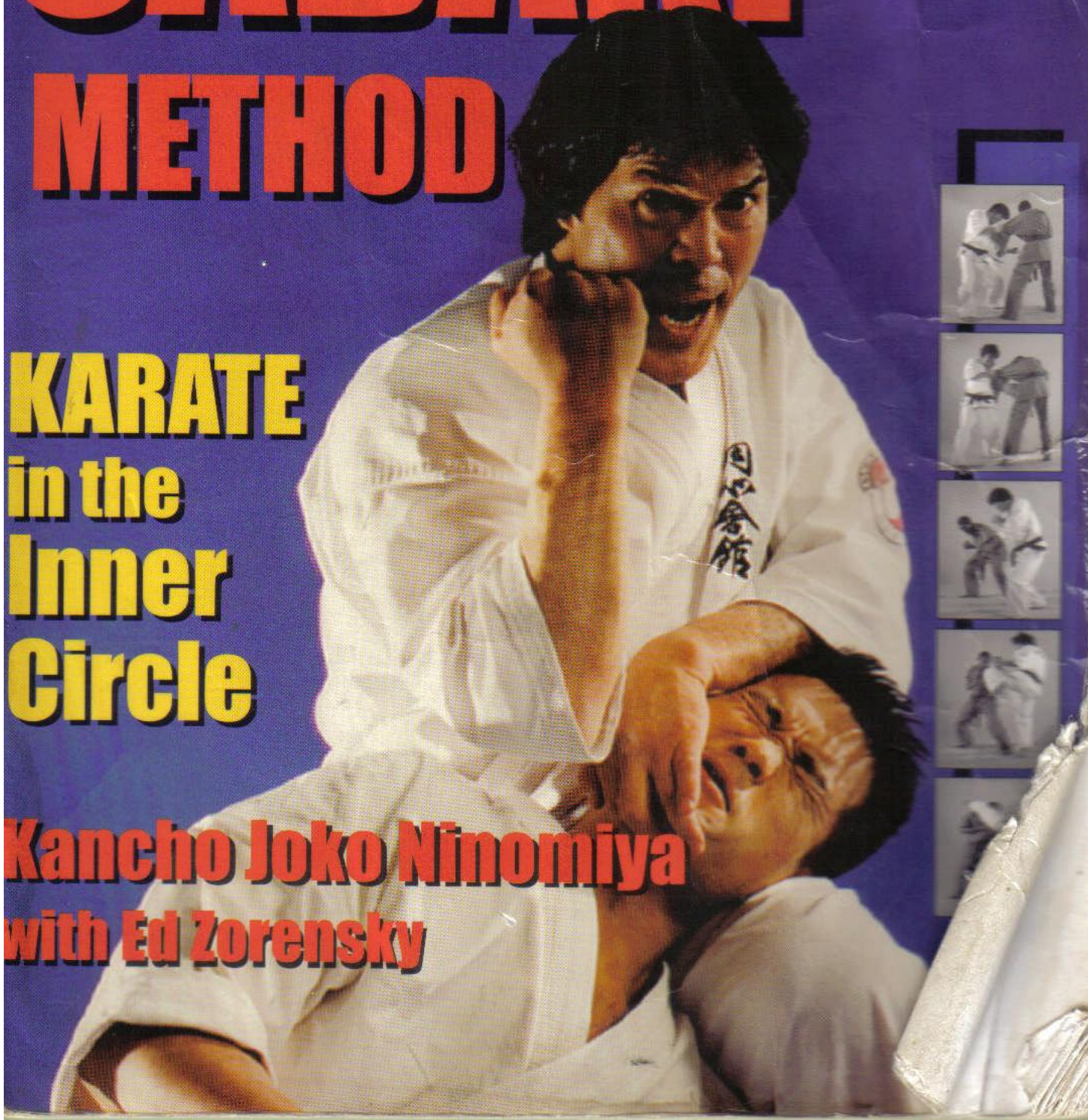


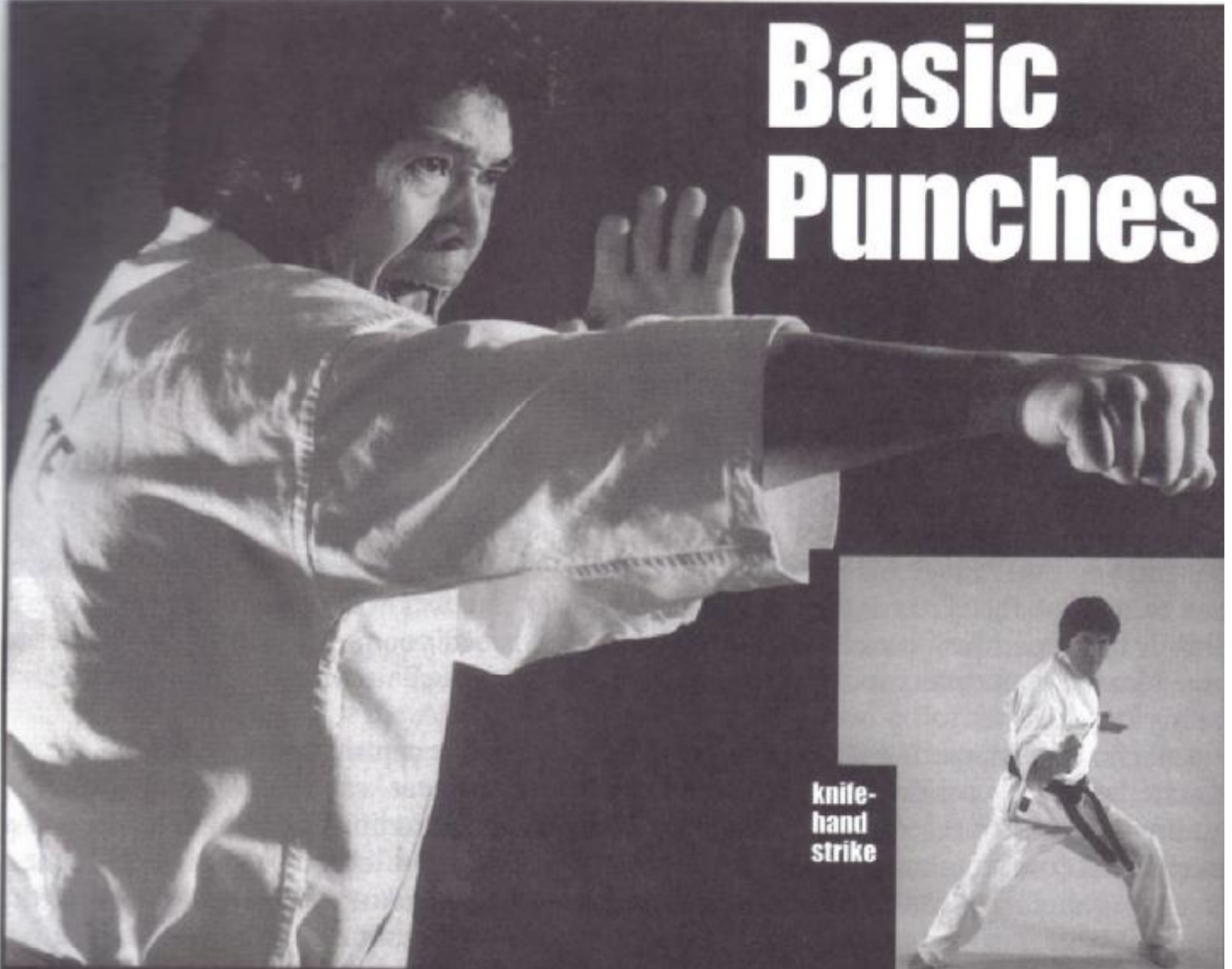
SABAKI METHOD

KARATE
in the
**Inner
Circle**

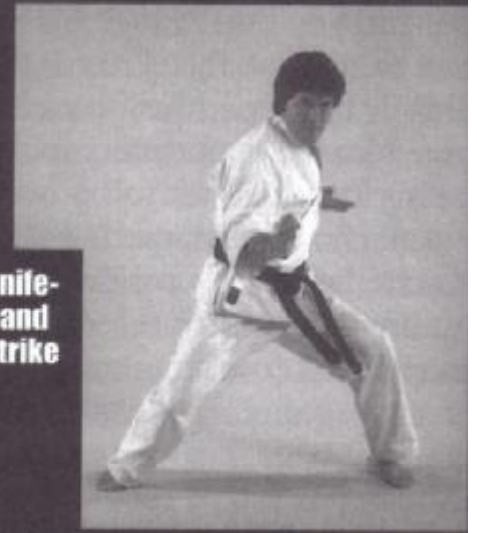
Kancho Joko Ninomiya
with Ed Zorensky



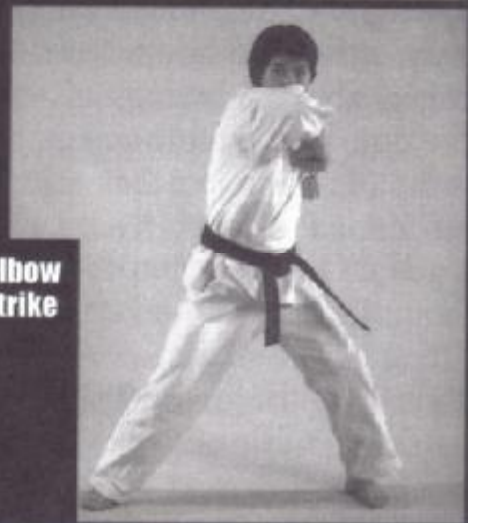
Basic Punches



knife-
hand
strike



elbow
strike



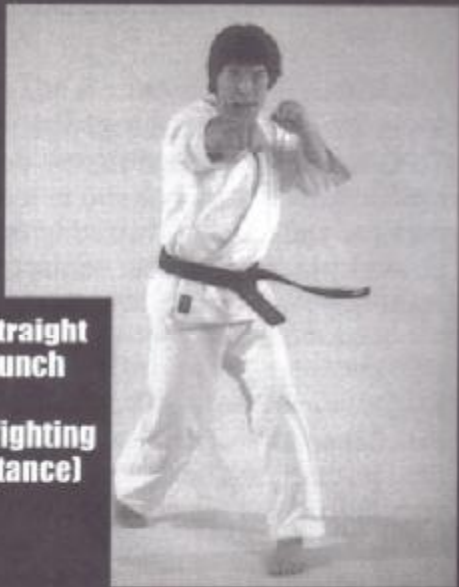
If karate is a language made up of combinations of movement, then punches, blocks, and kicks remain the basic alphabet on which this language is built. Here are the ABC's.

straight
punch



right
pigeon-
toed
stance)

straight
punch
(fighting
stance)



back-
hand
side
strike



back hand
uraken

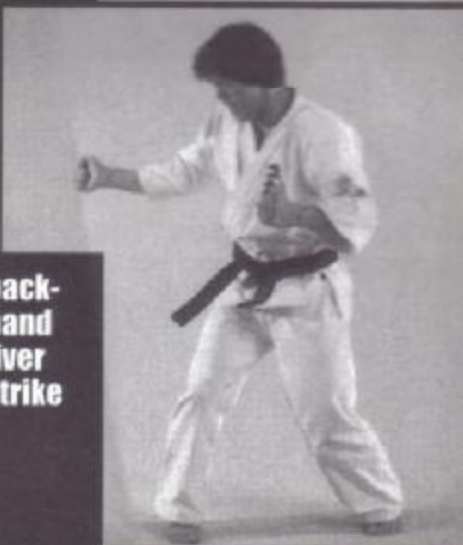
forelist
selken



knife-hand
shuto



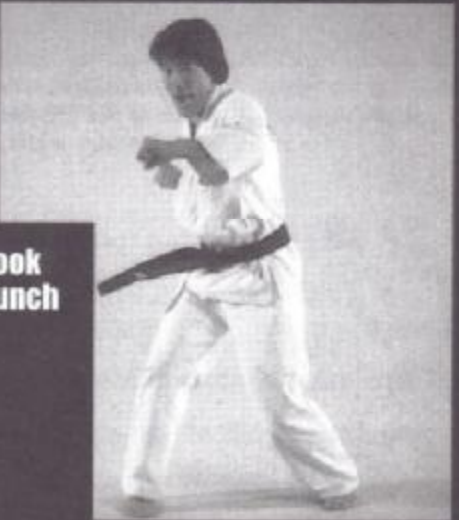
back-
hand
liver
strike



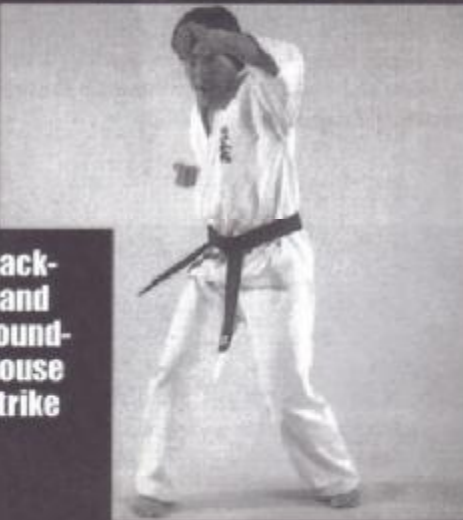
fore-
list
under-
punch



hook
punch



back-
hand
round-
house
strike



Pigeon-toed Stance / *sanchin dachi*



Condensing power

If you step while punching, you naturally create momentum and power. To achieve this in a stationary position is more difficult. The pigeon-toed stance, *sanchin dachi*, is a stationary stance for practicing basic punches and blocks. Practicing from a stationary position concentrates power by increasing your contact with the floor. It keeps you rooted and focuses power in the large muscle groups of the hips and legs. This concentration of energy not only increases power but enhances balance.

By forcing you to keep your feet in place as you practice basic punches, *sanchin dachi* teaches you to use your hips more effectively. Its pigeon-toed posture reinforces the habit of concentrating power, by coiling energy before you release it through your punch or strike.

Even though you will learn many variations on the basic techniques in this book, *sanchin dachi* is the foundation for establishing power, balance and focus.



Moving from ready stance into right pigeon-toed stance



From ready stance, the right forearm crosses inside the left, while the right foot moves next to the left foot. The supporting knee is slightly bent.

Palms rotate inward as hands rise and separate. The right foot circles to the outside and both feet are weighted evenly. The toes of the left foot line up with the arch of the right foot, shoulder-width apart, pointing inward.



Think of the arm action in *sanchin dachi* as the same as breaking a two-handed grab from the inside-out.

- Stay relaxed but rooted to the floor. Drop your weight.
- Turn the toes in slightly, but don't lose flexibility in the knees.
- Push out the rear. This pulls the inner thighs together to protect the groin and concentrate power.
- Pull the hands apart, as if against resistance, to generate power from within.
- Practice *sanchin dachi* with either the left or right foot forward.

Fighting Stance / *kumite no kamae*



The *Enshin* fighting stance allows mobility to the front and back as well as side to side. The feet stay rooted and the feeling of concentrated power is similar to that of *sanchin dachi*. Stay relaxed, but keep your power coiled. Keep the joints—ankles, knees, and elbows—flexed and ready to react.

As in *sanchin dachi*, keep an arch in the small of your back in order to pull your thighs together and concentrate your power. Keep the eyes focused on the space surrounding your opponent. This way, instead of looking at one point—his hands or feet—you will see any movement instantaneously. Use your hands and feet like antennae to sense your opponent's slightest movement.

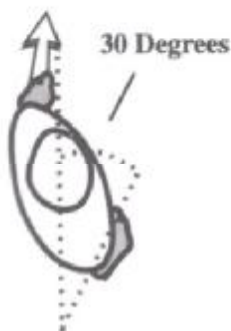
The upper and lower body, elbows and knees, eyes and hands, should all feel connected, as if everything is working together simultaneously.

From ready stance to fighting stance



From ready stance, the right forearm protects the face as the left hand crosses, palm in. The left foot steps forward.

The hands extend forward, eye-high, as the weight drops and is distributed almost evenly.



- Front foot points at opponent.
- Back foot is pointed thirty to forty degrees off the center line.
- Shoulder and hips are aligned thirty degrees left of center.
- Weight is centered yet flexible, shifting back and forth as needed.
- Insides of thighs pull together as if protecting groin. This coils power.
- Knees are slightly bent, weight on the balls of your feet.
- Practice fighting stance with left or right foot forward.

Straight Punch / *seiken chudan zuki, seiken jodan zuki*



From pigeon-toed stance . . .

By coordinating the action of the hips and shoulders, the straight punch in pigeon-toed stance develops speed and power while improving your focus. Like a long piece of rope that you can always shorten, the punching action in *sanchin dachi* consists of a long punching stroke which is later abbreviated in fighting stance. By pulling back the lead hand as you release the punching back hand, you create greater twisting action, or torque: think of a runner pumping his arms as he drives his legs. To increase focus, hold each punch extended for a split-second.



Pull back the punching hand and hip together, drawing back the elbow so that it aligns with the middle of the back.



Keep the punching arm close to the ribs, palm up. Start to drive the hip forward.



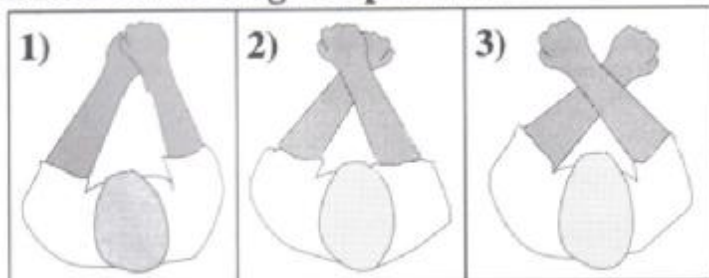
Rotate the wrist as the punching arm extends forward.



The wrist snaps as you follow through.

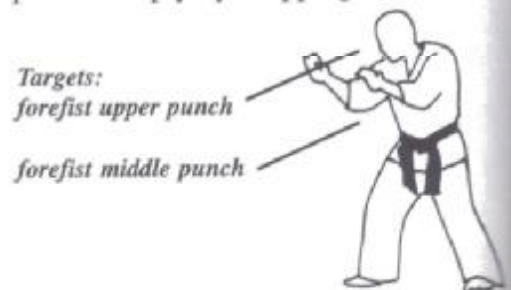


Distance and angle of penetration



The overlap of the wrists increases as the distance from your opponent decreases. The closer you are, the greater the angle of the punch. 1) long distance. 2) middle distance. 3) close distance.

- Keep your heels on the floor.
- Punch with the hip, not the shoulder.
- Don't bend forward; keep the back straight.
- Don't overextend the shoulder or turn too far.
- Stop the punch sharply by snapping the wrist.



From fighting stance . . .

In fighting stance the straight punch is shorter and more compact than in *sanchin dachi*. Since the lead hand must protect the face, you can't pull it back to create range as you do from *sanchin dachi*. Instead, generate power by pushing off the back foot and letting the heel come off the floor as you drive the punch. Always retract the punching hand to prepare for the next at-



As you retract with your power coiled. As you step forward with the front foot, start to turn the hips and release the punching hand. The back hand immediately protects the face.



When pushing off the back foot, your weight shifts forward. Keep the back straight. As the arm fully extends on contact, focus all of your power into the two large knuckles—*seiken* (see diagram below).



Immediately retract the punching hand into fighting stance. If you punch at 100 miles per hour, pull back the punching hand at 120 mph., in order to add power and snap.

The straight punch . . . shoulder, hips, and feet working together

The shoulder turns with the hips. At the end of the rotation, the arm extends. The shoulder, elbow, and wrist all simultaneously.

The hip turn connects the upper and lower body. For an effective transfer of power from the legs, keep the weight down and use a short twisting action of the hips to create torque.

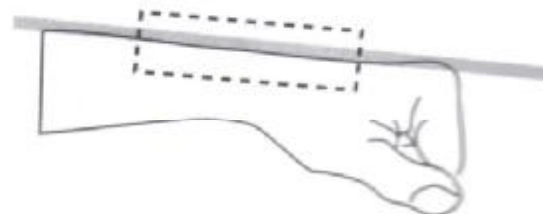
The back foot pushes off the floor as the punch extends in opposition. The knees stay bent.



For greatest power, time the release of the upper and lower body so that they are working together.



Concentrate punching power into the two largest knuckles.



To prevent sprains and achieve maximum power, always keep the wrist straight.

Backhand Side Strike / *uraken sayu uchi*



As you pull back the striking hand to coil your power, pull back the shoulders and hips as well. Keep the other hand stationary.



The elbow inscribes an oval as the striking hand passes over the forehead. The wrist snaps just before impact.

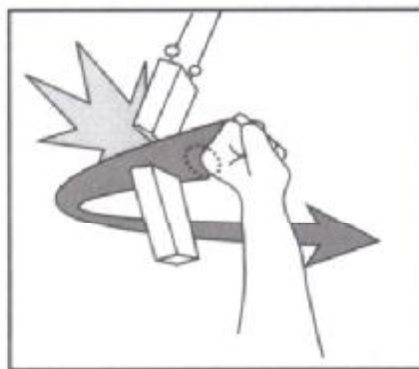
When you don't have time to turn your body to meet an attack from the side, use the backhand side strike or backhand liver strike. Because the side strike uses a whip-like action instead of a driving force, keep the wrist flexible so that it can snap freely and transfer power from the hips. Be sure to use the top of the knuckles and let the strike hook downward at impact for full snapping action. If the impact of the straight punch resembles that of a battering ram, then the precision of the side strike is like a stiletto.



