

Stick and Knife Defence

Thesis for 4th Degree Grading by Sean Carver

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Acknowledgement

The content of this thesis has been learned/absorbed by the author while under the tutelage of Master Steve Pellow while training as a very green/inexperienced Balintawak practitioner, first as a means to an end, to prepare for the author's third-degree grading where defence against stick attack is required, then in an ongoing process over subsequent years after the author's third-degree grading, because the Balintawak stick, once picked up is very difficult to put down. The author cannot take credit for the techniques presented in these pages, because they all originate in some form from Master Pellow's teachings. This thesis is the authors attempt to document these techniques and their application. Some of the techniques, in particular the simplified stripping moves are not what is taught in Balintawak, but instead what the author finds himself implementing when he attempts to apply Balintawak moves sometimes inelegantly, and what got the Author through his stick defence component of his Taekwon Do third-degree grading. The author would also like to thank Mr Glen Harding for patiently providing himself as a 'fall guy' for the pictures and video sequences in this thesis. It could not have been produced without Master Pellow's teachings and Mr Harding's contributions. An acknowledgement is not complete without a tribute to the author's main instructor Master Paul McPhail who has been the author's main instructor for the last six or more years. The author is very spoilt to have not one but two master instructors. For the last six months also, the author has been supervised by Master Mahesh Bhana. The Author is very lucky to get the opportunity to train under three masters in the same period.

Background

Weapons defence is potentially one of the most miss-understood aspects of traditional martial arts training. In traditional styles, small blade defence is taught in classic methods which bears little resemblance to actual realistic attacking scenarios with weapons defence scenarios consisting of large thrusting or slashing movements which are easily spotted and avoided or defended against. Similarly, small stick defence scenarios traditionally consist of large slashing or thrusting motions which are easily avoided because they can be seen a long time before they land. A knife attack or stick attack in reality, is not elegant, and bears little resemblance to what you would see at most martial arts weapons demonstrations. There is a gap between what is perceived as weapons defence in most traditional martial arts, and what actually occurs during a real weapon attack. In a real situation, the attacker is more emotionally committed to the attack, and there is an intensity in the attack that is difficult to simulate under normal training situations. Similarly, for the defender, under a real situation, the stress factor is also correspondingly higher because of the emotional commitment to the attack by the attacker, and the fear of the consequences should the defence side go horribly wrong. In the real-life situation, if you choose to attempt to defend against a weapon attack, and you get it wrong, you will most certainly lose your life, or be severely injured.

In the current ITKD unarmed self-defence syllabus we have the option A response, and the option B response. The option B response is for situations where your life is in danger, and you must use appropriate counters that will inflict real damage to the attacker. The option A response is when the attacker is just fooling around, and your life is not at risk, such as defending against a bully in the playground. In the option A response if we as the defender use our extreme option B counter attacks it would be construed as an overreaction, and the defender has used excessive force. In a weapons defence scenario – there is no option A scenario, because your life is always at risk once a weapon becomes involved. All weapons scenarios should be considered option B, where your life is at extreme risk and you must do what you must do to neutralise the threat as quickly as possible to escape with your life.

Of course, as laid out in the ITKD unarmed self-defence syllabus, the best defence is not to get into a situation where you have to defend yourself in the first place, and also at any point the best defence is to simply run away. This comes down to the traffic light system and awareness of your surroundings. However, there will always be situations where you have no choice, such as you may have become trapped, or you need to defend a member of your family or some other innocent and you are left with no other choice but to neutralise the attacker, or attackers.

Within the option B scenario, where an assailant has chosen to use a weapon, the assailant will typically have two motivations:

- The weapon is being used to intimidate the victim at first, and is brought out in a threatening manner, the attacker could be bluffing, or might not be bluffing. For example, a street mugging where the attacker is just attempting to rob the victim, or force the victim to do something against their will.
- The weapon is concealed at first, and the intention is to harm or kill the victim, and the attacker has no wish to give up the weapon advantage by letting the victim know he/she has the weapon prior to the attack.

In the above two scenarios, the first is easier to reason your way out of. Your best defence is to do what the attacker says, if it is a simple robbery. However, if the attacker is attempting to remove you to somewhere else, using a weapon for intimidation, your options are limited. You had better

try to escape, or defend yourself until you can escape. Scenarios where the victim is removed to a second location vary rarely have a good outcome for the victim.

The second scenario is the deadliest, because you do not know you are being attacked with a weapon until it is being used. This is where your awareness comes into play. In the second scenario as well, it is not likely that you can talk your way out of the scenario because the attacker has already become committed to causing you harm. The best defence is to escape, however depending on where you are being attacked, this may not be easy. If you cannot escape, and you cannot see both of the attackers hands, you should assume the hidden hand contains a weapon.

Thankfully, statistics show that the majority of us will never actually have to put into effect what we learn on the training floor, as the odds of getting attacked by a weapon wielded by someone attempting to take our life, are actually quite low.

There is a statistical report available from the NZ police web site (www.police.govt.nz) titled "Police Statistics on Homicide Victims in New Zealand 2007 – 2014". This report provides a summary of statistics on victims of murder, man slaughter and infanticide over the above period, and was published in March 2017. Within that report there is an interesting dimension 'Weapon', which refers to the weapon used to commit a homicide. Interestingly across the 8 years of the data:

- Most homicide victims were not killed with weapons.
- Only one in ten homicides involved firearms.
- Less than 9% of manslaughter victims were killed with a weapon.

The tables from the report showing the weapon dimension are reproduced below:

	2007			2008			2009		
	Murder	Manslaughter	Total	Murder	Manslaughter	Total	Murder	Manslaughter	Total
Firearm	6	0	6	7	0	7	11	1	12
Stabbing/Cutting Weapon	16	0	16	14	1	15	17	0	17
Other Weapon	11	1	12	12	0	12	13	1	14
No Weapon	18	16	34	18	18	36	26	24	50
Total	51	17	68	51	19	70	67	26	93

	2010			2011			2012		
	Murder	Manslaughter	Total	Murder	Manslaughter	Total	Murder	Manslaughter	Total
Firearm	7	1	8	3	0	3	3	1	4
Stabbing/Cutting Weapon	17	1	18	16	0	16	13	0	13
Other Weapon	7	3	10	5	1	6	11	1	12
No Weapon	11	29	40	14	23	37	16	19	35
Total	42	34	76	38	24	62	43	21	64

	2013			2104		
	Murder	Manslaughter	Total	Murder	Manslaughter	Total
Firearm	8	2	10	6	0	6
Stabbing/Cutting Weapon	20	0	20	16	0	16
Other Weapon	6	0	6	9	0	9
No Weapon	14	12	26	14	19	33
Total	48	14	62	45	19	64

The most recent data is a snap shot of data for February 2015, most of these cases were ongoing, but the details are below:

	2015		
	Murder	Manslaughter	Total
Firearm	7	2	9
Stabbing/Cutting Weapon	15	0	15
Other Weapon	12	0	12
No Weapon	15	14	29
Total	49	16	65

So, in a nut-shell, the most statistically likely weapon of choice for a homicide in New Zealand, is firstly “no weapon at all”, which is covered by the current ITKD unarmed self-defence syllabus which is learned by the gup grades.

However, when considering weapons defence, the most statistically likely weapon that you will be attacked with where the likely result is death (either murder or manslaughter), is a knife or stabbing/cutting weapon. This picture would be quite different in the USA where firearm laws are more permissive, however the statistics are fairly similar in countries that have similar gun control laws to our own such as Australia, or most European countries. The weapon of choice in countries where it is difficult to get a gun, is likely to be a knife or a stabbing/cutting weapon.

Having already mentioned, it is extremely unlikely that we will ever get to use any of our weapons defence training in a real-life situation. However, our likely hood of surviving a real-life situation is virtually non-existent if we don’t continuously train for realistic weapons defence scenarios. We do this by training under simulated scenarios to develop awareness of potential weapons attack scenarios. For safety reasons, we cannot jump in the deep end. We need to start off with simple

scenarios and then gradually build up to realistic scenarios. This gradually builds our awareness of what the attackers weapon hand is doing, or potentially doing.

Similarly, in the gym, we need to train with a training partner, who needs to take on the role of an attacker. The training partner who takes on the role of the attacker, needs to learn to wield the weapon in a realistic manner that is consistent with the sorts of attack scenarios that you would expect to experience out in the real world. However, because we will ultimately make mistakes in our training and try to learn from them, we must be able to attack in such a way that is safe, so that if an attack does get through we do not get injured. Safety is paramount so that we might learn together and develop our skills of both attack and defence together, living to fight and learn another day.

Because we are training with a training partner, we also need to be able to communicate with each other, so that we understand and label each of the attack scenarios so that our partner understands if we are trying to work on a particular attack scenario or combination. For systemising the attack vectors for knife and stick I have chosen the Philippine Balintawak system, for the following reasons:

- I have access to a master Balintawak instructor in the form Master Steve Pellow,
- Balintawak has a single stick system which describes all the attack vectors that you are likely to be attacked with a stick,
- Balintawak also has a knife system, where the numbering system is similar to the above stick number system.
- The Balintawak attack vectors are realistic and fast,
- Most of the angles / movements are very similar to our unarmed ITKD self-defence syllabus.

Note: There are a lot of stick styles out there as well as corresponding knife styles and systems, as any search of the internet will show, however the Balintawak system is a good solid system based on powerful strikes, and there is a wealth of knowledge in the Balintawak format in the form of Master Steve Pellow and his students available to our organisation.

The benefits of choosing a system such as the above are:

- It is rigorous and complete in terms of describing the types of attacks and vectors that you are likely to experience.
- You don't have to waste time re-inventing the wheel, working out the above vectors and moves, as the practitioners of Balintawak have been doing this over the last generation or so.
- You can practice the attack / defence scenarios in safety, once the practitioners have learned to properly wield the stick without inadvertently hitting each other.

There are really, only two weapons you need to learn to defend against, the stick and the knife. The stick is where you should start because it is slightly slower than the knife but teaches the majority of the framework that you work with when working with the knife.

The vectors used for a stick attack are essentially similar to vectors you would experience in a sword or machete attack. The difference is swords and machetes have sharp edges.

The difference with a knife is that it is smaller and faster, and it is easy to hide your intent to use a knife at the start of an attack. Most victims of knife attack do not realise they are being attacked

with a knife, all they feel is the fist that is holding the knife ramming against their rib cage, as the weapon had been concealed at the start of the fight.

Knives are also easier to conceal than sticks.

Knives are easier to obtain than (good) kali sticks.

Knives are easier to obtain than firearms.

The most likely weapon you will be attacked with, should you be attacked with a weapon is a knife of or cutting/stabbing weapon.

The knife is the most difficult non-firearm weapon to defend against.

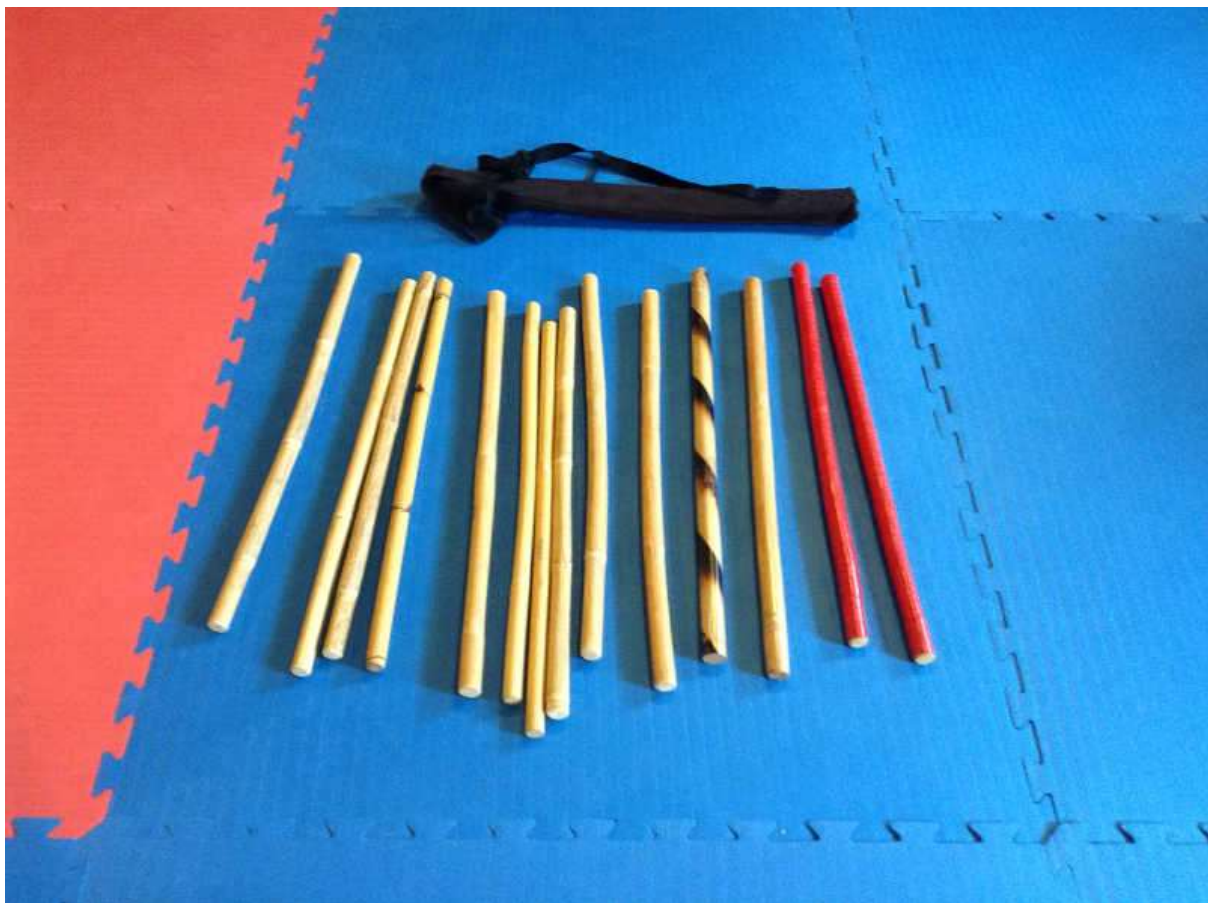
We will start with the stick because it builds a good foundation then move onto the knife.

The Stick

Obtaining a Training Stick

A training stick is made from Rattan and around 65cm long and 2.5 cm in diameter. These may be obtained from a martial arts supplier such as Fujimae if you are only going to use them for unarmed stick defence training only. However, if you are going to use a stick for training in Balintawak as well, then a bought stick is not going to last very long, due to the force with which sticks clash in full power Balintawak training. The author obtains lengths of rattan from a cane furniture manufacturer in Christchurch. Purchasing them in two metre lengths and cutting them down to 65 centimetre lengths.

If you are also going to use your training stick for Balintawak as well as self-defence training, then do not use a stick made from a material such as Bamboo or Wood, as it will splinter, with the risk of shards causing injury, potentially to your eyes. Rattan sticks have the characteristic of bending before they break, and do not splinter. Rattan is also a light weight sturdy material that is surprisingly strong.



The above picture shows the author's current stick collection.

There is a real possibility of developing 'tennis elbow' if you jump straight into wielding heavy sticks with large powerful strokes. So instead, use a stick made of Rattan which is light weight and easier on your elbow.

Holding the Training Stick

The stick should be held strongly in your hand as you would a hammer, and keep your wrist stiff, at right angles to the stick at all times. If your wrist is kept stiff and at right angles, it produces a predictable and repeatable stroke. If you allow your wrist to become loose, and the stick wobbles in your hand, then your strokes become less clean and predictable. If you have a loose wrist and a wobbly strike, then you risk inadvertently hitting your training partner. For safety reasons, right from the outset keep a stiff wrist and keep your stick at 90 degrees to your forearm at all times.



[The above picture shows the correct way to hold a stick with a stiff wrist.]¹

¹ Advanced Balintawak practitioners begin to relax the tight wrist rule during full power strikes to get more power and whip in their attacks, however when beginning it is paramount a tight 90 degree wrist should be maintained for safety reasons.



[The above photo shows a less correct method of holding the stick with a loose wrist.]

There should be two to three finger widths of stick emerging from the bottom end of your hand. This is referred to the 'but' end of the stick. The but is quite important and can be used as a secondary weapon to the big end of the stick when in close quarters. The butt can also be used to trap an opponent's weapon or hand.

In some styles of Kali, the long end of the stick is called the Puna, the short end is called the Puno.² In our Balintawak classes, we refer to the short end as the but.

The Puna or long end of the stick is the primary weapon, as it contains the significant component of Kinetic Energy due to rotational angular momentum compared to the short end of the stick.

