over," he explained. "Angle is very important when attacking the solar plexus."

TECHNIQUE: HOOK KICK

Target: The pressure point called *dae choo*. "This one is located on the back of the neck, along the spine, just above where the neck joins with the shoulders," Suh said.

Tool: The heel of the foot.

Tutorial: "When this general area on their opponent is

exposed, kuk sool practitioners like to aim for that pressure point because it affects the person's back and spine," Suh explained. A controlled kick to *dae choo* will induce disorientation and make the person unable to stand temporarily. When he falls, he probably won't be able to get up for a while, depending on how hard you kick, Suh added.

"Using more force with this kick can cause damage to the spine, so remember to use control," he said. "In self-defense, you want to send him a [message] that says, 'If I go harder, you're going to have a problem.' Yes, you can do that if you need to, but hitting anybody with more force than necessary is abusing the martial arts. Controlling your power is much easier to do when you can control your emotions."



For the hook kick, Sung Jin Suh elects to strike a pressure point on the back of his adversary's neck with his heel. A controlled hit will disorient the recipient and cause him to fall. Because a more powerful kick can injure the spine, control is essential, Suh says.

KUK SOOL CLOSE-UP During much of the nearly six decades that In Hyuk Suh has guided and grown the World Kuk Sool Association, he's focused on preparing his four sons to one day take the reins and ensure that knowledge of his comprehensive art is passed to the next generation. His oldest is Sung Jin Suh, the master featured in this article. The son holds a ninth-degree black belt in *kuk sool*.

Now in his mid-50s, Sung Jin Suh has trained in kuk sool most of his life. He's in great demand on the seminar circuit because of his knowledge and skill. His workaholic schedule has resulted in his students respectfully referring to him as "The Machine."

When he teaches, Suh makes it a point to frequently mention how students must be capable of using their entire body as a weapon. Whether it's a kick, punch, knee strike or elbow strike, speed, power and precision are the goals that bring the desired results in combat.

With that base built, he says, you're free to focus on the more artistic aspects of the art, things like perfecting your technique while improving your health. That's what keeps students in the *dojang* long after they've become proficient at self-defense, Suh says.

— R. Barry Harmon



Kuk sool's inside kick entails driving the instep of the foot into the middle of the opponent's shinbone. Here, Sung Jin Suh uses the technique to intercept a front kick and cause enough pain to perhaps end the attack.

TECHNIQUE: INSIDE KICK

Target: The middle of the shin. "Although in this case you're not aiming for a specific pressure point, the bone here is vulnerable," Suh said. "Close to the knee and close to the ankle, the bone is stronger, so go for the middle of the shin."

Tool: The instep of the foot. The effectiveness of this technique is, of course, greatly enhanced if you're wearing shoes.

Tutorial: "This kick is particularly good because it's unexpected," the kuk sool master explained. "You can use it when the other person is attacking, and he won't expect it at all. Give his shin a quick kick; there's no need to scrape down it with your foot. The loss of balance and the pain he experiences will give you an opening to escape or counter. It's easy to connect with a follow-up."

Again, remember to use control, he said. "In Korea, I saw someone break another person's shin with this technique during a sparring match. It does take a certain amount of power and just the right angle, but it is possible. You don't need to use that much force for self-defense."

SHARPSHOOTING IN THE DOJANG

As a martial artist, you should train to hit specific targets such as the ones described here, Suh said. "When you're a beginner, precision is not the most important thing, but by the time you're a black belt, you should have no problem doing this."

"Targeting pressure points is more effective than just kicking any part of the body. When you hit a pressure point on a person who's not used to it, he won't know what's happening. He's probably never felt that before. Most people, especially criminals, think they're very strong. They have no idea what getting hit in a pressure point is like. And they know the strike wasn't that strong, which makes them even more shocked by the effect the technique is having."

Of course, hitting a small target on a moving person is challenging, Suh noted. Consequently, precision and speed are more important than power. "Precision means your foot is more likely to hit its target, and speed means that if it doesn't, you have a better chance of kicking again and having it work. That's why it's so important to practice year after year." ✂

To be continued in the December 2017/January 2018 issue of Black Belt. For more information about the World Kuk Sool Association, visit kuksoolwon.com.



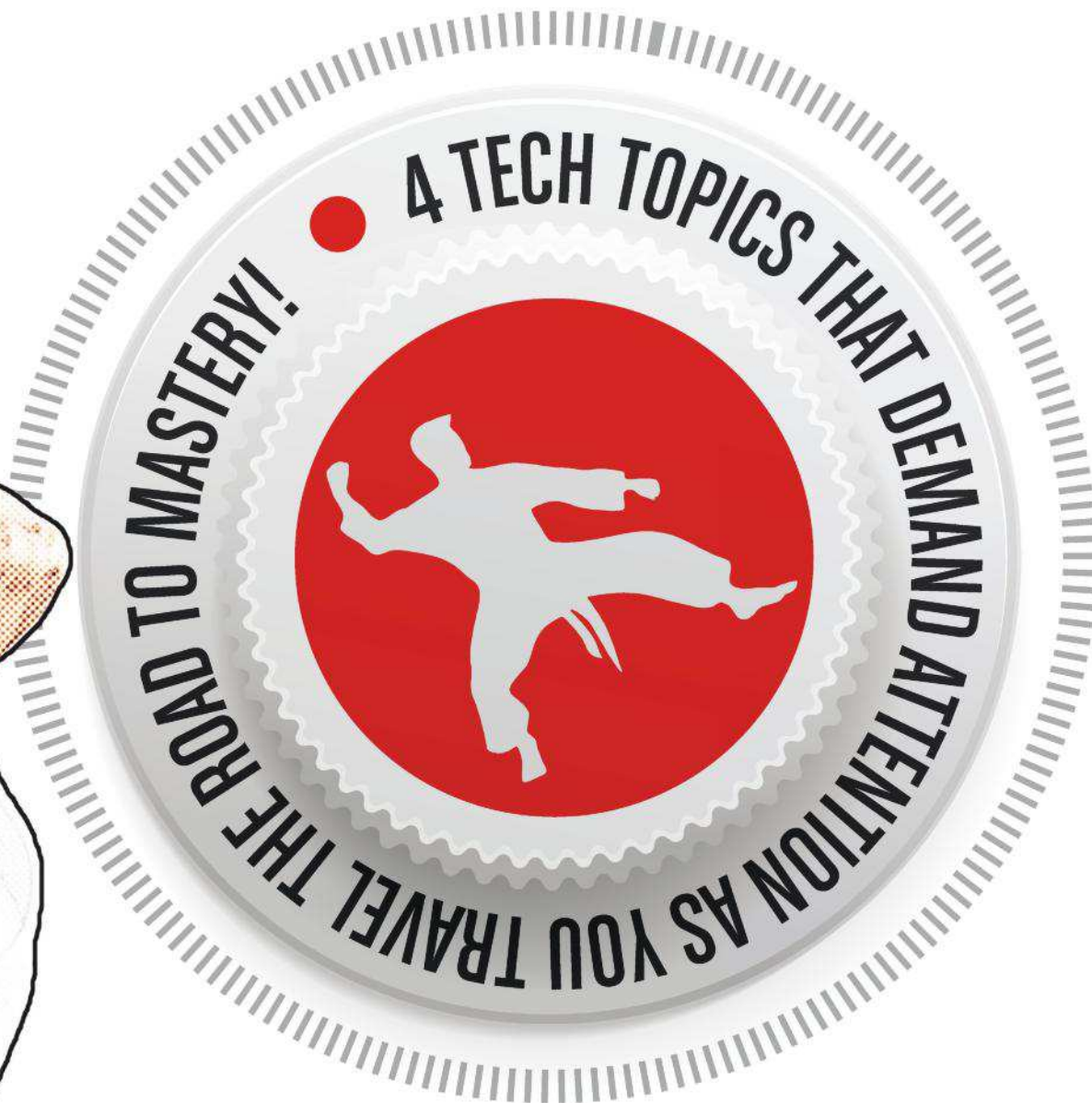
60TH ANNIVERSARY ON THE HORIZON

» In Hyuk Suh coined the name *kuk sool* in 1958 to describe the traditional Korean fighting skills he'd learned and then aggregated into a single system. He founded its official governing body three years later. Kuk sool quickly spread across South Korea, then jumped oceans and started gaining a foothold in numerous countries around the world. It now boasts more than 1 million active students.

Next year, kuk sool practitioners everywhere will celebrate the 60th anniversary of their art's founding. A major celebration will take place in October 2018 at the World Kuk Sool Won Tournament in Houston. As the anniversary approaches, details will be posted at kuksoolwon.com.

— R. Barry Harmon





FINE-TUNE YOUR KARATE!

BY DAVE LOWRY

No matter which style of karate you favor, the advice offered here will improve your understanding of your art, not to mention your performance in the dojo.

— Editors



When the scenario is laid out, when you know what attacks will come and how you're expected to respond, you can be forced to employ techniques you'd otherwise ignore.

SPAR TO BECOME A BETTER FIGHTER

It's a mistake — a serious one, even though it is understandable — to dismiss prearranged sparring as a sterile, unnecessary aspect of karate training.

I used the word “understandable” because if you don't have a realistic perspective on the place of prearranged sparring in the *dojo*, it can seem fake. You bow and take a stance. The attacker issues a strike that you both know is coming, and you respond with a block and counter. Real-life altercations are seldom that neatly arranged. Free sparring seems more spontaneous and natural. There's no designated attacker or defender, and the participants freely switch roles. It feels more authentic.

To be sure, sparring without a script has some advantages. There are also severe limitations. Stresses introduced by the dangers of free exchanges can lead you to narrow the range of your techniques. You tend to focus on moves with which you're comfortable. You don't expand your repertoire.

In free sparring, you polish what you're already competent with and ignore your weaknesses.

In contrast, when the scenario is laid out, when you know what attacks will come and how you're expected to respond, you can be forced to employ techniques you'd otherwise ignore. You strengthen and broaden your repertoire. Furthermore, within the structure of prearranged sparring, there's an opportunity to explore many avenues of karate that normally would be closed.

In Japanese, prearranged sparring is called *yakusoku kumite*. *Yakusoku* means “agreement.” There are several versions of this, including one-, two- and three-step *kumite*. An interesting variation is *happo kumite*. *Happo* means “eight directions,” but its connotation here is “many.”

HAPPO: Place yourself in the middle of multiple attackers — four is a good number. Begin with clear directions: The first opponent will execute a front kick that you must avoid or

block, after which you counter. The second opponent proceeds with a face-level punch that you must deal with the same way: block and counter. And so on. Everyone should be clear on the sequence.

The attacks are limited. The responses can be anything you, the person in the center, wish. The second attacker doesn't begin until the first attack and counter are completed. All movements are slow and focused but without power. In a real sense, this is choreography, like rehearsing a movie fight scene.

Stop there, at that level, and the benefits of *happo kumite* are limited. This is only the start, however. Once you have the moves down, speed up the sequences. Attacks should come faster, and the intervals between attacks should become shorter. As soon as you counter the first attack, the second one is launched. You're forced to respond more quickly.

At an even higher level, the attackers choose their own techniques. They also can change up the sequence, varying who attacks first so you can never know from which direction the next assault will come.

A benefit of *happo kumite* isn't immediately obvious, but it's important. The attackers, rather than being just mobile punching bags for you, play an essential role because no matter how good you are, you can be overwhelmed by multiple opponents coming from different angles. If the attackers become thoughtless or too aggressive, they'll force you to flail about — or just cower. At this point, you're learning nothing because you're not engaging in the training.

If, however, the attackers are participating thoughtfully, they can play a constructive role. They need to graduate their strength and power carefully, pressing you without destroying your spirit or compromising your technique. The attackers need to be constantly engaged, evaluating you, pushing you to improve without going too far. In fact, they can learn as much as you can from this kind of training. They learn to observe, to sense your mindset. Even though the roles of attacker and defender seem at odds, both sides are working together, each learning valuable lessons.

MAKE YOUR BLOCK MORE THAN A BLOCK

Attention! Use extreme caution when attempting this drill.

Begin by having your partner step forward with his right foot while aiming a punch at your chest. Step back with your right foot, taking a left-leg-forward stance. While doing that, use your left arm to make a midlevel block that deflects his punch to your right. At the same time, pull your right fist back to your hip. Next, shuffle forward, maintaining a left forward stance, and deliver a right reverse punch to his midsection.

If you've practiced karate for long, you've probably worked this combination a thousand times — perhaps so often that it's hard-wired into you. You don't normally think about it, but let's do that for a moment.

Why do you step back? What if you step *into* the attack? When you step back, the distance is such that your left forearm, in the block, strikes your opponent's attacking limb along the forearm. This is helpful in training. Forearms are relatively tough, and partners can move back and forth across the floor striking and blocking. Beginners may experience some soreness and bruises the next day, but more experienced *karateka* will be fine.

If you step forward to make your block, however, that

ideal distance changes. Your vertical forearm will strike your opponent's elbow. Now, we all know that "blocking" is a misnomer in karate, a poor translation of *ukeru*, which means "to receive." Moving forward and striking the elbow with your block does a lot more than redirect your opponent's attack. It does damage, perhaps severe, to the attacking arm. It's meant to injure.

When you step back to make the receiving movement, the relative distance stays the same. Test this, and you'll see that you redirect the punch away from you — but you do little to take his balance. This is a serious flaw in teaching movements we describe as blocking. Often, they do little more than redirect the weapon, in this case his fist. But if he has the ability to reorganize, he'll do so instantly. He can even use the force of your deflection to flow into a new attack.

Blocking is a defensive movement. It's playing catch-up, hoping to find an opening to make a counter. Stepping back reinforces this mindset. When you step in and use your forearm to strike your opponent's elbow, you're deflecting his attack. You're also destroying the weapon.

Why not teach this? Because it's dangerous. Introduce it in a typical dojo with 10 pairs of *karateka*, and very quickly you'll have elbows broken, dislocated and sprained. If you're going to experiment with this, you need to know your opponent's skill level, his attitude and his mentality.

One of the lamest clichés in the martial arts is "My art is so deadly I can't even demonstrate it." No, it isn't that karate, at a high level, is too deadly. It's that practitioners, even at a relatively high level, are still too undependable to be able to engage in it at full speed and power without exercising extreme care.

CAVEAT: I'm not suggesting that stepping back in the face of an attack is always inferior. It can be very effective, particularly if you use your hips. Once again, however, unless the training is careful and controlled, someone's going to get hurt. And once again, blocking, in the sense of using your forearm to deflect the opponent's strike at his own forearm, is not the intent.