The snapping action of the backhand side strike creates high velocity in a confined space.

Snapping power . . .

Make sure to snap the wrist so that the top knuckles of the back hand can strike down and through the target. Tighten the fist, but keep the wrist, elbow, and shoulder flexible, so that the joints can move freely.



Sharp strike vs. power strike

The snapping power of the backhand strike is more effective against a flexible target. Against a hanging board or an opponent's head, the snapping action creates the velocity for high impact without *pushing* the object. The sharp strike extends in a circular arc and retracts on a straight line to create the "snap." Think of the difference between a boxer's jab to the face and a powerful blow to the body. The snap punch works best against the head, while the straight punch is better suited for the body.

Backhand Liver Strike / *uraken hizō uchi*

Same whipping action, different angle . . .

For lower targets on the torso, use the backhand liver strike. Like the backhand side strike, this technique is ideal for tight situations. It uses a driving action of the backhand—*uraken*—to power through the target and it retracts along the same line.



Start with the right hand on top. The striking hand pulls back to the opposite elbow as the hip and shoulder coil. Stay focused on your target.

Keep the forearm parallel to the floor. As the hip and shoulder open, the elbow pulls away from the body. Snap the wrist and follow through five to ten degrees past the middle of your body.

Return the striking hand under the stationary hand. Alternate to the other side.

The hip action is just like that of swinging a baseball bat



The backhand liver strike uses the same twisting motion as a batter's swing in baseball. The same principles apply: Don't lean. Keep the back straight. Create torque and power by using an explosive hip turn.

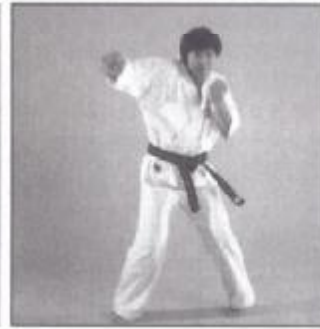


Against an attack from the side, the backhand strike to the ribs provides an effective short-range counterattack.

Backhand Roundhouse Strike / *uraken mawashi uchi*



The forearm sweeps down and across the center line to parry an oncoming punch. The striking hand drops behind the back as the hip and shoulder coil.



The roundhouse strike outflanks the opponent's defense from a side or back-side angle. The backhand roundhouse strike adds a wrist snap before contact. In contrast, the hook punch uses a firm wrist.

The hips turn and the striking arm swings up and out with the centrifugal force. Pull back sharply on the opposite hand to increase torque.

Rotate the fist and change the angle of attack

By changing the angle of the striking hand, you can snap the punch to the back of your target with the backhand or hook the punch from the side with the forefist. Your body position and distance will determine the angle for your attack.



Backhand roundhouse strike with wrist snap



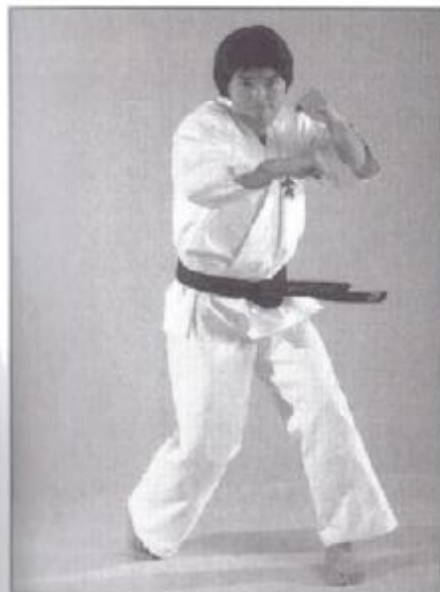
Forefist roundhouse strike without wrist snap

Outflanking the enemy . . .



- Parry down and away as the striking hand coils back with the hip turn.
- Start with the striking arm relaxed.
- Use a hooking action and keep the striking arm almost parallel to the floor in order to clear the opponent's shoulder.
- The backhand roundhouse strike can change to a forefist roundhouse strike or hook punch (see next page) simply by changing the angle of the fist. Use the top or front of the two largest knuckles accordingly.
- If you use the backhand, let the wrist snap on contact. If you use a hook punch, keep the wrist tight.

Hook Punch / *seiken mawashi uchi*



When your opponent defends the front of his body with his arms, bring the hook punch around his guard from the outside-in, using a twisting action of the hips. Unlike the backhand strike that uses a snapping action at contact, the hook punch calls for a firm wrist and elbow.



The centrifugal force of the hips and shoulders drives the punching elbow out from the ribs in an arc.

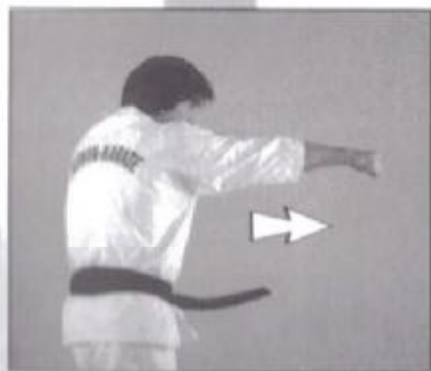
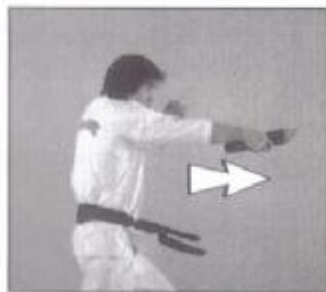


As the punch swings in, follow through to the center of the target with a tight wrist. Remember: for face punches, target the jaw from the side and below. Dislodging the jaw increases knockout potential.



Three striking actions

Many weapons are an extension of empty-handed techniques. The mechanics of the three striking actions (straight punch, backhand and roundhouse) can be easily illustrated in the use of *nunchaku*—fighting sticks connected by a flexible joint. Let's look at the similarities.



The driving action of the straight punch is a pistonlike movement.



The backhand strike uses a flexible wrist joint to create a snapping action.



The roundhouse or hook strike uses circular momentum, like a hammer pounding a nail.

Basic Strikes from Horseback Stance

Horseback Stance / *kiba dachi*

When you take down an opponent, you must keep control of him. This requires staying balanced and "rooted" to the floor. To develop balance and leg strength, regularly practice the horseback stance. When practicing basic techniques, assume the horseback stance from ready position—*yoi dachi*.



In ready position, the fists are held in front of the body and the knees are slightly bent. You are ready to move into any position.



The right forearm crosses inside the left



Step sideways with the right foot until the feet are spread two shoulder-widths apart. Separate the hands as you drop your weight. You will feel energy focused in the legs. The feet are rooted to the floor.

Forefist Underpunch / *seiken shita zuki*

At close distance, when you don't have room to extend your arms, use the underpunch. Unlike the hook punch, in which the elbow comes away from the body, the underpunch keeps the palm up and the elbow tight to the body as the hip drives the fist like a battering ram.



- Keep the feet parallel.
- Knees are pointed out.
- Weight is down.
- Raise the punching angle to create an uppercut.



*With the left hand, use the hook block—*kake uke*—to push away the opponent's lead hand as he attacks the upper body.*



Hook the opponent's arm and start to pull him into your punch.



With the knee and hip rotating together, the fist drives into the ribs. The pulling action of the lead hand doubles the punching power.



Elbow Strike / *hiji uchi*

At close distance, where you can't extend the arms to get power behind punches, use the elbow strike. Because the elbow is much closer to the center of the

body than the fist, it does not have the same centrifugal force as the fist. Therefore, it will take extra practice to develop as much speed as possible out of this weapon.



In the starting position, push away the opponent's lead hand across your body. The back hand is eye-high, forearm perpendicular to the ground.

Rotate the hips and shoulders towards the opponent. Retract the fist of the striking arm as the elbow accelerates through the target and well past the center line. Keep the backhand up to protect your face.

Elbow strike against opponent



Clear the lead hand.

Measure with the front hand as the back hand coils.

Follow through with a downward stroke of the elbow.

Knifehand Strike / *shuto uchi oroshi*

When finishing off a downed opponent, your target is often waist-high. In this case, use an ascending elbow strike or a descending knifehand strike. For the knifehand strike:

Always strike perpendicular to your target.

Pull back the lead hand to accelerate the striking hand.

Draw back the fingers of the striking hand to create tension in the knife-edge.

Cock back the wrist to strike with the heel of the knife hand.



Expose the knife-edge, tuck the palm and tuck the wrist. Use the edge of the hand close to the wrist bone.



From horseback stance, draw back the hip and raise the striking hand behind your head. The front elbow protects the jaw.

As you release the strike, pull back on the opposite elbow and let the knees flex with your momentum.

Basic Blocks



Think of blocks as the transition between your opponent's attack and your counterattack. They should flow spontaneously into a counterattack. In basic stance blocks are performed to improve the mechanics of each movement. They form the foundation for the combinations that will follow. This foundation is critical. If the structure is weak, the building will not stand.

Action from the 1992 Sabaki Challenge

**upper
block**



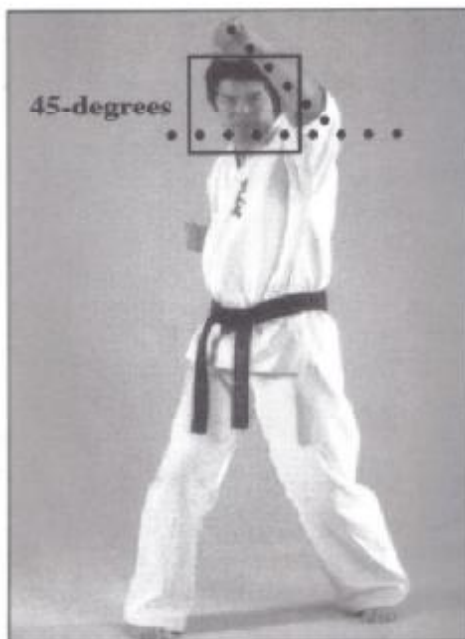
**middle
outside
parry**



**lower
parry**



Upper Block / *jodan uke*



In sanchin dachi the forearm of the top hand is slanted forty-five degrees. The torso is coiled in a half-body position.

Traditionally, the upper block has been used against straight punches to the face, but Sabaki strategy calls for deflecting these straight attacks across the body, using an outside parry (see opposite page). In *Enshin* we use the upper block to protect against high attacks from the top or side. Instead of meeting the attack at ninety degrees, the *Enshin* upper block uses a rising and thrusting action to intercept the attack and deflect it upward or outward.



As the hands come together, the elbows stay close to the body.



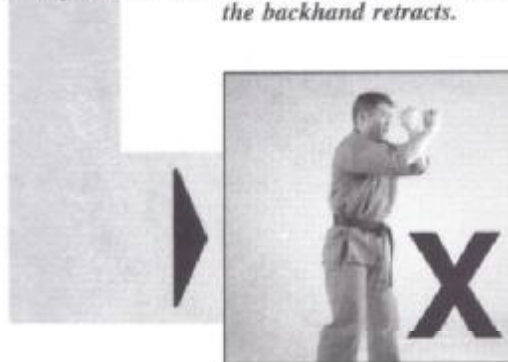
The blocking arm pushes out and starts to rotate as the backhand retracts.



Extend the blocking arm, but keep the elbow low and flexed. Retract the blocking hand just after impact.



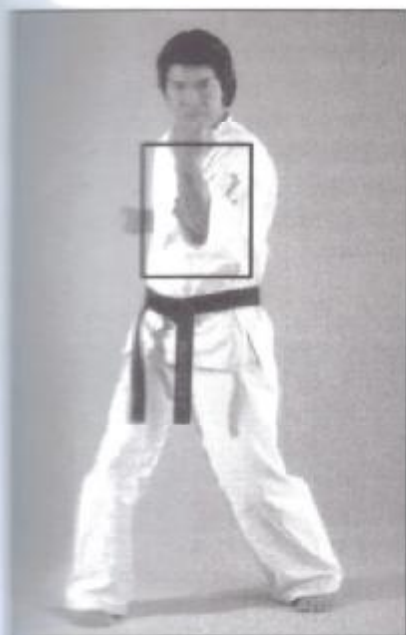
As you cross the arms at the beginning of the upper block, think of compressing your power. Keep the hip back until the last possible instant.



Don't extend the arms away from the body until you are ready to block. Instead, stay coiled for accuracy, speed, and power.

- The backhand fist protects the chin.
- As the forearm rises, keep the wrist of the blocking hand on the center line.
- End up in a half-body position, with the shoulder of the blocking arm turned forward and the torso turned sideways.
- Keep the chin tucked.
- Position the blocking forearm forty-five degrees across the front of the body and forty-five degrees forward.
- Finish all blocks with a strong hip and shoulder turn that carries the upper body into a half-body (*hanmi*) position. This not only increases power but provides a narrower target for your opponent.

Middle Outside Parry / *chudan soto nagashi*



Start in sanchin dachi with the front elbow bent at ninety degrees and the fist at shoulder height. The backhand is tucked against the armpit.

Against straight attacks to the face or middle body, use the outside parry. It works against punches or front kicks by deflecting the attack away from its target with a circular parrying action of the forearm. Sabaki strategy combines the deflecting action of the parry with position and footwork to expose the attacker's blind spot and set up a counter-attack.



As the right hand pulls back, the knuckles touch the ear. The left elbow rises to protect the jaw.



The hips and shoulders turn together. When the arm is almost fully extended, rotate the wrist and retract the elbow to the middle of the body. The backhand pulls to the armpit.



The path of the blocking hand describes a line shaped much like a fishhook.

- In basics, always use a closed fist that stays relaxed until contact.
- Before parrying, pull back the elbow and touch the fist to the ear to coil the upper body.
- Visualize making contact with your attacker's punching arm by using your forearm or the heel of your hand.
- Deflect the blow as the parrying arm retracts to the body.
- The arc of the parrying hand should descend from the ear to shoulder height.
- Finish in strong half-body (*hanmi*) position.

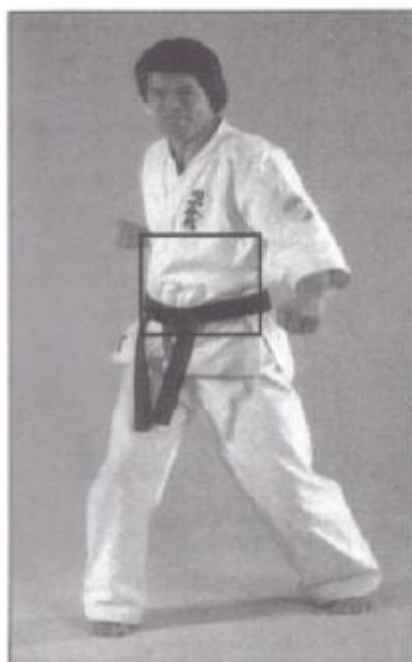


Don't send the parrying arm wide of your torso. Only protect what needs protecting. Anything more is wasted motion.



The blocking hand dips from eye height to shoulder height as it executes the middle outside parry.

Lower Parry / *gedan barai*



The hooking and pulling action of lower parry can turn an attacker and expose his blind spot. This “hooking” parry works equally well against front kicks to the middle of the body or high roundhouse kicks. In the basic lower parry, the pulling action of the arm coordinates with a slight hip rotation *away* from the block to increase strength and speed. For starters, think only of using the lower parry to deflect punches or kicks to the lower stomach area.



From starting position, the left hand will rise to protect the head. The right hand circles across the front of the face and in front of the left hand.

Arms cross in front of the left shoulder.

As the hands pull apart, the hips turn opposite to the direction of the blocking hand. The blocking hand crosses the lower stomach as the left hand pulls back.



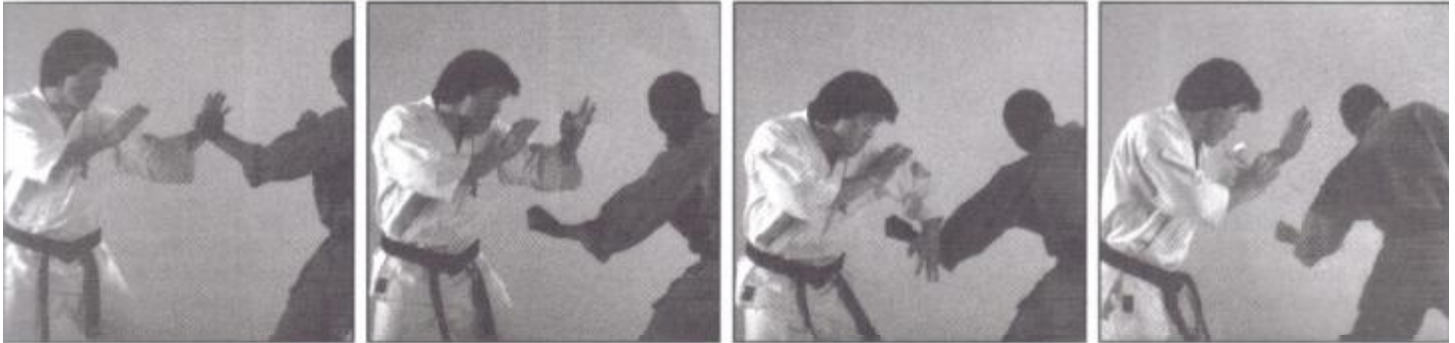
The elbow of the protecting hand should point down, covering the ribs. The blocking hand uses a circular motion and finishes just in front of the knee.

- Keep your eyes on your opponent. Never follow the block.
- Move both arms simultaneously, not in sequence.
- The elbow of the protecting hand should point down, protecting the ribs.
- Think of the blocking hand as a windshield wiper in front of your face. This will ensure use of correct circular action.
- Pull strongly on the back hand to increase parrying power.
- Always finish with the upper body in a half-body position—*hanmi*. This not only increases parrying power but gets you in the habit of narrowing your body as a target.

Protecting hand in front or in back?

Traditionally the lower parry positioned the protecting hand in front of the parry hand to increase blocking power. However, in *Enshin* blocks and parries, the protecting hand is always positioned *behind* the blocking or parrying hand. This is a more natural position, because it allows the back hand to protect while allowing the parry hand to move freely. It is a question of technique balancing the need for power and speed.

Protecting hand in back



With the protecting hand back, the blocking hand is free to move directly to parry the attack.

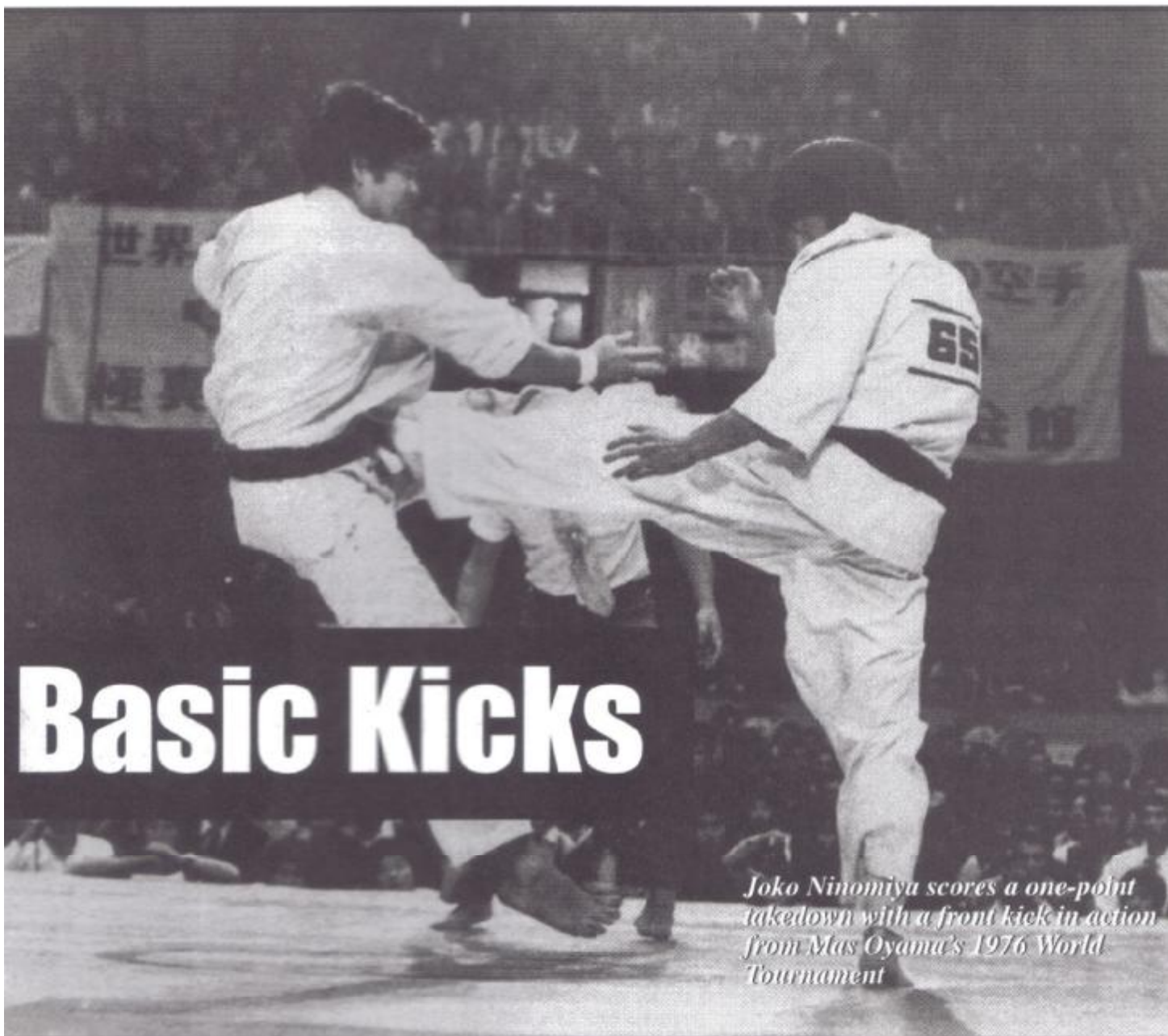
The circular action of the parry is smooth and continuous.