Energy Distribution Down the Length of a Stick in Motion

Let's just take a little side track to investigate by how much the kinetic energy from a resultant impact is generated the further you go up the length of a stick.

Intuitively it seems that if you are hit with the big end of the stick, the impact should provide more damage versus, being hit with a point part way down the stick. This is intuitively obvious, but by how much? Also, what is the equation? General Choi in his theory of power shows that due to $K=mv^2$, velocity is the main contributor to power for Taekwon Do techniques in general. This equation comes from the main kinetic energy formula from Physics.

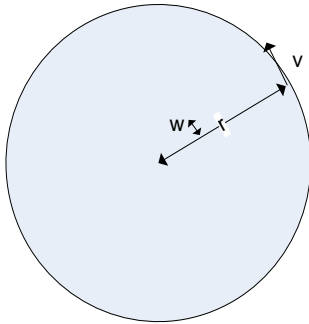
² From you tube video by Sean Hurst – Kali Level 1

Where:

K = Kinetic Energy due to impact of object in motion,

M = Mass of object,

V = Linear velocity of the impacting object at the time of impact.



In the situation of a staff being swung in a circular arc, v , which will be the tangential velocity at any point along the sticks length, will vary dependent on how far it is from the centre of the rotational motion.

To model this:

W = the rotational velocity of the strike in degrees per second (it does not matter what this is measured in as it will be constant for each part of the stick.)

R = distance along the stick from the centre of rotation.

V = tangential velocity.

From first year university physics we have the following equation which represents the relationship of tangential velocity to angular velocity and distance from the centre of rotation:

$$V = wr.$$

Using the above two equations we can substitute ' $v = wr$ ' to rewrite our kinetic energy equation to get kinetic energy for any point along a stick in terms of m , (mass of the stick), w (angular velocity of the stick), and r , (distance along the stick).

We have $K = mv^2$, however v also = wr (from above), so we get:

$$K = m(wr)^2$$

Or:

$$K = mw^2r^2$$

This means:

- If w (angular velocity) is kept constant, then the kinetic energy goes up proportional to the square of the distance from the centre of rotation.
- If you hit with the same part of the stick but swing the stick faster, the energy at the point of impact goes up proportional to the square of how fast you swung the stick.

Or put simply, the long end of the stick is extremely deadly compared to the middle of the stick or a point close to the wielder's hand. The stick is also extremely deadly in the hands of someone who can wield it extremely fast.

Distances/Ranges

Within stick fighting stick defence scenarios, there are the following ranges, or distances that are recognised that may separate the combatants that a defender needs to be aware of.

Standing off range (Distancia Furia)

This range is the furthest range out and is defined that if both attacker and defender have a stick reaching out, they cannot touch each other's hand holding the stick. In a real fight this is rare, it is normally at the start of a fight when the combatants are sizing each other up, and looking to find an opening for the first attack. This is the safest position to be, and where a sane person, if they have the option to, should attempt to escape by running away, or attempt to diffuse the situation by 'talking the opponent down'.



In an unarmed defender's point of view, this distance translates to a distance that the attacker's stick cannot touch any part of the defender's body yet.

Long Range (Largo Mano)

The long range is defined by the end of each attacker's stick can reach their opponent's hand that is holding the stick, but can reach no other part of their opponent.



It is from this range that an experienced stick fighter will attempt to 'defang' the snake, to end a defendant's ability to defend him/her self. 'Defanging the snake', refers to attacking the hand that holds the stick, if the defender holds a stick. The underlying reasoning is that if you can break the attacking weapons (wrists) of your opponent while you are in Largo Mano, then you don't have to deliver a potentially more fatal injury in one of the closer ranges to stop your opponent. From an unarmed TKD defender point of view, we must be especially aware that when we are facing an experienced stick practitioner, and we are at Largo Mano, that we don't inadvertently offer our hands, wrists or ankles as targets to the stick wielding attacker. (Such as we would if we adopted a standard sparring stance, or passive stance).

Middle Range (Medio Mano)

The middle range is defined by the ability to use the checking hand, to check the attackers hand which holds the stick. It is also possible to hit any point on the opponent using a stick. In the case of an unarmed ITKD practitioner facing someone with a stick, it means that the stick holder can hit any point on our body with the stick, but it also means we can reach their hand which holds the stick with our hands.



Middle range is a dangerous place to be due to the energy at the end of the attacker's stick. You want to stay in this region momentarily, and only pass through getting into close range or passing out to long range after a failed or miss timed counter. You do not want to stay in middle range when unarmed, defending against an experienced stick practitioner.

Close Range (Corto Mano)

Close range is defined by the ability to use the butt of the stick. (The Puno). It is also the range at which you can use your elbows, head but, or use your knees.

From close range, we as an unarmed defender can throw our assailant. From close range, it is difficult for the attacker to use the long end of his stick in uncontrolled strike through attacks.



It is from close range that we as an unarmed defender will be doing our most effective responses, and neutralising the attack of an attacker armed with a stick.

Basic Controlled Short Stick Attacks

This next section describes the basic attacks, and attack vectors so that finally, the training partner acting in the role of attacker can begin to start wielding a stick. The first set of strikes are referred to as 'in control' strikes. This means that they are not carry through strikes, and travel from the loading position to the target, and back again. They are little short sharp direct strikes that typically are used to set up a following follow through strike (which is described in the following section). When we are practicing with a training partner with these strikes we pull the strike just before the target, so as not to injure our training partner, in a similar manner to Taekwon Do step sparing, or non-contact sparing.

In all of the following strikes the attacker stands in a stance where the legs are shoulder width apart, but one leg is slightly in front of the other leg, with the heel of the back foot slightly off the floor. This is similar to how a diagonal parallel stance would look, if such existed in Taekwon Do. The attacker is usually full facing to the opponent, however when preparing the shoulder on the side holding the stick is withdrawn back in preparation so that the upper body is reverse half facing to the opponent.



The above preparation position is used for delivering forehand strikes to the target, where the stick loading position is on the same side of the body as the arm holding the stick.

The backhand loading position is shown below, which would be used for a backhand strike, where the preparation position is on the side of the body opposite to the arm holding the stick.



Number One Strike

If you hold the stick in your right hand, then a number one strike attacks the opponent's right temple from your perspective. The intermediate position has the stick over the attacker's right shoulder and then the stick travels directly to the opponent's temple, with the middle portion of the stick striking the temple. The stick is then not left on the target but is withdrawn again back to the intermediate position for the number one strike, (or is placed on the opposite shoulder in preparation for a number two strike.)

The below sequence of photos shows the number one strike starting from chamber position, through to target and then back to chamber position again.



A video of this strike being performed slowly can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/G5N_8gLuQPw

The number one strike is usually the first attack that you will be hit with at the opening of a confrontation, and is also the main strike that someone does not know how to use a stick will end up using.

Number Two Strike

If you hold the stick in your right hand, then a number two strike attacks the opponent's left temple from your perspective. The intermediate position has the stick over the attacker's left shoulder and then the stick travel's directly to the opponent's temple, with the middle portion of the stick striking the temple in a backhand motion. The stick is not left on target but is withdrawn again back to the intermediate position for either the number one or number two strike.



A video of the above strike can be viewed at https://youtu.be/6P_q1pYKCG4.

If your attacker with a stick has executed an ineffectual number 1 attack (which you have avoided), and the stick now resides on the back-hand side, the number two attack is the usual next attack you should be preparing for.

Number Three Strike

If you hold the stick in your right hand, then a number three strike attacks the opponent's left elbow, or ribs on the left side, about the height of their solar plexus, with the middle portion of the stick, in a back-hand motion. The stick is not left on target, but is withdrawn again back to the intermediate position for either a number two side attack, or a number one side attack. In other words, a number three strike is like a number two strike but is instead aimed at an opponent's mid-section.



A video of the above strike can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/BovZuRPYs-s>

Number Four Strike

If you hold the stick in your right hand, then a number four strike attack's the opponent's right elbow or ribs on the right side, about the height of the solar plexus, with the middle portion of the stick. The stick is not left on target, but is withdrawn again back to the intermediate position for either a number two side attack, or a number one side attack. In other words, a number four strike is a number one strike delivered to the opponent's mid-section.



A video of the above strike can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/3-YAD5QtFW0>.

Number Five Strike

A number five strike is a thrust directed at the opponent's mid-section, with the end of the stick. This is executed as follows. To form the intermediate position, hold the stick with an over hand grip on both hands with palms down, holding the stick at elbow height, in front of your body, but pivot your body to the left, so the stick is directed at the opponent's mid-section. The elbows are tucked into your own body, and the forearms are at right angles to your upper arms, and parallel to the ground. The wrists are straight and not bent. To deliver the strike (thrust), pivot your body while thrusting the stick forwards into the opponent's mid-section.

The stick is not left in the extended position, but is pulled back and positioned in an intermediate position for the next strike.



A video of the above strike can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/a_l2jilbbd4.

Number Six and Number Seven Strikes

The number six and seven strikes have been removed from this thesis, as they considered too dangerous for a non-Balintawak practitioner to deliver or train with. If you want to learn about the number six or seven strikes and how to defend against them, you should join a Balintawak or Kali class.

It is unlikely that you will be attacked by a number six or seven strike by a stick wielding attacker unless they have practiced some form of Kali or Philippine stick fighting system.

Number Eight Strike

A number eight strike is similar to a number one strike, or number four strike, but is aimed at the opponent's right knee (from your perspective.) The intermediate position for a number eight strike is the same as a number one strike, with the stick over your right shoulder. You should also bend your knees, and crouch a little to get low enough to deliver the strike. The strike is delivered in a straight attack with the middle of the stick striking the opponent's knee. The stick is not left on target, but is quickly withdrawn to an intermediate position for the next strike.



A video of the above strike can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/rq_Gt0xo90k.

Number Nine Strike

A number nine strike is similar to a number two strike, or number three strike, but is aimed at the opponent's left knee (from your perspective). The intermediate position for a number nine strike is the same as that for a number two strike, with the stick over your left shoulder. You should also bend your knees, and crouch a little to get low enough to deliver the strike. The strike is delivered in a straight back hand attack with the middle of the stick striking the opponent's knee. The stick is not left on target, but is quickly withdrawn to an intermediate position for the next strike.



A video of the above strike can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/b85UscdbMHA>.

Number Ten and Eleven Strikes

Similarly to the numbers six and seven strikes, the number ten and eleven strikes are also considered too dangerous for this forum. Should you want to learn them or train with them you should join a Balintawak or Kali class.

Number Twelve Strike

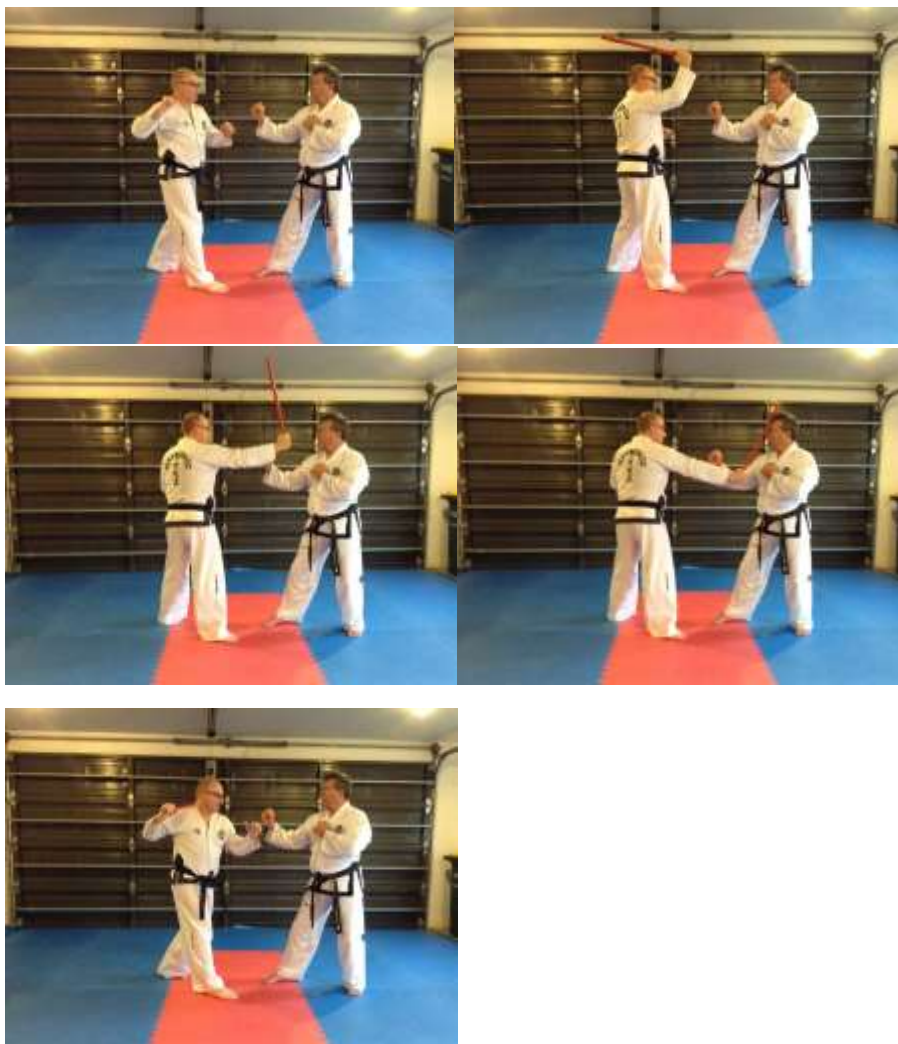
A number twelve strike comes from the same chamber (intermediate) position as a number one strike (on the forehand side), however strikes straight at the fore head in a vertical strike. In the under control short form, it is a short sharp strike like a jab which punches out and hits the fore head, with any of the following parts of the stick:

- The Fist holding the stick – like a punch,
- The middle of the stick,
- The end of the stick (long end furthest from the from the fist holding the stick).



A video of the above strike can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/H1yDe3vyVwA>.

The above photos show the straight conventional method of delivering a number 12 under control. The photos below show a slight variation in the number 12 which you might expect from someone not used to using a stick, where the stick is swung down on top of the opponent's fore head.



A video of the above strike can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/5tR4hhWB_gM.

Uncontrolled Full Power Strikes

The above strikes are what are referred to as 'in control' strikes. This means that they are short, sharp and easier to control. This section describes the more common strikes that you would expect to be confronted with in a stick defence situation that are strikes which are uncontrolled, with more power and follow through in their range of motion. The same numbering system is used to describe the strikes which describes the angle that the strikes come from.

This section will describe the following strikes:

- Number 1 full power strike.
- Number 2 full power strike.
- Number 3 full power strike.
- Number 4 full power strike.
- Number 8 full power strike.
- Number 9 full power strike.

Again, numbers 6,7, 10 and 11 have been left out due to safety reasons, and number 5 is essentially the same as its controlled form, in its full power form, so number 5 also will not be covered in this section, (as it was covered in the previous section.)

To deliver full power strikes safely, we don't aim directly at our opponent, we aim to just miss outside their head for diagonal or vertical strikes, or to just miss in front of their body for horizontal strikes. It is essential that the person that the full power strikes are being aimed at develops an awareness of where the stick is going to travel, so that they don't inadvertently step into it's path.

Number 1 Full Power Strike

The number 1 full power strike starts from the same chamber position as the under-control number 1 strike. The stick is held over the right shoulder. The stick is then swung in a diagonal arc which passes through the opponent's right temple (from the attacker's perspective), downward diagonally to the left, and is swung up to chamber in the number two chamber position over the attacker's left shoulder. When we actually deliver this strike in training, we do not strike the defender's temple but instead deliver the strike outside the opponent's left temple (from our perspective), to miss. It is essential when delivering this strike that the wrist is kept 90 degrees to the stick, so that the stick does not wobble while in flight and inadvertently hit our training partner. The stick should be wielded as if you are using a sword to slice along one of the lines of an X in front of you. You cut the air with the stick, and try and keep the stick in the striking plane of motion. Do not let the stick wobble.

The following pictures show the number 1 full power strike:



A video of the above strike can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/R2y31F8uXW8>.

Number 2 Full Power Strike

The number 2 full power strike starts from the same chamber position as the under-control number 2 strike. The stick is held on the left shoulder. The stick is then swung in a diagonal arc which passes through the opponent's left temple (from the attacker's perspective), downward diagonally to the right, and is swung up to chamber in the number one chamber position over the attacker's right shoulder. Again, when we actually deliver this strike in training, we do not strike the defender's temple, but instead deliver the strike outside the defender's right temple (from our perspective), to miss. It is essential when delivering this strike that the wrist is kept 90 degrees to the stick, so that the stick does not wobble while in flight and inadvertently hit your training partner. The stick should be wielded as if you are using a sword to slice along one of the lines of an X in front of you. You cut the air with the stick and try and keep the stick in the striking plane of motion. Do not let the stick wobble.