When you're retreating, a blocking movement is better employed as a pulling motion. Think not so much about moving back but about making a hole into which you're drawing your opponent. He's extending an attack; you're encountering it and pulling him — hard. Your forearm slides down from the initial position and brings your hand on top of his wrist, providing the grip you need. Your pull cannot be gentle; it needs to yank him off-balance. It isn't a straight-line pull; the motion draws his arm so it crosses his own center, further destroying his equilibrium.

When a person attacks with full commitment, only to have you suddenly retreat, taking the attacking arm with you and redirecting the force of the punch across his body, it's like grabbing the handle of a heavy open door, only to have it suddenly slam shut. It jerks you with it in a direction that comes close to taking you off your feet.

This movement doesn't take a lot of power. You can generate terrific force with the sudden movement of your hips as you step back. If you try to yank your opponent with your arm, he can easily feel your energy and adapt to it. Avoid that by making the pull quick and strong, powered by the large muscles in your hips.

LEARN WHEN TO STAY ON YOUR TOES

Put this one in the “obscure” category of karate techniques. Kicking with the toes is no longer taught in most dojo; in others, it was never part of training. There are a few Japanese karate systems that teach these kicks. Mostly, however, we associate them with Okinawan karate.

The obvious question is, Why? Most of us dislike hard contact with the toes. Stubbing a toe isn’t high on anyone’s “like” list. Further, the ball of the foot or the heel offer much more solid, much less potentially painful weapons, just as a closed fist is a safer, more effective way to use your hand compared to striking with the fingertips.

But think about the potential of a strike in which all five fingertips are pressed together, making a bird-beak shape. Such a strike delivered to the neck or another soft, nerve-rich target is powerful and penetrating. The same applies to toe kicks. If an opponent is doubled over in front of you as a result of your previous attack, a kick with the toes — especially if you’re wearing shoes — that hits his diaphragm or abdomen can be devastating.

Yes, but isn’t there a big difference between toe kicking while wearing shoes and toe kicking with bare feet? There is. To kick effectively with the toes requires a lot of training. Chances are if you’re an experienced karateka, as soon as you lift your knee to kick forward, your toes curl back, exposing the ball of your foot. A toe kick requires you to keep your toes straight and your entire foot parallel to the ground. Your lower leg doesn’t hinge up from the knee. Instead, it goes straight out, delivering the toes on target in

a line rather than a rising arc.

Some Okinawan systems teach kicking with only the big toe. Others involve squeezing the first and second toes together to form a delta-shaped weapon. In either case, the technique requires a lot of training, stretching and strengthening of the muscles of the foot.

Toe kicks are usually delivered toward the lower half of your opponent’s body, although some karateka chamber their knee high enough to drive their toes into their foe’s ribs or below his sternum. Such techniques can be effective against any target that has nerves close to the surface. For example, grappling locks that extend a captured arm, pulling an opponent so he’s bent over, expose the inside of the upper arm to a toe kick that can temporarily paralyze the entire limb. Toes driven into the inside of the knee or the area just above it can take a person to the ground with a combination of pain and nerve paralysis. Toe kicks directed at the thigh can disrupt normal nerve functions, making a person collapse.

There’s something about toe kicks that looks odd to the average karateka. To see such moves implemented by a skilled practitioner, however, with the toes driving into soft flesh with the potential for injury to organs or joints, is to see why one way of describing them in Japanese is *ashi-yari*, or “foot spear.”

HISTORY: Stories about toe kicks abound in Okinawan karate. Some are almost certainly in the realm of legend, while others have a grounding in historical fact. One of the latter involves Ankichi Arakaki (1899-1927), who was famous for toe kicking. On at least two occasions, he used the technique, once while sparring with his brother and once in a fight with a renowned practitioner of Okinawan wrestling. In the first encounter, Ankichi aimed his kick at his brother’s ankle. In the second, a fight that supposedly took place in a bar and was one Ankichi did his best to avoid, the target was just below the wrestler’s armpit. Both men suffered symptoms that resembled those of an aneurysm. The wrestler actually died within a few days.

Hohan Soken (1889-1982) was perhaps the most proficient Okinawan karate expert who used the toe kick. His white-crane system, with soft (looking), flowing moves, still teaches toe kicks. They’re often combined with movements that unbalance the attacker, causing him to drop his guard or perhaps open it, thus allowing penetration with a toe kick.

FOCUS ON THE SPIN KICK

The spinning heel kick is one of the most artistic martial moves. It looks graceful and generates tremendous power. Recently, some MMA fighters have worked to perfect their spinning kick because it hits like a baseball bat. Opponents are knocked down or completely out when the heel connects.

The origin of the spinning heel kick is hard to determine. The move is an extravagance of energy. It requires you to turn your back on your opponent. It’s most effective against the head. All these argue for not including it in the arsenal of a combative art designed primarily for real fighting. It appeared most prominently in *taekwondo* when the art became popular in the 1960s and ’70s. As the style became more widespread, the spinning kick became more sophisticated.

Most of us dislike hard contact with the toes. Stubbing a toe isn’t high on anyone’s “like” list. Further, the ball of the foot or the heel offer much more solid, much less potentially painful weapons.





Early free-style percussive arts with open, full-contact matches had little use for the spinning heel kick, mainly for the reasons mentioned above. As those arts continued to grow, however, they began to incorporate the technique. The power it offered was too great to ignore, which is why MMA practitioners have started implementing it.

The spinning heel kick was never in the repertoire of Japanese karate, and it's important for us to think about why that is. The Japanese combat arts have among their core principles one known as *kime*. In the dojo, *kime* is often translated as "focus." In everyday Japanese, *kime* (or its indicative form *kimeru*) means "to decide."

In a punch, *kime* is the exact point at which all energy is directed, extended, focused. In an art that involves throwing, *kime* comes the moment your opponent's balance has been compromised so completely he cannot resist. Apply focus, and the throw is effected at that very moment. *Kime* is that crucial point at which the intent of the technique is put into a decisive action.

Techniques like the spinning heel kick do not have *kime*. The extended leg is rotating; where the heel contacts the target is not precise. For that reason, the kick wasn't part of traditional Japanese karate.

TWO POINTS: First, to say that the spinning heel kick doesn't have *kime* is not to say it's ineffective. Too often karate practitioners develop an arrogance, a belief that theirs is the ultimate art. To be fair, practitioners of other arts develop the same delusions, but the point is that any fight-

ing art can be effective and dangerous and that you should never judge that potential by applying the standards of your own art.

Second, the underlying principles of your art are there for a reason. They give structure. Without that framework, you cannot build your own system.

If you have access to a library of karate books, you can see that, back in the early '80s, some Japanese karate schools began to incorporate the spinning heel kick into their curriculum. I have a text on what was then called "Korean karate" from the late '60s, and one of the techniques it illustrates is the "hook kick." The earliest reference I have of a similar kick in Japanese karate was not until the mid-'80s, and the explanation for it is muddled. Clearly, the authors had seen the Korean spinning heel kick, recognized its usefulness and tried to incorporate it. They couldn't reconcile its execution, however, with the principles of their art, particularly the principle of *kime*.

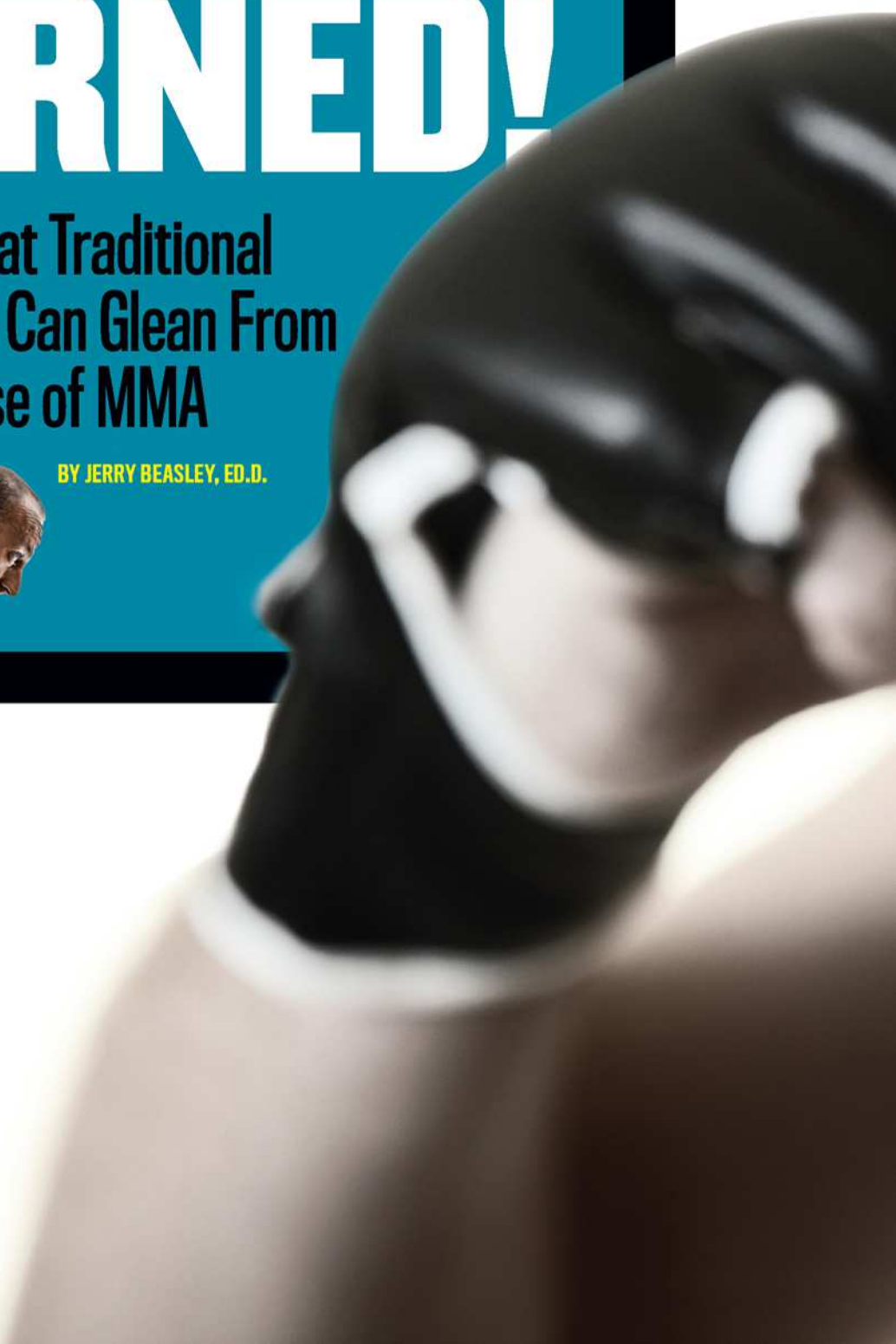
Of course, the possibility exists that some dedicated karateka will figure out a way to execute the spinning heel kick so it allows for the proper manipulation of *kime*. Principles give a fighting art structure, but they shouldn't squeeze it into a box. That's why karate is not the closed tradition many believe it to be. It can grow and change, so long as the principles are maintained. ✖

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LESSONS LEARNED!

**9 Take-Aways That Traditional
Martial Artists Can Glean From
the Rise of MMA**

BY JERRY BEASLEY, ED.D.







During the 1950s, '60s and '70s, most martial artists in America practiced only one art. There were, of course, some well-known figures who cross-trained in more than one system. One was Chuck Norris, who combined techniques from Korean and Japanese styles to win multiple world titles. Perhaps the most vocal early advocate of cross-training was Bruce Lee, who merged Eastern and Western boxing methods to create a new expression in what he termed “nonclassical martial arts.”

Then in 1970, Lee’s student Joe Lewis mixed karate kicks and boxing hand strikes and footwork with the *jeet kune do* sparring methods he learned from his mentor to jump-start the sport of American kickboxing. For the next two years, Lewis reigned as the undisputed heavyweight champion with 10 wins, all by knockout. Many of his kickboxing bouts had no particular rules. Fighters often wore tennis shoes and were permitted to use elbows and knees. This early incarnation of kickboxing, although it lasted less than two years, would set the stage for the no-holds-barred events of the '90s.

Masters from across the globe immigrated to the United States in the '70s and '80s in search of economic prosperity. Each claimed his system was the best for self-defense. Then in 1993, Brazilian *jiu-jitsu* master Rorion Gracie teamed up with fight promoter Art Davie to offer America its first no-holds-barred event that pitted one art against another. Within the first few shows, fighters learned that to be competitive, they had to have skills for fighting on their feet, in the clinch and on the ground. UFC commentator and Olympic gold-medalist Jeff Blatnick started re-branding the com-

petition as “mixed martial arts” as early as 1995, and from there, the modern sport of MMA was born.

Some would claim that MMA is not really a martial art, mixed or otherwise, and that the endeavor should be classified as a combat sport like boxing or wrestling. No matter what you think of their position, MMA athletes and the methods they use to train, the styles they mix and the way they fight can provide valuable insights for all martial artists. In this article, I identify nine lessons we can learn from MMA.

1 DEVELOP YOUR GRAPPLING AND STRIKING SKILLS

While the age-old debate over which way of fighting is superior is bound to continue, a 2016 study by Robert Macfarlane found the following to be true: In the 1990s, grapplers dominated UFC events. Rear-naked chokes and armbars were the preferred techniques on the ground. When the hands of strikers were not protected by gloves, the advantage often went to grapplers. They would lower their head on entry, thus removing an important soft target from the line of fire. The risk of injury to the hands caused strikers to hesitate just long enough for grapplers to enter and complete a takedown, after which a submission usually occurred.

By the early 2000s, grappling and striking were used more evenly, with the ratio being 49 to 51 percent. That was because grapplers had learned to strike and strikers had learned to grapple. But when he tabulated the results from 2010 to 2016, Macfarlane found that the outcomes began to favor strikers (56 percent). The rise of strikers was further

evidenced from 2014 to 2016, when they racked up 68 percent of the wins.

ACTION: Although the percentages vary, they remain fairly close, and that indicates that you should strive to master both skill sets. Yes, it can be argued that most fights start standing up, and if you're like most martial artists, you're functional there. However, in the event you can't end the encounter on your feet, you need to have ground skills.

2 DON'T NEGLECT CONDITIONING AND NUTRITION

They say fights are won or lost in the gym, and they're right. If you watch any street-fighting videos involving Kimbo Slice or other combatants, you'll notice that victory is usually determined not by who has the best skills but by who doesn't succumb to exhaustion. Several physical and mental changes occur when you're under attack. Your heart rate jumps. Your brain feels a sense of urgency and uncertainty. Your body and brain demand more energy. Being in shape gives you a chance to respond immediately and continue fighting until the end. This applies to the combat athlete as well as the self-defender.