Protecting hand in front



Here the protecting hand is in the way. The parrying hand may be coiled back for power, but the angle forces a hard block instead of a smooth parry.

Not only is the angle wrong, but you have wasted a split-second that can be the difference in avoiding contact. The mechanics of basics must balance power and speed.



Basic Kicks

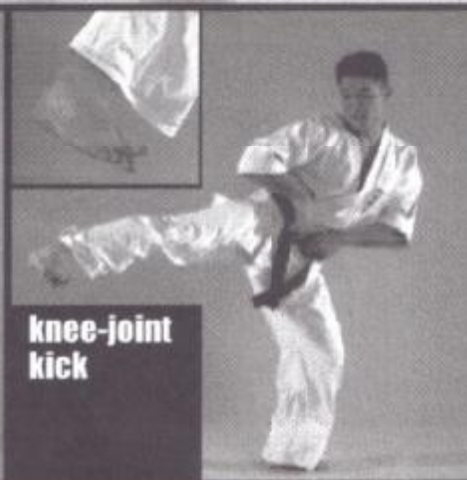
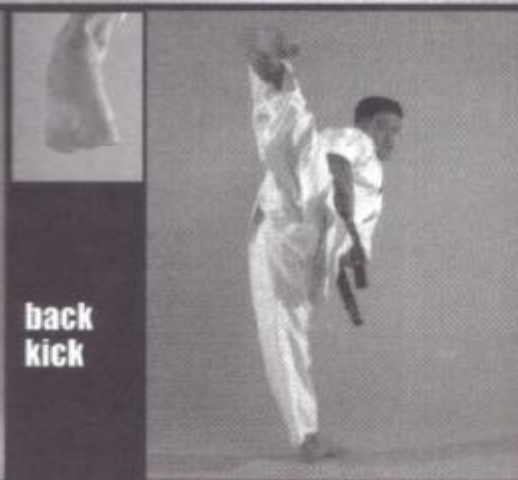
Joko Ninomiya scores a one-point takedown with a front kick in action from Mas Oyama's 1976 World Tournament



**inning
back
hook
kick**



**back
kick**



**knee-joint
kick**

front high stretching kick



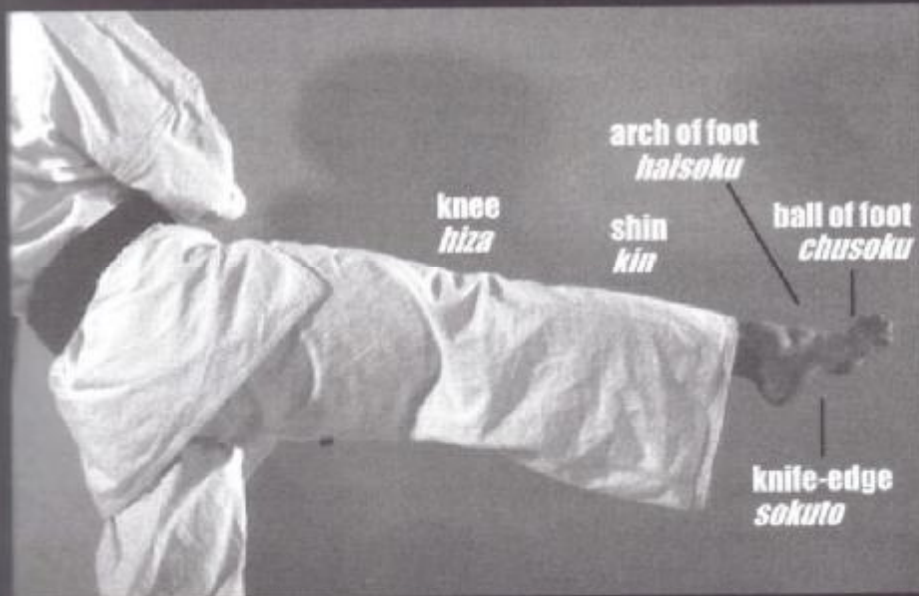
axe kick



knee kick



Kicking Surfaces of the Leg and Foot



groin kick



front kick



side snap kick



side high stretching kick



high round-house kick



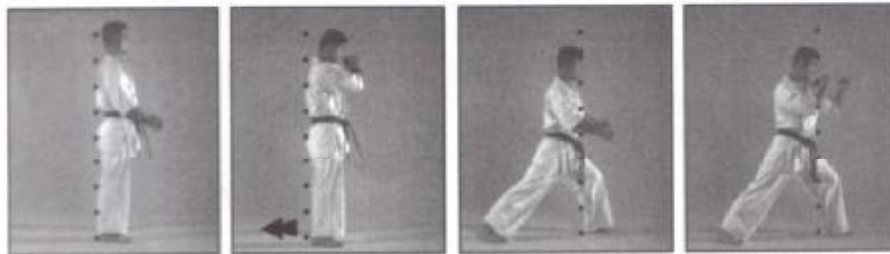
Front High Stretching Kick / *mae keage*

Front-leaning kick stance / *zenkutsu dachi keru no kamae*



The feet are shoulder-width apart and two shoulder widths deep.

With the legs widely sprung in a deep position, the front-leaning stance develops leg strength and flexibility. Although front-leaning stance is also used in step-and-kick combinations, in its stationary form the kicking leg always returns to its back position. This puts a greater burden on each muscle group in the kicking motion and strengthens balance. The high stretching kick out of front-leaning stance is an essential warm-up for any kick routine.



From ready position, the right arm crosses in front of the left.

The right leg steps back so that the feet are two shoulder-widths apart. The hands block down then come up to protect the face. Keep the back leg slightly flexed.

Front high stretching kick / *mae keage*

The front high stretching kick from front-leaning stance features an upward driving action of the knee and hip that strengthens the psoas or "core" muscles of the lower abdomen. These muscles are used extensively in almost all kicks. By holding the side belt to restrict use of the hands, we isolate the hips and force them to work even harder to provide balance and power. Holding the side belt is a good way to practice all kicks in basics. It also prepares for fighting situations in which you are kicking and cannot use the hands for balance because they are protecting the face.



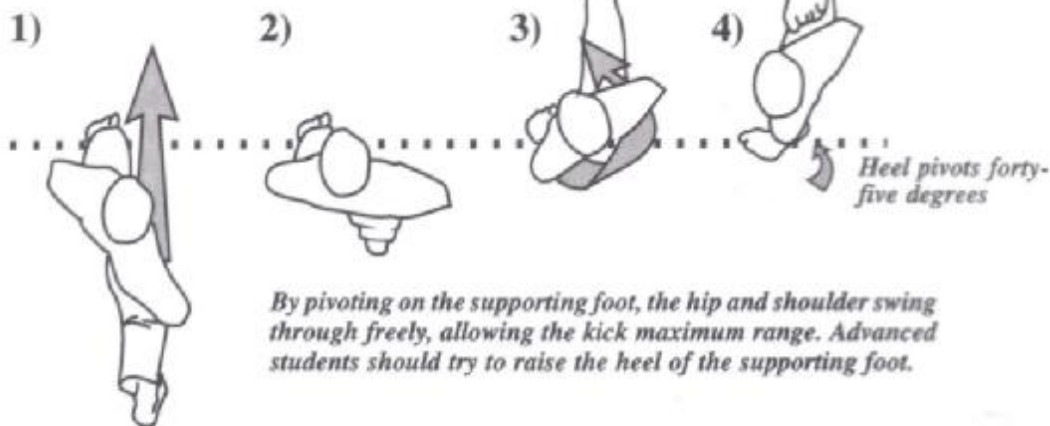
Push your weight onto the front knee as the hips start to twist. Drive the kicking leg forward as you pivot on the ball of the supporting foot. The pivot allows free movement of the hips.



Rise on the ball of the supporting foot as the kicking hip swings up. Try to touch the knee of the kicking leg to your right shoulder. Beginners should straighten the ankle to kick higher. For advanced students, pull back the toes to stretch the back of the leg even further.



For maximum extension on the front high stretching kick, pivot on the supporting foot



By pivoting on the supporting foot, the hip and shoulder swing through freely, allowing the kick maximum range. Advanced students should try to raise the heel of the supporting foot.

Axe Kick / *kakato otoshi geri*



from basic stance

The axe kick begins with an upward driving action of the leg much like the front high kick, except the axe kick arcs outside the opponent's shoulder then in again to finish directly above the opponent's head. From the foot's highest point, the heel of the kicking leg accelerates forward and drives down through the target area at the opponent's head. This "crossing" action—outside-to-inside—disguises the axe kick as a front kick and can be used from fighting stance to keep your opponent off balance. For more on axe kick techniques in fighting stance, see page 110.



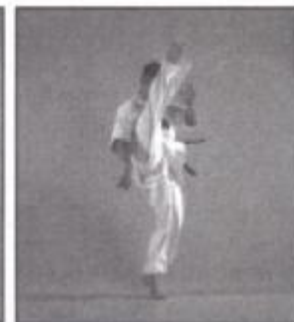
from fighting stance



Begin by twisting the hips and shoulders as the supporting foot pivots.



As the leg rises, the knee of the kicking leg is slightly bent.



At its highest point the kicking leg is straight. Point the toes for greater leg-extension. Let your upward momentum pull the heel of the supporting foot off the floor.



Lean back to give more thrust to the kicking leg. The heel drops forward through the target area.



Knee Kick / *hiza geri*



From basic stance, the knee drives upward to the shoulder with a circular action as the hip and supporting foot rotate to provide freedom of movement.

At close distance . . .

Like elbow strikes and underhand punches, knee kicks are used at close distance when you cannot fully extend for a roundhouse kick or straight punch. Unlike the elbow strike, which uses a centripetal cutting action (that contracts as it builds momentum), the knee kick extends away from the body centrifugally. Because the knee kick is more compact than a roundhouse kick, you must develop the springing action of the legs in order to push off the floor and drive the kick with power. Once you can generate power with compact movements, practice the knee kick at different angles. These should include upward and driving angles that target the torso, head, and even legs. Against an opponent, your position and distance will determine the angle of your kick.

Three grab and knee kick techniques



Upward to the head



Upward to the head or solar plexus.



Driving forward to the solar plexus.



With hands holding the side belt, the knees are slightly bent, ready to spring upward. Swing the right foot forward.



The supporting knee and ankle lift as the kicking knee drives upward and snaps back into the shoulder.



From fighting stance, push off the back foot as you drive the knee kick. The hands move diagonally toward the kicking knee as you contract your power.



At the very end, drive the hip through your target as the supporting foot pivots. As you drop your kicking foot to the floor, reverse the hips and coil back the opposite foot.



Repeat the same kicking action ten times on each side. Maintain a steady rhythm.



Groin Kick / *kin geri*

The groin kick uses a snapping action of the knee to drive the top of the foot upward between an opponent's legs. On the street, the groin kick will stop a superaggressive attacker long enough to allow an opening for escape or follow-up. The groin kick works best when the attacker's body is opened squarely instead of being turned in the half-body—*hanmi*—fighting stance.



From basic stance, paw the floor to create tension in the kicking leg. Lift the knee so the heel rises against the right buttock. Think of cocking the knee as if drawing a bow.

Drive the hip forward slightly and "crack the whip" by releasing the knee and snapping the foot forward. After contact, snap the foot back through the same arc instead of allowing the foot to drop to the floor.

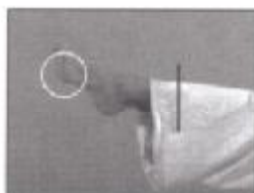
Front Kick / *mae geri*

The front kick targets your opponent's face and chest. It uses a motion similar to the groin kick, but with greater hip rotation and extension of the kicking leg. Develop this kick so you can trigger it instantaneously and retract just as quickly. Any hesitation and your opponent can grab the kicking leg or turn you with a strong parry that would expose your blind spot.



Just as with the start of the groin kick, coil the knee with the heel touching the buttock.

Pivot the supporting foot to allow full hip extension. Pull back the toes to expose the ball of the foot. Keep the top of the ankle straight.



Take a moment to stretch back the toes. With the ankle straight, tap the floor with the ball of the foot, your contact point for the front kick.



Allow the hips to rotate fully so the kicking foot crosses the centerline of your body.



Don't hold the hip back.

Roundhouse Kick / *mawashi geri*



Versatility & power

The roundhouse kick is one of the most versatile weapons in the *Enshin* arsenal because it can be used for high, middle, or low kicks. Target the low roundhouse kick to the inside or outside of the legs, but use a different part of the kicking foot or leg for each target. In fighting situations, position and distance always determine the appropriate kick. When we introduce Sabaki strategy, we'll talk more about the right attack or counterattack for each situation.

Achieving maximum power and speed for the roundhouse kick requires a free pivot of the supporting foot and easy movement of the entire body. The complementary action of the upper and lower body is critical. Specifically, the swinging action of the leg is balanced by the opposite movement of the same-side arm. In fighting stance, we use this complementary action of the arms and legs for groin kicks, front kicks, and roundhouse kicks.

Complementary action of upper and lower body: the arm pulls as the leg swings through. Reverse this movement to return to ready stance.

Roundhouse Kick / front and top views



In basic stance, the feet are spread shoulder-width apart, hands up, elbows protecting the ribs. To move quickly, keep the knees slightly bent.



Raise the kicking leg to the outside, bending the knee and pulling back the heel to coil your power.



Pivot on the supporting foot as the hip turns forward. The hand pulls for balance and power.



At impact, the kicking leg has fully accelerated. The supporting leg is straight as the ball of the foot thrusts against the floor, fully pivoted.



Fully extend the kicking leg to stop your circular momentum. Retract the kicking leg along its original arc.

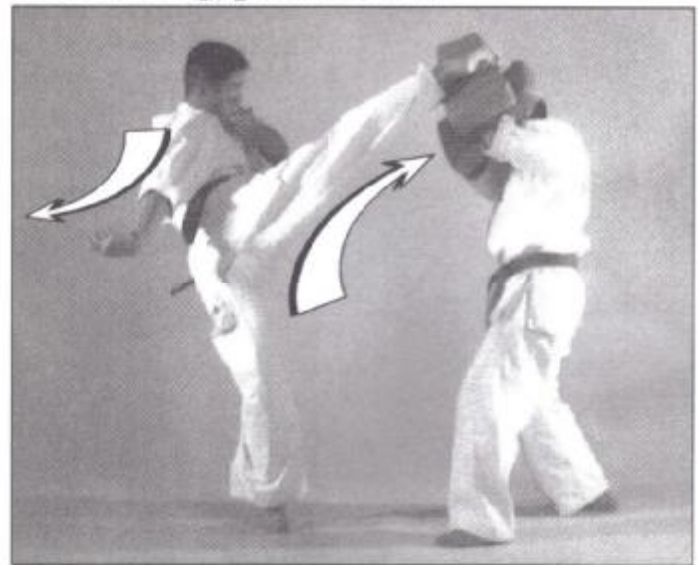


Coil power in the kicking leg



To develop the feeling of coiling power in the kicking leg, pull the leg forward and draw back the knee. Try to touch the heel to the floor. To increase balance and leg strength, do ten repetitions in this position, then switch legs.

Kick the leg, pull the arm



As the kick releases, the hand pulls in the opposite direction. Time the kick and pull for maximum power. Allow the supporting foot to pivot for full hip action. The higher the kick, the more the supporting leg should pivot and lift.

Upper and lower body in complementary opposition

Use a rising and falling action. At full extension of the kick your weight rises up and the supporting leg is straight. When the kick retracts, your weight naturally drops as the foot returns to the floor and the knees bend.

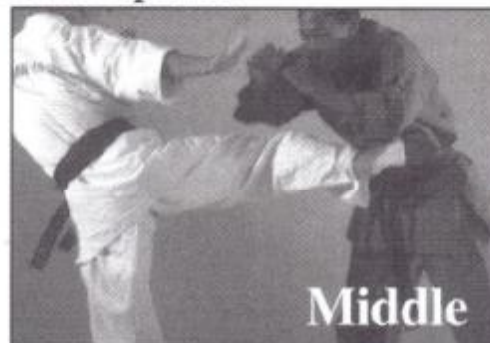
In the same way the kicking leg extends and retracts on its original arc, the pulling arm retracts strongly to its original hands-up position. This arm action helps to retract the kicking leg more quickly.

- If you have trouble with high roundhouse kicks, make sure your hips are turning freely. Check your pivot foot. For the hips to rotate freely, the supporting foot *must* pivot.
- Don't apply power to the pivot foot. Let it turn freely with the momentum of the kicking leg, forward and back.
- Practice with a *barre* allows you to hold your balance as you concentrate on perfecting the kicking action.

Three targets, three different contact points



For low kicks to the thigh, use the shin. It is stronger than the more delicate bones in the foot or ankle.



For middle body roundhouse kicks, use the ball of the foot to concentrate power in a smaller surface area.

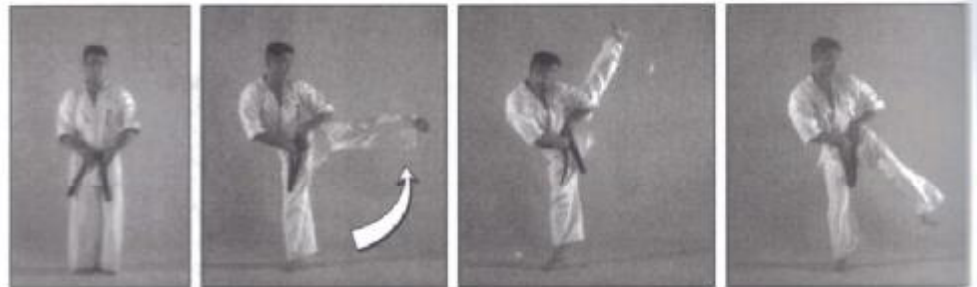


Since the head is a more flexible target requires greater range, use the top of the foot. Remember: snapping power is more effective against a flexible target (See page 6).

Side Stretching Kick / *yoko keage*



Use the side stretching kick as a warm-up to loosen the hip joint and inner thigh. As the foot swings up, lead with the heel, keeping it above the toes. Allow the supporting foot to pivot, then return to heels-together stance with your knees slightly bent to regain balance. Although the kicking action of the side kick differs from the side stretching kick, try to achieve the same height with both kicks.



Start in heels-together stance with the hands holding the front belt. The knees are slightly bent. Swing the leg out to the side and start to pivot.

Look over your shoulder so the eyes follow the kick. As the kick fully extends, keep the heel above the toes. Pivot back and bend the knees to return to heels-together stance. Kick to the opposite side.

Side Kick / *yoko geri*

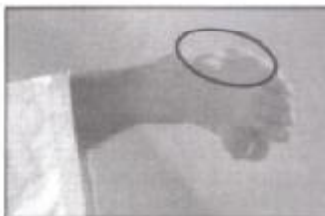
Use the side kick to maintain distance and set up combinations. The side kick can be effective in attacking the face or body, but you must retract the kick quickly or the leg may be grabbed. As a stopping technique to

check the momentum of an oncoming attack, the side kick is effective against both punches or roundhouse kicks when used to target the supporting leg.



From heels-together stance, turn the head to look at your target. Raise the knee waist-high, directly in front of the body. The ankle of the kicking leg is bent and the knife-edge of the foot is exposed.

Pivot and straighten the supporting leg as you extend the kick. Drive the knife-edge of the kicking foot until the knee is fully extended. Retract the kicking leg along the same arc on which it was extended. Return to the knees-bent starting position.



The knife-edge is exposed by cocking the ankle at ninety degrees as you pull back on the big toe. Use that portion of the outside of the foot between the base of the small toe and the heel.

The side kick can be used as an offensive or defensive weapon. As a quick counterattack, the side kick to your attacker's supporting leg can take the sting out of punches and roundhouse kicks.



arc of the side kick



Raise the kicking foot to the supporting knee, then drive it outward and upward on a continuous arc. Return the kicking foot to the floor along this same arc.