The following pictures show the number 2 full power strike.



A video of the above strike delivered slowly can be found here: https://youtu.be/bv_EYIFe7Ck.

Number 3 Full Power Strike

The number 3 full power strike starts from the number 1 chamber position, travels in a horizontal plane at mid-section level and then chambers back into the number 2 chamber position. Care must be taken to keep the wrist holding the stick in this strike in the axe grip 90 degree position, so that the stick does not wobble out of the plane of motion during the strike. The following sequence of photos shows this strike.



A video of the above strike can be found here: https://youtu.be/KpmD3X_iBSg.

Number 4 Full Power Strike

A Number 4 full power strike is similar to a number 3 full power strike, however travels in the reverse direction to a number 3 full power strike. The strike starts from the number 2 chamber position over the left shoulder, travels in a horizontal plane at mid-section, and chambers in the number 1 chamber position over the right shoulder.

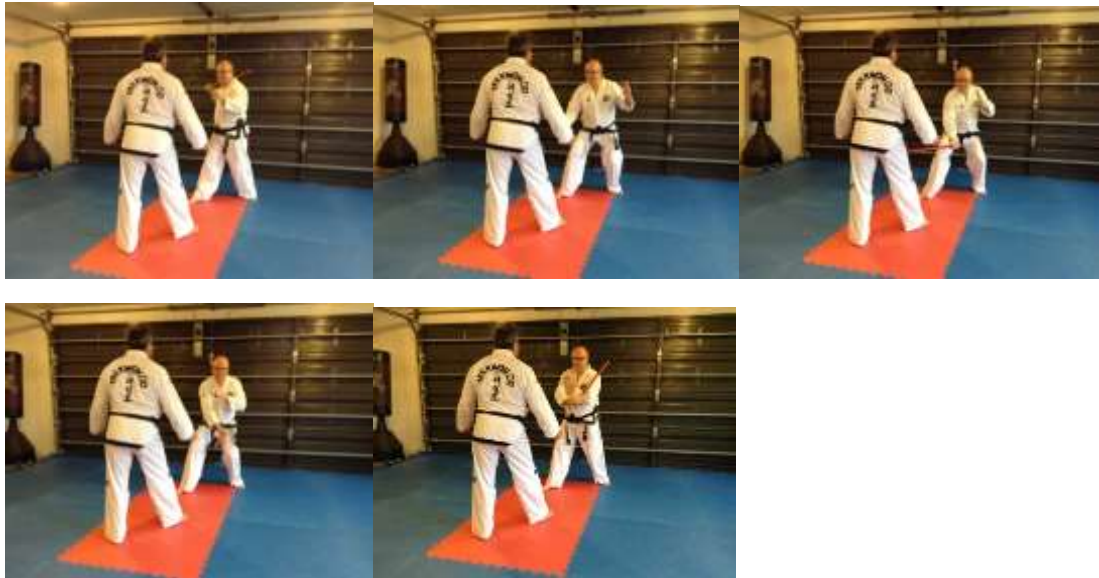
The pictures below show this strike.



A video of the above strike being delivered slowly can be watched here: https://youtu.be/0Y_jhpLQLQ4.

Number 8 Full Power Strike

A number 8 full power strike is like a number 3 full power strike, which is delivered at knee level. The strike starts from the number 1 chamber position, travels in a horizontal plane at knee level, and finishes in the number 2 chamber position. Care should be taken to ensure the wrist holding the stick is kept in the 90 degree axe holding position, and that the stick does not wobble out of it's plane during the strike. The following photos show this strike.



A video of the above strike delivered slowly can be found here: <https://youtu.be/559ql9LZ2xA>.

Number 9 Full Power Strike

The number 9 full power strike is similar to the number 8 full power strike, but is delivered in the reverse direction. It starts from the number 2 chamber position, travels in a horizontal plane at knee level, and then chambers on the number 1 chamber position. Care should be taken to keep the wrist holding the stick at 90 degrees in the axe holding grip so that the stick does not wobble out of its plane of motion. This strike is shown in the following pictures.



A video of the above strike delivered slowly can be found here: <https://youtu.be/AHrJQMbvK5g>.

Moving

Overview

So far, we have become acquainted with the stick, and how to wield the stick in a safe manner for both ourselves and our partner. We have also formalised a language for describing all of the types of attacks we are likely to train with or be attacked by. We have not yet begun to actually learn anything about defending unarmed against the stick. The first actual part of defending the stick, which is potentially the most important part, is developing an awareness of the distance between ourselves and the person wielding the stick. We also have to develop a natural awareness of detecting the various attacks of a stick wielder, and learning to evade the stick by moving. We do this by either moving from outside the stick radius to inside the stick radius, or moving to another position outside the stick radius. We also have to learn to detect the 'moment' when it is right to attack a person with a stick.

When we are being confronted with a stick wielding attacker who is in a standoff mode sizing us up, and threatening us, we remain at stand-off range, (*distancia furia*), until the attack actually begins, while we try and talk our way out of the situation. If the attacker moves, we move to maintain the standoff range if we are still trying to evade the situation. Should the attacker decisively attack, or we decide the best solution is to decisively attack and remove the threat then we quickly move to evade the attack, or move to attack.

If we are evading, we are trying to get back to *distancia furia*, (standoff range), where no part of the attacker's stick can reach any part of our body.

We do not stay in long or medium range, as in these ranges the attacker can hit us. In long range the attacker can destroy our attacking tools, removing our ability to end the situation decisively with a positive outcome for ourselves. In medium range the attacker can kill us by hitting a vital point with the long end of their stick, as well as destroying our attacking tools.

At close distance we can hit the attacker's vital points with devastating effect, we can also destroy the attacker's wrist holding the stick, and remove the stick from the attacker.

At close range the attacker cannot use his/her full power blows that will kill us.

We do not remain in middle or long range. We pass through these ranges to close range where we destroy the attacker's ability to do us harm.

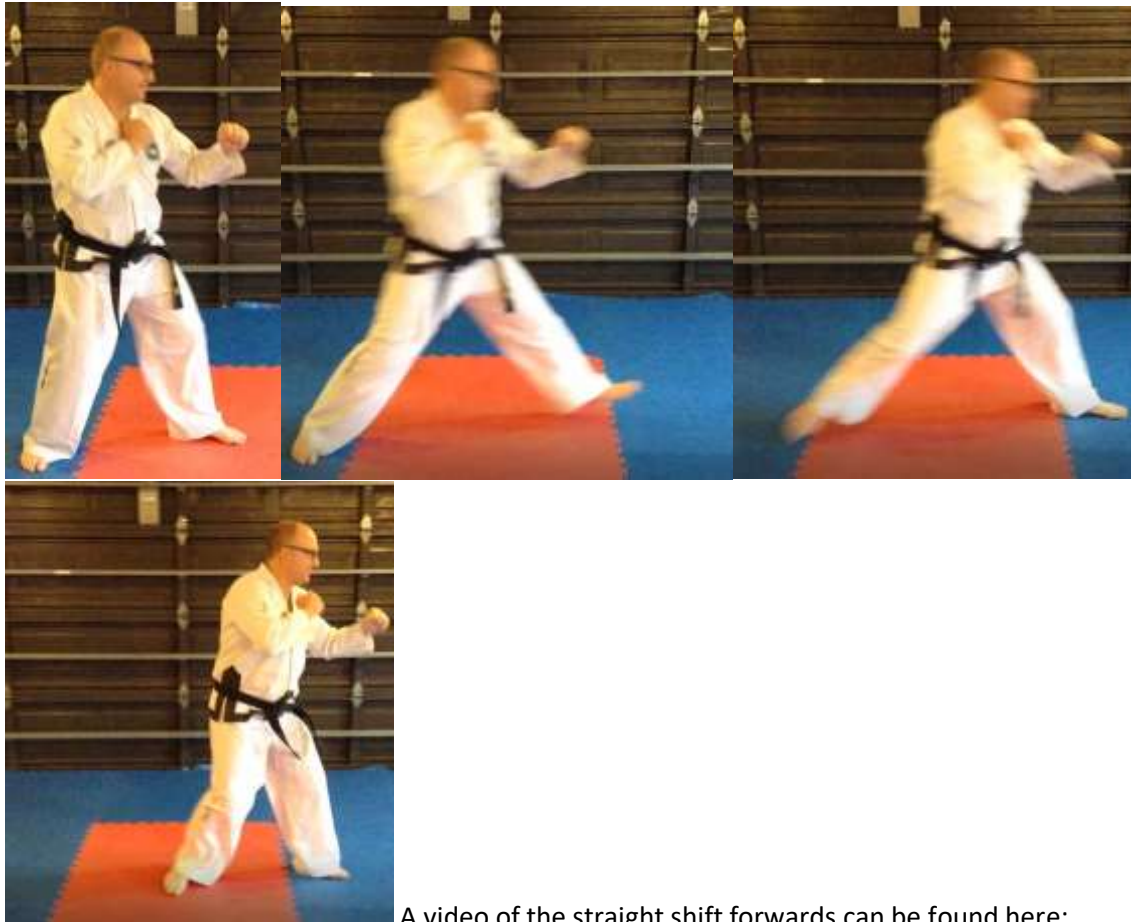
The next step on our training journey, and probably the most important step, is to learn to move around a person with the stick, and develop an awareness of which defence distance we are in. We also need to become comfortable evading the before mentioned strikes being wielded against us, and we need to develop an awareness of those strikes and angles. We also need to develop a sense of timing. When is it safe to slip past a strike into close range? When is it safe to pre-empt a strike and slip into close range? When is it safe to abort an attack and slip back out to stand-off range?

We need to do this in a controlled form of sparring similar to Taekwon Do controlled free sparring, where the attacker just attacks, (first slowly), and the defender just evades, using his/her ability to move only.

But first we need to ensure we are moving correctly. The rest of this section recaps the basic methods of moving we should already know from our experience from free sparring in Taekwon Do, then at the end of this section we add a couple of more moving methods which are more like Aikido movements which are useful against an attacker wielding a weapon.

Straight shift forwards

This is our standard burst forwards while sparing, or a shift forward while sparing. We want to push off our back foot, shifting our front foot forwards a stance width, or the distance we wish to move. Our back foot trails our front foot and slips into stance behind. The feet do not cross. The lead foot, (in this case the front), leads the movement, while the other foot pushes into the mat or ground to burst forwards.



A video of the straight shift forwards can be found here:

<https://youtu.be/31hGf-apbCw>.

Straight shift backwards

This our standard burst backwards while sparring. Push off the front foot, while stepping back with the back foot. The front foot then steps into position following the back foot. The feet do not cross. The lead foot (in this case the back), leads the movement with the other foot pushing into the ground to provide the power.



A video of the above movement can be found at <https://youtu.be/INTaKe3FVzc>.

Straight shift to open side

This is a lateral shift towards our open side. If we are in a right L stance, then it is a shift to our right. If we are in a left L stance it will be a shift to our left. With a shift to our open side, the back foot is the leading foot, and the front foot is the trailing foot. The feet do not cross, but the rear foot leads the shift, with the front foot trailing. The photos below show this shift from a right L stance.



A video of the above shift can be found here: <https://youtu.be/hXmpcOZUIdY>.

Straight shift to closed side

This is a lateral shift towards our closed side. If we are in a right L stance, the shift is towards our left. If we are in a left L stance, the shift is towards our right. In an L stance, our front leg is the closest leg to our closed side, so this is the leading leg in this shift. The legs do not cross, we shift directly to the closed side, leading with our front leg, trailing with our back leg. The following photos show this shift executed from a right L stance.



A video of the above straight shift to the closed side is shown here: <https://youtu.be/UYwDoOkwrcg>.

Step turn 90 degrees to closed side

In Aikido this turn is a form of Taisabaki Tenkan, where we just turn 90 degrees to our closed side using our front foot as a pivot, moving our back foot to our closed side. In Taekwon Do terminology, this is a 90 degree step turn to our closed side stepping with our back foot.



A video of this step turn is shown here: <https://youtu.be/T82rsEu1Rrw>.

This turn removes the defenders body completely off the line of attack, and places the defender at 90 degrees to the attacker's flank, should the attacker carry through a straight attack.

Step turn 90 degrees to the open side

The same turn can be accomplished, by rotating off the back foot, towards our open side.



A video of this step turn is shown here: <https://youtu.be/cYW36t5xyRM>.

This turn also takes out body completely off the line of attack for an attack straight to the front, however it places us on the other side of the opponent to the previous turn. In both cases we are positioned to be directly facing the opponent's flank after the turn.

Double Step turn 180 degrees to closed side

This turn positions you behind an attacking opponent. The defender takes a small step to the front with their front leg, then pivots on the front leg, rotating to their closed side with their trailing leg, through 180 degrees until they are facing in the opposite direction.



A video of the above turn can be found here: <https://youtu.be/dfmb5ZtnVdY>.

If you step slightly off the line of attack, it is possible to use this double step turn to completely evade an attacker who is attacking you from the front, and end up positioning yourself to their rear.

Double Step turn 180 degrees to open side

This turn positions you behind an attacking opponent, however you rotate in the opposite direction to the last turn, and you start by stepping with your back foot, rotating towards your open side. So if you are in right L stance, your right foot is your back foot. You step forwards with your right foot, (which effectively rotates you to your open side). When the right foot lands, you then rotate on that foot, bringing your left foot back behind you to rotate through 180 degrees, rotating to your closed side in this last half of the turn. You end up facing 180 degrees to your initial direction, but are a stance and a half in front of your previous position. Aikido refers to this movement as Taisabaki Irimi Tenkan.



A video of this movement can be found here: https://youtu.be/-J_JhTnkWNE.

This is the second variation of the previous 180 degree turn, however we pass the opposite side to the opponent that we passed on the previous 180 turn. So you can use this 180 degree turn, or the previous 180 degree turn depending on which side of the opponent you want to pass on, and this usually depends on which side they are holding their weapon on.

Exercises in movement and weapon awareness

Now we have introduced the basic moves that can be used to move around our opponent who is wielding a stick, the first step is to practice the above moves, while your training partner is attacking you with the various strikes that have been discussed in the earlier part of this document. Start off slowly at first and become familiar with the distances described earlier. Try not to linger in middle or long distance, but start from standoff distance and try and close to close distance without being hit. Try to time the move between attacks, or just prior to attacks. Most attacks can be avoided when at stand off, by the straight shift backwards, followed by a shift to the left or right. Experiment also with the above step turns to take yourself off the line when a direct attack occurs to your front.

Also try and position yourself behind your opponent with the 180 degree double step turns. After a bit of practice, you can step slightly off the line with the first step, and then step back on the line behind your opponent, placing them in a vulnerable position.

Stick Defence Preliminary Foundations

Unarmed defence against a round house – basic movement

We are finally at the point where we can begin to start developing some methods to defend against the stick. We know what the attacks look like, and we can practice them safely. We can also move around someone wielding a stick towards us. To move towards defending the stick we will start with our unarmed self-defence syllabus and evolve those moves to take down a stick wielding attacker. A round house punch is similar to a number one stick attack, the only difference is that you are being hit with a punch and not a stick.

Consider the following defence against a round house attack being delivered with the attacker's right hand.

A basic standard defence against a round house punch is to execute a wedging block inside the attacking arm, wrap our inside hand around the back of the attacker's neck, while at the same time delivering a knee attack with our right knee, low down on the attacker's body. This bends the attacker over. We then switch our feet and deliver a knee attack with the other knee higher up the attackers body, preferably on their face or head region.

The following sequence of pictures illustrates this attack.



Initially in our standard passive stance for unarmed defence.



The round house punch begins.
The defender prepares for wedging block.



The round house is blocked with a wedging block.

The hands are left open.

The defender steps forwards into a walking stance during the block to give power for the next attack being delivered with the back leg.



The right hand is hooked around the back of the attacker's neck, and pulled backwards.

At the same time a right knee attack is delivered to the attacker's groin, or inner thigh.

This double action, high to the back of the neck, and low to the thigh or groin, bends the attacker forwards.



The defender swaps legs and prepares for a knee attack with the other leg. This is a quick shuffle of the legs.



The defender delivers a knee attack to the upper part of the attacker's body, or face.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/57WMR8PTB6w>

Note:

- When performing the wedging block, the hands are left open so that contact can be maintained with the arm and neck.
- The hands do not hold the arms or neck.

The reason we do not grab or hold any of the attacker's limbs is this then causes the conflict to become a wrestling conflict. As the defender we do not want to engage with a wrestling contest with the attacker. We want to maintain speed of response, as well as a light controlling touch. These are all option B defences, so we want to neutralise the attacker's ability to attack using strikes and blows delivered with devastating speed and power. The action in the above videos is purposely slowed down for demonstration purposes, however in reality you would practice this move so that it can be delivered quickly with devastating power.