Because superior conditioning is enhanced by proper nutrition, MMA champs follow strict diets to make weight and build muscle. They know that what they eat and drink determines the way their body responds to stress, recuperation and hard work.

ACTION: Watch the pro fighters when filmmakers profile their training routines. Pay attention to the difficulties they face with respect to conditioning and nutrition. Learn how diet can affect performance.

3 DISCIPLINE YOURSELF AND STAY HUMBLE

Self-discipline and humility are cornerstones of the traditional martial arts. To advance in rank, you must follow rigorous routines that

inevitably stress your practice of humility. The resultant discipline and humble disposition prompt you to avoid danger whenever possible. If you're facing an insult or threat, you feel confident and comfortable maintaining your quiet demeanor. Walking away and choosing not to fight are valued over aggression.

Mixed martial artists need to exercise self-discipline, as well. Running miles, lifting weights, sticking to strict diets, sparring for hundreds of rounds — it all takes supreme sacrifice. However, when it comes to controlling one's temper and one's mouth, MMA fighters aren't always on the same side of the street as traditionalists. Yes, there are fine examples of humility in MMA, but often it's nowhere to be found.

ACTION: The take-away here involves learning how not to act in social situations. Instead of seeking attention through public displays of aggression, concentrate on overcoming adversity, exhibiting tolerance, being inclusive and, of course, avoiding violence whenever possible.

4 DON'T OVERLOOK THE FOUR ATTRIBUTES

Speed, power, accuracy and deceptiveness have certainly been explored in MMA. We've seen how size does matter. Weight divisions are required because it's tough for a good small person to beat an equally good big person. Moreover, the old notion of only needing to land the right technique at the right time has been shown to come up short most of the time. It's been replaced by a recognition of the importance of having the right blend of the aforementioned attributes. With those on your side, virtually any technique from a spinning heel kick to a simple cross can be devastating.

ACTION: First, hone your technique. Then follow the lead of MMA trainers, who constantly develop innovative methods for building speed and power. Contrary to what we used to be taught in the traditional arts, cross-training in complementary sports is one way that works.



5

UPDATE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF RANGE THEORY

In the traditional arts, the concept of distance is typically divided into kicking range, punching range, the clinch and the ground. It's often said that boxers fight at a range in which they can hit with their hands while *karateka* and kickboxers fight at a range that allows them to use their feet. According to conventional range theory, grapplers prefer to fight on the ground or at least at such close range that kicks and punches are ineffective. We used to be taught to move in and out of different ranges and never to try to grapple in kicking range or box on the ground.

A revelation that's come from MMA is that you can shoot in from kicking range and immediately grapple. Likewise, you can effectively kick and punch on the ground in a variety of positions. Recall the early UFC matches in which Mark Coleman and Mark Kerr often shot in from long range to effect a takedown and neutralize the offense of top-tier strikers. Georges St-Pierre also developed a long-range shoot that enabled him to close the distance and take down strikers. And Royce Gracie showed you can kick your opponent while you're lying on your back and your enemy is on top of you — just use your heels to hit his kidneys.

ACTION: Rethink conventional range theory. It still has value, but not everything it teaches applies to every martial artist, especially if you're fast and flexible. Study MMA bouts that show fighters using techniques you thought were impossible in certain ranges.

6

SPAR WITH THE INTENT TO DO HARM

Bruce Lee was convinced that freestyle sparring could serve as the fire to burn away useless techniques. "There is nothing better than sparring in the practice of any combative art," he wrote. "In sparring, you should wear suitable protective equipment and go all-out. Then you can truly learn the correct timing and distance for the delivery of kicks and punches."

MMA fighters believe likewise. They spend countless hours in the ring and on the mat perfecting their skills. The risk of injury has to be there to simulate the risk they'll face in the cage.

Inhabitants of both camps learned long ago that you get the results you expect every time when you engage with a compliant partner. That's why it's crucial to test your skills by sparring with someone who's not compliant. It's the only way to gauge how you'll react when what should have



Photo by Sportpoint / Shutterstock.com

been an elegant sequence gives way to spontaneous chaos.

ACTION: Notice I titled this section “Spar With the *Intent* to Do Harm.” You don’t have to actually inflict injury on your training partner. It’s always wise to use protective gear to preserve your health and your partner’s. For hardcore self-defense training, up the stress factor by adding loud, disturbing music and strobe lights to simulate a hostile environment. Self-defense practitioners will protest that the ring has rules and the street is nothing like the ring, and they’re right. However, your goal is to recreate “alive” training, which Lee advocated as essential for self-expression to flourish.

7 SEEK THE MENTAL EDGE

Experts agree that in real-life scenarios, physical skills and attributes are often of secondary importance. The person who wins does so as a direct result of successful psychological preparation, which enables said person to establish and maintain awareness and mental advantage throughout the confrontation. What you mentally take into an altercation can make all the difference.

Watch any MMA championship bout, and you’ll likely witness the coach psyching up the fighter to mentally prepare him or her for the task at hand. The words a competitor uses during self-talk can be just as important as the message received from the coach. This also applies in self-defense. Of course, you won’t have a coach alongside you, but all that means is you need to serve as your own coach by employing positive self-talk. To get the mental edge, convince yourself that you will win.

ACTION: Engage in high-risk sparring or MMA and seek to gain control over your adversary. Your heart rate will elevate. In figurative terms, you’ll smell blood. It’ll be all you can do to hold back. You need not be concerned about engaging your “killer instinct” to get the mental edge. What you need to be concerned about is controlling and ultimately stopping it once the engagement is over. This is why in MMA competition the tapout is used as an honorable way to communicate defeat if you’re losing. It also helps both parties control their killer instinct.

8 DISTINGUISH USING AN ART FROM USING NO ARTS

Traditional arts like karate, *taekwondo* and judo have a place in MMA, just as combat sports like boxing, wrestling, *muay Thai* and Brazilian jiu-jitsu do. What MMA teaches us is that highly structured systems like *wing chun* perhaps should be regarded as “gateway arts.” A gateway art points the practitioner in a direction of self-discovery and teaches attributes that can be used to solve problems. In *wing chun*, for example, you may practice specific techniques like the *pak sao* and *lop sao*



to temporarily immobilize your opponent. But in competition, you employ the principle of immobilization, better known as holding and hitting. Although *pak sao* and *lop sao* work in certain conditions, the principle of immobilization works in a far wider variety of conditions.

Recall the words of Bruce Lee, who told us that the highest technique is to have no technique.

ACTION: Note that the top MMA fighters have no particular style. Be like them and train to be successful on the ground, in the clinch and on your feet. Skills and drills from Brazilian jiu-jitsu, boxing, wrestling and *muay Thai* belong in your arsenal. But never forget that proficient fighters can come from karate, *taekwondo*, *kung fu* or any other art as long as they supplement their style with the right tools and training methods.

9 FINE-TUNE THE PROVEN TECHNIQUES

It’s clear from watching MMA that certain moves are used often and with great success. They include the jab, cross, hook, elbow, knee, front kick, round kick, single-leg takedown, double-leg takedown, guillotine, armbar and rear-naked choke. When augmented with the right blend of speed, power, accuracy and deception, they can be extremely effective in a multitude of self-defense situations.

ACTION: Watch MMA matches with the eye of a martial technician. Pick out the moves that work, then ask yourself if you’re proficient in them. If you’re not, you know what to do. 🐯

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dr. Jerry Beasley was Black Belt’s 2000 Instructor of the Year. A senior professor at Radford University in Radford, Virginia, he heads the martial arts program and is promoter of the Karate College summer camp. His website is aikia.net.





COMPRESSION

LOCKS

Learn How They're Done and Why They're So Effective – With Input From Former UFC Ringside Physician Dr. Joseph Estwanik!

By Andrew Zerling • Photos Courtesy of acnjmanasquan.com

During a match, a young grappler thinks he's safely passing his opponent's guard to get to a better position. Then he feels an intense pain in his bent arm — like his muscles are about to explode. He's forced to tap out even though he doesn't know what just happened.

The grappler learns that he was caught in a biceps slicer. Many unwary martial artists have been lured into passing their opponent's guard only to be caught with this move. The biceps slicer belongs to the family of submission techniques known as compression locks. Also called muscle locks, muscle slicers and muscle crushers, this category is composed of devastating holds that inflict intense pain by pressing soft tissue (muscle or tendon) against bone.

In this tutorial, I will discuss three compression locks: the Achilles lock, the biceps slicer and the leg slicer. They're taught in Brazilian *jiu-jitsu*, *sambo* and catch wrestling, but they're considered unorthodox submission holds and, therefore, are not used often in training or competition. For that reason, the application of any of them is bound to incorporate the element of surprise, which is never a bad thing in a contest.



Andrew Zerling begins inside his opponent's open guard. His left knee is raised to keep the man from closing his legs, his right arm is overhooking the left calf and his left hand is controlling the right knee (1). Zerling posts with his left arm and falls onto his side (2). He wraps his right leg around the opponent's hip and pinches his legs together to control the trapped leg while using his left hand to push away the man's right foot (3). Zerling slips his right foot under the opponent's right knee while maintaining his hold on the lower leg (4). He locks his feet together to tighten the hold, which prevents the man from sitting up or rolling out (5). Finally, he uses a ball-and-socket grip to apply the Achilles lock (6).

ACHILLES LOCK

AKA: Achilles Hold, Achilles Squeeze

TECH DATA: The Achilles lock is probably the most commonly used compression lock. It induces intense pain by pressing the Achilles tendon against the lower-leg bone or ankle. In general, that happens when you sink the bony part of your forearm into your opponent's Achilles tendon while using your foot and leg to immobilize him and boost leverage. When you use the Achilles lock, think of the trapped ankle like a miniature neck that you're attacking with a guillotine choke.

Along with the heel hook and toe-hold, the Achilles lock is a staple of leg-lock specialists because of its effectiveness. That makes it a valuable addition to your arsenal.

TRIVIA NOTE: The Achilles lock is detailed in *The Canon of Judo*, by Kyuzo Mifune. Called *ashi-hishigi* in the judo world, it's categorized as a joint lock (*kansetsu waza*), but it's not part of the Kodokan Judo Institute's curriculum.

BICEPS SLICER

AKA: Biceps Lock, Biceps Crusher

TECH DATA: The biceps slicer induces instant agony by driving the biceps muscle into the humerus bone, which constitutes the upper part of the arm. Ideally, it's applied by inserting the shin or forearm into the gap created when your opponent's arm is folded, then pressing the sharp edge of the bone against his biceps. The trapped arm is compressed even more to up the pressure on the muscle.

The biceps slicer benefits from the element of surprise because when they're faced with the not-yet-completed technique, most martial artists will be preoccupied with possible hyperextension or hyper-rotation of the arm and thus won't be ready to defend against the compression lock.

TRIVIA NOTE: If your opponent believes he's perceptive enough to detect and then resist an arm hyper-extension, you can bend the limb into position for a biceps slicer in a heartbeat. Conversely, if he fights against your biceps slicer, you can transition to an arm lock that goes with the flow as he resists.

LEG SLICER

AKA: Calf Slicer, Thigh Crusher

TECH DATA: The leg slicer causes its incredible hurt by crushing the calf and/or thigh into the bones of the leg. Ideally, you fold your foe's leg and insert your shin or forearm into the gap while positioning the bony edge of your limb against the muscle. Compress the bent leg a bit more and you'll create great pressure on the leg muscles as they get squeezed between the leg bones. As with the aforementioned techniques, the leg slicer can take advantage of the element of surprise because during the lead-up, most martial artists will be concerned with avoiding hyperextension or hyper-rotation of their leg.

TRIVIA NOTE: If your opponent is sharp enough to resist what he thinks is an impending hyperextension of the leg (such as a kneebar), you can bend his leg into a leg slicer. And if he fights what he thinks will be a leg slicer, you can transition to a kneebar.

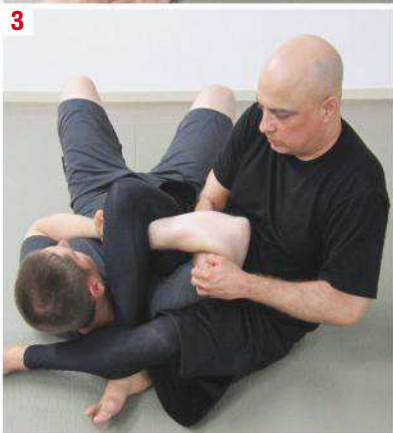
7 KEYS TO SUCCESS

An effective compression lock hinges on your ability to execute seven points correctly. Seven of them are critical. They build on each other, so it's best to learn them in order.

1) Opportunity Presents Itself: You must make the limb available to attack. In the case of the biceps slicer and leg slicer, that limb must first be bent. For the Achilles lock, you'll need to have your opponent's foot floating near your ribs to make securing the leg easier.

2) Thin Part Goes in First: When you're inserting a limb for a biceps slicer or leg slicer, make sure you place the thinnest part of that limb near the flexed joint. That will enable you to easily tighten the lock by rotating and then pulling said limb. For the Achilles lock, position the bony part of your wrist on the Achilles tendon, not your meaty forearm.

3) Make the Attack Perpendicular: For maximum effectiveness in all these compression locks, ensure that your inserted limb is oriented at 90 degrees to the limb you're attacking.



The grappler attempts an arm lock, but his opponent clasps his hands to defend against it (1). The martial artist bases out with his left hand and turns his body counterclockwise so he can swing his right leg over the man's right wrist (2). Next, he triangles his legs and joins his hands using a ball-and-socket grip. By lifting his hips while pulling and twisting his right wrist clockwise, he effects the **biceps slicer** (3). Close-up of the hand being wedged into the joint (4). If the adversary manages to escape the compression lock, the grappler can transition to an armbar (5).

The author starts on the bottom with his feet on his adversary's hips and his hands controlling his arms (1). He repositions his left leg so he can insert it in front of the man's torso and under his right arm (2). Note how he's immobilized his foe's right arm with his hand and leg (3). Next, the author locks his right leg over his left ankle, which lets the opponent think he's no longer in danger because he's out of the guard (4). Meanwhile, the author has grabbed his triceps from the inside. Using both hands, the author pulls on the triceps while further flexing the arm to crush the biceps against his shin (5). Close-up of the finishing position for the **biceps slicer**, in which the author is pulling with his arms and lifting with his hips (6).



4) Control the Lock: Because your opponent will be resisting, you'll need to maintain a solid grip on the flexed limb as you execute the biceps slicer and leg slicer. For the Achilles lock, concentrate on using your legs to control your opponent's leg by pinching them together. That will minimize thrashing.