Stretching for side kick

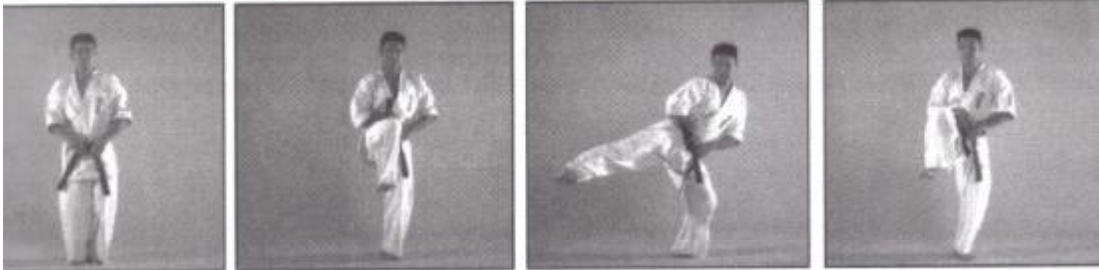


Stretch the inner thigh and hip joint using barre with a partner. Holding the barre for balance with one hand, keep your torso straight as the leg is elevated. Expose the knife-edge of your foot as your partner pushes up.

knee-joint Kick / kansetsu geri

A kick to the front of the knee can disable an attacker in the street. In the dojo, you can unbalance an opponent by driving a kick to his hip or thigh. From the front's back or side, the knee-joint kick can take

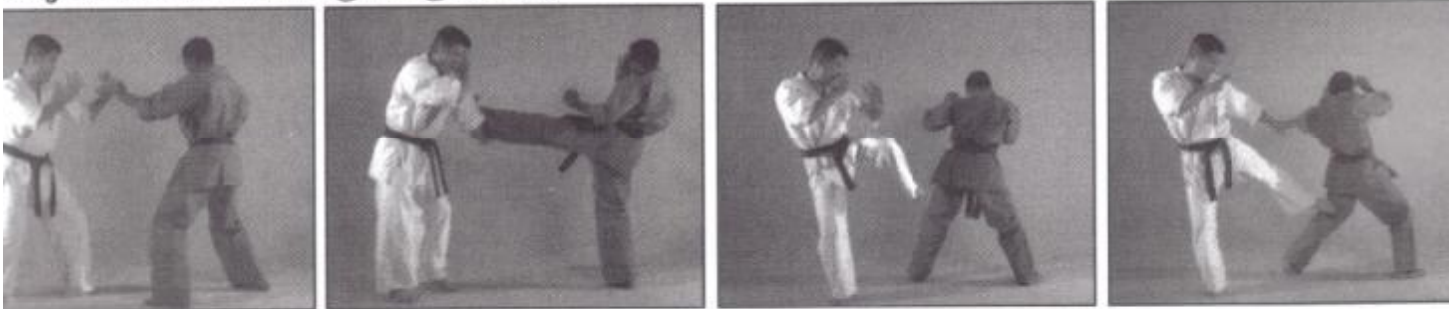
him off balance and set up a sweeping or finishing technique. In the dojo, practice this technique with extreme caution. Never contact the front or side of the knee.



In heels-together stance, raise the kicking foot to the supporting knee. Keep the supporting foot bent.

Drive the knife-edge of the kicking foot down and outward. Keep the kicking foot five to ten degrees forward. Retract the foot along its original path.

knee-joint kick from fighting stance



When parrying away a front kick, use the knee-joint kick to unbalance your opponent.

The knife-edge to the back side of the knee forces the opponent to the floor. You can then finish with a variety of techniques.

Back Kick / *ushiro geri*



Use the turning action of the back kick to confuse your opponent and land powerful blows to the body from short or long distance. Because you are exposing your back, trigger the kick quickly by turning the shoulders. Keep your eye on your opponent as you extend the kicking leg. Retract the kick immediately to your original fighting stance or step forward to continue the attack. Set up the back kick with a crossover step to make sure the kick extends at the correct angle.



In ready stance, look over your shoulder and raise the heel of the kicking foot above the knee.

Drive the heel backward by straightening knee. Retract along the same line on which kick extended. Practice by alternating right & left leg.

- Start with the knees bent. Straighten the supporting leg as the kicking leg extends.
- Look back over your shoulder to keep your target in view.
- Make contact with the heel.

- Keep the back as straight as possible.
- Also practice from fighting stance or by holding onto a *barre*.

Long Distance Back Kick



For long distance back kicks, keep the knee pointed down as you raise the heel behind the knee. Extend the kicking leg straight back and upward.

Short Distance Back Kick



When you don't have space to extend, lift the knee of the kicking leg to the outside, keeping it parallel to the floor. Bend the knee and drive the kick from the outside-in.

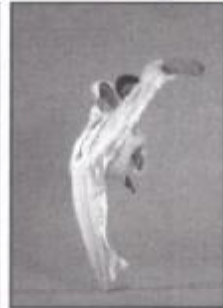
Spinning Back Hook Kick / *ushiro mawashi kake geri*



Mix spinning back hook kicks with back kicks and other attacks out of fighting stance to provide more angles of attack and further confuse your opponent.

Since your back is again exposed with the spinning back hook kick, trigger the kick quickly. Raise the elbows and use a strong twisting action of the upper body to turn the hips and lead the kick through its rotation.

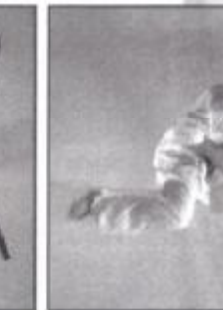
Spinning Back Hook Kick (front & top views)



From fighting stance, turn the elbows to start rotation. Raise the kicking knee and foot to the outside. The heel should rotate slightly above the kicking knee just as it does in the short distance back kick.

The kick fully extends at forty-five degrees. Immediately retract the kicking foot as you maintain rotation. The hooking action of the kick should sweep through your opponent's head and stay parallel to the floor (see practice drill below).

Don't stop too soon. Once the kick clears the impact zone, snap the leg back immediately to its starting position.



- Swing the elbows to create torque.
- Push off the floor with the ball of the supporting foot.
- Use the heel as the impact point.
- Fully extend the kick at impact to create maximum centrifugal force.
- To improve speed and balance, practice the turning action without extending the kick. Raise the knee and rotate on the supporting foot.

Kick through the impact zone



With a partner, practice kicking through two armguards shoulder-width apart. Keep your kick parallel to the floor as it sweeps through the impact zone.

Basic Training Routine

When leading basics, explain the correct form then execute the technique four times slowly. Follow with ten to twenty counts at full speed with *kiai*. Add advanced

(shaded) techniques for upper belts. Remember: ne count and punch simultaneously; always count first, then punch or kick.

Punches & Blocks

1) From right foot forward pigeon-toed stance / *migi sanchin dachi*

- Forefist middle punch / *seiken chudan zuki*
- Forefist upper punch / *seiken jodan zuki*
- Backhand side strike / *uraken sayu uchi*
- Backhand liver strike / *uraken hizo uchi*
- Backhand roundhouse strike / *uraken mawashi uchi*
- Forefist hook punch / *seiken mawashi uchi*
- Triple punch / *san bon zuki*

2) Blocks

- Upper block / *jodan uke*
- Middle outside parry / *chudan soto nagashi*
- Lower parry / *gedan barai*

3) Block & Punch

- Upper block, punch / *jodan uke, seiken jodan zuki*
- Middle outside parry, middle punch / *chudan soto nagashi, seiken chudan zuki*
- Lower parry, middle punch / *gedan barai, seiken chudan zuki*

4) From horseback stance / *kiba dachi*

- Forefist underpunch / *kake uke, seiken shita zuki*
- Elbow strike / *hiji uchi*
- Knifehand strike / *shuto uchi oroshi*

Teaching Points

- Correct foot position, weight down, knees bent
- Use the hips on all blocks and parries. Is the body moving side to side?
- Cross the fists, relax the shoulders, pull back the retracting hand completely.
- Picture your opponent. Make sure the strike hits the correct target.
- Coil back the striking hand and hip before punching.
- Look at your target to focus energy.
- Stand in half-body position.
- *Enshin* parries should deflect the attacking blow. Don't make contact at ninety degrees. The parrying hand should move with the direction of the attack.
- Keep your weight down.
- On forefist underpunch and knifehand strike, contract your power.

One-hour instruction plan

Stretches (see p. 160 for routine)	Punches 10 min.	Blocks 5 min.	Kicks 10 min.	Break 3 min
---------------------------------------	--------------------	------------------	------------------	----------------

One and one-half hour instruction plan

Stretches 10 min.	Punches 10 min. •Triple punch	Blocks 5 min. •Block & punch	Horse-back Stance 5 min.	Kicks 10 min. •From basic stance •Against arm guards •At the barre
----------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------------------	--------------------------------	---

Kicks

Front-leaning stance / *zenkutsu dachi keri*

Front kamae

Front high stretching kick / *mae keage*

Heel kick / *kakato otoshi geri*

Front ready stance / *yoi dachi*

Inner knee kick / *hiza geri*

Inner shin kick / *kinteki geri*

Front kick / *mae geri*

Roundhouse kick / *mawashi geri*

Front heels-together stance / *musubi dachi*

Side stretching kick / *yoko keage*

Side kick / *yoko geri*

Inner-knee joint kick / *kansetsu geri*

Front ready stance / *yoi dachi*

Back kick / *ushiro geri*

Front fighting stance / *kumite no kamae*

Inner thigh back hook kick / *ushiro mawashi kake geri*

Teaching Points

- Deepen the stance to strengthen the legs.
- For punches, use a rotational action of the hips. For kicks, the hips and legs drive upward.
- For punches, the belt should move side to side. During kicks the body should be moving up and down to develop a strong driving action of the supporting leg.
- Watch the angle of the knee and foot at the beginning of each kick to ensure correct form. If the angle is correct early on, the kick will follow the right path.
- Break down the kick into a four-count pattern to isolate leg movements.
- After full extension, the kick should return to its original path.
- Use the arms. Is the upper body working with the lower body?

Vary the workout to fit your time frame and students' abilities

In a one-hour class, use an eight- or ten-count during basics. In a longer class you can extend the count to as many as twenty for a set of kicks and punches. In a longer form you can also include more advanced combinations and more instruction on positioning at distance for individual techniques. Vary techniques from class to class. If you work on distance one day, concentrate on short distance or back side position the next.

Technique & positioning
10 min.

Sabaki with partner
10 min.

Kata
5 min.

Push-ups & sit-ups
5 min.

Technique & positioning
15 min.

Sabaki with partner 15 min.
• Bag training
• Sparring

Kata
10 min.

Push-ups & sit-ups
5 min.

An Overview of Sabaki Strategy



Basic Sabaki Movement—Blind Spot Position

Offense and Defense in the Same Circular Movement

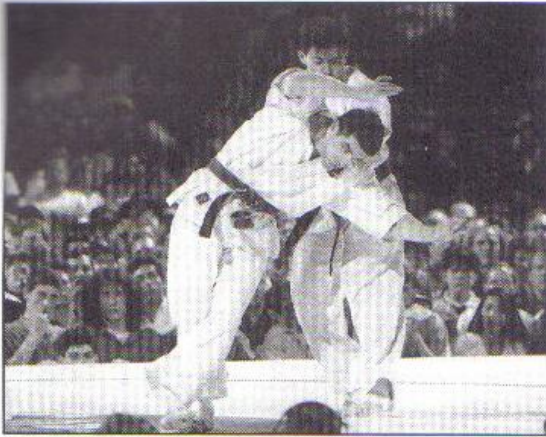


When defense and offense are combined in the same circular movement, you have the most efficient fighting strategy available. The “pendulum dynamics” of *Enshin* Karate consists of a rotational defensive movement out of the line of attack into a “blind spot” position that provides simultaneous preparation for immediate counterattack.

The body’s rhythmic rotational motion back and forth is similar to the drive wheel of a mechanical watch—a pendulum-like motion that simultaneously stores and releases energy. Think of the way a child on a swing rhythmically kicks his legs to gain thrust and altitude. In *Enshin*, the parry and circular movement to the outside of an attack releases power in the front hand, while the back hand and leg store energy for counterattack. You swing out on the parry, then swing in on the counterattack.

The fighting combinations that derive from this blend of simple rhythmic motion and circular momentum are not only powerful but quick. When applied to four basic patterns of strategic positioning, these combinations are almost limitless.

The Sabaki Pattern



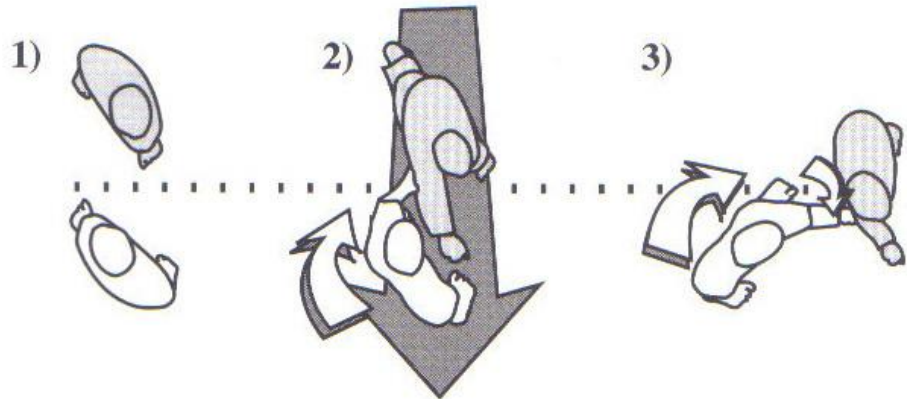
Tamaki Tamashiro moves to the blind spot position with a two-handed grab in action from the '93 Sabaki Challenge.

Improving on instinct . . .

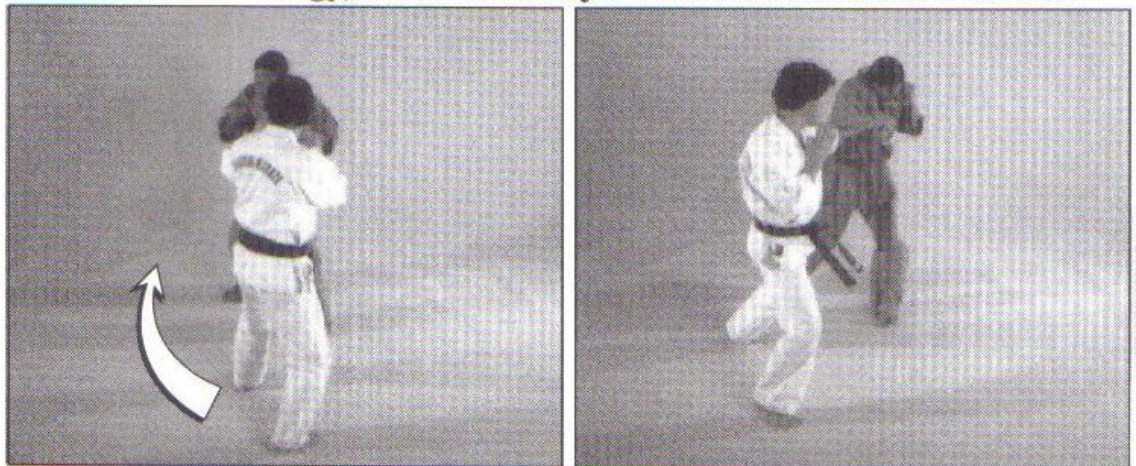
In a fighting situation, we instinctively move out of the way of an attack to avoid injury. But instinct does not always show us the most efficient escape route. To move out of the way effectively, you must move outside the opponent's attacking channel (See 2 below)—that line of force extending forward from between his hips and shoulders—into a position (3) from which your opponent cannot easily continue to attack. **This means moving to the outside of the punching hand or kicking leg.**

When you are likely to face more than one punch or kick, you need a strategy that will take you out of the range of attack and simultaneously prepare you to counterattack. **The first step to the Sabaki method: move to the outside of an oncoming attack.**

**Move outside
the channel of attack**



With *Enshin* strategy, simultaneously elude attack and take control



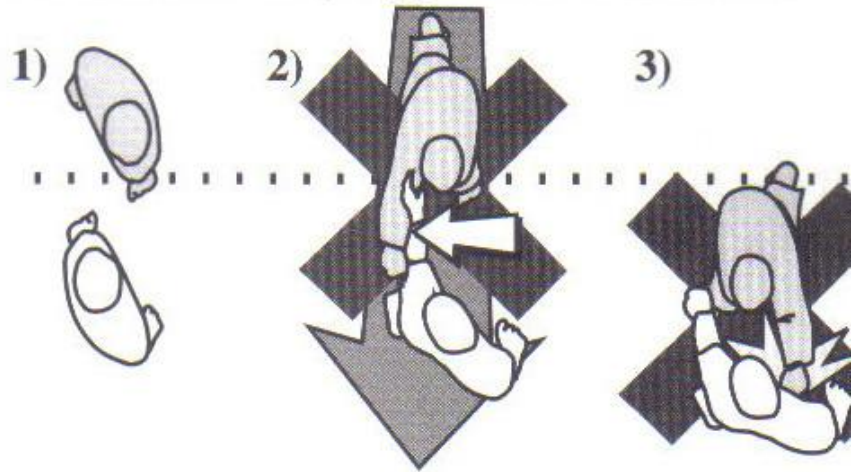
Moving to the attacker's blind spot is a way of simultaneously eluding attack and taking control.



Challenge: Shingo Asayama moves to the outside to block his opponent's attack and follows up with a roundhouse kick counterattack to the blind spot position.

The wrong way— no escape and no counterattack!

A poor defense offers little chance for escape and even less opportunity for counterattack. To block or parry an attack while remaining in the path of a follow-up punch or kick is suicidal. In the figure below, the defender (in white) blocks the straight punch to the outside and stays in front of his attacker (2). He fails to create a tactical advantage and (3) leaves himself open for the attacker's follow-up punch with the back hand.



To block, grab the sleeve of the punching arm to pull the attacker off-balance.



To parry as you move to the outside and set up for your counterattack is easy if you move in rhythm.

The Blind Spot Objective

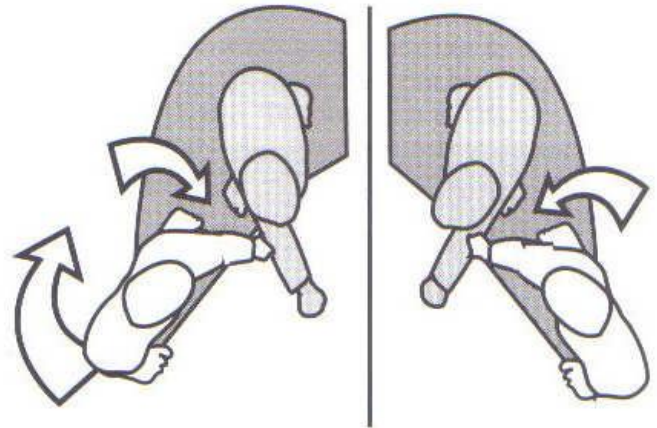
Take the shortest route to the blind spot

After blocking a punch or kick, move immediately to your attacker's blind spot—that area to the back and side of the opponent where his visibility is limited and his offensive weapons are few.

Always move to the blind spot by taking the shortest possible route: this means moving around your attacker's leading shoulder or hip. This way you stay out of range of a follow-up attack.

As you will see, it is often possible to block *at the same time* that you move outside to the blind spot position.

The Blind Spot: that area to the back and side of the opponent, where his visibility is limited and his offensive weapons are few



It doesn't matter whether the attack comes from your right or left side; simply move to the outside of the attacker's lead shoulder or hip. This will take you to the blind spot position. We will examine how to step and grab, so that you move as quickly as possible and make the best use of the blind spot's tactical advantage.

- At the blind spot position, you are well situated to keep your opponent off balance as you counterattack.
- Think of the blind spot as the launching pad for your counterattack. But move quickly, because it is only available for a split second before your opponent recovers.
- To switch quickly from defense to offense from the blind spot position, use a pendulum-type rhythm.

Defense + Counterattack = Sabaki

Sabaki means pendulum power

Enshin Karate uses a pendulum-type body action to provide defense and offense in one continuous rhythmic motion. **This pendulum-type motion 1) takes you to the blind spot position, 2) gives you control of your opponent, and 3) creates momentum for your counterattack.**

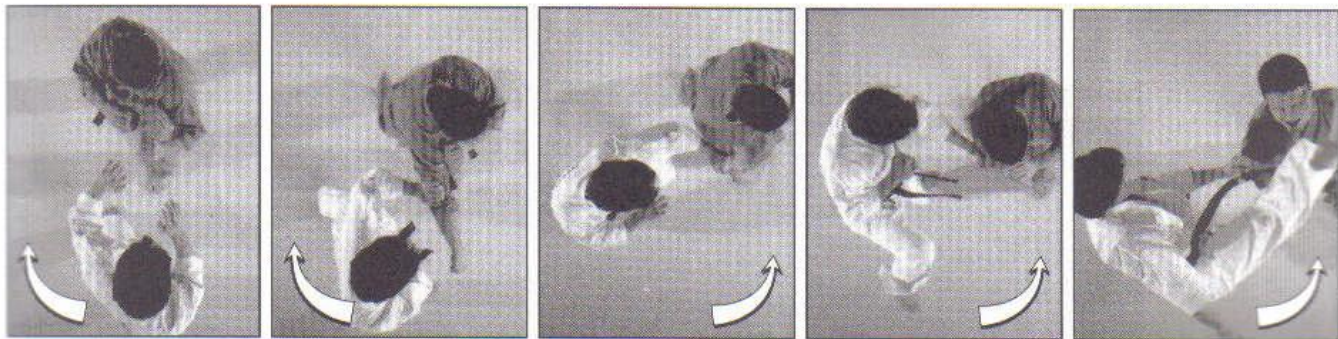
The power of a pendulum derives from a weight swinging back and forth from a fixed point. The centrifugal momentum around that point creates rhythm and power. Think of a child on a swing.