The above defence is a good routine that teaches the basic movements as a starting point for defending a round house punch or a number one stick strike. In all reality though, this would not be that effective in a real attack, because the attack that turns off the attackers processing unit does not come until the last attack with the second knee attack. We can do better. We need to stun the attacker at the same time as we execute the first block, attacking simultaneously.

Unarmed round house punch defence variation one – counter with open fist

This sequence shows a variation of the above defence.

The initial wedging block becomes an outer forearm block with the left hand, while delivering a simultaneous open fist strike to the defender's philtrum. We then move the right hand into wedging block position, while monitoring the attackers right arm with the left arm still in outer forearm block position and wrap the right hand around the back of the attacker's neck to move to the two knee attacks.



Initially in passive stance for an unarmed attacker.



Attacker is beginning the round house, as the defender prepares to deliver an outer forearm block while simultaneously delivering an open fist attack.



The open fist attack is delivered with the right hand of the defender, while the attacker's round house is blocked with an outer forearm block.

The block is an outer forearm block, however the hand is left open in a knife hand position, even though it is the forearm doing the block. With the hand left in knife hand position, it is possible to monitor the attackers right arm after the block.



After the open fist is delivered with the right hand, it wraps around the attacker's neck, to be placed in the right-hand side of a wedging block position, then hook behind the attacker's neck.

Note: The hooking of the right hand around the attacker's neck can be a strike to the back of the neck as well. This will cause them to shoot their head forwards, and momentarily be disrupted prior to the low knee attack.



The first knee strike is delivered, while pulling the head down.



The shuffle to prepare for the last knee strike. Both hands reposition behind the attacker's head/neck.



Knee strike is delivered to attacker's face.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/BVzKbrfdF5A>.

Note: In the above video the action is shown slowly, and in control for demonstration purposes. In the real-life situation, you would deliver the attacks in a much more aggressive manner with more speed.

Unarmed defence against round house punch variation two – counter with front elbow strike

A more decisive initial defence/counter can be performed by substituting a front elbow strike for the open fist attack.

The defender delivers a simultaneous outer forearm block with a front elbow strike, then delivers two knee attacks.



Defender is initially in passive stance for an unarmed attacker.



As attacker begins the round house attack with his left hand, the defender prepares to deliver an outer forearm block with the left arm, while simultaneously delivering a front elbow strike with the right arm.



A front elbow strike is delivered simultaneously with an outer forearm block.



The defender repositions legs to deliver a left knee attack, while repositioning hands around the back of the attacker's neck.

Note: In the heat of the moment the defender has decided to use the left knee attack before the right knee attack. Both defences are equally valid, as long as the leg delivering the attack is first positioned as the back leg of a walking stance prior to the knee attack to achieve maximum power.



The left knee attack is delivered, while the attacker's upper body is pulled forwards and down.



The defender repositions to a left walking stance prior to delivering a right knee attack.



A video of the above sequence executed slowly under control can be found here: <https://youtu.be/2Lil-JENmKs>.

When we switch from an unarmed attack to an armed attack, it is essential that the first counter, that is simultaneously delivered with the initial block, has the power to seriously disrupt the attackers attack, and turns off his/her processing of his/her brain. The first counter strike must be delivered to a primary vital point, and must disrupt the attacker's thoughts. A front elbow strike is ideally suited for this purpose.

Unarmed defence against round house punch variation three – counter with reverse knife hand strike to the groin

Another initial counter attack that has shock value is to deliver a reverse knife hand strike to the attacker's groin, while simultaneously blocking the punch with an outer forearm block. In the following sequence, the reverse knife hand to the groin with the right hand is followed by an open palm slap to the side of the head with the left hand, followed by a take down with a leg sweep.



The defender is in passive stance for an unarmed attacker as the attacker prepares to attack.



The defender executes the round house punch attack, while the defender prepares to simultaneously block the round house punch attack with an outer forearm block, while delivering a reverse knife hand attack to the attacker's groin.



The reverse knife hand strike is delivered to the groin of the attacker.



The defender uses his/her other hand to deliver an open palm slap to the side of the attacker's face/head.



The defender places the right hand in the 'hook' position behind the attacker's neck.

Note: A front elbow attack could have been inserted here after the last attack, on the way to placing the right hand behind the attacker's neck.



The defender transitions to the intermediate position for a leg sweep.



The defender is in the process of sweeping the attacker's leg.



The attacker is thrown.

A video of the above sequence executed slowly, under control can be found here:
<https://youtu.be/ug1X-3joVdk>.

Defence against unarmed attacker key points for application against an armed attacker

Practically any of our option b unarmed defence routines can be adapted to use as a defence against an armed attacker. We will all have 'go to' techniques which we fall back to in most situations, or defence scenarios.

The best unarmed techniques that are useful in armed attacker scenarios have the following attributes:

- Initially there is a simultaneous block and counter to a primary target that disrupts the attacker's ability to follow through with other techniques following their primary attack.
- The hands of the defender rarely cross from one side of the bodies centre line to the other side, instead alternate counter attacks occur from each hand that is closest to the target to increase the speed of counters.
- With each counter blow, a devastating attack is performed on a vital point.
- The counters don't stop until the attacker stops.
- Refrain from grabbing or holding the attacker's arms or wrists, this leads to a wrestling competition and slows down the rain of counters on the attacker's vital spots.
- Instead, maintain contact with a blocking surface against the attacker's wrists or arms, so that they can be monitored. If the attacker move's you will know about it instantly and react accordingly.

As you practice sequences of counter, you will be wanting to build and practice speed in response, and efficiency of movement. Try not to let target opportunities pass, and use the closest attacking tool to the target area. However, if you do miss a target opportunity, do not stop to curse your-self for opportunities, lost. Quickly move onto attacking the next target opportunity. Self-defence is real life. You can't ask the attacker to stop and start again so that you can try to get it right on the second attempt. If you miss a target or counter, don't lock up, just carry on, there will be more targets to attack.

Not grabbing the attacker's wrists, or arms is going to be a controversial theme in this thesis, which probably runs against a large body of thought in martial arts circles. This is especially true when considering defences against blade attacks, however it will be shown in this thesis that the result of getting into a wrestling match with a knife wielding attacker will in most cases result in the knife wielder cutting their way out of any hold resulting in the defender being attacked with minor injuries followed by fatal injuries. This is if the knife holder knows what they are doing. More on this later.

Similarly, when you are being attacked by someone wielding a stick, you need to respond with blazingly fast counters, and don't give the stick holder a chance to wrestle their stick off you if you descend into a wrestling contest attempting to take their weapon off them.

This is based on the following premise.

If someone has decided to attack you with a weapon, and you try to wrestle that weapon off them before disrupting their attack with a blow to a primary vital point, the attacker will not willingly give up their weapon. They have already decided to start a life and death encounter. They are not going to give up their weapon without fighting for it as if their life depends on it. If you descend into a wrestling attack without doing some damage to the attacker, you are in a very serious situation, as you are on even ground, or worse, as it will become a battle of strength against strength.

If instead you aim for blazingly fast counters, that destroy the attacker's ability to attack, you can then take the weapon out of their lifeless hands at the end of the encounter.

Stripping the Stick

Overview

This section consists of techniques to strip the stick off an attacker. They are presented before showing the actual counter techniques, but in all reality, stripping the stick should not be the primary objective when facing an attacker armed with a stick. The primary objective should be to neutralise the attacker holding the stick, then proceed to remove the stick off them once they have been neutralised. Focusing too much on the stick is a common mistake in stick defence scenarios. You should instead aim to hit the person holding the stick in a manner that will turn off or disrupt their central processing unit (their brain) before even attempting any of the disarms in this section.

Snaking the stick on the number one side

A snake stick strip on the number one side starts with a knife hand side block with the defenders left hand against the inside of the wrist holding the stick. The blocking hand then 'snakes' around the stick, with a tight circular motion where the stick gets wrapped around and then trapped under the defender's arm, and the attackers hand is levered with the palm pushing upwards. The stick is then levered out of the weak part of the attacker's hand between the finger tips and the palm.

This movement is broken down below.



The number one strike is blocked with a knife hand side block against the inside of the wrist holding the stick.



The blocking hand slips forward slightly and begins to wrap around the wrist holding the stick. In this case going from inside to outside in an anti-clockwise direction, leading with knife hand edge.



The blocking hand wraps down and underneath the hand holding the stick. The blocking wrist must be kept close to the hand holding the stick.

It should not drift down the stick away from the hand holding the stick, or drift down the arm holding the stick away from the hand holding the stick.

At the bottom of the wrap motion, the blocking backhand is against the back hand of the hand holding the stick.



The back of the blocking hand completes the circuit back to the top, exerting pressure and levering the hand holding the stick upwards, and pressure on the wrist holding the stick which is at the same time rotated outwards, because the stick is trapped inside the elbow of the defender.

The blocking hand is positioned so the knife hand is in a position to cut across the wrist holding the stick.



The blocking hand then cuts downward and outward across the wrist holding the stick. The stick is levered out through the weak point finger tips and palm of the hand holding the stick.



The movement completes with the hand that was holding the stick being levered away from the stick.

A video of the above movement can be found here: <https://youtu.be/B9Kh9MqBI1A>.

The key to the above snake movement is to scribe a small circle around the wrist holding the stick with the knife hand that blocked the number one strike inside the attacker's wrist. A typical mistake made when attempting this snake movement is to trace a circle that is too big, and the blocking hand ends up levered against the attacker's arm too far from the wrist, or down the stick too far from the wrist.

Stripping the stick with a wrist slap on the number one side

This strip starts again from a knife hand side block to the inside of the wrist holding a stick for a number one strike. This time the defender moves their hand back towards the stick and holds the stick with the hand right next to the attacker's hand. The defender's fingers must wrap around the stick with fingers wrapping from inside to outside as shown by the following sequence of pictures. This move must also follow a strike which stuns the defender and loosens their grip on the stick. The stick is popped out the weak side of the attacker's grip by a blow to the attacker's wrist as shown in the pictures below. In practice, this method of stripping the stick is useful if you miss the snake disarm discussed earlier. The snake disarm requires that you get your wrist in exactly the correct place as a fulcrum to affect the disarm. This disarm is simpler to perform and is usually the one the author goes for if he has managed to miss the snake disarm.



The number one strike has been blocked with a knife hand side block to the inside of the wrist holding the stick. Preferably a counter strike has also been delivered to momentarily stun the attacker.



The blocking hand slips back and grabs the stick with the defending hand right next to the attacking hand holding the stick. Note how the defending hand wraps around the stick in a different direction to the attacker's hand holding the stick. The weak part of the attacker's hand is facing the strongest part of the defender's hand. The defend prepares to deliver a slap to the inside of the attacker's wrist.



A slap to the inside of the attacker's wrist pops the stick out of the weak part of their grip.



The force of the slap, forces the attacker's hand away from the stick.

The above movement can be seen on this video: <https://youtu.be/38e9ZL1tPE8>.

The key to the above stripping motion is to divert attention away from the motion by first stunning the attacker with a strike or blow to a primary vital point.

Snaking the stick on the number two side

A snake disarm on the number two side is proceeded by blocking to the outside of wrist holding the stick with a knife hand side block. The knife hand is then wrapped around the wrist holding the stick, and the stick is levered out on the weak side of the hand holding the stick. This move is shown in the following sequence of pictures.



The number two strike is blocked by a knife hand side block to the outside of the wrist holding the stick.



The blocking hand begins to snake around wrist holding the stick, traveling in the knife hand direction.

Note: Keep a small circle with your wrist next to the wrist holding the stick, and maintain contact with the wrist holding the stick.



The defender's wrist wraps around under the attacker's wrist, and the attacker's stick is jammed against the defender's under forearm.



The defender's wrist has wrapped under the attacker's wrist and is beginning to rotate the attacker's wrist on its upward journey. The attacker's wrist is being rotated by the stick jammed against the defender's arm.



The defender's hand completes the circle back to the top and gets ready to cut downward and outward. The defender's wrist is right next to the attacker's wrist, and does not slip down the attacker's arm towards their elbow or shoulder. The attacker's wrist is under pressure from the leverage of the stick jammed down against the defender's elbow or forearm.



The defender cuts with their knife hand across the attacker's wrist in a downward and outward motion. The stick begins to pop out of the weak part of the attacker's hand.



The snake is completed with the stick popping out of the attacker's hand, and the attacker's hand being pushed away from the stick.

A video of the above movement can be found here: <https://youtu.be/Ouv5-ypc3a8>.

Twist Strip on the number 2 side

A twist strip which is less elegant than the snake disarm on the number 2 side is a strip which involves grabbing the wrist holding the stick, and the stick, and then twisting the stick out through the weaker part of the hand, through the fingers. The attacker will need to have been disoriented by an attack to a vital spot before attempting this strip, because if the attacker attempts to hold onto the stick, you will not likely succeed in getting the stick out with this strip.



The stick is initially blocked with a knife hand side block to the outside of the strike delivered via a number 2 strike.



Slip the other hand in underneath the blocking hand and grab the wrist.



With the blocking hand grab the stick and rotate clockwise out through the open fingers, while holding the attacker's wrist with the other hand.



The stick is twisted out of the attacker's hand.

A video of the above strip can be found here: <https://youtu.be/a-5gvR1Z4XU>.

The snake strip will be more effective on the number two side, however if the defender finds the snake strip difficult, this is an alternative strip. The key though is to disorient the attacker with a counter to a vital spot before attempting this strip, because if the attacker is big, and is seriously determined to not let the stick out of their grip this strip will be difficult to perform.

Slap strip on number 2 side after failed snake

Quite often, the author has noticed that beginners in stick defence will not be able to perform the snake disarm, because they end up missing the fulcrum point by scribing too big a circle while perform the disarm, or end up with their arm too far down the stick. This variation of the slap disarm is shown as a method of recovering from a failed snake disarm on the number 2 side.

Essentially, if the open side of the customer's hand holding the stick is towards your opposite hand that is not performing the snake disarm, you immobilise the stick using the hand performing the snake disarm, and slap the wrist holding the stick just inside the stick with some force. This will force the hand off the stick, and the stick will pop out through the open part of the hand.



A snake has been attempted on the number 2 side, but it has failed because the fulcrum has been missed.



Immobilise the stick with your elbow.



Slap the wrist hard on the open hand side, the stick will pop out through the fingers on the open side of the hand.



The stick has popped out of the hand as the wrist is slapped away.

A video of this sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/YtEe8hanCeo>.

Slap stick on number one side after failed snake

The following sequence shows the variation where a snake strip has failed because the defender snaked the stick itself and missed the wrist altogether on the number one side. In this case the slap strip can still be used as shown.



A snake starts on the number one side however the hand slides up the stick.



The snake proceeds ineffectively with the hand sliding down the stick.



The snake proceeds to a point where the arm is too far down the stick to perform the snake correctly. The snake moment has been lost.



The stick is immobilised with the snaking arm, and the other hand is used to slap down on the wrist holding the stick. This is possible because the open part of the hand holding the stick is pointing upwards.



The attacker's wrist is slapped off the stick. The stick pops out of the open part of the attacker's hand.



The attacker's hand is slapped off the stick, which is immobilised under the defender's arm.

A video of this move can be found here: <https://youtu.be/GNnJZWYzO8>.

Stick Defence/Counters

Overview

We now go through the basic unarmed self-defence moves covered earlier, but apply them to an attacker wielding a stick. We will find that the same basic movements are used, the only difference is that the attacker holds a stick. The same moves that we are familiar with from the unarmed self-defence syllabus can be used against the stick.

The key points are:

- Block against the wrist holding the stick, not the stick itself.
- If you must block the stick, block the short end of the stick, not the long end. (This has less kinetic energy as was shown previously).
- Block with open hand knife hand blocks, this allows the wrist holding the stick to be monitored, you can feel if the attacker is going to change direction.
- Watch the non-stick hand, this can be used to punch you, so be ready.
- Do not grab the stick for a long period of time, this will lead to a wrestle for the stick.
- Instead use short sharp counters.
- If you must grab the stick, such as performing a disarm, then do it momentarily. Don't hold on for too long.

The general sequence of defending the stick is as follows:

- Block, or block and counter at the same time
- Counter more than once to vital points
- Strip the stick after the attacker has been neutralised,
- Optionally throw the attacker after a couple of counters

When countering, rather than delivering a sequence of counters using the same hand or arm or leg. (Like for example repeated punches with the right hand). Instead alternate between sides of the body, as this is quicker. While you are withdrawing the arm on one side, the other side is attacking. This allows an uninterrupted stream of attacks which are relatively strong attacks if the tool delivering the attack is properly primed/chambered before-hand.

Never give the stick back to the attacker, even when practicing. This builds the wrong behaviour that will be repeated inadvertently when it is the real thing. Make the attacker retrieve the stick from the ground.