5) Work at the End: For the biceps slicer and leg slicer, compress the muscle at the end of the limb for maximum effectiveness. For the Achilles lock, position your forearm at the end of your opponent's ankle (low on the leg). That will enable you to attack the Achilles tendon instead of the calf muscle.

6) Not Tight Is Not Right: For all three locks, try to eliminate gaps. Get your body in tight. There should be no empty spaces between your attacking limb and your opponent's attacked limb.

7) Use Your Entire Body: Think "body unification" when applying any of these compression locks. For the

biceps slicer and leg slicer, add a rotation and pull to achieve a superior lock. For the Achilles, rotate your wrist slightly to dig your radius bone into the tendon. If your right wrist is on the tendon, rotate your wrist slightly clockwise. For all the techniques, use your whole body, especially your bridging hips, for maximum power.

MEDICAL IMPLICATIONS

Dr. Joseph Estwanik, M.D., was the ringside physician during the early years of the UFC. The orthopedic surgeon is the author of *Sports Medicine for the Combat Arts*, which means he knows all about compression locks and their medical implications.

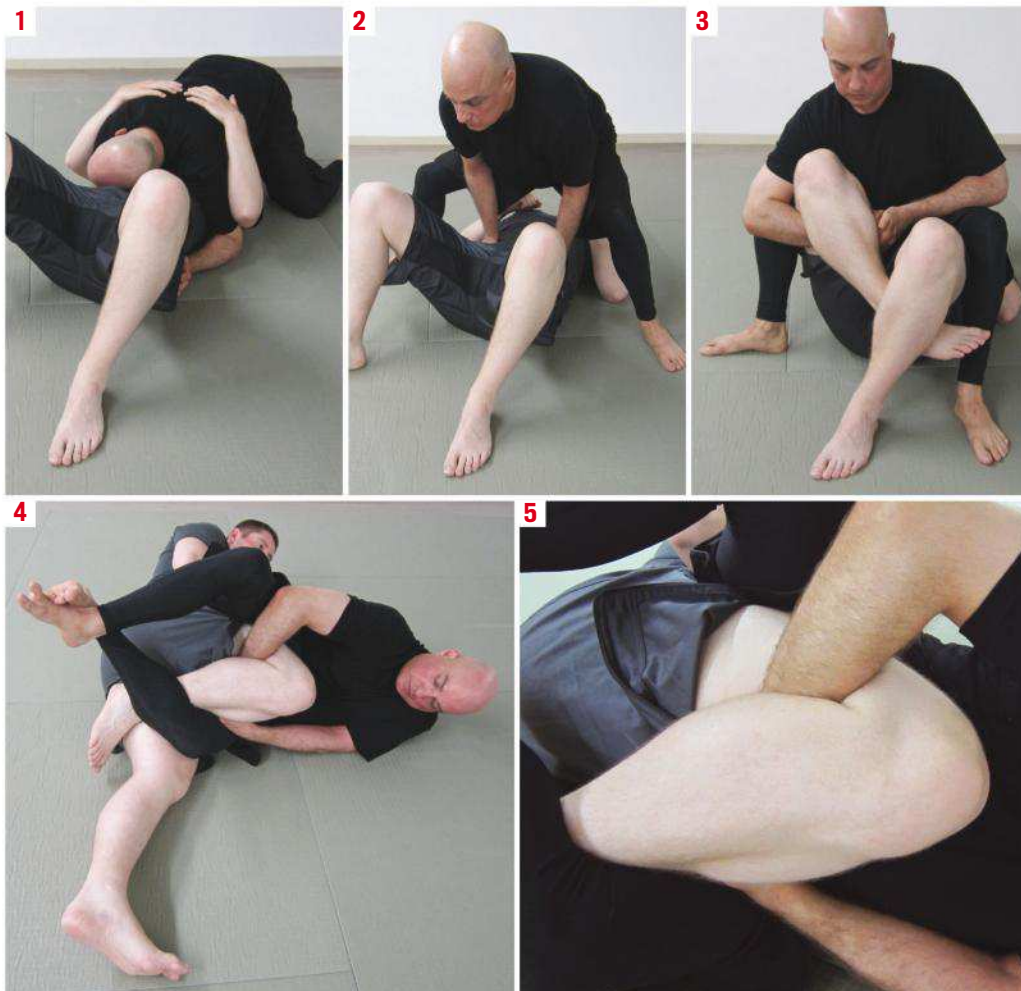
What possible injuries are associated with compression locks?

Estwanik: When the muscle or tendon is forcibly pressed against the bone — as typically happens with

these locks — if you don't tap out from the extreme pain, various degrees of bruising will occur. Bruising is internal bleeding that can be seen by discoloration of the skin. Even though there is great pressure, the muscle or tendon will not normally sustain a complete tear or rupture from these types of locks; however, other more serious complications could occur if the injury is more substantial.

Collateral damage transferred to the adjacent or surrounding joints and bones is a great possibility. Using the Achilles lock, where the foot is often the lever to the lock, damage to the midfoot ligaments and bones could occur. While using the biceps slicer or leg slicer, the elbow, knee or surrounding bones could be damaged, including torn ligaments, dislocation or bone fractures.

What's the recommended treatment for an injury that stems from a compression lock?



Andrew Zerling is on top in the north-south position (1). He leap-frogs the torso of opponent Paul Berger and momentarily lands on his belly, possibly knocking the wind out of him (2). Zerling then moves into the reverse-mount position and wraps his right arm around the man's right leg — which causes him to triangle his legs to prevent a kneebars (3). Prepared for that defense, Zerling falls onto his left side and locks his legs around the opponent's bent leg (4). Close-up: He applies the **leg slicer** by pulling and twisting his right wrist clockwise and lifting his hips (5). Although you can't see it, Zerling is using the ball-and-socket grip and has oriented his forearm so the bone exerts maximum pressure on the squeezed muscles.

Estwanik: Treatment varies. For minor injuries, bruising will occur, so ice — never heat — should be applied to the bruise. Icing a bruise will limit bruising and help the body heal the injury. Anti-inflammatories like Motrin can be taken, as well.

For recovery from severe bruising, perform non-forceful progressive range-of-motion movements so stiffness does not occur. More serious injuries, such as to the joints or bones, should be examined by a physician. A competent physician familiar with the mechanisms of injury within the martial arts will look completely up and down the chain of the injury for other problems.

Injuries to the joints or bones may require surgery and could take many months to heal. Considering these possible outcomes to an injury from a compression lock, control and safety should definitely be kept in mind when applying these locks in training.

CONCLUSION

In MMA bouts, compression locks are seldom used to end fights. They're used much more often in submission-grappling competitions to elicit a tapout. Their use is often limited to the advanced divisions in submission-grappling events because of the above-mentioned dangers, which are more likely to afflict the inexperienced.

One reason compression locks are used infrequently in MMA is they're specialized and unorthodox. Most mixed martial artists would be better off relying on high-percentage submissions like the rear-naked choke and armbar. In grappling, however, competitors tend to have more submission tools in their toolbox. That fact, coupled with the absence of strikes,

means you have a much greater chance of seeing a compression lock in action.

Incorporating the three locks described here into your grappling arsenal will increase your submission-hunting ability. They can be employed from a variety of positions on the mat, making them a real threat that's often totally unexpected. As you practice them, remember the cautionary words of Dr. Joseph Estwanik. No one wants to inflict a serious injury on a training partner.

Finally, even if you never use a compression lock, the knowledge you've gained from this article will help you avoid being submitted by one of them. As in all martial arts, knowing the nature of the threat you face is essential to being victorious. ✘

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Andrew Zerling is a New Jersey-based martial artist and the author of the award-winning book *Sumo for Mixed Martial Arts: Winning Clinches, Takedowns, and Tactics* (YMAA Publication Center). His website is AndrewZerling.com.



DUCT- TAPE DEFENSE



**You're Unlikely to Survive a
Home Invasion Unless Your Hands
and Feet Are Free to Function —
Here's How a Spy Does It!**

BY JASON HANSON • PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOE CALLAHAN



According to the FBI, approximately 200 home invasions take place every hour in the United States, and one out of every five homes will experience a break-in or home invasion. Additionally, 38 percent of violent assaults and 60 percent of rapes occur during a home invasion.

These are harrowing statistics, but they don't tell the whole story with respect to how most home invasions unfold. After an intruder bursts into your house, chances are he'll immediately restrain you — and your family members, if they're home — with tape. Do an internet search for "duct-taped during home invasion," and you'll find numerous news stories in which this has happened. The headlines should serve as a wake-up call: "77-year-old

duct-taped during home invasion," "Family of 5 bound with duct tape during terrifying home invasion," "Deaf couple beaten, duct-taped during home invasion," "Robbers beat duct-taped man with pipe during home invasion" and "College students duct-taped during armed home invasion."

MODUS OPERANDI

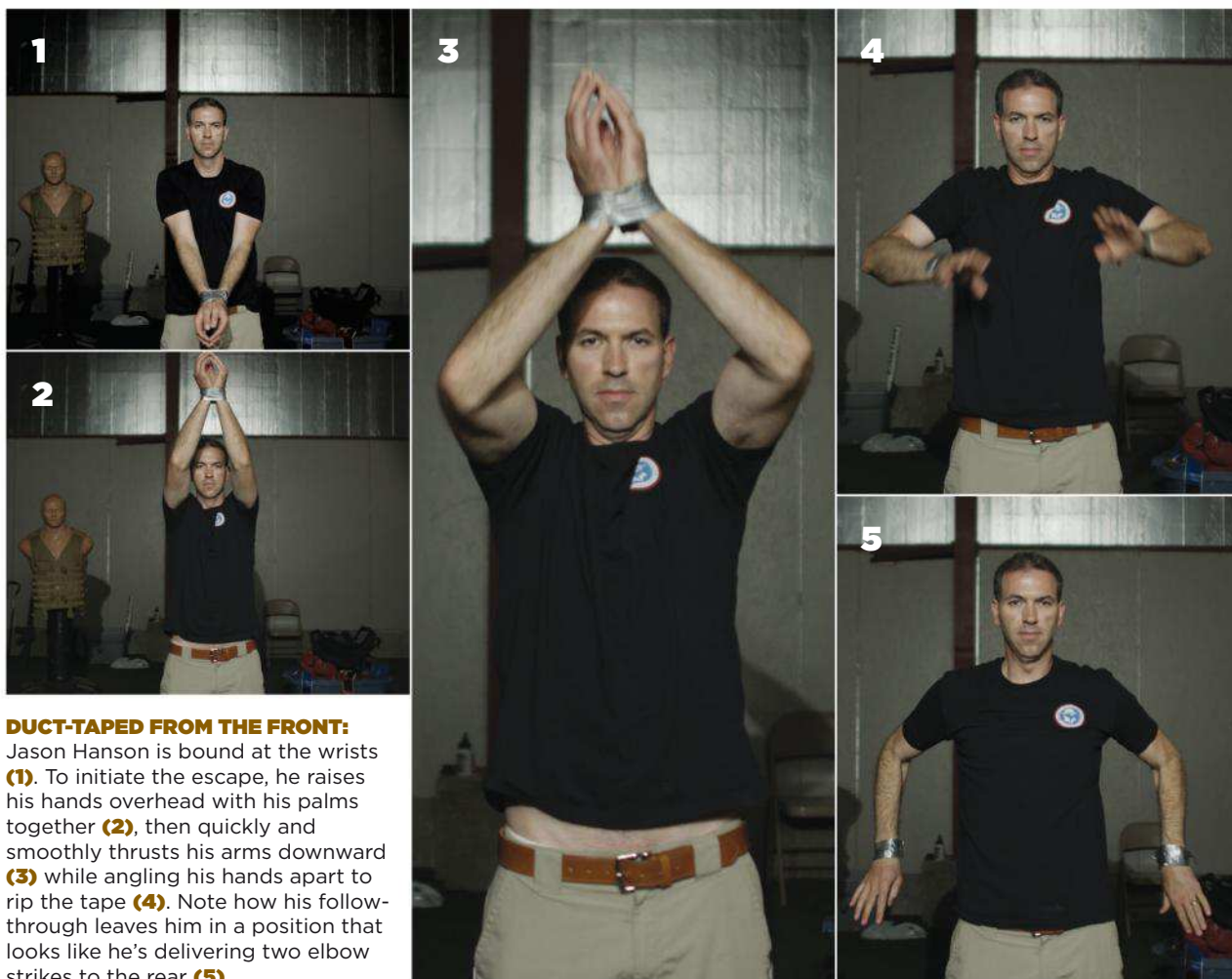
As the news stories note, duct tape is one of the most popular ways criminals use to bind people all over the world. Why duct tape? First, it's easy to get. Go to almost any hardware, grocery or big-box store, and for less than \$5, you can walk away with a huge roll.

Second, most people regard duct tape as a super-strong material that can be used to fix and hold together virtually

anything. That's why criminals believe the person they just duct-taped isn't going anywhere and why victims mentally give up on trying to escape when their hands and feet are taped (or when they're bound to a chair).

The truth, however, is much different. There's no reason anyone should be bound, tortured or killed because of duct tape. In fact, if you ever find yourself tied up with it — whether it's just your hands or your hands and feet — it's relatively easy to escape. Doing so takes less than five seconds. That may seem hard to believe, but I've shown folks as young as 5 and as old as 77 how to escape.

If, heaven forbid, you ever find yourself in a bad situation and are unable to fight your way out, a criminal probably will duct-tape your wrists first. He'll make you extend your arms in front of your body, after which he'll



DUCT-TAPED FROM THE FRONT:

Jason Hanson is bound at the wrists (1). To initiate the escape, he raises his hands overhead with his palms together (2), then quickly and smoothly thrusts his arms downward (3) while angling his hands apart to rip the tape (4). Note how his follow-through leaves him in a position that looks like he's delivering two elbow strikes to the rear (5).

wrap your wrists a few times. If it's a kidnapping scenario, he may drag you into a van or getaway vehicle. If it's a home invasion, he may start with your wrists and make his way to the rest of your body.

I'm often asked why criminals usually duct-tape your hands while they're in front of your body and not behind your back. The most important reason: It's very difficult to duct-tape someone's wrists when the hands are placed to the rear. It takes significantly more time than doing so when they're in front. Criminals want to be able to bind you quickly — especially if it's a kidnapping situation.

Another reason is it's tough to position a person's hands close enough together when they're behind the back. Often when it's attempted, you easily can lift your hands right out of the restraint.

The third reason is criminals prefer to have complete control over their victims. When they duct-tape you from the front, they can grab your arms and drag you wherever they want.