Swing out on the parry, swing in on the counterattack . . .



In *Enshin* Karate, we grab the opponent's sleeve and use a pendulum-like rhythm to "swing out" on the parry and to "swing in" on the counterattack. Sometimes this motion is large, and you can pull the opponent to the floor. Sometimes this motion is little more than a jerk of the sleeve to pull him off balance in preparation for a quick follow-up attack.

The heart of *Enshin's* Sabaki Method is this use of rhythmic centrifugal force. Think of your body as a pendulum on a horizontal plane. Your grabbing hand and arm are the rope from which you swing out of the line of attack on the parry and swing back in on the counterattack. **You are defending and preparing your counterattack at the same time.** This is the Sabaki Method.



Parry and step to the outside position. Pivot on the front foot and allow the back leg to trail out behind by letting it swing in a smooth arc.

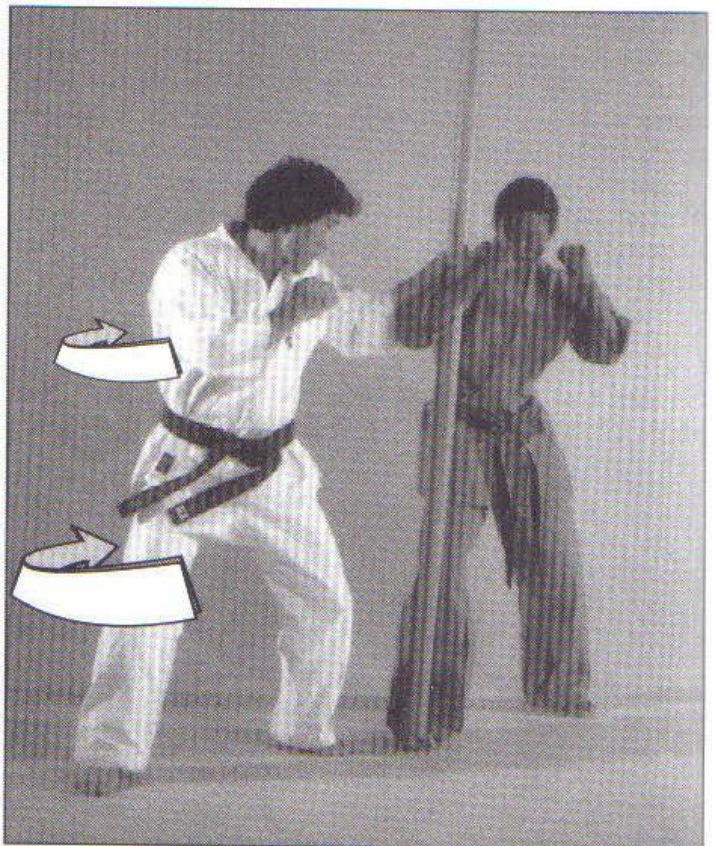
As your back leg lands, your weight shifts naturally to the back foot. Now push off the back foot and pull yourself in the opposite direction as you initiate your counterattack.

The grabbing hand and pivot foot act as the axis for your rotation.

The Basic Sabaki Sequence

To create pendulum power, think of swinging around a fireman's pole

A pendulum requires a fixed support to which the object in motion is attached. The pendulum action of the Sabaki Method is no different. This means when you move outside an attacker's lead shoulder, **you should establish a vertical axis with your grabbing hand and pivot foot.** As you step to the outside of your opponent, grab the sleeve and let your front foot pivot as your momentum swings out the back foot in a natural arc. It is as easy as swinging around a pole. Think of swinging around a fireman's pole. Grab the opponent's sleeve between the elbow and shoulder as you plant your pivot foot.

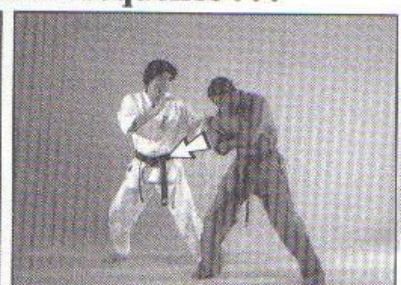


Moving to the blind spot position is similar to swinging around a pole. To go left, grab with your left hand and plant your left foot. As you pivot open, let your back leg swing out. To move right, use your right hand and right foot.

Now put together these movements in a typical Sabaki sequence . . .



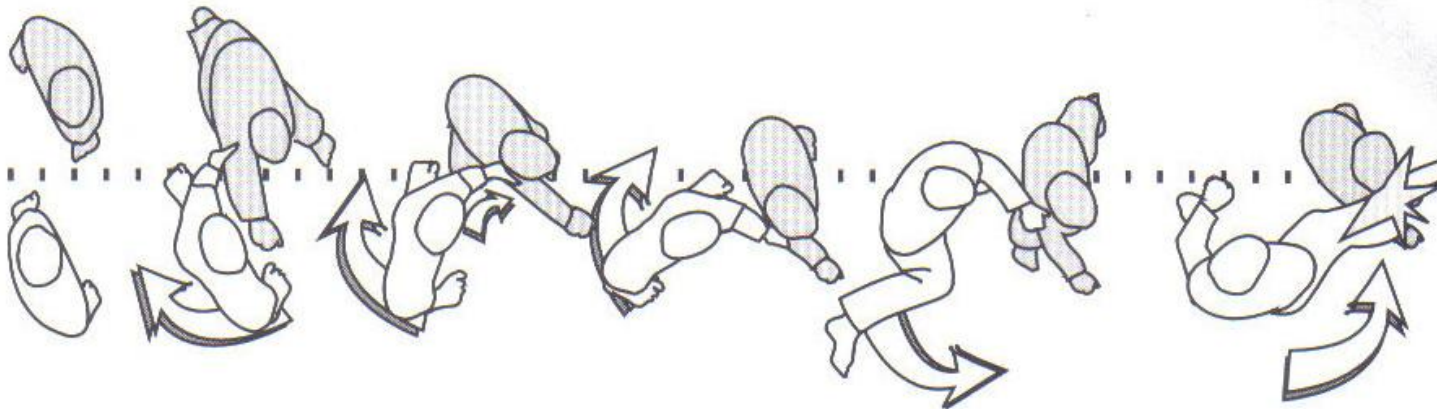
As you step to the outside of the attacker's lead shoulder, pivot on your front foot and let your momentum swing open the back leg in a broad arc. The closer you step to the opponent, the better leverage you will have.



As your back leg swings out, pull the attacker off balance. Use his forward momentum against him.

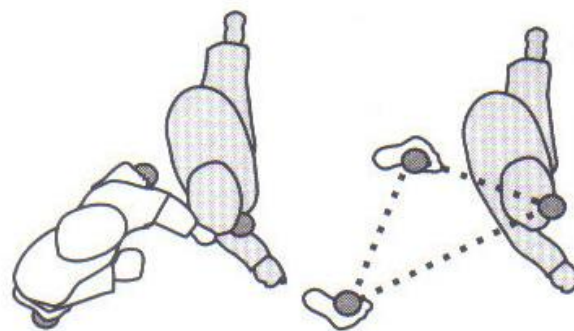
ving out, swing in (reverse rotation) . . .

ock and move to an outside position. Grab the attacker's sleeve and let
e circular momentum reverse itself naturally at the point of maximum
verage. You will feel the tension built up in the hips and shoulders.



or the best "set" position think of a triangle

r the optimum "set" position for your counterattack, think of
ur feet and the target as three points in a triangle laid out on
e floor. If the attacker's head is your target, one side of the
angle is formed by your front foot and the opponent's head.
e second side of the triangle is formed by your front foot and
ck foot. The third side is formed by the target and your back
ot and should always be longer than the other two sides. This
sures that the back leg and hip are pulled back for maximum
verage and power for your counterattack. When your energy is
lly coiled, simply release your counterattack. This pattern holds
e for kicks and punches alike.



When your momentum stops, keep pushing with the arm. Your back leg should be coiled at the knee and ready to push off for counterattack.



To double your power, pull the attacker by the sleeve into your kick.

Position & Distance





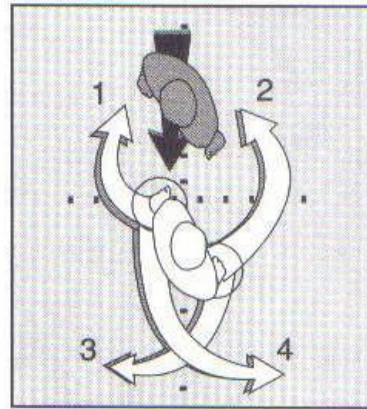
Footwork / Positions 1 & 2

Four Positions

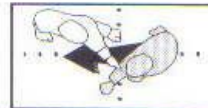
Sabaki footwork is patterned on moving to one of four basic positions in order to take your opponent's blind spot. Move forward or backward depending on the momentum behind your opponent's attack. **Move to Positions 1 or 2 when your opponent's stance is balanced.** Move to Positions 3 or 4 when he drives forward with full momentum. Let's look first at footwork for Positions 1 & 2.

To move left, step with the left foot first; to move right, step with the right foot first

Never cross your feet. To move left (forward or backward), step first with the left foot and pivot by swinging out the right foot behind you. To move right, step with the right foot (either forward or backward) and pivot with the left foot swinging an arc behind you. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart for maximum balance and leverage.



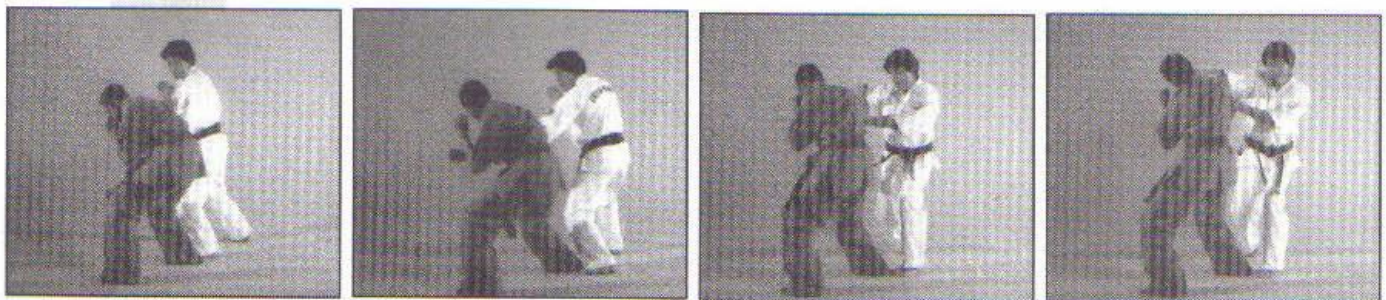
Sabaki strategy is based on movement to four basic positions. Move to the outside of the attack, either forward or backward, to the right or to the left.



Position 1



When the attacker is balanced and his momentum does not carry through strongly, parry and move forward to the outside of his lead shoulder. Against a right punch, move forward and to your left to create the shortest route to the attacker's blind spot. Step first with the left foot and swing open the back foot.



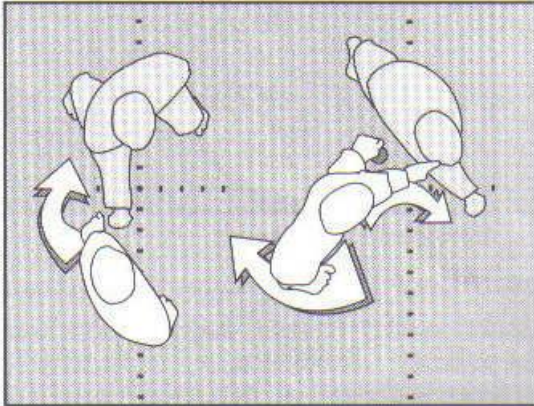
This brings you to the blind spot in set position ready to counterattack with a face punch.

The Control Point

orient your footwork around the *control point*—that position on the floor corresponding to a point just outside the attacker's lead shoulder or hip. Touch down at

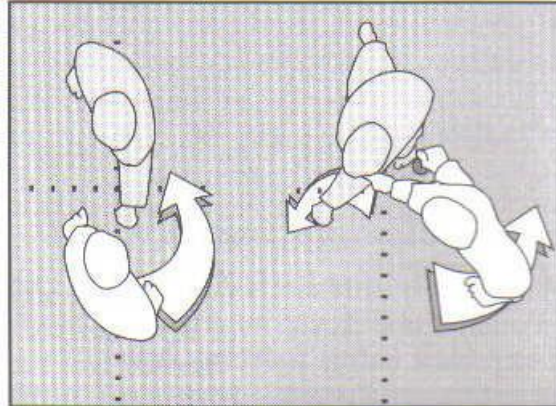
the control point with the stepping foot in order to establish your pivot for “swinging out” and counterattacking. Step to the control point, then swing out.

Control Point for Position 1



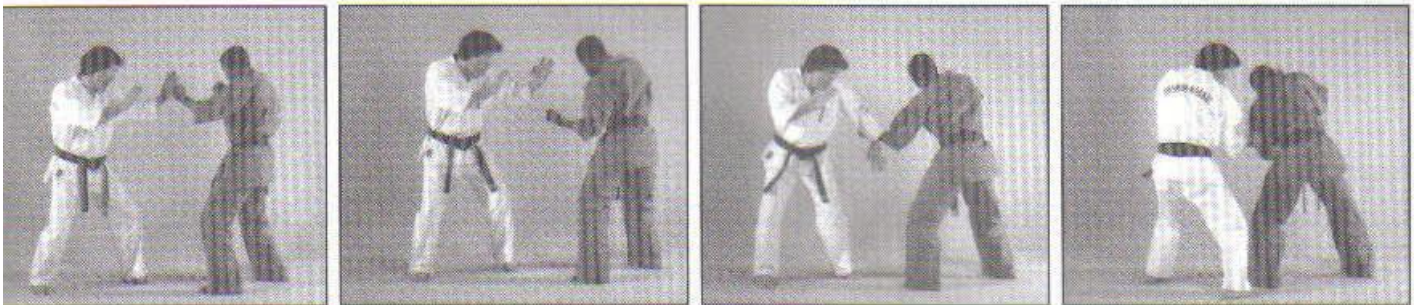
Against a balanced right punch, your left foot steps forward and to the left to Position 1.

Control Point for Position 2

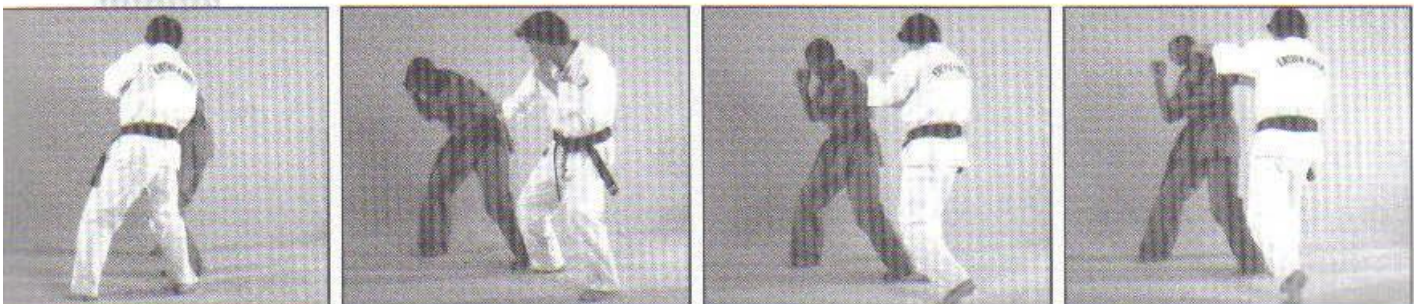


Against a balanced left punch, your right foot moves forward and to the right to Position 2.

Position 2



Against a balanced attack from your right, parry with the left hand and step forward to your right with the right foot. This same move can be done faster by unweighting both feet and reversing the hips to take the outside position. The hip reversal should be executed as you parry or grab. Jump only high enough to reverse the hips and feet. Anything more is wasted motion.



As you land, pivot on the right foot and open the shoulders and hips to prepare your face punch counterattack.

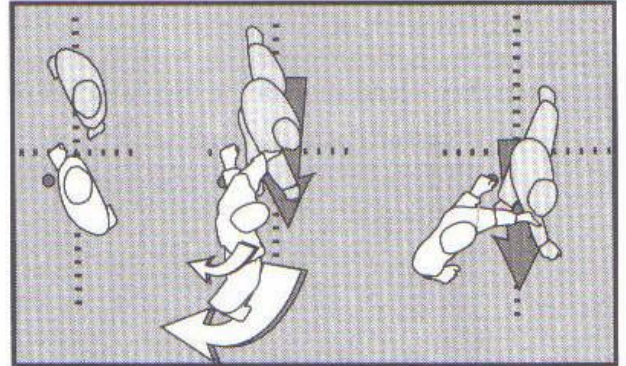
Footwork / Positions 3 & 4

Position 3

Against straight lunging attacks

Use Position 3 when you are forced to give ground against driving attacks from your opponent's right side (right hand or foot). Keep your balance by staying under control and moving at your own pace. When you move backward and to your left, the left foot steps backward first and the left leg swings open to elude the attacker's main thrust. First, parry with your arm as you move your feet, then pull the attacker forward and off balance as you move out. Draw your front foot to a new control point.

Control Point for Position 3



Move back and to the left

Position 3

Against low roundhouse kick & lunging punch attacks

Against a low roundhouse kick, you must first shin block the kick, then step back before touching down. If the attacker lunges with a follow-up punch, grab his sleeve and pull him off balance as you move back.



Against the low roundhouse kick, use a shin block and let the foot of the blocking leg (left foot) touch down in front.



As the attacker lunges with a follow-up punch, give ground by stepping back with the left foot first. Then swing open the right foot to the outside and establish your blind spot position.



Once you have given ground by swinging open the back (right) foot, you are in the same relative position as you would be in position 1.



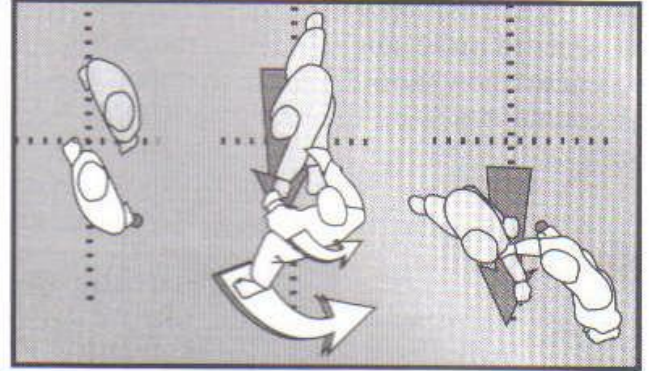
Pull down the head and counterattack as you would from Position 1.

Position 4

Against straight lunging attacks

Against a lunging left hand or left leg attack, 1) Swing open the front foot to bring your body into a blind spot position. 2) Re-establish your control point with the right foot, and create the outside position by swinging open the back (left) foot as you draw the attacker's momentum forward and pull him off balance.

Control Point for Position 4



Move back and to the right

Position 4

Against low roundhouse kick & lunging punch

First shin block with the back (right) leg, then touch down and parry the follow-up punch. Swing open and pull the opponent forward and off balance.



Against a low roundhouse kick to the back leg, use a right shin block.



Add a lower parry against the left body punch as your blocking leg touches down. Pivot on the right foot and start to swing the front foot behind you.



Grab the sleeve as you swing open. Hook the neck to control the head.



Maintain rotation as you force down the attacker's head into a forward rolling throw.



Quick Counterattacks

If an attacker leaves himself open to an immediate counterattack, go ahead and **counter without grabbing**. However, try to position your lead foot at the control point in order to make sure you are in range. The first two sequences below show the defender responding with a quick counterattack by moving forward and left to

Position 1. In the second two sequences, the defender gives ground and moves backward and left to **Position 3**. In each case, the defender sets for his quick counterattack in the blindspot position. Note the variety of counterattacks you can execute from the same blind spot position.

Position 1 Quick Counters



The left hand and left foot work together. As the left hand blocks, the left foot steps out to the blind spot position.

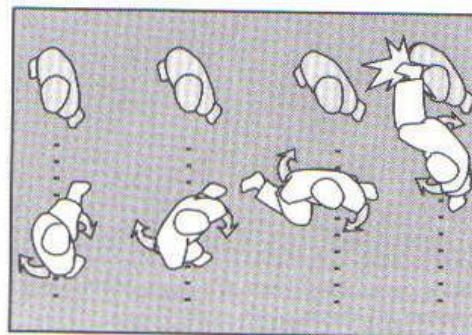
Position 3 Quick Counters



Against middle roundhouse kick, use the foot-stop—ashi dome. However, if the attacker's power drives through, quickly touch down with the stopping foot and pivot to Position 3 by swinging open the back leg. To speed up your footwork, touch down, and use a "jump-switch" to move both feet simultaneously.