Always treat stick defence scenarios as life and death situations.

Passive Stance Variation for facing an attacker with a stick

For unarmed attackers we use the following passive stance with our hands facing outwards towards the attacker to show that we are not interested in fighting.



This shows that we are not the aggressor should someone take a photo of our confrontation, it also shows the attacker that we are attempting to diffuse the situation. Unfortunately, if the attacker is wielding a stick, we are likely to have our hands broken.



We need to be very careful that we don't inadvertently offer our hands to our attacker, who has a longer reach with the stick.

We could close our fists and keep them close to our chest.



However, this although keeping our hands close and up where we can use them, does not signal to our attacker that we are not interested in fighting, and is escalatory rather than diffusing.

We need to keep our hands open, and passive, however close to our chest or face area, and out of harm's way. We keep them out of harm's way by keeping them moving. Do not keep the hands stretched forwards as this offers them as targets for the stick. Keep them close to your chest, but unclenched. Keep them moving but in that area, where they can be used if necessary.



Number one strike counters

Blocking the number one strike

A number one strike is blocked with a knife hand side block against the wrist holding the stick. After the block maintain contact against the wrist holding the stick so that you can detect if the arm gets withdrawn for another strike.



Number One Strike Counter - Wedging Block, Knee, Knee

The first number one strike counter combination we apply is the initial unarmed attacker defence against a round house punch, which is instead applied against a number one strike. This demonstrates that our current unarmed defence syllabus can be applied against weapons attacks, and we can stick with what we are familiar with. The counter consists of performing a knife hand wedging block inside the attacking arm, then reaching around behind the shoulder and head with our inside hand, hold the back of the attacker while we deliver a low knee attack, which bends the attacker over. We then switch our feet and deliver a follow up knee attack to the attacker's face.



In passive stance waiting for the attack.



The number one strike is blocked with a wedging block with the hands forming knife hand blocking tools. (This allows you to manipulate the arm after it is blocked.)



Pull with the right hand, hooking behind the neck, while delivering a knee strike to the lower abdomen area, this bends the attacker over. (This is very similar to movement 12 in pattern Choong Moo.)

Note: If the attacker is big, a more effective target for the first knee is the inner thigh, as a knee to abdomen may have no effect on a large attacker.



The legs are switched in preparation for the last knee. Note: The knee that attacks, is the knee attached to the back leg in walking stance, to give maximum power.



Final counter is a knee to the face of the attacker, which is in a nice presented position thanks to the bent over position due to the first knee counter.

A video of the above counter can be found here: https://youtu.be/jzYF_anXO6I.

The above counter sequence, is essentially the same as what is practiced by Red Belts when they counter a swinging punch. This should be an easy first defence to learn against stick number one strike, as most people will be already familiar with the counter, because it is the main counter that is taught by Master Pellow which should be used for swinging punch attacks.

Number One Strike Counter – Block and Open Fist strike, Knee, Knee

The previous counter is a good beginning point, however the first attack to the head, (which is likely to stop the attacker), occurs with the last knee strike. This counter is a slight variation where, instead of starting with a wedging block, instead a simultaneous knife hand side block and open fist attack to the face are used for the first block/counter. Then we follow up with the knee, knee counter.



Passive stance waiting for the attack to begin.



The number one strike is blocked with a knife hand side block with the left hand, while a simultaneous open fist strike is delivered to the face of the attacker.



The right hand is positioned behind the neck to gain leverage for the right knee attack.



The right knee is delivered to the low abdomen area, while pulling the attacker with the right hand.



The legs are repositioned in preparation for a left knee attack.



The left knee attack is delivered to the attacker's face.

A video of this attack sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/SRPJ1PnDBG4>.

The strike and block at the same time makes this counter likely to stop the attacker with the first move, and is a more abrupt counter.

Number One Strike Counter – Block and Elbow strike, Punch, Reverse Knife hand strike.

For those of us who want to give a good solid hit on the first strike, with a good solid attacking tool. This counter involves performing a knife hand side block to a number one strike attack, while delivering a simultaneous front elbow strike to stop the attacker cold. The counter continues with an angle punch followed by reverse hand knife strike, just in case the elbow strike missed.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to commence.



Counter with a solid front elbow strike with the right elbow while blocking stick with knife hand side block.



Switch walking stance by 90 degrees, now the left leg is at the back and right leg is at the front, while simultaneously delivering an angle punch to the attacker's jaw. (By the time the hips have changed it is more like a reverse punch.)

Note: The Right hand is also beginning to prepare for a reverse knife hand strike to the attacker's groin.



The counter finishes with a reverse knife hand attack to the attacker's groin.

Note: The direction of the hips in the defender's walking stance has again switched with the direction of the counter. The defender is once more facing forwards.

A video of this sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/l55SlCy5GZE>.

This counter demonstrates how counter attacks should be delivered from alternate sides of the body, to maintain a steady sequence of fast and powerful counter attacks. While a counter attack is delivered from one side of the body, the other side of the body is priming or getting ready for the next counter attack. So, at the beginning of each counter attack, the arm or leg delivering that attack has already been drawn back by the delivery of the previous attack.

If you keep delivering repeated attacks from one side of the body only.

- You need to withdraw the arm delivering the attack in between each attack which results in slower counters.
- You might not withdraw the arm delivering the attack, and so the attack may not be as powerful as it could be.

When you are facing someone with a weapon, every fraction of a second counts, as does every attack. So alternate counter attacks from different sides of the body.

Number One Strike Counter – Block and open fist, reverse knife hand strike, sweep, punch

This counter demonstrates a sequence of counters followed by a leg sweep take down.

In this counter sequence an aggressive passive stance is used from the outset, which would inflame the situation rather than diffuse it. This is an example of what not to do as far as the passive stance goes, however the rest of the sequence shows how a throw can be incorporated into the counter.



Starting off, in an aggressive passive stance. The hands should be open, not clenched in fists.



The number one strike is blocked with a knife hand side block as well as a simultaneous open fist strike to the face.



The attacker is hit on the jaw with a turning or angle punch with the left hand while the right hand is being prepared for the next strike.



The attacker is hit with a reverse knife hand strike around the throat area.



After the reverse knife hand strike to the throat the attacker is thrown with a leg sweep.



The attacker is thrown, as the attacker goes down, the right hand is prepared to deliver the last strike.



The counter is finished with a downward punch.

A video of the sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/EtEuPjctYik>.

Throws can be incorporated into counters, as this sequence shows, however prior to the throw, it is best to stun the attacker with a block and a counter or two to start with. Add the throw at the end of the sequence. Throws are easier to execute if you have broken the structure of the attacker with a counter or two.

Number One Strike Counter – Block and open fist, reverse knife hand strike, strip the stick

The best time to attempt to strip the stick off an attacker is after you have broken their structure, or disrupted their attack with a block and a counter or two. In this sequence this is demonstrated with a number one strike attack, blocked with a knife hand side block with a simultaneous open fist strike to the face. This is followed by a hard slap to the face with the left hand followed by a reverse knife hand strike to the throat. This is then followed with a strip on the number one side.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



The number one attack is blocked with a knife hand side block and a simultaneous open fist attack to the attacker's face.



The left hand performs a hard slap to the side of the attacker's face while the right hand is preparing to deliver a reverse knife hand strike. (This is an example of using counters from alternate sides of the body.)



Followed by the reverse knife hand strike around the attacker's throat area.



Followed by trapping the stick in preparation for a slap strip on the number one side.



The stick has been stripped with a slap strip.

A video of this sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/FNepVyyv-a-s>.

Any of the stick strips mentioned earlier from the number one side can be used at the end of this sequence. As can be seen, the key is getting the sequence of block and simultaneous counter, followed by further counters to vital points, preferably following an alternate hand sequence. This means if you miss the first vital point, you will hit the second or third. Also, you should be wary of the non-stick hand being used to attack you, however your hands will normally be positioned to ward off your attacker's other hand should it be brought into an attack. After some practice performing these sequences, and maintaining contact with your blocking hand after a block, you will be able to feel when the attacker is moving their stick hand, and in most cases when they are positioning to do something with their other hand. However, it will be difficult for an attacker to do something if you are raining a sequence of counters on them against their vital points. The above sequences are shown as examples, however experimentation will come up with a set of counters that the defender is comfortable with that will become the defender's go to set of techniques for the number one strike defence. In subsequent attack defences, the sequence of counters is fairly similar to a number one strike, what is different is how you block the stick to start with. For this reason, we will not focus too much on the sequence of counters, but instead the different blocks, and initial counters for each stick attack.

Number two strike counters

Blocking the number two strike



The number two strike is blocked with a knife hand side block which blocks the outside of the wrist positioning ourselves onto the closed side. We again, attempt to maintain contact after the block with our knife hand and wrist, so that we can monitor what the attacker is doing with their weapon hand.

Number Two Strike Counter – Block, Open Fist, Clear, Knee, Knee, Throw

We jump straight into the number two attack counters with a knife hand block, with simultaneous open fist attack to the attacker's face, followed by clearing the attackers stick arm out of the way with our left hand, while delivering a front elbow strike with our right elbow. This positions us for our familiar double knee strike with alternate legs, after which we finish with a throw executed by pushing down on the attacker's neck while lifting their stick arm, to flip them over and throw them on their back.

The sequence is shown as follows:



Waiting for the attack to begin in passive stance.



The number two attack is blocked with a knife hand side block, with simultaneous open fist strike to the attacker's face. The open fist strike disrupts the attacker as well as obstructing their vision.



The attacking arm is cleared away with the left hand...



... followed by a front elbow strike with the right elbow...



... after which the right hand is positioned behind the neck to begin a knee attack with the right knee...



.... the right knee attack is delivered to the lower abdomen...



..... the legs are repositioned for the left knee attack...



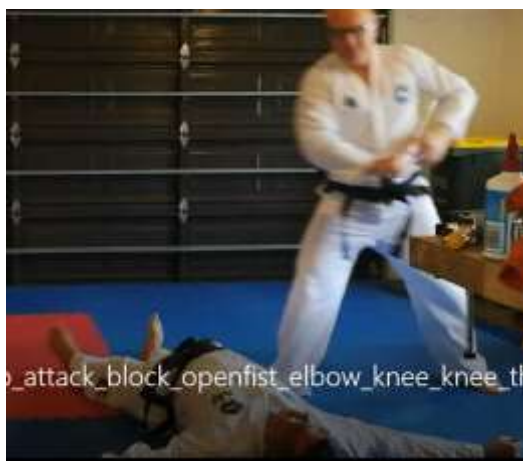
.... the left knee attack is delivered to the face...



... press down on the back of the neck, while lifting the weapon arm, begins to turn the attacker over onto their back....



... in this case the stick slips out of the attacker's hands as he performs a backwards break fall landing square on his back....



... the defender steps back and chambers the recovered stick.

At this stage it is best to throw the stick away just in case someone is taking photos. If you stand over the defeated attacker with a chambered stick it looks like you are the attacker.

A video of this sequence can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/a51a-FjzXW0>.

The main difference between this counter for the number two side attack, and the previous counters for the number one side attack, is the inserted clearance move, to clear the stick arm from a closed position, to an open position so that we can proceed with our double knee attacks, and frontal attacks such as the front elbow strike.

When we initially block the number two attack we are closed off from the open side of the attacker, and the angle for the simultaneous open fist attack is a more difficult angle, than with the number one attack. The simultaneous open fist attack though does disrupt the attacker and spoils their vision as we proceed to clear and perform the more effective counters which follow the clearance move. Once the clearance move has occurred, the rest of the counters are similar to those presented from the number one side attack, so we will not repeat all those moves and variations for the number two attack as they are essentially the same. The difference is the initial block and clearance move.

Number three strike counters

Blocking the number three strike



The number three strike is blocked with a low knife hand block, after which you maintain contact with the attacking arm so as to maintain an awareness of what the attacker is doing with his attacking arm. We block, placing ourselves on the closed side of the attacker's arm. The other hand is kept somewhere near our centre line or the passive stance position just in case. Ideally, we use the other hand to perform a simultaneous disruption strike while blocking.

Number Three Strike Counter – Block, Open Fist, Clear, Elbow, Knee, Knee.

Countering the number three strike, is very similar to countering the number two strike. An initial knife hand low block and simultaneous open fist strike to the attacker's face is performed first, which places the defender on the closed side to the attacker. The open fist, disrupts the attacker, as well as obscuring their vision. The attacking arm is cleared while an elbow strike is delivered to the attacker's face, which places the attacker back on the open side, from where we proceed to performing the two knee attacks as performed previously.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



The attacker attacks with a number three, which is defended with a knife hand low block with simultaneous open fist strike to the attacker's face.



The attacker's stick arm is cleared with the defender's left arm, while a front elbow strike is delivered with the defender's right arm.



After which a right knee is delivered to the attacker's low abdomen.



The defender switches legs in preparation for a left knee attack.



The left knee attack is delivered.

A video of this sequence can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/rjM6XyYGf80>.

This counter is very similar to the number two counter attack, except the initial attack comes at a lower angle, so a low block is used. However, the defender is on the closed side of the attacker after the block, so we must use a clearance move prior to using the full set of counters that can be used for the number one attack. The defender should start with the presented combination, then experiment with other responses similar to those presented for the number one attack.

Number four strike counters

Blocking the number four strike



The number four strike is blocked with a low outward knife hand side block, to the attacker's wrist holding the stick. Maintain contact after the block so as to detect what the attacker is doing with their weapon hand. It is also advisable to keep the other hand up near where it would be in a passive stance, just in case the attacker uses their non-weapon hand for an attack as well. Alternatively, the non-blocking hand can be used for a simultaneous attack.

Number Four Strike Counter – Block, Arc Hand, Sweep.

Most number one counters presented so far can be used for the number four strike counter as well, once they lower block has been used. The sequence presented consists of a block and simultaneous arc hand strike to the attacker's throat, followed by a leg sweep take down.

The sequence is shown below.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



The number 4 strike is blocked and countered with a simultaneous arc hand attack to the throat. In this case the attack has tracked slightly higher than anticipated, but the defender has blocked slightly higher and taken the attacking wrist on his forearm instead of the knife hand. Because this is training, the arc hand is not full force. If the arc hand was delivered with full force, in reality this would snap the attacker's head backwards, putting them in an even better position for the leg sweep to follow.



Intermediate position for the leg sweep. Note that because the defender is going easy on his training partner, he is gripping the dobok around the neck area so that the attacker's fall can be controlled. In a real-life situation, you would keep driving forwards with the arc hand.



Part way through the leg sweep. Note the attacker's weapon hand is still being controlled, even during the leg sweep.



After the leg sweep the defender is still ready, although a further counter being required is not likely.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/cpELsVDKrio>.

As mentioned earlier, any of the number one strike counters can be used for the number four attack, once the lower block is used. This particular counter can be quite brutal, because the arc hand to the throat will push the attacker's head backwards, potentially resulting in the back of their head hitting the ground first during the sweep, (if you don't lower them to the ground.) Also, the arc hand to the throat will be inflicting severe damage to the attacker as well if performed at full power. This is an example of an extreme response for an extreme situation. If you are being attacked with a stick though, it is a life and death situation. This counter can also be used for the number one strike.

Number five strike counters

Blocking the number five strike

The standard number five strike is blocked by rotating your hips sideways to rotate off the line of the attack combined with a knife hand outward block as shown.



The other hand is kept up near the passive stance position so that it can be used if needed. Ideally though a simultaneous disruption attack would be delivered with the non-blocking hand.

In the above pictures the rotation of the defender's hips has placed him on the attacker's open side. Ideally you would want to rotate the other way to place yourself in a more closed orientation to the attacker's arms as shown below.



Number Five Strike Counter – Block Open Side, Elbow, Knee, Knee

This first counter to the number five strike involves performing a simultaneous front elbow strike to the attacker's face, while the number five strike is being blocked in the open position. In this situation also, the attacker is delivering the number five strike in a thrusting motion with a single hand on the stick, in a manner that would be more common on the street. Because the opposite hand to the stick hand is in the open position to the defender this is called the open side. After the elbow the defender proceeds to our standard knee, knee attack which is similar to the unarmed defence.

The sequence is shown below.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



Attacker is part way through number 5 strike(thrust), with the defender part way through rotating off the line, while simultaneously blocking and delivering a front elbow strike.



The block and front elbow strike are completed.



Positioning for the first knee attack.



The first knee is delivered.



Positioning for the second knee.



The second knee is delivered.

A video of this sequence can be found here: https://youtu.be/eLlm8E_gjiM.

The defender is in the open position in this sequence, so the following sequence is potentially a bit more desirable. However, if you inadvertently choose the wrong side when defending, you have to follow through. You can't just stop and ask the attacker to repeat the attack.