WAY OUT

Now that you know you'll most likely be duct-taped from the front, here's the exact method you'll want to use to escape in mere seconds.

First, raise your arms straight above your head with your palms together as if you're praying. Your hands should not be at eye level; you should have to look up toward the sky to see them.

Second, in one fluid, lightning-fast motion, bring your arms down while pulling your hands apart and throwing both elbows behind you. Envision trying to slap your hips, and you'll get

the idea. The key to this escape is that the moment your hands start moving, you must begin separating them. If it helps, pretend someone you don't like is behind you and you need to throw two rear elbow strikes into him.

If you do these two movements correctly, the duct tape will tear and your hands will be free. The reason most people are unable to escape when they're bound at the wrists is they don't immediately separate their hands from the praying position.

Instead, they bring their hands down to their stomach and then try to pull them apart. That doesn't create the angle you need to break free.

Of course, merely reading how to effect an escape is not enough. To build muscle memory, get a roll of duct tape, find a training partner and take turns wrapping your wrists. If you encounter any difficulties, reread the instructions and study the photos in this tutorial. Once you've got it all down, it's time to learn how to escape from a more serious situation.

CHAIR BOUND

A well-known record producer and his 14-year-old daughter are just two of the many Americans who've experienced the horror of being restrained with duct tape during a home invasion. What the criminals did — and what they typically do in this kind of scenario — is break into the home, bind the victims to a chair with duct tape and then make for the master bedroom to rummage through drawers in search of cash, coins and jewelry.

Once they've ransacked the bedroom, they typically come back downstairs to where the homeowners are still restrained. The worst part is, the criminals frequently elect to torture or even kill their victims.

Here's a proven method for escaping from this predicament. The key is to free yourself while the criminals are upstairs so you're not sitting there helplessly when they come back. First, forget what you see in movies and don't purposefully tip over in the chair or scoot back and forth across the floor. There's no point.

Instead, remain still — and then jolt forward with your torso, putting your head between your knees as if you're trying to kiss the floor. To envision



DUCT-TAPED TO A CHAIR: When Jason Hanson is restrained, the first thing he does is refrain from tipping over or scooting around the room (1). Instead, he sits momentarily upright (2) and then pitches forward (3-4) until his head is between his knees (5). The leverage generated by his downward-moving torso tears the tape, enabling him to escape (6).

DUCT-TAPED AT THE ANKLES: If an escape must start with the defender being bound at the wrists, bound to a chair and bound at the ankles, Jason Hanson advises clients to first free themselves from the chair, then separate their hands from each other as shown in the other photo sequences. Next, he stands with his toes pointing outward (1). He begins squatting, making sure his knees move outward (2). The leverage this creates angles his lower legs away from each other, which breaks the tape (3-4).



this motion, imagine that you're on an airplane and you feel like you're going to throw up. After grabbing that little white bag from the seat pocket, you'd put your head between your knees to vomit. This is the exact move you want to use to escape from a chair — except that you need to do it with a lot more force. Done correctly, your abrupt forward motion will tear the tape, and you'll be free from the chair and able to flee your house.

WORST CASE

The final situation in which you might find yourself comes about when a criminal decides not only to duct-tape your wrists to a chair but also to secure your ankles. If you had the time, you could free your wrists first, then bend down and tear the tape from your ankles. But what if you hear

the criminal walking down the stairs toward you and you know every second is a matter of life and death?

A faster way to escape being bound at the ankles — after you've freed your hands and stood up from the chair — is to quickly squat with your toes pointing outward. Your feet should form a V-shape. With your toes at that angle, the tape will tear as you lower your body.

It should take less than five seconds to escape from this worst-case scenario. Unfortunately, most people who find themselves in such an unthinkable situation end up getting beaten or killed because they're overwhelmed from being duct-taped essentially from head to toe. The best way to avoid that fate is to memorize the instructions

presented here and practice until the moves are second nature. Not only are the escapes fun "party tricks" and family activities, but they also could end up saving your life one day.

Note that all the techniques described in this article also work with other types of tape. For instance, you're probably familiar with the Gorilla brand that's incredibly strong and sticky. Even if a criminal uses Gorilla tape, you can escape in less than five seconds. The only difference is that Gorilla tape is so sticky that when you try to pull it off, your skin might rip and you could bleed a little. That's something you'll want to avoid in training, but obviously it won't matter in a life-threatening encounter. ✖

● **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Jason Hanson is a former CIA officer and New York Times best-selling author. He's also the founder of *Spy Combatives*. To get a free copy of his *Spy Combatives* book, visit SpyCombatives.com.

SILAT

Renowned for its effectiveness in Indonesia, the land of its birth.

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Introducing *Burton Richardson's Silat for the Street* online course from *Black Belt*. Richardson has an impressive martial arts pedigree. In addition to being a member of the *Black Belt* Hall of Fame and a disciple of Dan Inosanto, he's trained in *jeet kune do*, as well as Brazilian *jiu-jitsu*, *kali*, *muay Thai* and MMA — along with *silat*. That gives him a more realistic understanding of the types of attacks used on the street, as well as the best solutions.

In this course, which streams videos to your cellphone, tablet or computer whenever and wherever you want, Richardson presents the most relevant tactics and techniques of *silat*. He selected them so 21st-century students of self-defense can add them to their arsenal at will. Among the topics he covers are:

- The differences between *pencak* and *silat*
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- The essential self-defense principles of *silat*
- How to catch kicks in combat
- *Silat*'s many forms of fighting footwork
- Takedowns, the bread and butter of the art
- *Silat*'s 10 most useful entries
- Brutal fighting techniques for use in the clinch
- No-holds-barred combat on the ground
- *Silat* techniques that use the *karambit* knife and sarong



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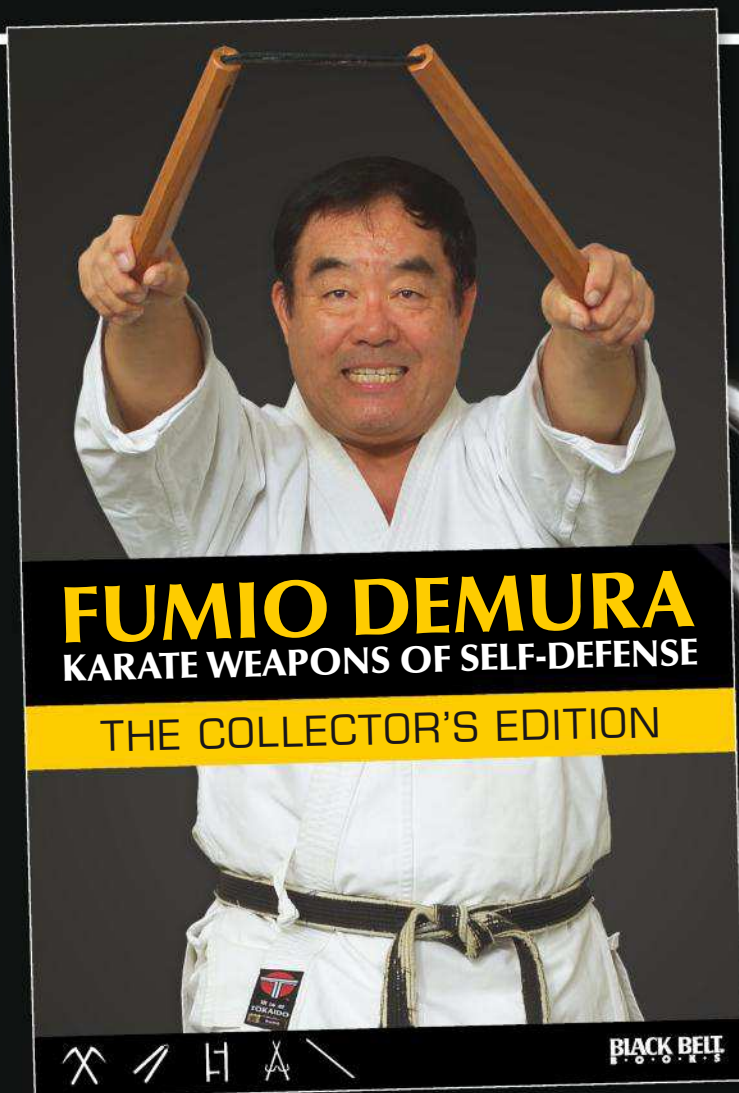
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For the first time, Fumio Demura's karate weapons books have been collected under one cover!

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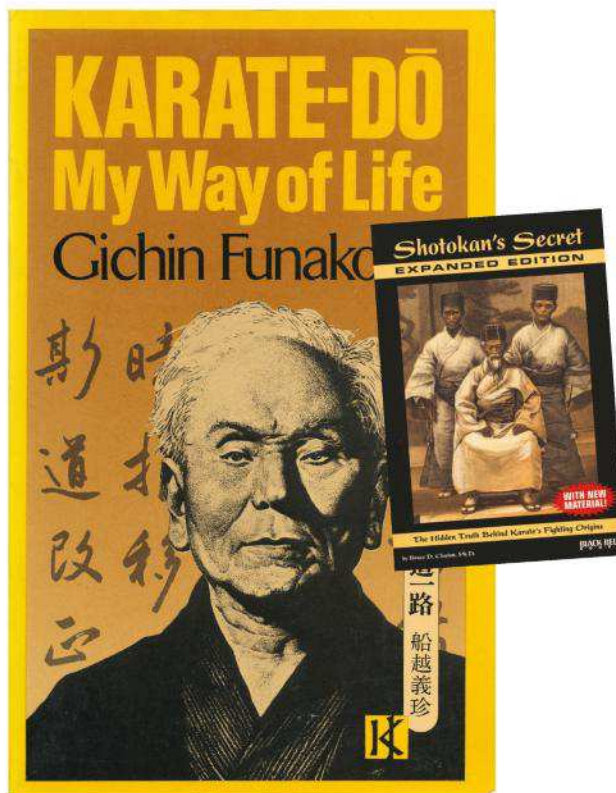
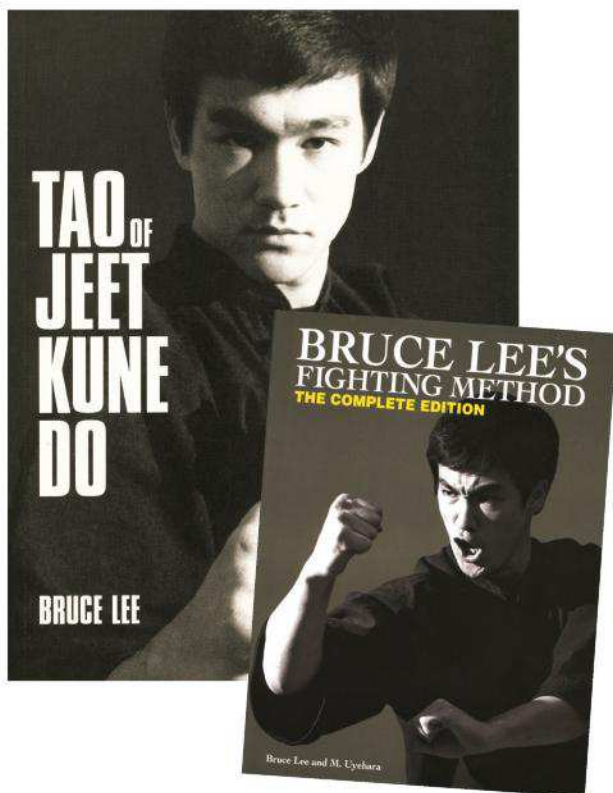
BEGINNER'S GUIDE *to Needful Things*

***Books and Gear to Get
to Become a Complete
Martial Artist**** BY THE EDITORS



***Complete martial artist** [Unofficial definition]: a term often used to describe a person who possesses knowledge and skills that extend beyond what's taught in a single style.

PART 1: Reading Material



Tao of Jeet Kune Do [by Bruce Lee]

The classic is published by Black Belt Books, but that's not why it's first on the list. It's first because it contains so much good stuff — we're talking technical material, training advice, philosophical points and even what you might call spiritual guidance — that it begs to be read by practitioners of all arts. Once you do that, chances are you'll find yourself returning to it regularly for answers to questions that pop up. Word to the wise: Go for the *New Expanded Edition* because it has numerous improvements Shannon Lee wanted to incorporate. And consider getting the e-book. The search function enables you to key in words like "rear hook" and instantly find everything Lee wrote about it.

RELATED! *Bruce Lee's Fighting Method: The Complete Edition* by M. Uyehara: Also from Black Belt Books, this is the perfect companion for the *Tao*. Written by a close friend of Lee's who also happens to be the founder of *Black Belt* magazine, it's a hard-cover composed of the four original volumes of tech talk — with bonus material by Shannon Lee and Ted Wong.