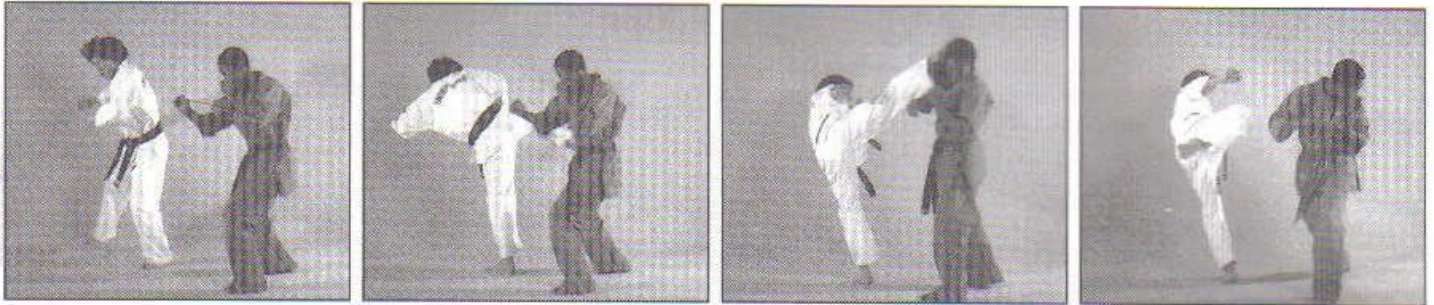
Set Up Back Kicks by Stepping Across

When using either a back kick or spinning back hook kick after a front kick or roundhouse kick, allow the kicking leg to carry through after the first kick. Let it touch down across the line of attack (dotted line in the diagram at the right). This way, you have properly aligned your body to set up the back kick. If you don't compensate by stepping across the line of attack, your impact zone will fall short of the mark. The diagram at the right shows correct alignment for a spinning back hook kick. Remember: upper and lower body should work together. Use the elbows for added turning power, balance, and speed.

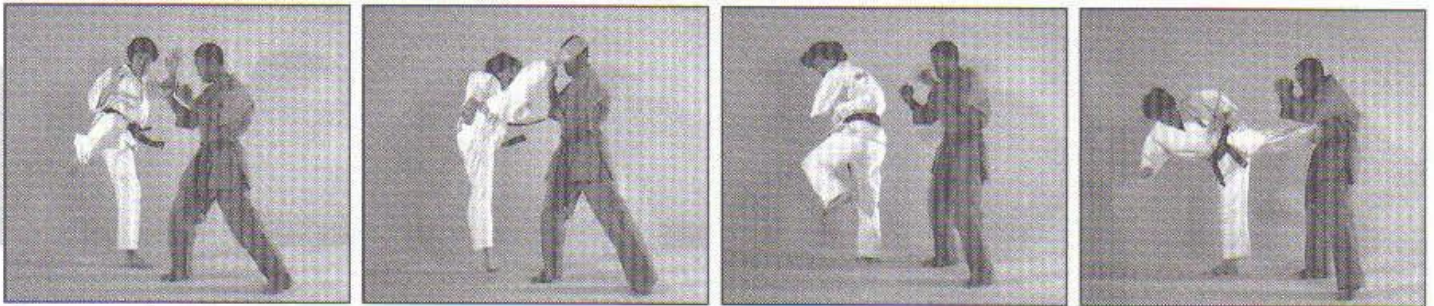




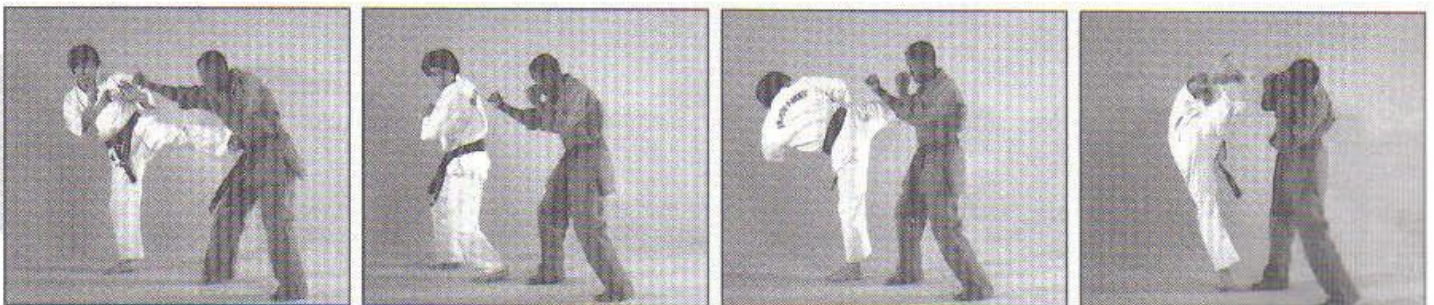
Instead of grabbing, counterattack right away with a face punch and roundhouse kick. As your punching hand retracts, push off the floor with your back foot to trigger the roundhouse kick.



After moving to the control point, spring into a spinning back hook kick counterattack. Use the elbows to trigger your backward spin. Hips and lower body follow the rotation of the elbows with a whipping action.



Counterattack with a roundhouse kick, letting your kicking leg carry across the line of attack. This sets up the follow-up back kick in its proper alignment. If you don't step across, the back kick extends off target (see diagram, page 50).



Use the side kick to check your attacker's advance. You can target the front hip or torso, and follow up with a spinning back roundhouse kick.

One-Handed Grab / *hiki kuzushi*

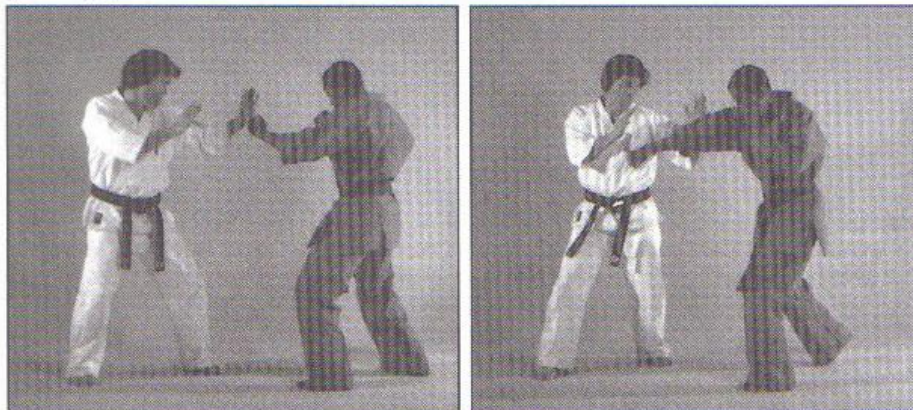
After you block your opponent's attack, he either will pull away to escape or turn into you to continue his attack. This is precisely the instant to take control of his upper body. By grabbing his sleeve and forcing him off balance, you create the opening for your counterattack.

Your distance from the attacker will decide whether you grab with one hand or two. At close distance, grab the attacker's sleeve with your front hand and hook his neck with the knife-edge of the back hand. From middle distance, use a one-handed grab to control the attacker's lead arm as you force him off balance to set up your counterattack.



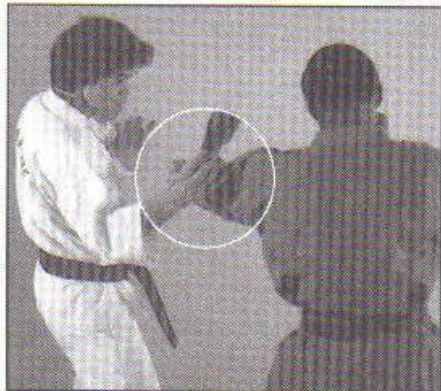
Create the best possible leverage

Grab your attacker's arm between the elbow and shoulder. For maximum leverage, keep your grabbing arm close to your body. Use your whole body to pull around the opponent as you pivot on the front foot and swing an arc with the back leg. Your body will feel like a gate swinging open, taking your opponent off balance with its momentum.



Use one of two angles for controlling an attacker's lead arm and taking him off balance after the grab. Either pull across your body for middle (*chudan*) counterattacks, or pull across and down for high (*jodan*) counterattacks. (A third choice: if the attacker doesn't move as you try to pull or push, then pivot open your own body, using his resistance as a counterweight. Now you are coiled for a counterattack with either a punch or kick.)

Use a circular grabbing motion that draws the opponent off balance



The grab is a quick, decisive motion. The hand circles forward from behind the attacker's arm. Keep the grabbing hand open, with the thumb up.

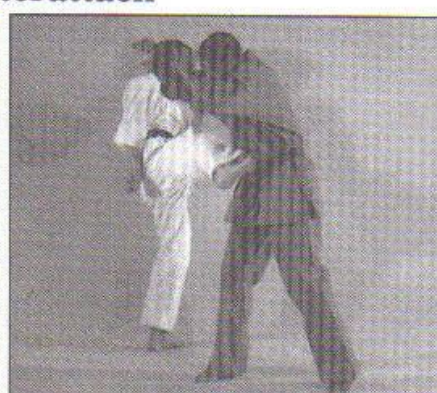


Target the sleeve between the elbow and shoulder. Grab the sleeve and pull forward.



After grabbing the attacker's sleeve, pivot and pull him off balance before starting your counterattack.

Pull across to set up a middle roundhouse kick counterattack



Pull across and draw the attacker off balance. Counterattack with middle roundhouse kick.

Pull across & down to set up a high roundhouse kick

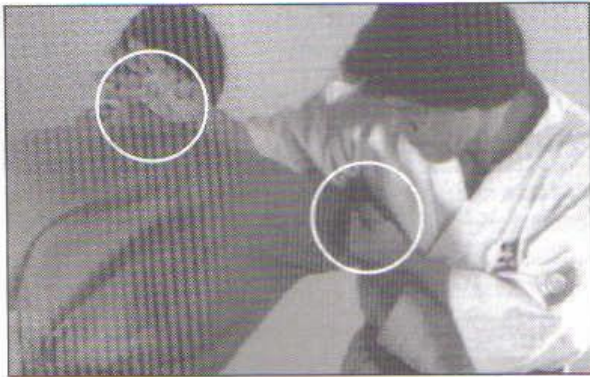


Pull down on the attacker's sleeve to bring his head into range for a high roundhouse kick.

Two-Handed Grab / *hiki mawashi*

Grab the sleeve & hook the neck

Use the two-handed grab—*hiki mawashi*—for close distance encounters to gain control of your opponent's head and upper body. The two-handed grab not only smothers your opponent's follow-up attack but positions you for knee kicks or throwing techniques.



Hiki kuzushi—one handed grab

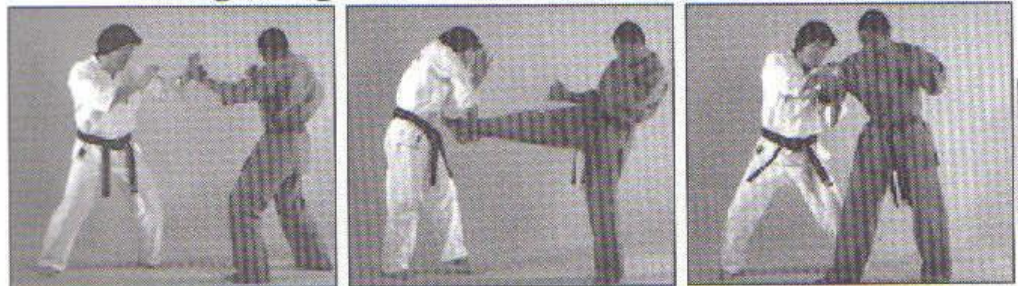


Hiki mawashi—two-handed grab & hook

Two circles: one on top of the other

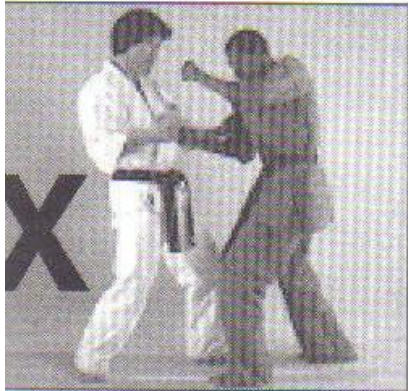
The two-handed grab—*hiki mawashi*—starts with the same grabbing action as the one-handed grab (*hiki kuzushi*), but adds a hooking motion to the neck with the knife-edge of the top hand. Think of the hand movements for *hiki mawashi* as two circles, one on top of the other. Whether moving to Position 1 or 2, the bottom hand will always grab the attacker's sleeve, and the top hand will hook the attacker's neck.

Two-handed grab against front kick



Use a reverse lower parry against the front kick, step outside to the blind spot position as you grab and hook the neck.

Move outside to keep control



If you step straight in and grab, you are in no advantage, because your opponent can still attack.



If you simultaneously step outside to the blind spot position and grab, you are ready to take full control by hooking the attacker's neck. This is true for both hiki kuzushi and hiki mawashi. But vary your movement to the blind spot to keep your opponent guessing. Sometimes, use quick counterattacks before moving to the blind spot; sometimes parry and move out immediately. Avoid easily recognized patterns.

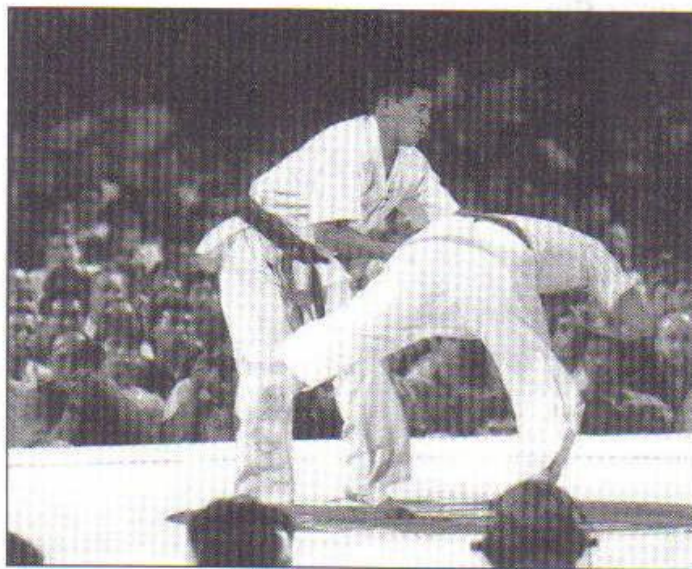
Keep the grabbing elbow in close to the body

Grab from the outside-in

As the grabbing hand pulls in, start to hook with the top hand

Apply the knife edge of the hooking hand to the back of the neck.

1993 Sabaki Lightweight Champion Tamaki Tomashiro uses the two-handed grab—hiki mawashi—to control his opponent and take him down with a forward rolling throw. The two-handed grab is a proven technique for taking larger opponents off balance.



As you force down the head and pull your opponent around, the small circular movements of the hands grow into a large circular movement of the body. Counterattack with a knee kick.

One-Armed Hook and Knee Kick



The one-armed hook is faster than the pull-around hooking techniques—*hiki mawashi* or *hiki kuzushi*—because you are driving straight in with your attack instead of moving outside. The disadvantage of the one-armed hook is that it limits your counterattacks primarily to knee kicks.

Use the inside of your forearm to hook the back of your opponent's neck. Draw the head downward into the knee kick.

Instead of first moving outside, pulling around your opponent and then counterattacking, move straight in and draw your opponent's head directly into your knee kick. When using side *kyushu* to move to the outside against a hook punch or roundhouse kick, use the attacker's neck as an axis around which you concentrate your centrifugal force (see bottom sequence).

One-armed hook and knee kick against a front kick



Use a lower parry against the front kick. Then move to an outside position.

One-armed hook and knee kick against a hook punch



*Block the first punch and move outside on the hook punch with a side *kyushu*.*

Jumping knee kick

When you target the head, the angle of your knee kick is important. Your chances of scoring a knockout are better if you connect with the softer tissue of the jaw. Think of a boxer's uppercut or hook. The techniques that do the most damage are designed to connect with the bottom half of the head. To target this area, attack from underneath. Drive upward with your knee kick to make contact with this vulnerable area.



Drive upward to impact the jaw from underneath.



As your right foot steps outside, your right arm hooks the neck. Pull the opponent's head down into the knee kick.



Snap the kicking knee and hooking arm together like the jaws of a giant trap snapping shut.



As you kyushu to the side, hook the neck with one arm. Use the pendulum action of the hips to trigger the jumping knee kick.

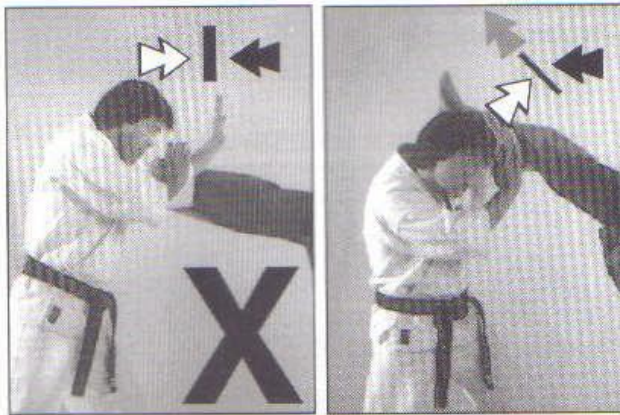


Drive your knee kick upward to catch the bottom of the attacker's jaw. When practicing with a partner, always use control.

Block & Grab Combinations in Fighting Stance

Blocks & kicks from fighting stance

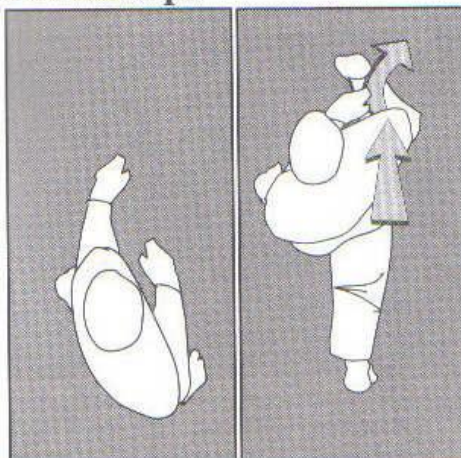
We practice the basic punches, blocks, and kicks in pigeon-toed stance in order to build strength and balance. In fighting stance, these techniques become faster and more compact. The five basic blocks or parries in the *Enshin* system are designed to deflect an attack and turn the opponent's body to expose his blind spot. Although each block is designed to protect a different area of the body, the principle of following up with outside movement to the blind spot is common to all of them.



Against high roundhouse kicks, always use a low-to-high motion to deflect the kick. Avoid making contact "bone to bone."

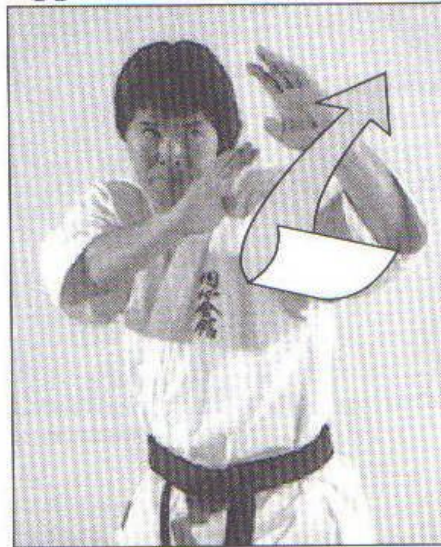
Lift the forearm from beneath the line of the kick to deflect it upward.

Use the hips



Rotate the hips and shoulders as you block.

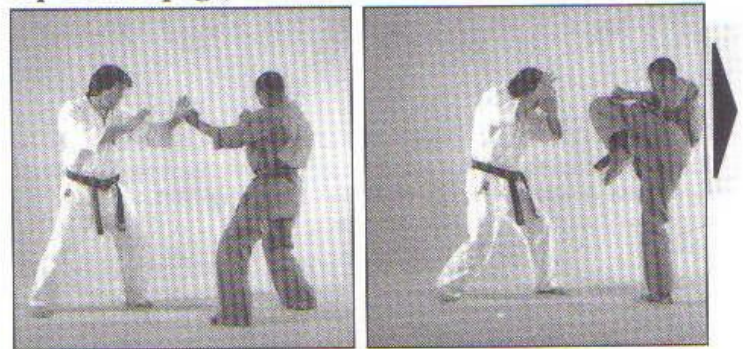
Upper block / jodan uke



The upper block protects the head with an upward blocking action of the forearms to deflect away upper punches, axe kicks, or high roundhouse kicks overhead and off to the side.

Jodan uke & jodan age uke

Jodan age uke uses the same motion as *jodan uke*, but lifts the elbow of the blocking arm to trap the attacker's leg and push him backward, off balance (see detail on top of next page).



Start both blocks with an upward oval motion of the arms. Gather the hands towards the chest, then release them outward. You should feel as if you are ducking under the kick, then rising up from below to deflect the kick upward. Use the backhand either to protect the face or to brace the block.

Upper Block / jodan uke

Blocking angles for jodan uke & jodan age uke

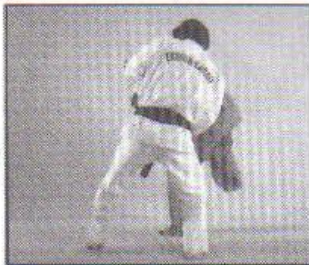
Like *jodan uke*, *jodan age uke* starts with an upward circular motion from beneath the attacker's kicking leg. Whereas *jodan uke* pushes outward, *jodan age uke* pushes straight back on a line directly through the attacker's head.