Number Five Strike Counter – Block Closed Side, Elbow, Elbow, Knee, Knee

In this sequence, the defender chooses to rotate and block on the closed side, while simultaneously delivering a front elbow strike. The defender then follows up with another front elbow strike while remaining on the closed side followed by two knee attacks. This is a more effective defence than the previous sequence.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



Blocking while delivering simultaneous front elbow strike to disrupt the attacker.



Follow up elbow strike from the other arm.



Positioning for the first knee attack.



The first knee attack is delivered to the lower abdomen, which bends the attacker over forwards.



Repositioning for the second knee attack.



The second knee attack is delivered.

The above sequence can be viewed on this video: https://youtu.be/-nLLu_GJWEc.

The above sequence is slightly safer as the defender remains on the closed side to the attacker throughout the counter sequence.

Number Five Strike Counter – Block Closed Side, Elbow, Elbow, arc hand, Knee

This last defence counter sequence for the number five stick attack is a slightly more brutal variation on the last counter, with an arc hand strike attacking the attacker's throat.

The sequence is shown below.



Waiting for the attack to begin in passive stance.



The number five attack is defended with a block and simultaneous front elbow strike.



A side elbow strike is delivered with the same elbow, while the stick is being controlled/monitored.



An arc hand strike is delivered to the attacker's throat.



A knee attack is delivered to the groin after the arc hand strike to the throat.

A video of this sequence can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8TggdHcoKY>.

The simultaneous elbow strike while blocking on the closed side, as well as the subsequent elbow followed by an arc hand strike to the throat make this a particularly brutal counter when applied with power.

Number eight strike counters

Blocking the number eight strike



The number eight strike is blocked with a knife hand reverse low block while obscuring the attacker's vision with the non-blocking hand. Depending on how low the number eight attack is aimed, it may not be practical to crouch and block in this manner. The defender may also not be quick enough to block in this manner. An alternative method is to step in closer to the attacker and turn your leg, so the blow is taken on the back of the leg with the short end of the stick.

Number eight counter – taking the stick on the back of the leg

This next sequence shows the alternative to blocking of taking the stick to the back of the leading leg during a number eight strike. The leg is moved forwards, so the short end of the stick makes contact with the back of the leg.



The stick is blocked with the back surface of the leg against the small end of the stick.

A video of the sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/NgNrJFYW4ZI>.

This method of blocking the number eight strike then leaves both hands free of the defender to perform counters on the attacker's upper body, which is only defended by a single non-stick arm.

When attempting to block in this risky fashion, though it is essential that you get close and block the short end of the stick. If you instead end up blocking the long end of the stick you could sustain an

injury to the back of your leg, which will prevent you from moving or standing. A number eight attack though would be rare in real life.

Number eight counter – block with upset fingertip strike to throat

The standard block with simultaneous counter can be used against a number eight strike, you just need to ensure that you get low enough to block the strike, while using some form of simultaneous counter. The counter shown in the below sequence is an upset fingertip thrust to the attacker's throat.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



The low number eight attack is blocked with a knife hand low side block, while simultaneously delivering an upset fingertip thrust to the throat.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/b5ZBioFgsb8>.

The above shows an effective block and simultaneous counter sequence for the number eight attack, after which you would follow up with more counters as per the number one strike defence.

Number eight counter – block, open fist, knee

This sequence is another variation for the number eight stick attack, consisting of a block with simultaneous open fist attack to the philtrum, followed by a knee attack to the lower abdomen.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



Blocking the number eight with a knife hand low side block, while delivering a simultaneous open fist strike to the philtrum.



Repositioning for the knee, attack.



The knee attack is delivered.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/CD92ErpxxYA>.

This sequence follows the more familiar pattern of block with simultaneous counter followed by at least one more counter.

Number nine strike counters

Blocking the number nine strike



The number nine strike is blocked with a knife hand low reverse block, while keeping the other hand up in the passive stance position, or alternatively using the other hand to deliver a simultaneous counter. The number nine strike can also be blocked by taking the short end of the stick on the back of the lead leg, in the above case, a step would need to be taken to position the leg on the stick side into the front position.

Number nine counter – taking the stick on the back of the leg

The sequence below shows taking the number nine strike on the back of the leading leg.



The number nine strike being blocked with the back of the leading leg.

A video of the above move can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/J6ZZ6NMIBII>.

The above is quite risky, as if you get the wrong distance and take the long end of the stick on your leg, you could sustain an injury that will affect your mobility on that leg. The benefit of this block, is that both hands of the defender are free to deliver counters to the attacker.

Number nine counter – block with open fist to face

An alternative approach to the number nine strike attack is to perform a knife hand low side block, with a simultaneous open fist attack to the attacker's face followed by a standard sequence of counters. The initial stages of this sequence, is shown below.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



The number nine attack is blocked with a knife hand low reverse side block, with a simultaneous open fist attack to the face.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/!Oghf1FXO1E>.

The above is very similar to a number three strike counter, with the exception that the stick is slightly lower for this attack. After this sequence any of the number two counters, or number three counters which were presented earlier can be used.

Number twelve strike counters

Blocking the number twelve strike

The number twelve strike attacks the defenders head, along the centre line, so it is up to the defender to either move and block the strike as one would the number two strike, or to move the other way and block the strike as one would a number two strike. Either option suffices, and would depend on the defender's current position at the time of attack, and also the defender's most confident set of blocks and counters. Beginner's tend to be more confident on their number one side, so would initially move so as to block a number twelve attack on their number one side. After a bit of practice though a number twelve strike can just as easily be blocked on the number two side.

Number twelve counter – taken on number one side, open fist counter

This initial sequence shows a number twelve strike, taken on the number one side and blocked with a knife hand high side block, with a simultaneous open fist strike counter to the philtrum.



In passive stance waiting for the attack to begin.



Number twelve strike blocked on the number one side with a knife hand high side block, with simultaneous open fist attack to the attacker's philtrum.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/UPydNnjkhvQ>.

After the above entry sequence, any of the number one counters can be used which were shown previously.

Number twelve counter – taken on number two side with block and punch counter, clear, knee, knee

This next sequence shows a number twelve strike taken on the number two side, with a simultaneous block and punch counter, followed by a clearance move and repeated knee attack.



Initially waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



The twelve strike is blocked on the number two side with a knife hand high reverse side block, as the punch begins its journey towards the attacker's head.



The punch hits the head, and the attacker's stick is beginning to be cleared out of the way.



The stick is cleared, in preparation for delivering the knee attack.



Knee attack is delivered to the attacker.

A video of the above sequence can be shown here: <https://youtu.be/spiU1KU0w7Q>.

In the video above the knee attack is repeated. However, this video and above sequence shows that beyond the initial moves to block the number twelve attack on the number two side, the rest of the counters proceed as the same for a number two attack. Any of the previous counters shown for the number two and number three attacks can be applied to the number twelve attack when it is blocked on the number two side.

Stick Defence Summary

The previous sections have shown how to attack with a stick along the most common trajectories, and how to attack in a safe manner. There have been presented various methods to block and counter each of the presented stick attacks. These have been presented in a format similar to one step sparring with multiple counters. The above routines should be practiced in a similar manner to one step sparring to allow the defender to become familiar with each defence scenario. The next step is to practice the scenarios in a free sparring format, where the attacker continuously attacks, while the defender evades, chooses the right time to counter, then counters decisively with one of the counters presented above, or other counters which the defender has devised on their own.

Each counter should consist of a simultaneous block and counter strike, followed by a sequence of counter strikes to vital spots. Optionally the defender can throw the attacker or strip the stick. The throws and strips should come after a couple of counter strikes so that the attacker's structure has been broken. Throws and strip attempts should not be attempted without first applying a solid counter that will disrupt the attackers processing unit. (IE their brain.)

The counter strikes them self should be delivered as powerful fast strikes to the attacker's vital spots. The counters should be delivered from alternate sides of the defender's body. This allows the arm that is not delivering a strike to be chambering or withdrawing in anticipation of the next strike. This ensures a steady rain of powerful counter strikes on the attacker, who hopefully will not be able to keep attacking as they are themselves being attacked repeatedly.

Initially the free sparring should be conducted slowly, to give the defender time to develop their instincts for counters. Eventually though speed and realism should be increased. If the stick is stripped from the attacker, it should not be held or wielded by the defender, but should be kicked across the floor away from the attacker. This prevents the defender from being mistaken for the attacker by an onlooker's photos or videos. If the stick is kicked away, and the attacker moves to retrieve the stick for another attack, the defender should follow behind at a close distance. This allows the defender to be in close distance at the beginning of the next attack, so does not need to move from outside distance to close distance again, and the next defence sequence is easier.

When defending against a stick wielding attacker do not forget to check your surroundings for other attackers. Attackers will seldom operate alone.

This ends the section on defending against the stick. What has been presented is a foundation only, and provides the framework for a Taekwon Do practitioner to begin to learn to defend against the stick. Most of the Balintawak based content presented here is only the very basic content that is equivalent to level one of Balintawak (which is equivalent to a white belt.) The Balintawak content has also been seriously watered down to the point that the content is easily absorbed by someone familiar with Taekwon Do.

Finally, defending against the stick is not about focusing on the stick itself. It is about destroying the holder of the stick, and then retrieving the stick from the unconscious stick holders grip at the end of an encounter.

The Knife

Obtaining a training knife

Having covered stick defence we now dive into how to apply what we learned with stick defence against defending against an attacker wielding a knife. First, we will look at the types of training knife that can be obtained.



The above picture shows the author's training knife collection which was obtained from martial arts supply outlets. There are a couple of black plastic knives purchased recently for work on this thesis, as well as a wooden 'tanto' that was obtained by the author during his training period in Akido in the early 1990's. The above knives are fine for learning the basics of knife defence moves as is the focus of this thesis, however if the practitioner was to move onto more advanced studies a metal knife with a blunt edge provides more realism. It is possible to receive serious eye injuries when practicing with a knife, so it is also advisable to wear some form of eye protection when training with a knife. Both the author and his training partner in this thesis both wear corrective glasses so, they did not bother with any extra eye protection during the production of this thesis. If you are providing martial arts classes where a training knife is used on a regular basis, it is advisable that the participants wear some form of eye protection.

Knife Targets

The knife is a very mobile attacking weapon. An experienced attacker can rotate their wrist to attack in random directions with unpredictable moves that are lightning fast. As a defender we need to be aware of the obvious vital spots that we should not allow ourselves to be inadvertently cut by the attacker as below. Often, we take cuts on more preferable areas to areas that would result in more serious injury. In a knife fight, it is not a question of if you will cut, it is more a question of when you get cut, where the injury is located. In this section we list some areas you should attempt to avoid being cut.

Knife target – under forearm

The under forearm is the most likely place that we will get inadvertently cut, if we attempt to grab the wrist of a knife wielding attacker. The under forearm contains muscles, tendons and blood vessels. If we get cut in our under-forearm area, we will lose the ability to use the hand on that arm, as the tendons controlling the fingers and the hand pass through this area, relatively near the

surface. There are also some major blood vessels in this area as well, so any cut to this area will result in blood loss should we live long enough to be affected by the blood loss. An alternative to being cut in this area is to be cut in the outer fore arm area instead, as there are no tendons, and the blood vessels are deeper than the under forearm.



Knife target – Armpit

In the arm pit area there is a major artery which we would like to refrain from being cut. Death comes fairly quickly if that artery is cut.



Knife target – abdomen



We would also like to refrain from being cut or stabbed anywhere in the abdomen area, as this contains organs relatively near the surface. In particular, is the liver that contains a large portion of our blood. A stab to this area will result in us bleeding out and dying in around ten minutes. There

is of course the lungs and heart which will result in us dying earlier if we are hit in any of those locations.

Knife target – Carotid Artery



There is a carotid artery running down each side of your neck. It is the blood vessel that feeds your brain with blood. A cut here will result in an arterial spray and brain death in less than ten minutes. You would like to avoid being cut here.

There are other artery locations as well that you would like to avoid being cut from a knife, however the above targets are the main ones that are within reach of an attacker that is facing you. It also goes without saying that you should avoid being stabbed or cut in the face or head.

Knife Passive Stance

Our standard passive stance offers the underside of our wrists to our attacker, so we should be careful to not extend our hands towards the attacker, but instead keep our hands close to our chest as is the case for stick defence. A safer alternative to switch to is the following stance, which has our fingers covering our carotid arteries and the outside of our forearms facing our attacker, so we cannot get inadvertently cut under our forearms. The under forearms and elbows are also in a position to take cuts that are aimed at our vital spots on our abdomen.



Don't grab the knife

The standard defence for defending yourself against someone attacking yourself with a knife is to attempt to grab and immobilise the attacker's knife hand. This is the main defence proposed on numerous you tube posts and is the standard approach provided to knife defenders that don't necessarily have any formal training in martial arts. Recently the author's training partners from Balintawak put this approach to the test. This was part of some preliminary work around exploring standard methods of defending against the knife. Initially the approach does work if the defender is able to grab and immobilise the knife hand. However, there are a number of issues. Firstly, once you have grabbed the attacker's knife hand, you are usually using both of your arms to immobilise the attacker's arm, and at that point you have the tiger by the tail. You do not have a spare arm to attack the knife wielder with to neutralise them, and the attacker will have their knife free hand free, which will allow them to attack you. If you then release their knife hand momentarily to ward off blows from their non-knife hand, then then use their knife hand to kill you.

Another issue, is that if you hold the arm holding the knife, it is quite easy for the attacker to rotate their knife hand and cut across your wrist, and then cut their way out of the immobilisation hold. Then they use their knife hand to kill you. The problem of immobilising the knife hand without first neutralising the attacker is that the action takes place too slowly, and it is easy for the attacker to think about their situation and fight their way out of it. You as the defender always also have one limb less than the attacker to work with, because you are using both your arms to tie up the knife arm, while the attacker will always have one arm free to attack you with.



Defender grabs the knife attacker's wrist.



The attacker then cuts the under forearm of the defender.



Standard approach to grabbing the attacker's knife hand with both hands. The attacker has a spare hand to hit you with, and both of your hands are tied up.

As was shown during the stick defence portion of this thesis, you should not grab the weapon hand, but instead block, maintain contact, so as to control/monitor the weapon hand, and rain devastating blows down onto the attacker's primary vital spots until the attack has completed. If a weapon hand is held, the attacker will resist. However, if you just block and guide the weapon hand with your blocking hand, while countering with the other hand, the attacker has other things to worry about, and will tend not to resist manipulations of his/her weapon hand.

So now we need to build a framework as we did with stick defence, to learn how to deal with knife defence. We start with looking at the various distances involved and compare them to what we already know about stick defence.

Knife Distances

Knife Outside Distance

The outside distance is classified as the attacker's knife cannot reach any part of the defender's body. The defender is not able to reach the attacker or their knife. This is where we attempt to talk our way out of the situation or run.



Knife Long Distance

The long distance has the same definition as in stick defence. The attacker's weapon can reach our arms or guard, but cannot reach any part other part of our body. We need to be especially careful that we pass through this distance but do not remain at this distance. If we are in this distance, we don't inadvertently offer the under-side of our forearms or wrists to be attacked by the knife.



Knife Medium Distance

At medium distance the attacker can kill us with a knife, however we can't yet fully reach our attacker to be able to properly neutralise them with our hands. We could reach them with a foot attack, however that is likely to be slow when compared to our hands, and also in normal clothing we may not have the flexibility to deliver a medium distance kick.



Knife Close Distance



At close distance we are able to effectively defend and counter a knife attack. However, at close distance an attacker can also easily kill us. If we are forced into a confrontation and we have no other choice, at close distance is where we neutralise the attacker.

Knife Attacks

Overview

So that we can learn to defend against the knife, our training partner needs to learn how to attack with the knife in a safe manner. We need to also be able to reproduce the main attack trajectories that we will experience in the real world so that we might defend against them. It just so happens that the Balintawak attack vector classifications work for knife attacks as well. The main variation being that there are two methods to hold a knife.

Knife Standard Grip

The standard grip is shown below.



This grip is used when slashing, and also in stabbing as well, with the wrist pointed at 180 degrees to allow a thrusting motion with the knife.

Knife Ice Pick Grip



The knife is reversed in the hand and can be used to stab in a downwards motion. The knife can also be used to slash in this grip as well. In a scenario where both defender and attacker have a knife, when a knife is held in this grip it can be used to block knife attacks. That however is outside the scope of this thesis, and in any case, if you were to pick up a knife to defend yourself, the law would treat this the same as if you picked up a fire arm. We may actually be attacked by someone using the knife ice pick grip, so it is shown in this thesis.

Knife Number One Attack

The knife number one attack, is a slashing attack along the same trajectory as a stick number one attack. There are two variations, the standard grip and ice pick grip. The standard grip is shown below.