Karate-Do: My Way of Life [by Gichin Funakoshi]

Part history, part philosophy, part personal experience, this work by the founder of *shotokan* has served as the gateway drug for countless people who went on to a lifetime of martial arts training. It's not about karate technique; it carries a deeper

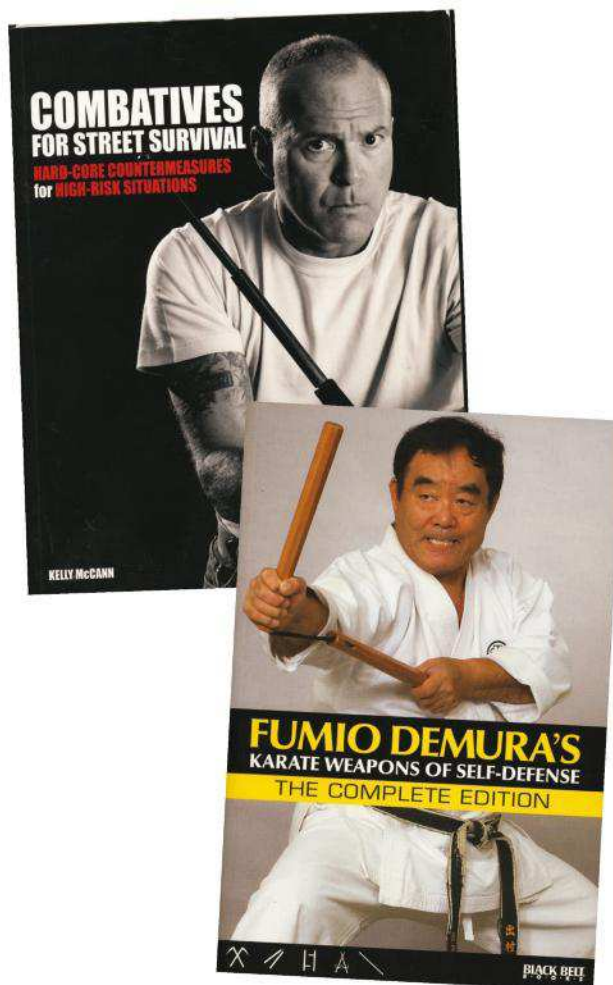
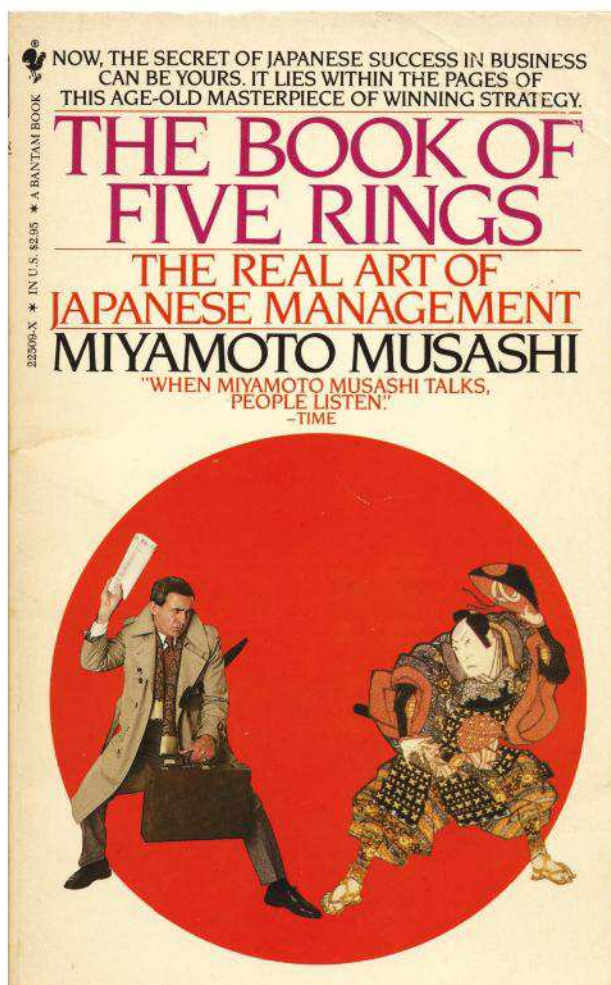
message, one that's sure to inspire even experienced practitioners of other styles.

RELATED! *Shotokan's Secret: The Hidden Truth Behind Karate's Fighting Origins* by Bruce Clayton, Ph.D.: The author lays down a fascinating explanation of the development of karate as used by royal bodyguards in Okinawa. If the text is sold out when you look it up on the website of your favorite bookseller — inventory moves quickly — consider opting for the e-book.

The Book of Five Rings [by Miyamoto Musashi]

Perhaps the world's most famous samurai, the author fought his first duel at age 13 and went on to engage in more than 60 battles before he turned 30. When he was an old man — by the standards of 16th-century Japan, anyway — Musashi decided to record all he'd learned for future generations. You'll enjoy working your way through the five main sections: the Book of Earth, the Book of Water, the Book of Fire, the Book of Wind and the Book of Emptiness.

RELATED! *Zen in the Martial Arts* by Joe Hyams: This book is popular across the arts, which is not surprising when you consider that the author trained under Ed Parker, Bong Soo Han and Bruce Lee. Its continuing appeal is a testament to the timeless nature of the life lessons Hyams conveys.



Combatives for Street Survival [by Kelly McCann]

The author, a *Black Belt* Hall of Famer, poured his heart and soul into this no-holds-barred look at real violence and the most effective ways of stopping it. McCann serves up everything a martial artist might need to fill in the gaps in his or her traditional training to make it more street oriented.

RELATED! *The Gift of Fear* by Gavin de Becker: Our community has been raving about this book since it was first published. It drives home the message that when it comes to staying safe, there's plenty you can do before the first fist flies in a fight.

The Art of War [by Sun Tzu]

This classic dates from more than 1,600 years ago, and it's as relevant now as it was then. In fact, you probably already know a few of its gems like "The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting." Read it for more snippets of warrior wisdom that are guaranteed to expand your mind.

RELATED! *The Art of Peace* by Morihei Ueshiba: Another best-seller, this book comes from the founder of *aikido*. He was a man known for his spirituality as well as his technique, and that shines through in his words.

The Complete Master's Kick [by Hee Il Cho]

A lot of technique books are mere lists of moves taught in a given art. Not this one. The author, a member of the *Black Belt*

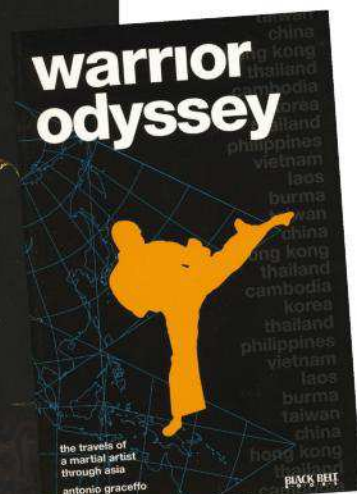
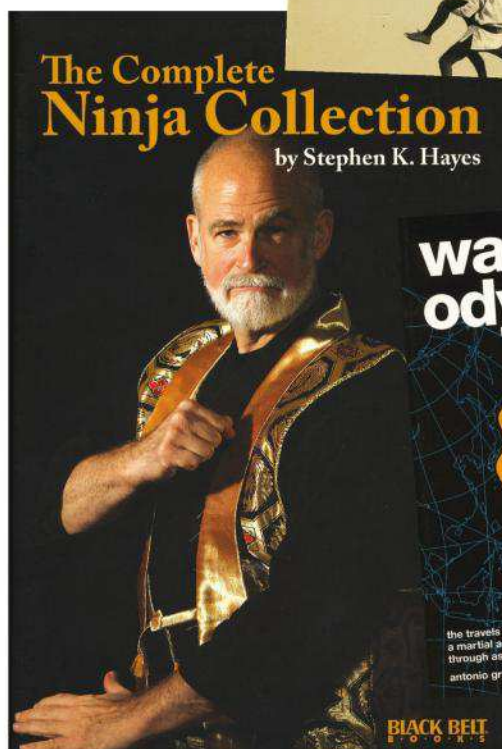
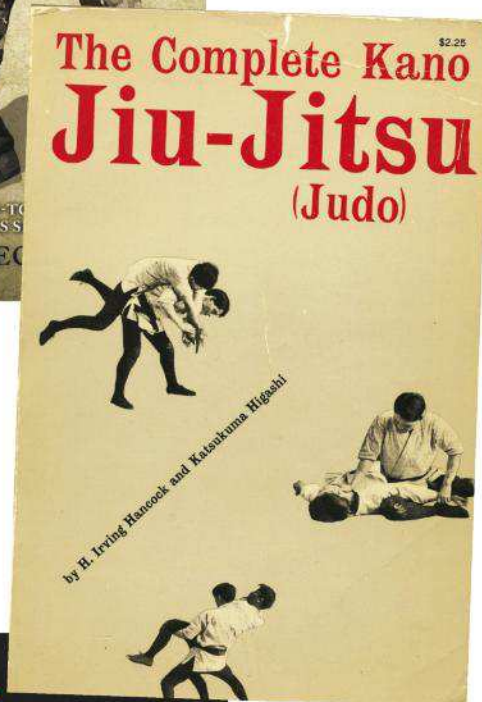
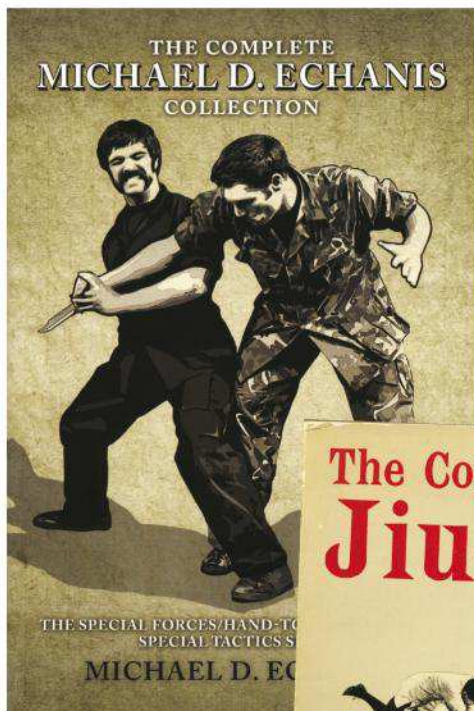
Hall of Fame who's regarded as one of the world's best kickers, dissects the most common kicks and teaches them in detail. Note that the techniques are not geared for scoring in competition; they date from the days when *taekwondo* was a pure fighting art.

RELATED! *Fumio Demura's Karate Weapons of Self-Defense: The Complete Edition*: Demura's five classics — covering the *nunchaku*, *tonfa*, *sai*, *bo* and *eku bo* — are collected in one volume. Whether you practice for personal development or competition, you'll benefit from owning this. Even if you're not into *kobudo*, you'll appreciate learning about these ubiquitous weapons.

Comprehensive Asian Fighting Arts [by Donn F. Draeger and Robert W. Smith]

Although a bit dated, this cross-cultural look at the world's martial arts presented all the information that was available before the internet came along. It no doubt inspired many readers to hit the road and see for themselves what was being taught in remote regions like Mongolia.

RELATED! *The Way of the Warrior* by Howard Reid and Michael Croucher: This book also is guaranteed to foster wanderlust. The authors examine the indigenous martial arts of a variety of nations with an approach that's more about history and cultural anthropology than fighting technique. It makes for an enjoyable read.



The Complete Michael D. Echanis Collection

[by Michael D. Echanis]

When they were written, the three books that make up this volume — *Basic Stick Fighting for Combat*; *Knife Self-Defense for Combat*; and *Knife Fighting, Knife Throwing for Combat* — proved very popular. For a variety of reasons, the last title was removed from circulation and sold only to military and law-enforcement members. When the publisher finally realized that it was unfair to withhold self-defense teachings from the public, the entire collection was released.

RELATED: *The Filipino Martial Arts as Taught by Dan Inosanto*: Out of print and hard to find, this is an early classic from the *Black Belt* Hall of Famer and pioneer in the Filipino fighting arts. It offers a different but equally valid take on blade fighting than the Echanis book does.

The Complete Kano Jiu-Jitsu (Judo)

[by H. Irving Hancock and Katsukuma Higashi]

The grappling moves taught here date from before 1905, when the book was first published. Interestingly, the majority are stand-up techniques even though “judo” is part of the title.

RELATED: *The Kyokushin Way* by Masutatsu Oyama: The subtitle of this one, *Mas Oyama's Karate Philosophy*, reveals why it's a timeless text. When one of history's toughest *karateka* talks, all martial artists should listen. Sadly, it's been out of print for some time, but it's worth buying if you get a chance.

The Complete Ninja Collection

[by Stephen K. Hayes]

It's been claimed that the six *Ninja* books written by this *Black Belt* Hall of Famer constitute the best-selling martial arts series in the world. They've been wildly popular since the 1980s, which is why they were updated and merged into one volume. Even those who don't harbor illusions of being a ninja will enjoy its insight on the martial culture of Japan.

RELATED: *Warrior Odyssey* by Antonio Graceffo: This modern-day work from a *Black Belt* contributing editor recounts the author's experiences learning martial arts in numerous nations in Asia. It offers insights on a life most of us can only dream about.

PART 2: Training Gear

Body Opponent Bag

You can use it for most hand strikes, some kicks, even some techniques with training weapons — whatever will benefit from making contact with a humanoid target. There's no better way to learn precision than with BOB.

RELATED! A suit composed of pads that cover most of the body is great for making contact, provided you have a training partner and the cash. It will enable you to fine-tune your precision with the added excitement of a live target.

Heavy Bag

This is a time-tested way to teach your body how to hit hard. Your workouts will strengthen your wrists and toughen your shins. The traditional version of the heavy bag hangs from the ceiling, and that's great if you have a suitable area. Otherwise, look for a free-standing model with a water-filled base. Bonus: This type of bag can be moved from room to room fairly easily.

RELATED! If punches are your go-to techniques, you can benefit from buying a speed bag. The workouts will improve your hand speed, timing, rhythm and precision.





Lightweight Uniform

If you're a striker, this is what you'll wear for everyday training. You don't have to spend a ton of money, but don't scrimp if you want durability and comfort.

RELATED! If you spend a lot of time on the mat, get a grappling *gi*, too. Skip this purchase and roll a few times with your lightweight *gi*, and you'll be in the market for a new lightweight *gi*. You'll be shredded, and not in a good way.

Martial Arts Headgear

This product will help protect you in case of accidental contact with your opponent or the floor. Most, however, are not designed for full-contact fighting.

RELATED! If you're feeling full contact, you need to purchase the appropriate protection. FWIW, this type of head pro is normally categorized as "boxing headgear."

Boxing Gloves

Similarly, dipped-foam hand protection is not designed for full-contact sparring with another person — and neither are those more substantial-looking gloves that bear the label "bag gloves." The easiest way to be sure you're getting gloves meant for sustained human contact is to search for "boxing gloves."

RELATED! If you're going to spend a lot of time at point tournaments, grab a pair of competition gloves, as well. They'll help protect you and your opponent during occasional contact.

Mats for Your Home

You should consider getting mats for your home only if you have the space, of course, but keep in mind that most people can rearrange their spare room or garage to make space. Having mats at home doesn't eliminate the need to train at a *dojo*, but once you get used to the convenience of being able to work out on a soft surface anytime you want, you'll wonder how you got along without them for so long.

RELATED! Whether you spend most of your time on the ground or on your feet, you'll benefit from enhanced flexibility. An efficient way to get there is with a stretching machine. Some are high-tech devices that do a wonderful job, especially for kickers, but people who lack the space or the funds can opt for a more economical model.

Training Weapons

Whether your fave is a sword, a *kali* stick, a three-sectional staff or a *kama*, you should have a safe and preferably soft version of it. Why? So you can fine-tune your technique on a live human being. Will it make you score better in your next



tournament? Maybe. Will it augment your understanding of the weapon and how it was meant to be wielded? Definitely.

RELATED! If your weapon of choice is a handgun, consider buying an identical Airsoft version of it. Airsoft guns fire small plastic pellets that won't break the skin if they happen to hit a human. (They can take out an eye, though, so always wear eye protection.) An Airsoft gun will enable you to hone skills you should never practice with a real weapon — like force-on-force training and gun disarms.

Training Knife

Even if you don't intend to carry a knife, it's worth buying a trainer because using one is the only safe way to practice knife defense. To prevent injury, think soft and dull. If you carry or plan to carry a live blade, get a trainer that's identical, except for the dull edge and tip, to your carry knife.