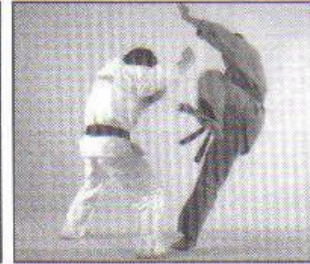
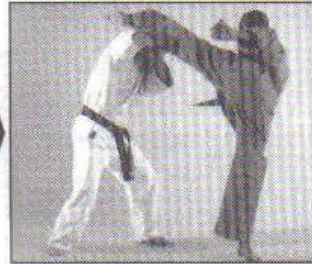
Jodan uke & grab



Use upper block and move immediately to the blind spot. Grab while the attacker is unbalanced. Counterattack with high roundhouse kick.



Jodan age uke & grab



If you time the upper block to trap the attacker's leg from underneath at the top of its arc, you can take him off balance. By lifting and driving his leg up and back over his head, you can push him onto his back. Follow straight in to set up your counterattack.



Middle-Outside Parry / *chudan soto nagashi*

Deflect away . . .

The middle-outside parry is used against straight attacks—right or left punches, or right-front kicks. It is designed to **deflect the attack away from the defender while simultaneously turning the attacker** and exposing his blind spot. Apply the circular momentum of the parry across the line of attack, drawing the blow forward and to the side.

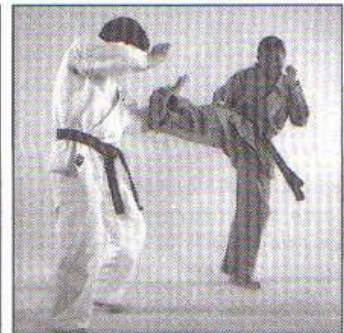


Parry with the inside of the forearm



The elbow of the parrying arm inscribes a small oval as the hand and forearm extend across the front of the chest. The contact surface for the middle-outside parry is the inside forearm area from the heel of the hand to the elbow. You can use the palm as well, but keep the fingers well above the wrist, so that they aren't jammed.

Middle parry and grab



By using a strong parry motion across the body, you can turn the attacker's shoulders and expose his blind spot.

ry across, never down . . .



ing across the body forces the attacker's shoulders to turn. not only disrupts his attack, but exposes his blind spot.

If you parry down, you leave your face exposed to the attack other hand. Always parry across the body.

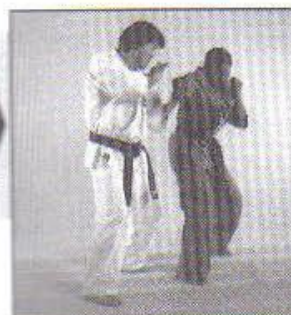
Against a left face punch . . .



Against a left punch to the face, use the right middle-outside parry and counter immediately with the opposite hand before moving out to the blind spot position. Always keep the nonblocking (back hand) up to protect your face.



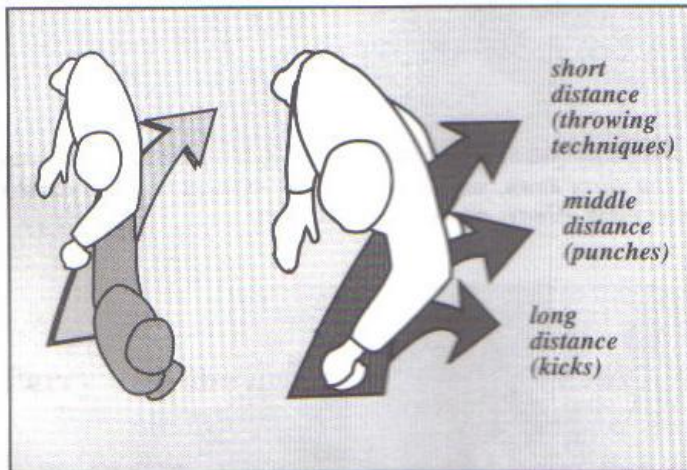
The parrying hand circles again to grab the attacker and take control with hiki kuzushi. Finish off with a punch.



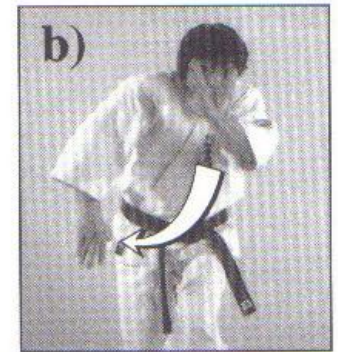
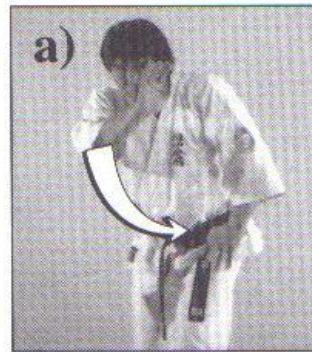
By grabbing the sleeve and hooking the neck with the back hand—hiki mawashi—you can direct the opponent's head down and take full control. Follow up with a knee kick.

Lower Parry / *gedan barai*

The lower parry is used to deflect front kicks or underpunches. Even though it primarily protects the lower torso, it also can be used to pull down a high roundhouse kick (see page 64). Against punches or front kicks to the face, use outside parry (*soto nagashi*).



By changing the angle of *gedan barai*, you can create short, middle, or long distance counterattacks.



From left foot-forward fighting stance: a) lower parry and b) reverse lower parry

- Circle the parrying arm all the way through, so that the hand returns to protect the face.
- The angle of the parry is from front to back. Reach forward and pull back before the parrying hand circles to the top position. This angle will change depending on your counterattack (see illustration at left).
- If necessary, skip back as you parry to absorb—*kyushu*—the impact of the blow (see page 100).

Lower parry and grab



Absorb your opponent's attack—*kyushu*—by hollowing your body to fit around the kick as you use a lower parry. Step back as needed.



Push off the back foot as you start your counterattack with a low roundhouse kick.

Back hand lower parry and grab



From fighting stance, open your body as you start your back hand lower parry.



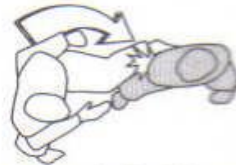
As you parry away the attacker's leg, your weight lands on the back foot before pushing off to begin your low roundhouse counterattack.

Turning the attacker with a back hand lower parry

Though you can block a front kick with a middle outside parry, it is harder to keep the attacker "turned" afterward than you were to use a back hand (also called "reverse") lower parry. With the back hand lower parry, you can pull through the attacker's leg, keeping his body turned and forcing him into his blind spot. Think of the back hand lower parry as two motions in one. **From left foot forward fighting stance:** 1) Start the back hand circling the attacker's leg. 2) Turn the front hip and pull back the front foot. 3) Bring the front hand to center to protect the face.



Turning out, swing in . . .

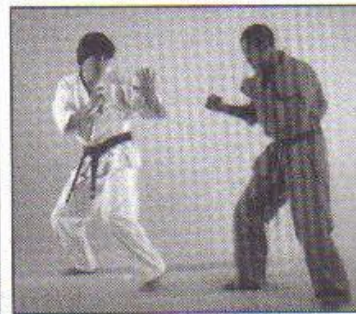


By turning the front hip and pulling back the lead foot as you execute the back hand lower parry, you coil power for your counterattack. Now you are ready to spring back with a low kick.



Now kick and grab simultaneously to keep your opponent off balance.

Pull down the attacker's shoulder and finish off with a high roundhouse kick.



After the low roundhouse kick, step across with the kicking leg to position yourself for a back kick.

Finish your rotation and fully extend the back kick.

High Parry / *jodan kake oroshi*

Use the high parry against high roundhouse kicks that carry strongly through the impact zone. (Against snap roundhouse kicks, which are shallower and retract more quickly, use a body stop—*ashi dome*—or a foot sweep—*jikuashi gari*.) The high parry's scooping action draws down the kicking leg and can turn the attacker to expose his back side. When parrying down, you may need to draw your head back out of range; always keep your chin tucked. Time the high parry so your parrying hand makes contact with your opponent's kicking leg *before* it reaches your guard hand.



- Use a scooping action of the hand to parry down.
- Keep your guard hand up.
- Use high *kyushu* to avoid contact to the head.
- Tuck your chin.
- The guard hand (back hand) does not actively block but remains stationary to protect the face.



Lower Block / *gedan uke*



Lower parry (*gedan barai*) or middle-outside parry (*chudan soto nagashi*) defends the front of the body by deflecting straight punches or front kicks to the side. **Against circular punching attacks from the side—targeting the ribs or kidneys—use the lower block (*gedan uke*).** When executing the lower block, move forward inside the arc of the punching fist and snap downward with the forearm at an angle ninety degrees to the attacker's forearm.

- Move forward inside the arc of the hook punch.
- Use an outward snapping action of the forearm.
- Target the opponent's forearm or elbow—no higher.



When the attacker has put full power behind his roundhouse kick.

Parry down, but keep your guard hand up.

Follow up with a low kick to further expose his back side.



Pull back on the attacker's opposite shoulder ...

... as you sweep his leg.

Keep in control from a strong horseback stance.



Against hook punches, move forward and block out with the forearm at an angle ninety degrees to the line of the punch.

If your opponent pulls back the punching hand, take control of the opposite arm by grabbing the sleeve.



... and hook the neck.



From a straight-on position, use an inside thigh kick.



Once your opponent is doubled over, finish him off with a knee kick.



Shin Block / *sune uke*



When using a shin block against a low roundhouse kick, keep your hands up and momentum forward.

Against low roundhouse kicks at close distance, use the shin block—*sune uke*. Unlike with parrying techniques, the shin block immobilizes a low roundhouse attack by meeting the kicking leg at a perpendicular angle just above the knee.

Angles for shin blocks



For attacks to the front leg, raise the front shin and turn it out to meet the circular arc of the kick at a right angle (Photos A & B). Once you have momentarily stopped the attacker's momentum, use this opening to establish your counterattack. Against attacks to the back leg (Photo C), lift the back knee and angle the shin down to deflect the kick to the floor.

Front leg shin block

- Keep your body weight moving forward to offset your attacker's momentum.
- Move from the waist down. Keep your upper body facing your attacker. Allow the blocking knee and hip to pivot into a line perpendicular to the angle of the low kick.
- Snap the lower leg forward on impact to increase your stopping power and push back his leg.
- Target the inside of your opponent's kicking leg just above the knee.

- Never drop your hands below your waist to block a low kick.
- Bend back the ankle of your kicking leg tightly to trap the attacker's kicking leg and prevent it from sweeping your back leg.



When your attacker's kicking leg drops forward after the shin block, slightly retract your blocking leg then circle it outside the attacker's leg before touching down at the control point. From this position, swing out your back foot to an outside position as you grab the opponent's sleeve to set up your counterattack.

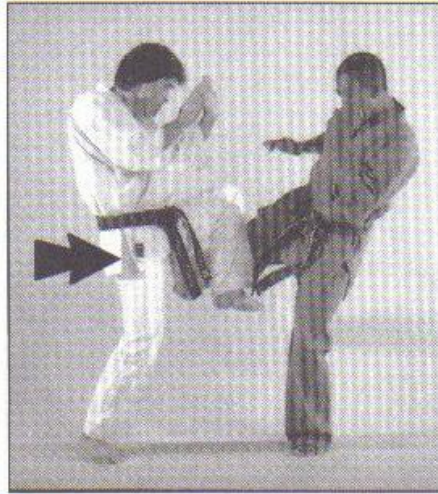
Shin block against right low roundhouse kick



Against a right low kick, keep the hands high, bringing the knee up as the shin swings out to meet the kick.

Block the kick. Immediately retract and "step around" the attacker's front foot with your blocking leg.

Drive the hip of the blocking leg forward



Counter the attacker's momentum by thrusting with the hip while skipping forward on the supporting foot during the shin block. If the blocking hip is not projected forward with your momentum, you will be toppled over backward.

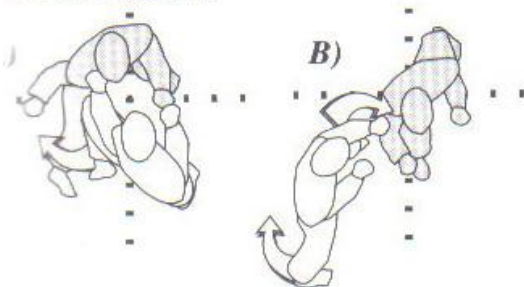
Targeting shin blocks



Target the area above your attacker's knee. If you block below the knee, you will hit bone-to-bone. Use either your shin or knee to block the kick. Block the kick early, before it picks up momentum.

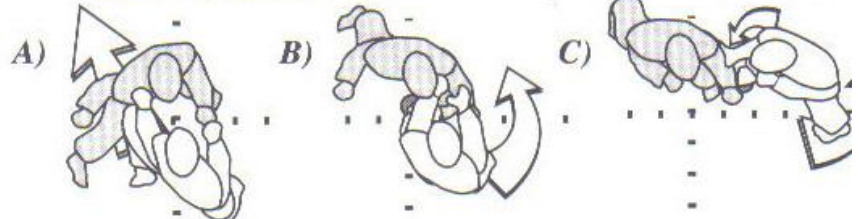
Take the shortest route to your opponent's blind spot

If attacker's right kicking leg drops forward, move to Position 1



If the attacker's momentum carries forward and his kicking leg drops in front, take the shortest route to the blind spot at Position 1: (A) move outside his kicking leg to reach the control point (B).

If attacker's right kicking leg is forced backward, move to Position 2



If you shin block with strong momentum and push back the attacker's kicking leg (A), your shortest route to the blind spot is moving around the front leg to Position 2. Touch down the blocking foot just inside the attacker's left foot as you grab his lead arm. Pivot out quickly, stepping to the control point with your back foot (C).



Grab and hook as you "load up" the kicking leg. Counterattack with a knee kick.



Pull the attacker off balance with hiki kuzushi, and follow up with a high roundhouse kick.



Crossover Shin Block

Crossover shin block against left low roundhouse kick

An attacker may use a left low roundhouse kick to target either your front leg or back leg. Against an attack to the front leg, use your front shin to cross over and deflect the kick downward. After the block, your attacker's kicking leg will usually drop forward. In this case, touch down inside the attacker's leg with the foot of your blocking leg and step out to Position 2, the same as you would after a lower parry.

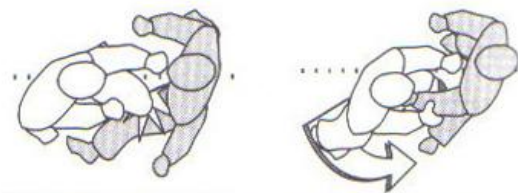


With left low roundhouse kick, your opponent will target either the inside of your front thigh or the outside of your back thigh.

- Let the hip and blocking knee rotate into the attacker's left inner thigh.
- Do not pivot the supporting foot or turn your shoulder; you will expose your back side.
- Block with your shin just above the attacker's knee on the inside of his thigh.
- The crossover shin block should have a high-to-low motion. Remember to flex the knee on contact and kick out with the shin to stop the momentum of the kick.



To use a crossover shin block against a low roundhouse kick to your front leg, bring the knee over quickly but keep the shoulders and hips square to your opponent. If you turn too far, or cross over too early, your opponent will sweep you or take your back side.



Crossover shin block and move to Position 2



Against the low roundhouse kick, turn the shin and hips quickly. Keep the shoulders and supporting foot in place.

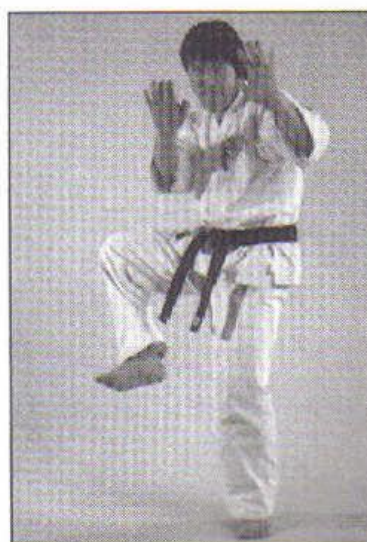
Use a strong top-to-down motion to smother the kick. Touch down quickly on the ball of the foot, grab the attacker's hand, and control the upper body (see diagrams above photos).

Back Leg Shin Block

Shin block against back leg attacks

To protect the back leg against a low roundhouse kick, point the back knee to the outside as you lift the foot to create a downward angle with your shin. This will keep your leg from hitting the attacker's leg straight on, shin-to-shin, and will deflect most of the attacker's power downward. Keep the ankle flexed at ninety degrees to stop the low kick and keep it from driving into your supporting leg.

- As you shinblock, use your left hand to straight-arm the attacker's front shoulder. This will help throw him off balance and weaken his attack.
- Keep your backhand up to protect your face.
- After the block, touch down by immediately stepping over the attacker's kicking leg. Pivot out to Position 2 to take the blind spot position.



1 Lift the knee quickly but keep the shin angled toward the floor in order to deflect the kick downward.



2 Touch down by stepping over the attacker's kicking leg. Open the body to position yourself to finish off.



3 For a faster movement to the outside, touch down and grab the attacker's sleeve, then unweight the feet and shift the hips, moving to Position 2. Hook the neck quickly to keep control (see diagram).



4 Maintain your circular momentum to force the attacker down into a forward-rolling throw.



Foot Stop / *ashi dome*

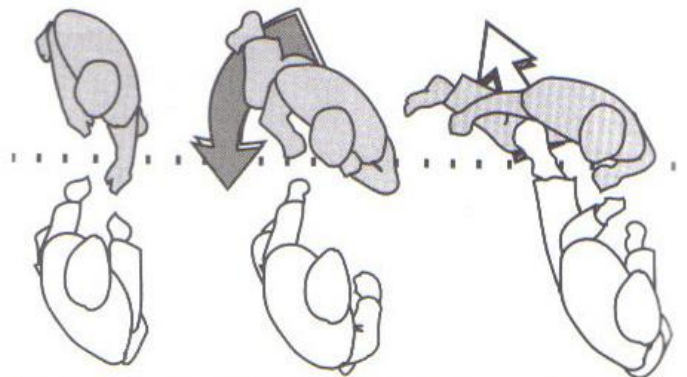


An effective foot stop is similar to a boxer's jab: it allows you to keep your opponent off balance by pre-empting his attack and breaking his rhythm. By repeatedly stopping your opponent's leg or body as he initiates his attack, you can keep an aggressive opponent at distance.

Timing is critical. A foot-stop only works when used early in your opponent's attack, before he develops momentum. If you are late, you can be caught fighting on one leg and quickly end up on the floor.

Foot stopping is equally effective against punches and roundhouse techniques. To take the steam out of an attacker's punch, stop to the body or legs with the arch of your foot. Disrupt the roundhouse kick by checking the hip of the attacker's kicking leg, his body, or even his supporting leg.

- Instead of first cocking your leg, as you would for a front kick, simply lift the leg and plant the foot against your opponent's leg or body.
- Use the arch of your foot.
- Do not lean back or be late; you'll be swept.
- Shift your weight forward to stop your opponent's forward momentum.



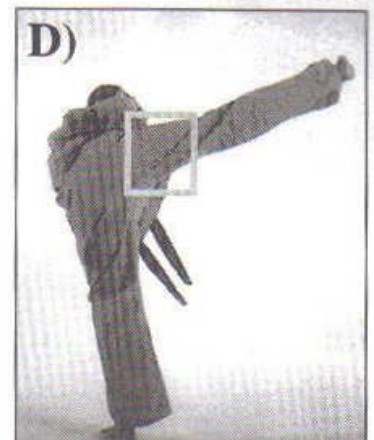
The foot stop uses a lifting action of the front leg, with the arch of the foot pushing out against the opponent's hip or kicking leg. Angle the foot to a position which aligns perpendicularly to the line of your opponent's kick. Retract quickly so that your opponent can't grab your leg.

Foot stop against roundhouse kick



Very often when you stop your attacker's hip or body, you will push him backward, creating a long-distance situation.

Targets for foot stop



Targets for the foot stop include:

(against punches) the front hip—A & B; (against roundhouse or spinning back roundhouse kicks) the kicking leg at the top of thigh, the body, or the front of the supporting leg—C & D. Always keep the stopping foot perpendicular to your target by turning the toes inward or outward as needed. Keep the ankle bent at ninety degrees.

opping against punches

Using the foot stop to check the attacker's forward momentum, most of the power is taken out of any punch.



Against a right punch, use the foot stop to stop the attacker's supporting leg at the thigh.

Retract the stopping leg and step outside the attacker's lead shoulder.

Using hiki mawashi to take control of the opponent's head, finish him off with a knee kick.



In this case, follow up by stepping in with a roundhouse kick or a straight back kick.

Offensive Movement—Attack and Grab



Follow up your attacks with a one- or two-handed grab

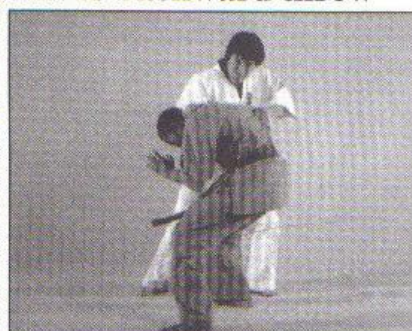
Grabbing techniques can be used defensively after a block or parry, or they can be used offensively to follow up punches or kicks and to pull your opponent off balance.