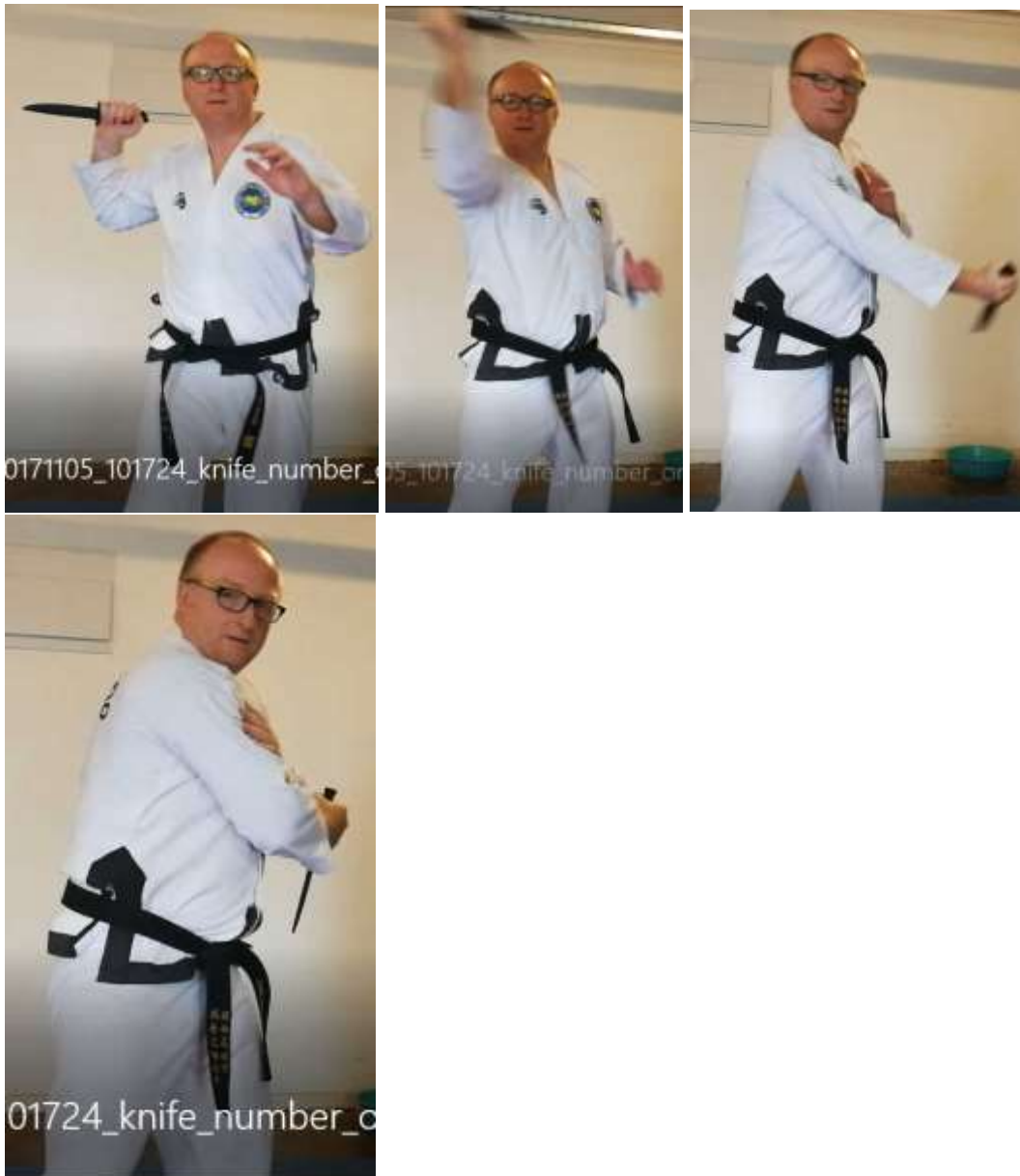
Intermediate position is above right shoulder (if right handed, left shoulder if left handed.)
The cut begins at the diagonal high side on your right-hand side and proceeds diagonally down across the body.

The cut finishes at the bottom left of the diagonal.

The knife is then chambered on the number two side ready for the next attack.

A video of the above sequence is shown here: <https://youtu.be/jZ6DRnnzXW0>.

A number one strike with the ice pick grip is shown below.



The knife starts in ice pick hold above right shoulder if right handed, or left shoulder if left handed.
The knife travels across the body diagonally right to left, top to bottom.
The strike finishes at the bottom left diagonal.
The knife is then chambered ready for the next strike.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: https://youtu.be/s2GK10axb_U.

Knife Number Two Attack

The knife number two attack, is a back-hand strike along the same trajectory as a stick number two attack. There are two types, the standard grip, and the ice-pick grip. The standard grip is shown below.



Strike starts from chamber position on the back-hand side.

The strike is a slash starting from the top left hand diagonal corner.

The slash continues down the diagonal crossing the centre line.

The slash finishes at the bottom right hand diagonal corner.

The above sequence can be viewed as a video here: <https://youtu.be/gR0MTk3hBH0>.

The same strike can be performed with an ice pick grip. This is shown below.



The knife starts in the back-hand chamber position with an ice-pick grip.

The strike starts at the top left diagonal.

The knife travels through the centre line on a downward diagonal path.

The strike finishes at the bottom right diagonal corner.

A video of the above sequence can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/WWxWpp3IHIM>.

Knife number three attack

A knife number three attack follows the same trajectory as a stick number three attack. It is delivered from the forehand side, cutting across the mid-section at about elbow level cutting from one side of the body to the other in a horizontal line.

The following sequence shows this strike using the standard grip.



The knife is initially chambered on the number two chamber position.
It cuts horizontally across the body, and then chambers back in the number one chamber position.
A video of the sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/9Z9ZahwxnQ>.

The following sequence shows this strike using the ice pick grip.



The strike begins chambered on the number two side.
The strike cuts across the body horizontally, and rechambers on the number one side.
A video of the sequence can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/i9NvnGXXIXU>.

Knife number four attack

A knife number four attack follows the same trajectory as a stick number four attack. It is shown below using the standard grip.



The knife starts in the number one chamber position, then cuts horizontally across the body, and ends in the number two chamber position.

A video of the sequence can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/ivuTp2-y8OY>.

The sequence below shows the number four attack using an ice pick grip.



A video of the sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/XTMnQ50GG7g>.

Knife number five attack

The number five knife attack is probably the attack that you are most likely to be attacked with in the street. It consists of a thrusting attack to the abdomen area, in a similar fashion to the stick number five attack. There is only the standard grip variation shown below.



A video of the above sequence can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/2AHzB83QeU>.

Probably the most difficult knife attack to defend, and the most common type of attack is a frenzied, repeated number five attack known as a 'sewing machine' attack. A video of this attack is shown here: <https://youtu.be/fIHedh5evdM>.

Knife numbers eight and nine attacks

Knife number eight attack and number nine attacks are the same as their stick counter parts. They are number four and number three attacks executed at knee or thigh level. They are not covered in this thesis as they are very similar to their number three and four counter parts, and they would be very rare in a normal attack situation.

Knife number twelve attack

The knife number twelve attack is delivered along the same trajectory as the stick number twelve attack, directly at the forehead or face area. It can come in three variations when using the knife.

The first is the same variation as the standard number twelve stick attack where the knife cuts down on the forehead as shown below.



A video of this sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/sHuoK6q3VjA>.

A variation of the above strike using an ice pick grip, where the knife stabs down onto the forehead is shown below.



A video of this sequence can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/rqTq7B2gdgw>.

There is also this last variation for a number twelve attack which is delivered more like a high number five attack towards the face as shown below.



A video of this sequence can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/-ZIV_y5PqtE.

Blocking and countering the knife

Overview

The approach taken to blocking the knife in this thesis is to use a knife hand block. The blocking hand should also be kept between the attacker's knife hand and the defender's body. After the block, contact should be maintained with the attacker's knife hand so that the defender is aware of what the attacker is doing with his/her knife hand. Also, this allows the attacker's knife hand to be guided away from the defender's critical knife target areas. This also allows the defender's other hand to be used to attack the knife wielders' primary vital points.

It is essential that:

- The defender can keep the attacking knife hand and associated weapon away from the defender's own critical target areas.
- The defender does not grab or struggle for the knife using both hands prior to inflicting some form of severe injury with his/her non-defending hand, this leads to a wrestling struggle,
- The defender has a free hand that is not blocking the knife that can be used to launch devastating counter strikes to the attacker's primary target areas, or ward off the attacker's non-knife hand, should that be used to attack as well.

Knife attacks out in the real world are characterised by very fast short movements which change direction, and are hard to block. The defender must gain an instinct for what the attacking knife hand is doing, by starting off with slower larger attacking movements which correspond to the main target strikes mentioned above. Gradually over time the speed of the attacks is increased, and the shortness and sharpness of the movements is increased, to allow the defender to develop his/her knife defence awareness and ability to cope with real life attacks.

The defender should try and move his/her body so that it is off the line of the knife attack, or move the knife hand away from a line which would take it through a target area on the defender's body.

The attacker is not going to stop until he/she has been stopped by devastating counters that have been executed against the attacker's own vital spots. The defender has a race against time. The defender must execute an effective counter, or set of counters before the attacker manages to hit a major target with the knife. While the defender is trying to execute counters, the defender must multitask and simultaneously block attacks from the attacker's knife hand, and the attacker's non-knife hand. Which each block of a strike by the attacker's knife hand, the defender should retain contact with his/her blocking hand and try and guide the attacker's knife hand away from target areas.

Blocking the knife number one strike

The knife number one strike is blocked with a knife hand outward block with the closest hand. The blocking hand will be between the knife and the defender's body, and maintain contact with the attacker's knife wrist, guiding it onto a safer trajectory.



Ideally, the other hand should be placed in the attacker's face to obscure vision, or deliver a simultaneous counter.



In the picture above, the defender's non-blocking hand is positioned strategically in the attacker's face to obscure vision, and is occupying the centre line where it is conveniently placed to ward off an attack by the attacker's non-knife hand, should it be brought into the conflict.

Countering the knife number one strike

With a knife defence counter, there is no sense in using any counter except a counter that will stop the attacker as quickly as possible. Practically any simultaneous counter can be used, from our standard unarmed self-defence syllabus, as long as it:

- Hits a primary vital point,
- Stops the attacker's ability to think and attack.

There are really only the following counters that fit in this category:

- Simultaneous block with open fist strike to philtrum,
- Simultaneous block with front elbow strike to philtrum,
- Simultaneous block with arc hand strike to throat or carotid artery.

The following sequence shows the simultaneous block with arc hand strike to the throat area or carotid artery.



In passive stance before the attack begins.



The knife attack is on its way. The defender's blocking hand is on its way to block the knife strike, while the defender's other hand is beginning to deliver the arc hand strike.



The knife strike has been blocked, and the arc hand counter strike is landing on the attacker's neck.

The defender maintains contact with the defending hand, and begins to slide it down the attacker's arm towards the wrist holding the knife.



The defending/blocking hand has now slid down to the wrist holding the knife and guided the knife hand away from its attack trajectory.

A video of this sequence can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/oe1o_d5jskl.

Ideally, after this initial counter the defender would follow up with another counter or two, however the knife hand should be monitored. If the attacker still has the presence of mind to try and slip the knife under the defenders blocking arm, and cut a number four strike across the defender's mid-section, the defender would be alerted to this occurring by the contact with the blocking hand, and would switch the blocking hand around to a low knife hand outer block to the inside of the knife hand to prevent it from cutting across the defender's body, while potentially using a front elbow strike with the other hand.

Should the attacker instead have the presence of mind to attack with the other hand, the defender would instead push out and down on the blocking hand to gain a split-second window off the knife hand, and use the blocking hand to deliver an angle punch to the attacker's carotid artery, while blocking the other hand with the defender's other hand, then snap back to controlling the knife hand with the right hand while again delivering another strike with the defender's right hand.

If leaving the knife hand unattended for a split second is deemed too risky, then instead, the defender's left hand continues to monitor the attacker's knife hand while the defender uses the right hand to block the blow from the attacker's non knife hand, bounces off the block to deliver an angle punch to the attacker's jaw, or temple, carotid artery.

The key is to use short sharp counters, while monitoring the attacker's attempts to attack. The attacker's attacks should become more sluggish with each vital point that has been hit by the defender.

Blocking the knife number two strike

The knife number two strike is blocked with a knife hand outward side block, using the back hand, while stepping onto the closed side of the attacker.



Ideally, you should deliver a simultaneous strike to, or put your hand in the attacker's face to disrupt their vision.



This positions the defender nicely on the attacker's closed side, should the attacker try to bring their other hand into the conflict. The knife hand is also guided away, outward from the defender's centre line.

Countering the knife number two strike

Executing a simultaneous counter while blocking the number two strike can be difficult because the angle to the attacker's face is quite tricky.

In the sequence below, the number two strike is blocked, cleared and then an arc hand strike is delivered to the attacker's throat.



In passive stance before the attack begins.



The knife is blocked, and the blocking hand maintains contact while beginning to clear the weapon down.



The knife has been cleared down, the other hand is coming across to replace the blocking hand to clear to the side.

(Note: The other hand could have inserted a punch to the attacker's face on the way across.

This is a wasted opportunity.)



The knife is cleared out to the side with the non-blocking hand while an arc hand begins its journey towards the attacker's neck.

71105_103034_knife_number_two_attack_block



The knife is cleared right out to the side as the arc hand lands on the attacker's throat.

A video of the above sequence can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/qGpkCvIXzus>.

After the above sequence we are positioned to counter with a knee attack. Our right hand is positioned to ward off an attack from the attacker's non-knife hand should he have the presence of mind to use it. We are also positioned to deliver a head butt if required, or a front elbow strike with our right elbow. After the attacker is suitably neutralised we are also positioned to step through and leg sweep/throw our attacker.

Blocking the knife number three strike



The number three knife strike is blocked with a knife hand outward low block on the reverse side. After the blocking hand makes contact with the weapon arm, contact is maintained against the weapon hand to guide it away from major target areas and to also sense what the knife hand is doing. Ideally the non-blocking hand is kept up near the passive stance position, where it can be used to obscure vision or disrupt with a strike to a primary vital point on the attacker. In the above picture the non-blocking hand is also ideally positioned to begin a clearance manoeuvre, to clear the knife away, so that the blocking hand can deliver a more direct counter on the attacker's open side.

Knife number three counter – block cover

The block and cover movement shown below for the number three attack is a standard block movement that sets the defender up to launch into the clear and counter sequence which is shown in the following sequence. The key is to use both arms together, the blocking hand to execute the block and monitor the weapons hand, and the cover hand to be ready for the non-knife hand, obscure the attacker's vision. The non-blocking hand is also positioned just in case the knife hand sweeps higher than our anticipated trajectory and travels higher.

This basic sequence is shown below.



Initially the defender waits in passive stance.



The attacker launches a number three attack. The defender moves the lower arm to block the knife attack, however simultaneously the non-blocking arm moves to cover.



The knife has travelled the expected trajectory, and been blocked by the blocking hand. The defender's non-blocking hand naturally moves to the cover position, where it is positioned to clear the knife hand, or launch a counter.

A video of this sequence is shown here: https://youtu.be/1TeyQ_nCqSk.

After the above block and cover movement, the defender can clear and counter.

Knife number three attack – Block, cover, clear, arc hand counter

Sometimes the number three strike does not progress how we expect. It may drift higher than our blocking hand. If this occurs, the blocking arm should naturally track higher so that the section of the blockers forearm positions itself between the wrist holding the knife and the defenders body. The covering arm also tracks higher to be positions to clear the weapon arm downwards.

This sequence shows the above block cover movement where the knife hand has tracked higher than anticipated, however it is cleared down, and an arc hand strike is delivered after the weapon hand is cleared.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



The number three strike begins its journey, the defender prepares, or begins executing the block for a number three strike.



The attack tracks higher than expected, so the block and covering hand tracks higher as well.

The knife wrist is captured on the blocking forearm and the covering hand begins to clear the weapon hand down.



The weapon hand is cleared down, and the arc hand strike is being launched towards the attacker's throat.



The weapon hand is cleared out to the side as the arc hand hits the attacker's throat.

A video of the above sequence can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/TdbOg0_jfjU.

After the completion of this counter sequence we are in a similar position as the sequence shown for the number two attack.

From this position our non-blocking hand is positioned to ward off an attack from the attacker's non-weapon hand. We are also positioned to deliver a knee attack to the attacker's inner thigh or groin, or lower abdomen. Our blocking hand is keeping the attacker's knife hand away from our body. We are also in a position to throw our attacker with a leg sweep of their forward leg with our rear leg.