RELATED! Many experts will argue that carrying a knife can even the odds in a street fight. If you're on board, buy one that matches your trainer. Then you won't have to think about whether it's being carried tip-up or tip-down and whether your thumb should search for an opening-assist stud or an opening-assist hole. Be sure to check your local laws before you carry and make sure you know the regs in other states you frequent. Finally, get one that's practical for everyday use

because you'll be opening packages with it way more often than you'll be fighting.

Mouth Guard

Engaging in contact sparring without one of these is asking to have a tooth chipped or knocked out — or worse. So get a good mouth guard and use it. The better ones are designed to be dipped in hot water so you can bite down on them for a better fit to your choppers.

RELATED! If you can afford it, consider a custom-made mouth guard. These are crafted from a mold of your teeth and, consequently, fit like a glove — which makes breathing a whole lot easier. And they won't pop out by accident in a match. They will, however, cost you, usually several hundred bucks.

Shin Pads

If you train primarily for competition, you can get away with foot pads, but if your goal is hardcore self-defense, you'll want shin pads. Then, when you strike with nature's baseball bats, your partner will remain functional.

RELATED! As important as protecting your shins is, you'll also want to guard your groin if you engage in any type of sparring. Even though almost everyone tries to avoid groin shots in training, accidents do happen. ✕

GEAR

FROM THE 2017 MARTIAL ARTS SUPERSHOW



◀ SPORT COMPETITION FIGHTER UNIFORM

Made for competition, these lightweight polyester uniforms feature vibrant sublimation-print designs to project a unique look. They're ideal for high-level sport-karate practitioners, whether they compete on a team or as an individual. Note that this is the official uniform of Team Paul Mitchell Karate.

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▲ PIGAONE FOOT SUPPORT

This minimalist footwear sets out to accomplish two missions while making you feel like you're barefoot. One, it fortifies your feet by providing arch support and strengthening the associated muscles and tendons. Two, it bolsters your balance by encouraging optimal foot positioning. Bonus: It has a non-slip sole, which is always appreciated in the *dojo*.

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More and more people are recognizing that fitness is an essential component of the martial arts and of a healthy life. Century makes it easier than ever to stay fit with its line of workout gear that includes Resistance Tubes, Sand Bells and Sand Kettle Bells. The variety means you can keep your routines fresh while still getting results.

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ACTIONFLEX WEAPONRY ▶

If you do anything with a sword — or a knife, staff or *kali* stick — that involves an opponent, you should consider outfitting yourself and your training partner with padded weapons and head protection from ActionFlex. That's even more essential if said activity involves kids. The company is helmed by *Black Belt* Hall of Famer Dana Abbott, who lived and trained in Japan for 25 years.

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"Come on! Kick me harder, directly in the groin this time. Good. Now punch me right in the face. Again! Strike my eyes!" You don't hear that a lot — unless you're *Black Belt* Hall of Famer Bill Kipp demonstrating the virtues of his Predator Armour suit. Funny how it takes some coaxing to get martial artists to unload, even when they know the contraption he's wearing will keep him from being injured. Hitting a human with full power is a whole new world for most people.

PREDATORARMOUR.COM



◀ 20/20 ARMOR

Called the Recreational Electronic Chestguard, this new product will seem like a no-brainer, especially for the video-game generation. It combines a chest protector with an electronic scoring system that can communicate with your opponent's unit. LED lights indicate when a technique scores; the stronger the hit, the more lights you'll see. Different-color lights indicate how much "life" you have left. Young martial artists will love sparring with one of these on — especially in the five one-person and five two-person game modes.

2020ARMOR.COM



EYE GOUGE HEAD ▶

One of the joys of attending the Martial Arts SuperShow each year is seeing the new gear on display. This item, called the Eye Gouge Head, is a novel idea. Self-defense practitioners always talk about the effectiveness of eye gouges, but few can offer a realistic way to practice them. Enter the head. Have a partner hold it by the handle that attaches where the spine might, and then it's just a matter of locking on target and drilling those orbs. Fortunately, the eyes are replaceable. You also can practice slaps to the ears, but those don't need to be switched out.

EYEGOUGEHEAD.COM



◀ MARTIAL ARTS HISTORY MUSEUM

When Michael Matsuda, actor and practitioner of monkey kung fu, hatched a plan to build the Martial Arts History Museum, few thought he would succeed. That was 18 years ago, and the institution just keeps getting bigger and better. In addition to its permanent displays on the world's fighting arts, the Burbank, California-based organization hosts special events like book signings, movie screenings and the Dragonfest, the ultimate martial arts expo held every August. 🐉

MARTIALARTSMUSEUM.COM

For the Good of the People

by Mark Jacobs



The Native American tribes that inhabit the Coso Mountain Range of eastern California have a history that goes back millennia as evidenced by the rock art that's spread throughout the area, some estimated to be at least 10,000 years old. An important part of that history has always been the indigenous warrior tradition.

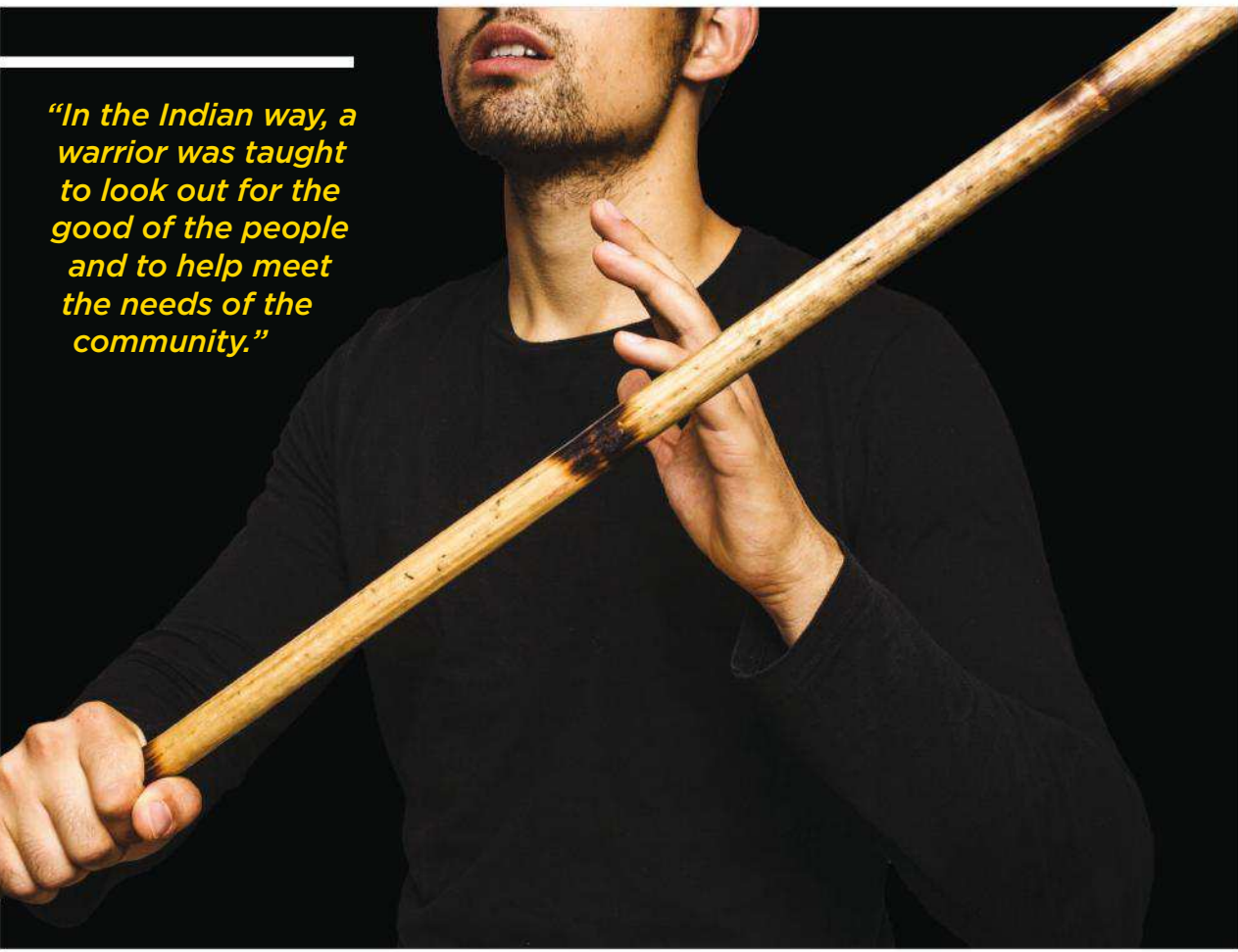
"The Coso Mountains were a training ground where tribes would come together to share their medicine," said Raymond Garcia, who was raised in the region and is part Shoshone. "I grew up being told about how Shoshone warriors would protect healers when they'd come into the mountains. Hearing stories of how fierce they were in hand-to-hand combat was inspiring."

But with the marginalization of American Indian culture over the years, such inspiration has been more and more difficult to come by. Native American youth grow up facing alcoholism, domestic abuse and health problems of epidemic proportions within their communities.

Garcia, 52, a longtime student of renowned martial arts instructors Al Dacascos and Benny Urquidez, came up with his own unique means of combating those issues by reinvigorating the warrior tradition in young Native Americans. He does that by offering martial arts classes that combine Asian fighting arts with American Indian cultural traditions.

"WHEN MY OLDEST son was a teenager, I noticed all the kids his age were looking and acting like little gangbangers," Garcia said. "The elders in the community thought they needed to learn to sing and pray and dance, but when I talked to these kids, they told me, 'Who wants to be a Native American?' Then I learned from some counseling classes I took that you have to meet kids halfway. So I thought if they're all trying to look and act like tough guys, let's bring back the idea of Native American combat and use that to give them something to take pride in."

Garcia started learning Native American dances later in life and was forced to turn to the traditions of



"In the Indian way, a warrior was taught to look out for the good of the people and to help meet the needs of the community."

other tribes because most of the Shoshone dances had long since been forgotten in his community. But armed with the knowledge of those other dances, he began combining them with his martial arts skills to create a unique cultural mix.

"I'd already been working with the *kali* I'd learned from Al Dacascos, and it has a beautiful blending of dance-like steps with combat," Garcia said. "So I started manipulating the things he does and blending that with Native American dance. Kids would see it and like it, so I eventually got them dancing and chanting and being proud of what they're doing."

GARCIA BEGAN offering his martial arts classes to at-risk youth and domestic-violence victims nearly 20 years ago. He quickly noticed positive results among the kids he taught, as

well as some real fighting potential developing in a few of the more talented ones. He turned to Urquidez, a former world kickboxing champion, for guidance in helping the more combative kids train for competition.

While Garcia prepares his students primarily to battle the negative circumstances they encounter in their everyday lives, he also likes to think that as all-around warriors, they can back it up by stepping into a ring or cage and holding their own. But he's most proud of the members of the next generation he's guided in a more positive direction, keeping them out of jail or away from an early grave.

"There's one young fellow named Spider who I started teaching when he was a really frustrated kid," Garcia said. "But he's now a talented artist. He creates this beautiful artwork with flint knapping and teaches seminars

on it. I think training in the martial arts provides these kids with a confidence they can do things like that."

GARCIA SAID the classes he conducts are not free, but he doesn't turn away anyone who can't afford to pay. If they're unable to cover the cost, he offers them a deal that entails helping out three people in the local community. To make things easier, he provides them with a list of organizations in need of volunteers.

"I think all martial arts schools should be involved in this sort of community service," Garcia said. "In the Indian way, a warrior was taught to look out for the good of the people and to help meet the needs of the community. Fighting by itself is not for the good of the people, so you also have to learn how to lift people's hearts up. This is the warrior's way." 🐸

Highlights From America's Premier Martial Arts Expo

Story and Photos by Robert W. Young

The day after Independence Day, representatives from *Black Belt* packed their bags and hit the road for Las Vegas to prepare for the 2017 Martial Arts SuperShow, held this year at the MGM Grand Hotel. There, we joined more than 2,000 martial arts enthusiasts who made the trip for the same reasons we did: to go hands-on with soon-to-be-released products, to pick up new skills in seminars, to discover innovative ways to grow the martial arts biz and to just have some fun with like-minded individuals in good old Sin City.

Describing everything that caught our eye in the MGM's convention center would require more space than we have here — which is why we wrote up a handful of the more interesting products we spied in this issue's Essential Gear section. That leaves this space to focus on the human angle of the SuperShow.

The most famous person in attendance was John Paul DeJoria, co-founder of Paul Mitchell Systems. Why was he at a martial arts gathering? To deliver a very inspirational keynote address at the opening ceremony and to rehash a little about why he's sponsored Team Paul Mitchell Karate for three decades. The martial arts community could use more benefactors like him.



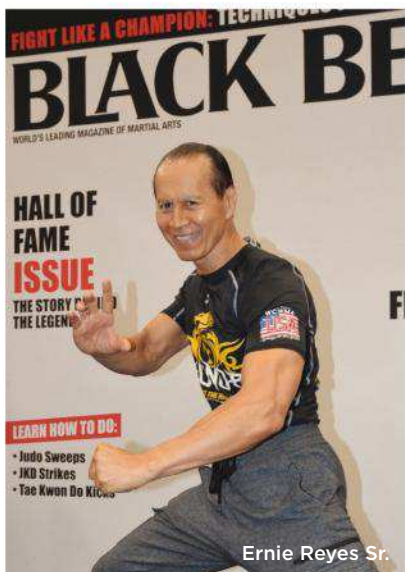
Bill Wallace

A VIP of a different color — specifically, bright red — at the show was Master Ken. If the Martial Arts Industry Association had given an award to the martial artist (he's a real-life *kenpo* black belt) who attracted the most fans seeking graphs, both photo and auto, it would have gone to this man. Master Ken, of course, is the star of the hit web series *Enter the Dojo*.

Making the rounds on the trade-show floor and likewise drawing a constant crowd was film star Michael Jai White. He's a regular at the SuperShow, but he usually arrives alone. This year,

he showed up with his wife Gillian Waters, also a martial artist — we learned that when we watched the happy couple work out together at a 7 a.m. Bill Wallace seminar.

Side note: Although *Black Belt* has hosted White for several photo shoots over the years, this marked the first time we got to see him really whale on a kicking pad. Believe us when we say that his *kyokushin* background is legit, especially when it comes to low shin kicks. That man can generate some power!



Ernie Reyes Sr.