Blocking the knife number four strike



The number four knife attack is blocked with a knife hand low outward block, where the knife hand or wrist of the defender maintains contact with the attacker's weapon arm after the block. The attacker's weapon hand is then guided away from the defender's body. The defender's non-blocking hand is placed in the attacker's face to obscure the attacker's vision. Alternatively, the non-blocking hand can be used to perform a simultaneous counter strike to the attacker's face or throat area. The non-blocking hand is positioned in the passive stance area, where it is also positioned to ward off an attack from the attacker's non-weapon hand. Counters for the number four strike would be very similar to counters for the number one strike, as the knife hand is on the same side of the body. The defender just needs to be careful that the knife hand can drift up or down, and the knife once blocked may not end up where the defender was anticipating. As is shown in the next counter sequence, a clearance move, which is similar to the motion that is used during a stick snake disarm, can be used to scoop the knife hand up, and place it into a more secure location.

Knife number four attack counter – block, arc hand, clear, punch

This counter sequence shows a knife number four attack being countered with a knife hand low outward block with a simultaneous arc hand strike to the attacker's throat. However, the defender has not anticipated correctly where the knife hand would end up, and is not able to monitor as the knife is against the defender's arm, high up on the arm. The defender is in danger of the knife hand slipping up towards the defender's head. To counter this, the defender performs a clearance move, which involves performing a snake motion with the blocking hand to wrap up the knife hand and position further down the forearm where it can be better controlled. During this motion, the defender delivers another simultaneous counter in the form of a punch to the attacker's throat region, to disrupt their attention and structure during the clearance motion.



Waiting initially in passive stance before the attack.



The attacker delivers a number four attack, which the defender instinctively begins to defend with a knife hand outward block, while beginning a simultaneous counter to the throat with an arc hand strike.



The arc hand counter strike lands on the attacker's throat as the knife holding wrist is blocked, further up the defender's arm than was anticipated. The initial strike has been blocked, and the knife attack has been stopped. The attacker will also be disrupted by the arc hand attack to the throat. However, in this position the knife holding hand of the attacker cannot be controlled and monitored. If the arc hand attack is not effective, there is a danger the attacker will slip the knife over the defender's arm and attack the face.



To gain control of the attacker's knife hand the defender wraps his blocking arm around the knife holding arm outwards to inwards, in a move similar to snake disarm. The defender scribes circle with his blocking hand around the attacker's hand holding the knife, and gets on the inside line of the attacker's arm approaching down from above. At the same time a simultaneous counter is performed with the other hand to disrupt the attacker's attention and structure.



The attackers knife hand is swept down and outwards, as the defenders non-blocking hand begins to deliver a counter.



The defender sweeps the attacker's knife hand into a much safer position below his elbow and out to the side, as the counter punch lands on the attacker's throat.

A video of the above sequence can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/n8BZLm84tWs>.

This sequence demonstrates, how keeping an awareness, and contact with the attacker's weapon hand after the block, allows the defender to monitor and manipulate the attacker's weapon hand continuously keeping the weapon hand away from dangerous targets. The key is to also keep the attacker's attention with a continuous stream of attacks with the non-blocking hand. The counters should also not be wasted, and should be directed to primary vital spots where a good solid counter should turn the attacker's lights out.

Blocking the knife number five strike – closed side

The number five strike is the most likely attack that you will experience in the street. The variation you are likely to receive is a frenzied attack of a sequence of number five attacks in succession called a 'Sewing Machine Attack'. Sewing machine attacks are extremely difficult to block, however to begin to anticipate and instinctively block a sequence of number five attacks you must practice blocking and countering a single number five attack. The number five attack comes straight at the centre line in to the abdomen. It can be blocked on the open side, or the closed side. It is safer to block on the closed side. However, in the heat of the moment it is not always possible to anticipate which side you are blocking on, closed or open, so I present both movements here, with counters on both the open and closed side. You must be flexible and play the cards that are dealt you in any encounter. You must train for all eventualities, so your body instinctively knows what to do.

Initially we shall show how to block on the closed side. You block on the closed side by rotating your body off the line, and onto the attacker's closed side, while executing a knife hand low outward block with your back hand. You use your front hand to cover above the attacking forearm, with your non-blocking hand occupying the middle space, in the position it would be in the passive stance. This is shown in the following sequence.



Waiting in passive stance, as the attacker begins a number five attack.



The number five attack is on its way. The defender rotates his body off the attack line, and moves forwards onto the attacker's closed side, while simultaneously executing an outward knife hand block with the back hand.




The number five has been blocked, and the covering hand is placed over the attacker's knife arm to better control the weapon arm. The covering hand from this position is also suitably placed to assist in controlling the weapon hand as well as delivering a counter to the attacker's face. The defender also is safely on the attacker's closed side.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/QRs7vMSTZlg>.

The above position in blocking the number five attack is possibly the best place to be after the block, as you as a defender will be on the attacker's closed side.

Knife number five strike counter – closed side block with elbow strike

The previous sequence can be made more effective by delivering a simultaneous elbow strike to the attacker's face while executing the block and rotating onto the attacker's closed side. This is shown in the following sequence.

	<p>Knife number five attack begins as the defender reacts from passive stance.</p>
	<p>The defender rotates off the line and blocks with a knife hand low outward block against the attacker's knife wrist. At the same time an elbow strike is aimed at the attacker's face.</p>
	<p>The knife number five attack has been blocked to safety. The blocking hand maintains contact with the attacker's weapon hand so as to monitor it. At the same time the elbow strike arrives at the attacker's face.</p>

A video of the above sequence can be views here: <https://youtu.be/jRDt8VQyoNo>.

The above shows a good simultaneous counter and block sequence for the number five attack on the closed side. If the attacker is just stunned and not neutralised, then a follow up knife hand strike to their throat with the arm that launched the elbow attack should finish the job.

Knife number five strike counter – block open side – simultaneous arc hand

As has been mentioned, we aim to get ourselves on the closed side of a number five attack, however that is not what always plays out during an encounter, so we must be able to follow through and block if we end up on the open side of a number five attack. It is essential though, that if we end up on the open side of a number five attack, that we deliver some form of effective counter attack simultaneously with our non-blocking hand to prevent the inevitable repeated number five attack to our abdomen. The following sequence shows the number five attack being blocked on the open side with a simultaneous arc hand attack to the attacker's throat.



Waiting in passive stance while the attacker begins the number five attack.



The number five attack is on its way. The defender rotates onto the open side. The defender launches a simultaneous arc hand strike to the attacker's throat.



The number five attack is blocked and monitored. The arc hand attack lands on the attacker's throat.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/aFixLj26Tqc>.

We have just blocked on the open side, so after the above simultaneous counter we would deliver follow up attack's similar to those for a number one strike for a stick attack. The main difference being that we continuously monitor the weapon hand. A stream of counter strikes though will discourage the attacker from launching further attacks, or minimise the number of repeated number five attacks.

The number five attack and counter should be practiced repeatedly to get the instinctive counter ingrained into your consciousness. The defender should also, once he/she can easily defend a single

number five attack, should build up the speed and strive to be able to defend multiple number five attack's no matter what the number or speed of the attacks are.

The repeated number five attack is the most likely attack out on the street, so you must be able to defend against it.

Blocking the knife number twelve strike – the variations

The number twelve knife strike has the following variations:

- With ice pick grip where the strike comes down the centre line on the fore head
- With the standard grip slash where the strike is a slash downwards on the centre line to the fore head or face.
- With the standard grip where the strike is a high five strike/thrust to the face

Each of the above variations can be blocked either on the closed side, as you would block a number two strike, or on the open side as you would block a number one strike. The closed side block is safer, but harder to counter with. The open side block is less safe, but it is easier to deliver a simultaneous counter.

Knife number twelve ice pick grip strike counter – open side block, inward knife hand strike

This counter to the number twelve strike delivered using the ice pick grip, involves rotating onto the open side, blocking with a knife hand outward block against the weapon wrist, while at the same time executing an inward knife hand strike to the attacker's carotid artery. (As in movement two of Won Hyo). The sequence is shown below.



Waiting in passive stance for the attack to begin.



The number twelve strike begins. The knife hand outward block begins, and the defender begins to rotate to the right to get off the line of attack and block the attack.



The knife hand outward block is on it's way to block the knife attack. The knife hand inward strike is on it's way to the attacker's carotid artery.



The number twelve attack is blocked, and the inward knife hand strike lands on the attacker's carotid artery.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/4oxQyQo9SDE>.

Any follow up sequence from the number one attack counter can be appended to the above sequence to ensure that the attacker is neutralised. However, the attacker's weapon hand should be monitored during all counters until the attacker is neutralised.

Knife number twelve ice pick grip strike counter – closed side block, clear – arc hand strike to throat

Practically any counter sequence that works for the number two strike counter also works for the number twelve strike in ice pick grip where the strike is blocked on the closed side.

The following sequence shows our standard closed side block, clear, arc hand strike to throat counter applied to this strike.



Initially in passive stance...



The attacker delivers downward number twelve strike with knife in ice pick grip. The defender rotates to the attacker's closed side and blocks the attack with high outward knife hand block with the right hand.



The defender begins clearing the weapon hand downwards.



The attacker's weapon hand is then cleared out to the side while an arc hand strike is launched towards the attacker's throat.



The arc hand strike lands on the attacker's throat as the weapon hand is monitored safely out to the side.

A video of the above sequence can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/aBfAJJ70v6Y>.

The above sequence shows that this strike can be defended in a similar manner to a number two strike. So, any counters that work for a number two strike can be applied after this sequence.

Knife number twelve standard grip strike counter – closed side block, clear – punch to throat

The number twelve knife hand attack is the same to defend on the closed side regardless as to the grip that is being used by the attacker is an ice-pick grip or a standard grip. This sequence presented here shows the number twelve attack with a standard grip being defended and countered with a block, followed by clearance movement, and a punch to the throat.



Initially waiting in passive stance.



The attacker begins a knife number twelve attack with a standard grip, which will slash down the defender's centre line. The defender begins to block with the right hand, and begins to move onto the attacker's closed side.



The knife attack is blocked from the closed side. The defender is now completely on the closed side and bringing the other arm up to clear the weapon hand.



The defender's left hand which is clearing the weapon hand cuts down from above on the attacker's weapon arm, and clears out to the defender's left side.



As the weapon is cleared safely out to the side, the defender lands a punch to the attacker's throat.

A video of the above sequence can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/pPxweX4PkWI>.

The only difference between this sequence and the last sequence is that the attacker used the knife in a standard grip for delivering the number twelve strike, and the defender used a punch to the throat instead of an arc hand strike to the throat for the counter. The counters are interchangeable, and the defences are fairly similar. Practically any defence that works for a number twelve strike can be used in this situation once the knife is blocked from the closed side.

Knife number twelve standard grip strike thrust counter – closed clear, punch to throat

The previous sequence can be optimised if the clearance movement is used to block the strike. This is demonstrated against the final variation of the number twelve strike which is more like a high number five strike which thrusts towards the defender's face or throat. The defender in this situation, still blocks from the attacker's closed side, but instead of performing a knife hand outward block with the back hand, the defender executes a knife hand inward block (similar to an outer forearm inward block) with the front hand, and continues with the blocking arm in a clearance movement. (IE the block and the clearance movement are joined together which makes the defence quicker.) The counter that is used after the clearance is our favourite throat strike, the arc hand strike.



Initially in passive stance. Note: Even though the defender has one hand down by his side, there is at least one hand up and close to his chest in the passive stance position where it can be used to defend.



The attacker begins a thrust number twelve attack towards the defender's face, or throat. The defender begins a knife hand inward block with the left hand, while beginning to rotate onto the closed side of the attacker.



The thrust is being blocked.



The defender rotates fully off the line onto the closed side and begins to clear the knife hand away with the blocking hand.



The knife is cleared out to the side as the defender begins an arc hand strike toward the attacker's throat.



The knife is cleared completely out to the side as the arc hand lands on the attacker's throat.

The above sequence can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/TJr6msyGI8E>.

Another view of the above move, from the other side is shown below.



Initially waiting in passive stance.



The attacker launches a number twelve strike, (a high five thrust). The defender rotates off the line of the attack towards the attacker's closed side, and blocks with an inward knife hand block. (Or outer forearm inward block with the knife hand extend...).



The attacker's knife arm is cleared downwards and out to the side, while the defender begins an arc hand strike.



The knife is safely off to the side, and the arc hand strike is on it's way to the attacker's throat.



The arc hand strike lands on the attacker's throat.

A video of the above sequence can be found here: <https://youtu.be/r7PNuXWC1dY>.

The above sequence efficiently blocks and clears the knife thrusting attack in the same movement, and the counter delivers a good solid attack to the throat which will discourage the attacker from delivering further knife attacks, or attacks with the non-knife hand.

The defender though should keep countering until the attacker has been well and truly neutralised.

Knife Defence Developing Instinct and Sensitivity

The key to successfully applying all the above knife defence moves and counters, is being able to monitor the attacker's weapon hand and developing an instinct and sensitivity to what the attacker is doing. In the progress of preparing the videos for this thesis, the author stumbled across an exercise that can be used for this purpose. The attacker, attacks with any of the above strikes, which the defender then just blocks, and maintains contact with the attacker's weapon wrist. The attacker then proceeds to move the weapon wrist and associated weapon in various directions to try and get the weapon around the defender's block. The defender attempts to keep the weapon wrist under control. This is very similar in principle to the Wing Chun Kung Fu Chi Sao exercise, albeit in the form presented here, it is not mixed with counter strikes. The below sequence shows the sensitivity exercise as it progresses.



At the start of the play, the attacker just attacks with any technique, in this situation the attacker has attacked with a number five strike, which the defender begins to defend on the closed side.



The number five is blocked, and the defender maintains contact with the wrist to monitor, and moves the knife hand safely out to the side.



The attacker attempts to push inwards and up towards the defenders chest...



The defender re-establishes control and shepherds the weapon hand back out to the side again...



The attacker tries to sneak around the top of the defender's wrist. The defender follows the attacker's wrist around, maintaining contact....



The defender stops the attacker's wrist from going higher by getting the defender's wrist between the attacker's line of attack to the defender's face region..., the attacker begins to change direction, instead trying to get the knife hand under the defender's wrist....



The defender detects the change of direction and gets his wrist down between the attacker's knife hand and its target, pushing the wrist back out to the side again.

The sequence can be seen here: <https://youtu.be/x8R-8doHpVM>.

The above sequence is actually the very second sequence of sensitivity play after the author discovered this method of developing sensitivity. So, the play is still relatively slow and uncoordinated. However, with a bit of practice, this exercise will really sharpen the defender's defences and sensitivity to anticipating the attacker's moves. Eventually the defender should start incorporating counter attack's as well, as is done in Wing Chun Chi Sao exercise. Emphasis should also be placed on the defender moving off the attacking line when-ever possible.

Conclusion

This thesis, although quite extensive, only covers the very basic aspects of stick and knife defence, and represents a framework that allows a practitioner to be able to begin to learn to defend against the stick and the knife. As practice continues, the practitioner will find their own set of go to techniques for handling weapon attacks. The author though hopes the process of beginning to learn these techniques has been made a less formidable task. One must however always remember, that defending against a weapon attack is a very serious business, and especially so a knife attack.

One does not win a knife fight. If one is lucky one might *survive* a knife encounter with a minimal set of injuries if one invests enough time in preparation for the knife defence.

Facing a person with a knife should always be an absolute last resort. Lastly the author wishes to emphasise, that there is no magic formula for knife defence. It is hoped that reading this thesis does not cause the reader to become over confident, and full of false bravado to rush off to face a knife wielding assassin, potentially getting his/her self killed in the process. It is hoped that training with the knife gives the reader, (as it has given the author) a respect for the knife, and a realisation that knife defence should only ever be attempted when there is absolutely no other option.

Appendix

References

The below are listed the sources that the author used to product this thesis.

- Protect Self Defence session on realistic knife defence attended by the author on 01/05/2013 at PaulM Papakura Branch training venue – brings home the realism of knife attacks and how unprepared the classic martial artist is with respect to a knife attack.
- Weekly Balintawak training sessions under Master Steve Pellow for a number of years...
- Balintawak Eskrima by Sam L Buot Sr – published by Tambuili Media ISBN-13:978-0692312995 – contains a written history of Balintawak by one of the original students of the initial Master of Balintawak – Venancio “Anciong” Bacon.
- Wikipedia article on Balintawak Eskrima https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balintawak_Eskrima
- International Taekwon Do self-defence handbook (Green Cover) – option A vs Option B
- You Tube Video – Kali Level One – Sean Hurst <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wL-zp8Z5Ss&t=1197s> – This video although a different Kali style to Balintawak does contain the information about the main stick fighting distances, and also contains a lot of the Eskrima terminology presented in this document.
- Countless other You tube videos authored by various martial arts ‘experts’ on weapons defence.