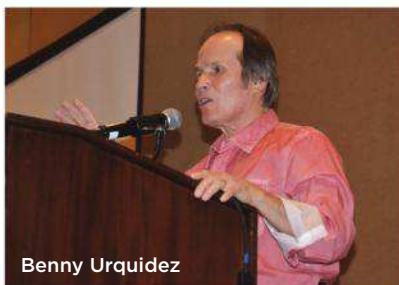
Michael Jai White and his wife Gillian Waters

MORE VIPs THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A STICK AT!

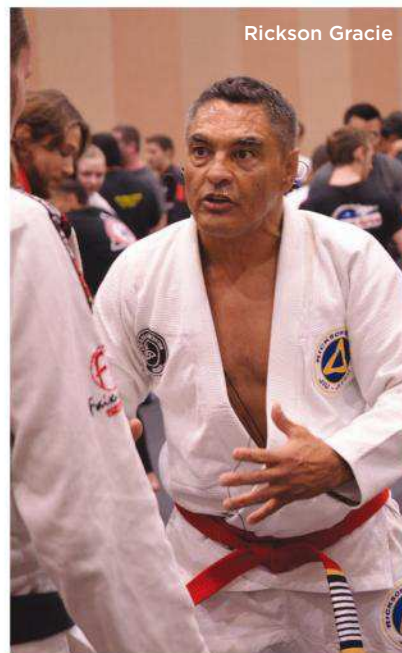
While roaming the floor and the various seminar halls at the 2017 Martial Arts SuperShow, we spotted a gaggle of girls and guys you're sure to recognize. They included **Christine Bannon-Rodrigues** (*Black Belt* Hall of Famer), **Ricardo Liborio** (founder of the Brazilian Top Team and American Top Team), **Herb Perez** (Olympic taekwondo gold medalist), **Chris Casamassa** (actor from the old *WMAC Masters* TV show), **Ernie Reyes Sr.** (founder of the West Coast Demo Team), **Mike Swain** (four-time Olympian in judo), **Emil Farkas** (martial arts researcher), **Jackson Rudolph** (tournament world champion), **Caitlin Dechelle** (fight double for *Wonder Woman*), **Dana Abbott** (*Black Belt* Hall of Famer), **John Hackleman** (bossman at *The Pit*), **Damon Gilbert** (2017 *Black Belt* Hall of Fame inductee), **Mike Chaturantabut** (founder of XMA) and **Jimmy Pedro Jr.** (Olympian and judo coach of Olympians).



Master Ken



Benny Urquidez



Rickson Gracie

The SuperShow highlight for grapplers was surely the free Rickson Gracie seminar. When it started, we wandered in through an open door to shoot some action shots. By the time we left, the crowd had swelled so much that door monitors were forced to shut down the influx because the room was at capacity. Even though he hasn't competed in years, Gracie clearly still commands a following.

Less celebrity oriented but nearly as popular over the course of the three-day event was the expanded *Black Belt* booth. The focal point was a backdrop

that looked like an oversize mag cover sans subject. Anyone who ever had a hankering to appear on the front page of the world's leading martial arts magazine had only to step up, grab a weapon or other prop, strike a pose and wait for the iPad to snap a photo. The results were then emailed or texted to the ad-hoc model.

Two other things cemented the SuperShow's position as the martial arts event of 2017. First, Benny Urquidez received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Martial Arts Industry Association. He earned his first black

belt in 1966 and has been active in the martial arts community ever since. He owns six world championships and claims a record of 63-0-2. All that means he's definitely deserving of the recognition.

Second, Bill Wallace was honored with a proclamation from Carolyn Goodman, mayor of Las Vegas. It officially established July 8, 2017, as Bill "Superfoot" Wallace Day in the city. Like Urquidez, Wallace is eminently worthy of the accolade and, once again like Urquidez, was characteristically humble in his acceptance. 🐉



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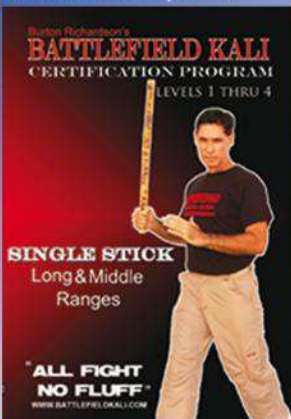
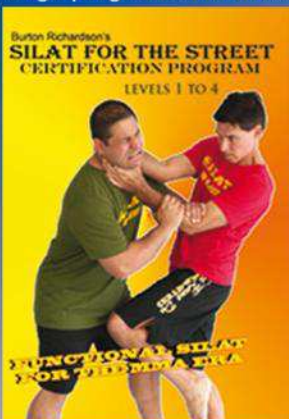
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Delve into traditional Shaolin kung fu with Buddhist monk Wang Bo, who began training at the famed monastery when he was 8. In this course, he teaches the philosophies of the martial art and the fighting methods Shaolin monks have used for the past 1,500 years. The foundation of the course is the tree of Shaolin.



BONUS! You get instant access to a story titled “The Shaolin Whole-Body Workout.” You also get “A Concise Guide to the Tree of Shaolin,” along with the original article that accompanied Wang Bo’s induction into the *Black Belt* Hall of Fame.

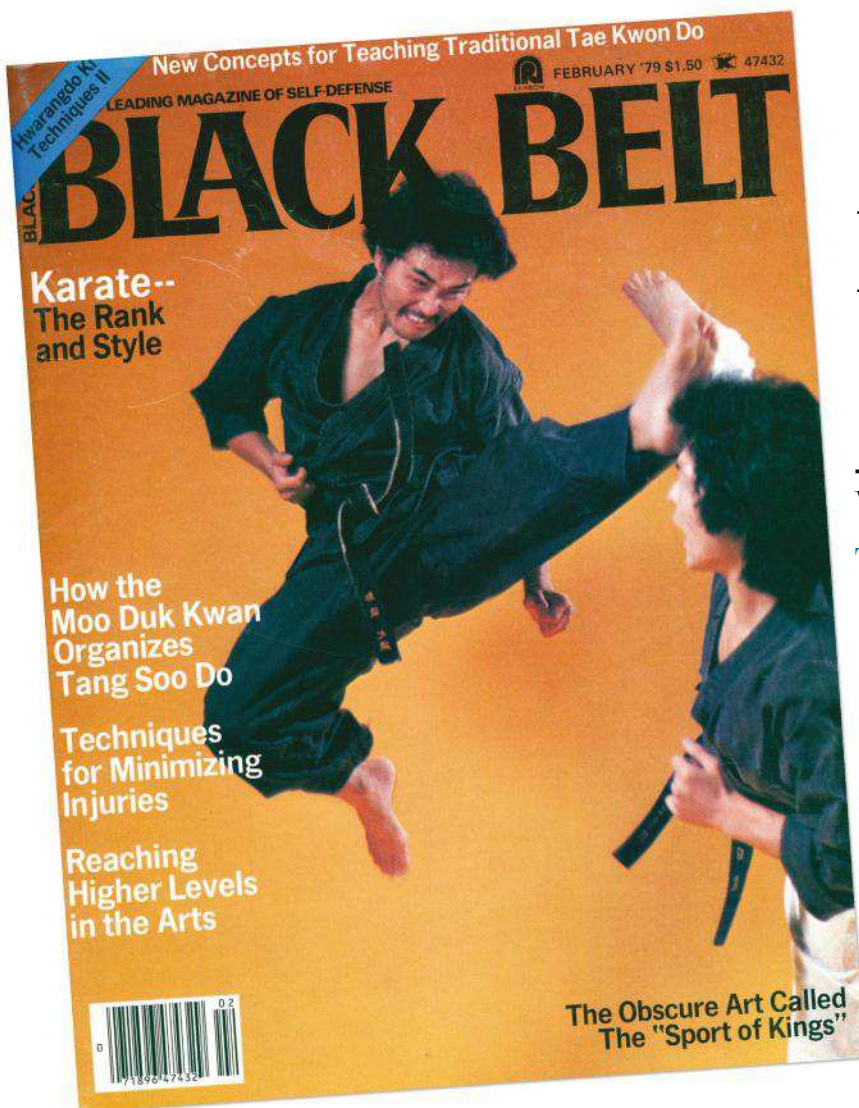
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From the Archives

Vol. 17, No. 2, \$1.50

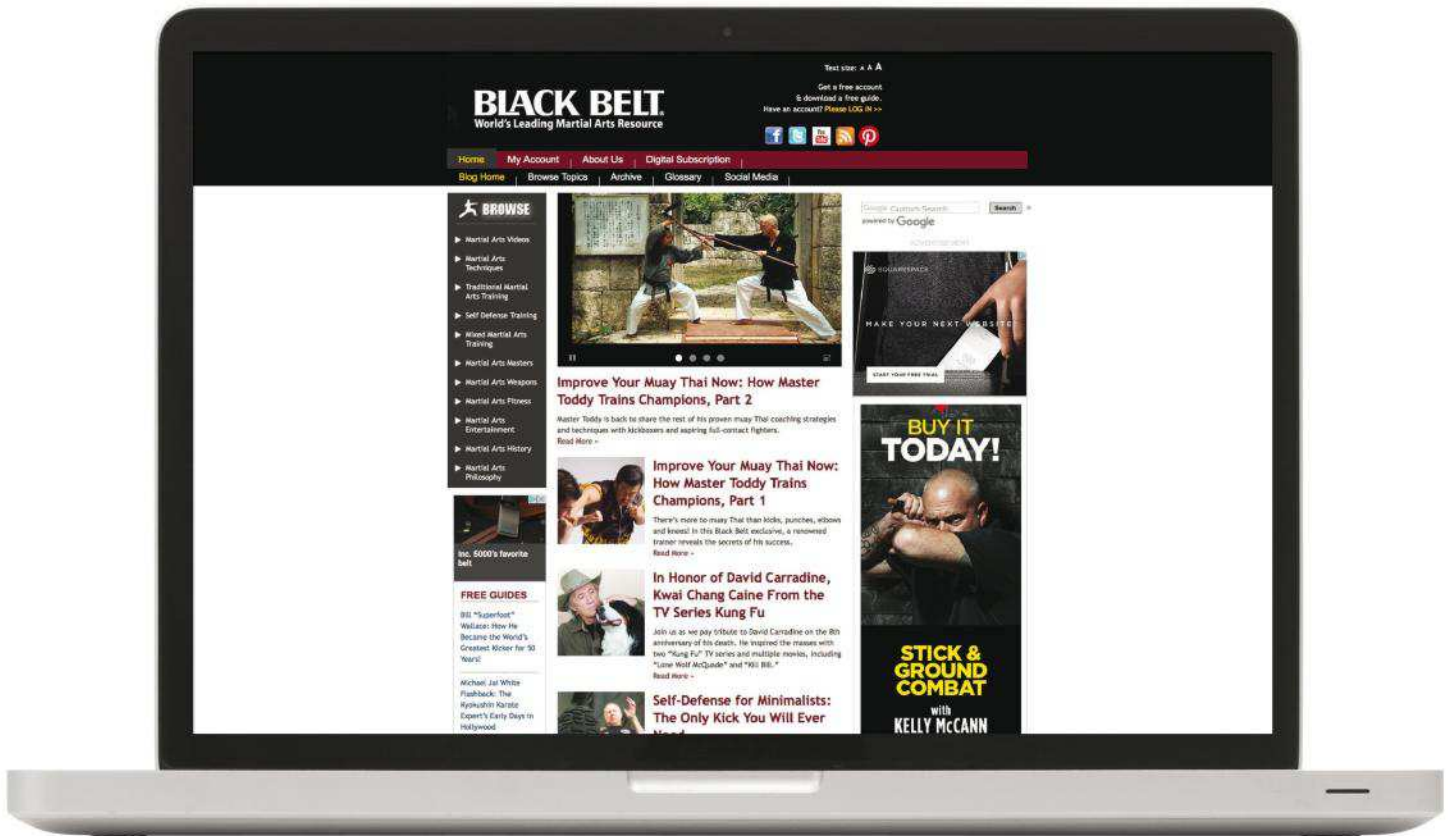
The 182nd issue of *Black Belt* was dated February 1979. It was 76 pages long and featured *taekwondo* expert Jun Chong on the cover.

- "If a student fails to achieve power in his techniques, he cannot be considered advanced," *taekwondo* instructor Jun Chong says in the cover story. "If this continues, I tell such students to go back and train with the lower belts. They hate this, so they train harder."
- Who remembers flipbooks? Before we had VHS, fans of films would buy, when available, books filled with photos from the movies, sequentially positioned to retell all or part of the story. You can get a two-volume set featuring Bruce Lee's *nunchaku* scene and "eight consecutive kicks" scene for just \$2.50.
- Remy Presas predicts, "Modern *arnis* will become the martial art of the world."
- Stephen K. Hayes becomes the first American to receive the title *shidoshi*, or "teacher of warrior ways." A resident of Japan, he trains under *ninjutsu* authority Masaaki Hatsumi.
- Reading, Pennsylvania's George Dillman is featured in a CBS documentary about self-defense for women.
- In his analysis of the reasons people study the martial arts, Dr. Millard S. Seto opines, "Unconsciously or consciously, all individuals strive for security as a means of internal peace."
- *Black Belt* profiles Bow-Sim Mark, an immigrant from the People's Republic of China who teaches *tai chi* to students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Mark, of course, is the mother of movie star Donnie Yen.
- A wooden dummy is advertised for \$109.95. Never mind. It's not a wooden dummy. It's a "wing chun dummy" made from PVC plastic. Fortunately, the pipes are replaceable.

- "Build yourself first, then help others," Jigoro Kano is quoted as having said. "You have to think of yourself first in a positive sense of progress."
- A group of Catholic nuns in Michigan takes up karate.
- The first United States Kendo Championships takes place at a Buddhist temple in Los Angeles. The team from Japan wins the lion's share of the matches.
- "When you practice *tang soo do* correctly in the classical, traditional sense, you will go through a mental and physical process to make you more alert," says Robert E. Beaudoin, secretary of the Moo Duk Kwan Federation. "You can concentrate better so that when you pursue or participate in any kind of activity ... you are going to be a better person for it."
- *Black Belt* gets up close and personal with *bando*, the traditional fighting art of Burma. The scoop comes from Maung Gyi, an expat instructor who set up shop in the United States in 1960.
- A study finds that the average hand speed of a punching *karateka* is 33.2 feet per second, while a boxer's equivalent stat is 40.7 feet per second.
- A company starts selling "martial arts casuals," *dojo*-inspired apparel that can be worn anywhere.
- When American kung fu stylist Ralph Mitchell travels to Thailand to try his hand at *muay Thai*, his eyes are opened. "Their endurance was incredible," he says. "As a warm-up, they'd take knees to the side that would floor most guys." ✂

(Note: Back issues are not for sale.)

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