Hiki kuzushi & roundhouse kick



Start your attack with a punch and move outside to Position 1 as you grab the opponent's sleeve—hiki kuzushi.

Hiki kuzushi & backward throw



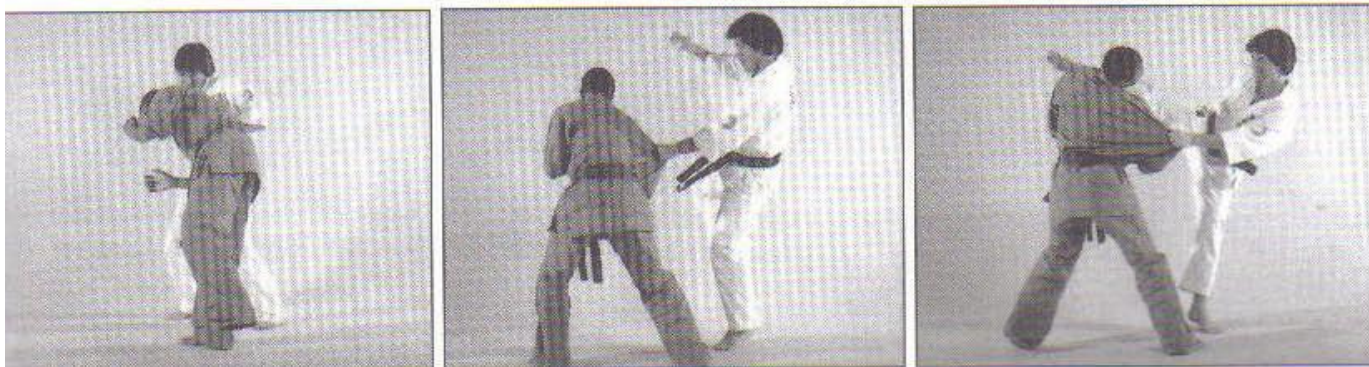
Follow the attack with a low roundhouse kick as you grab the sleeve and move to Position 1.

Hiki mawashi & inside thigh kick



If you choose a two-handed grab—hiki mawashi—grab the sleeve and hook the neck.

punch or kick is only the first step in your attack. By stunning the opponent, you create an opening to grab and take control from a blind spot position. From there the options are unlimited.



Roll the attacker around and follow up with a roundhouse kick.



With the opponent off balance, take him down with a back throw—ura nage.

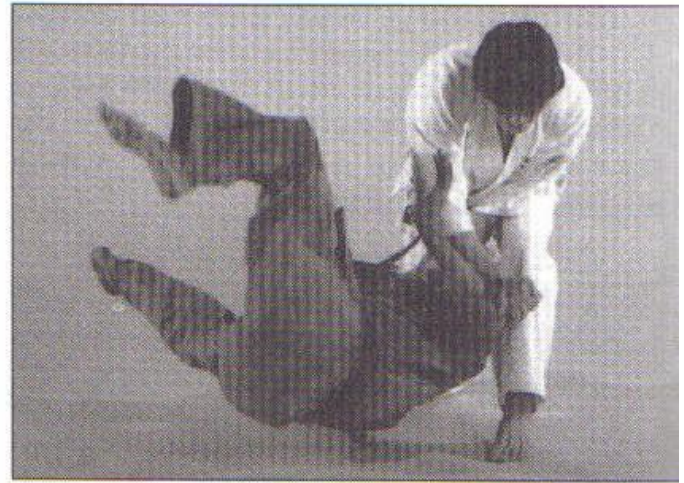


Follow up with an inside thigh kick and forward-rolling throw—makikomi nage.

Kabuki Takedowns

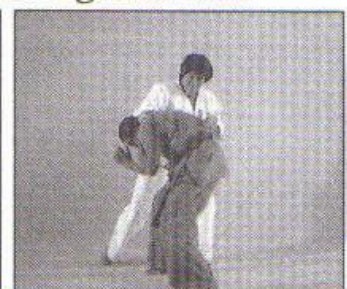
Keep your opponent off balance

Kabuki strategy uses sweeping or throwing takedowns to add a greater dimension to the arsenal of kicks and punches normally associate with karate. In a close-distance fighting situation, when your opponent braces in anticipation of a follow-up kick or punch, the sweep or throw can catch him off guard and easily take him down.



Forward-rolling throw—makikomi nage

Using your opponent's momentum against him



Which throwing technique you use depends on your opponent's position and momentum as you establish the one- or two-handed grab. Moving with your opponent, you can increase his momentum by adding an unexpected push or pull.

Stay a step ahead of your opponent

By anticipating the direction of your opponent's momentum, you can add pressure and redouble it, forcing him off balance and into a **forward-rolling throw, front throw, or back throw**.

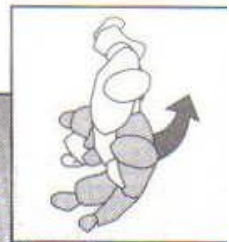
If your attacker loses balance or pulls away so strongly that he ends up with his weight on one foot, you can take him down with a **foot sweep—ashi barai**—in one of two ways: a) Draw the unsupported leg and his upper body in opposite directions, forcing him off balance (see opposite page, bottom). b) Trap the supporting leg in place and force his upper body off balance. With proper timing, each of these techniques can easily bring an opponent to the floor.

**Opponent's momentum forward:
Forward-rolling throw / makikomi nage**



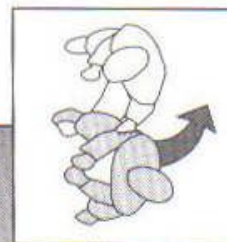
As your knee kick causes your opponent's head to drop forward, increase his forward momentum by pushing down on his head and directing his body into a forward-rolling throw.

**Opponent's momentum backward:
Back throw / ura nage**



If your opponent resists the knee kick by pulling backward, add to his backward momentum and follow up with a back throw.

**Opponent's momentum sideways (pulling away):
Foot sweep / ashi barai**

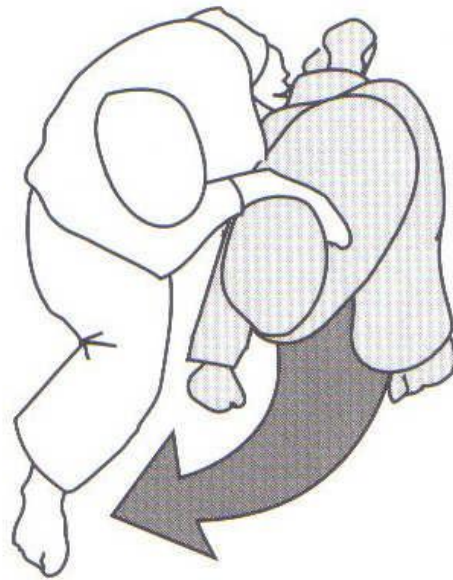


If your opponent anticipates the knee kick and pulls away, he will end up weighted on one foot. Hook his unweighted leg from beneath him as you pull his upper body over the unsupported leg. Without a leg to stand on, he will end up on the floor.

Forward-Rolling Throw / *makikomi nage*

When your opponent's momentum is moving forward . . .

Use the forward rolling throw—*makikomi nage*—when your attacker's weight and momentum are moving forward. First grab the sleeve from the side as you move out of the way to Position 1. With the top hand, hook the neck and push down as quickly as possible while your grabbing hand pushes up and back on the sleeve. Both hands working together should give the feel of turning a small wheel.



Forward-rolling throw



Use a shin block to stop the low roundhouse kick.



Quickly grab the sleeve and hook the neck as you move to Position 1.



For added leverage, swing open your back leg. Push down on the attacker's neck with your knee hand and pull up on his sleeve with your grabbing hand. Pressure the attacker's head to the floor.



The simultaneous lifting and pushing action of the hands is similar to that of turning a wheel.

Finishing Off

Once you get your opponent to the floor, keep him under control. If he falls away from you, close the distance and keep him on his side so he can't reach you with a punch or kick. Pull up on his arm as you pin his body with your shin. Using a modified horseback stance—*kiba dachi*—keep the attacker in place between your knees. With your back straight, your head stays out of kicking or punching range.

To finish off with a punch from horseback stance, drop down on the right knee as you twist your hips and release the punch. Keep the angle of the punch perpendicular to the floor. Rotate the body with the motion of the punch for maximum power. **For more on Finishing Off, see page 88.**



Pull the attacker close to your body.



*Keep him under control by pulling up on his sleeve as you drop into horseback stance—*kiba dachi*. Pin him on his side with your knee.*



Finish off with a punch to the ribs or face.

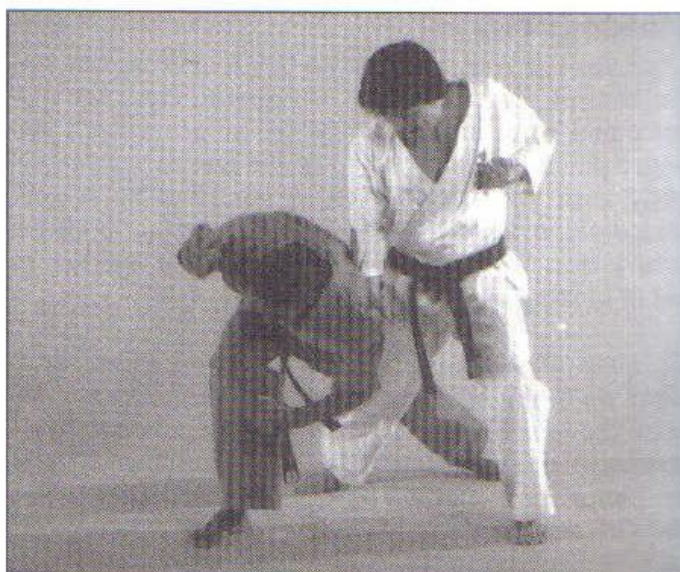


Keep your opponent on his side; otherwise, he will be able to kick or punch you from the floor.

Front Throw / *omote nage*

Use front throw for versatile combinations

The front throw—*omote nage*—works best in combination with sweeps or throws, as a finishing technique to bring your opponent to the floor. After an inside thigh kick or knee kick that drives your opponent's upper body forward, *omote nage* adds to his momentum and easily brings him down. It is also effective when your opponent resists a back throw or pulls forward from a back-of-the-knee-joint kick—*teisoku kansetsu geri*. In each case, *omote nage* uses your opponent's momentum against him.



Inside thigh kick and front throw



Use shin block against the low roundhouse kick.



When the attacker's leg drops forward, grab the sleeve and hook the neck.



Back-of-knee-joint kick (*teisoku kansetsu geri*) and front throw



Use lower parry against the left front kick.



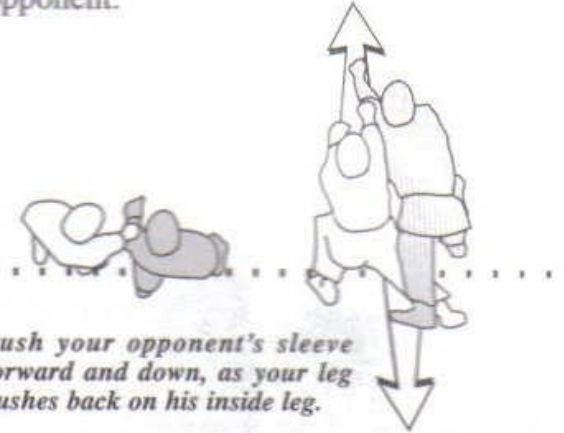
As you pull through, turning the attacker to set up *teisoku kansetsu geri*, he resists and pulls forward.



Open the scissors . . .

Position yourself so you and your opponent are facing almost the same direction. Your supporting foot should be close to your opponent's inside leg for maximum leverage. Grab his inside sleeve and push it forward and down at a forty-five-degree angle. At the same instant, your hooking leg drives your opponent's inside leg backward. The action is like opening a scissors: as you force the upper body forward, you drive the inside leg back and remove the support. Remember: it's much more tiring to use power instead of timing against your opponent.

- Push the sleeve forward and down at a forty-five-degree angle to force the opponent's upper body off balance.
- As with the back throw—*ura nage*—use a stamping action of the hooking leg to drive back the opponent's leg.
- Extend your arm and leg fully.
- Time the arm and leg action together.



Follow up with inside thigh kick and retract the kicking leg.



Follow up with omote nage. Push forward on the sleeve at the same time you drive back the hooking leg.



Use his momentum against him by applying a forward throw in the same direction that he is already leaning.



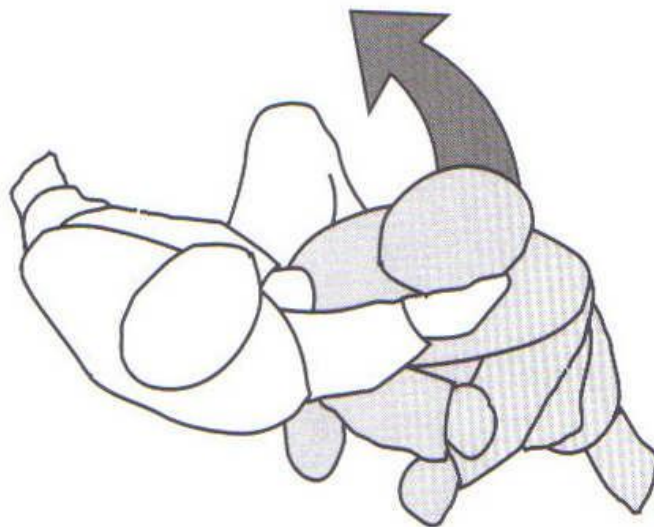
Drive your attacker to the floor and follow up with a lower punch.



Back Throw / *ura nage*

Use a back throw when your opponent's momentum is moving backward

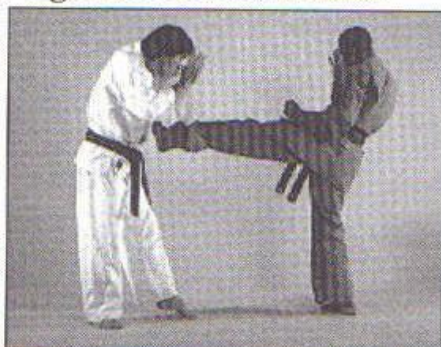
Execute the back throw from a one-handed grab position—*hiki kuzushi*—by swinging in and pushing back on your opponent's upper body as you drive his front leg in the opposite direction. Use the back throw from a two-handed grab position—*hiki narwashi*—to follow up a knee kick. When the opponent recoils backward from your knee kick, touch down as if to load up for a follow-up knee kick and hook your leg behind his inside leg, driving back the upper body with your forearm.



Back throw—*ura nage*

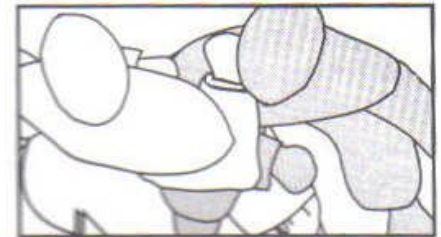
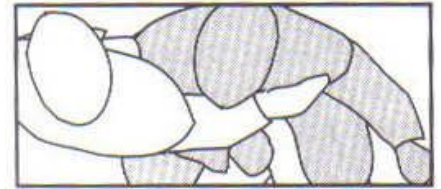
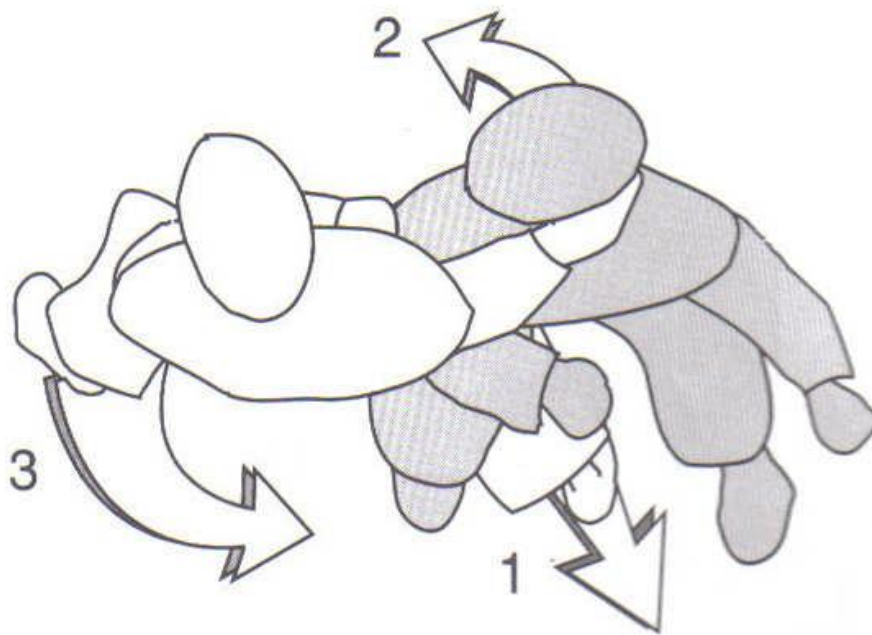
- Grab the sleeve of the attacker's inside arm and pull his lead shoulder across your body as you hook his leg.
- Bring your free hand to the opponent's chin, turning his head toward you so he can't pull free in the opposite direction. You can also apply pressure across the chest or with the forearm to the lead collar bone.
- Apply backward pressure to his upper body as you drive his inside leg forward. The scissor action of his upper and lower body will force him off balance.
- As he starts to go down, keep his body close by swinging open your outside leg and pivoting until he's on the floor. Pin him in place with your knee.

Lower parry & back throw against left front kick



With the left lower parry, draw the attacker's leg past your body to keep him close.

Grab the sleeve with the outside hand.



1) Drive back your inside foot as 2) the inside hand pushes back on the opponent's chin. 3) For additional leverage, swing an arc with the outside foot as you pivot on the ball of the inside-hooking foot. This will take down your opponent in a circular motion and allow you to stay in control.

When pushing back the upper body, apply pressure to the face, the collar bone, or to the chest (see illustrations).

Finish with circular motion



circular momentum as you draw down your opponent.



Plant the driving foot and use it to pivot open. Keep in control pinning the opponent on his side.



Drive your inside leg backward into the opponent's leg.



As you drive the attacker's leg backward, push on the chin, then draw him down in a circular motion.



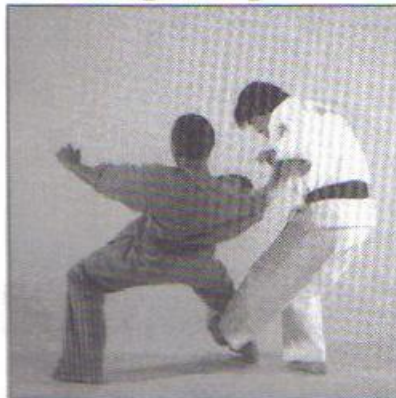
Foot Sweep / *ashi barai*

When your opponent pulls away . . .

the Front Leg Sweep and the Driving Foot Sweep are better suited to the one-handed grab—*hiki kuzushi*. They are especially effective when your opponent is trying to pull away from your grasp, or as follow-ups to high roundhouse kicks when your opponent is not well-grounded. **The Front Leg Sweep** unbalances your opponent by scooping the ankle of his front foot and drawing it forward as you fall backward on his upper body. **The Driving Foot Sweep** requires closer positioning. As your opponent pulls backward, give his upper body an extra push while trapping or sweeping his back leg.

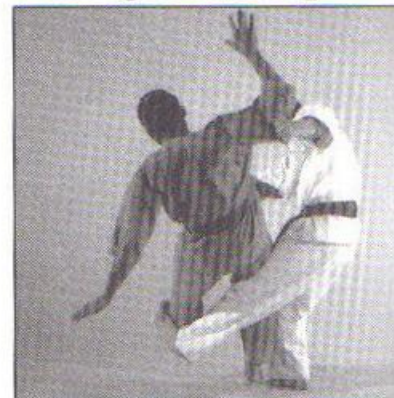
The leg or foot sweep—*ashi barai*—is *not* a kick, but a scooping and lifting action to the inside of your opponent's ankle. It should sweep your opponent's leg away from his body at a forty-five-degree angle.

Front leg sweep



The scissor-action of the front leg sweep forces the opponent's leg and upper body in opposite directions.

Driving foot sweep



Force the upper body off balance as you target the back leg with a driving sweep.

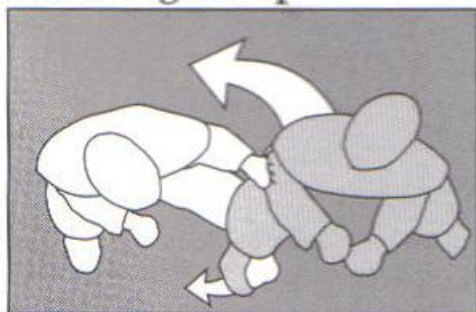
- Keep your hooking ankle bent at ninety degrees. This will trap the opponent's leg and keep it from sliding free during the sweep.

Your angle and the opponent's momentum indicate which technique to use



Use a lower parry against the left front kick. Move outside with a one-handed grab—*hiki kuzushi*—and follow up with a high roundhouse kick.

Front Leg Sweep



Hook the ankle and pull back on the shoulder.



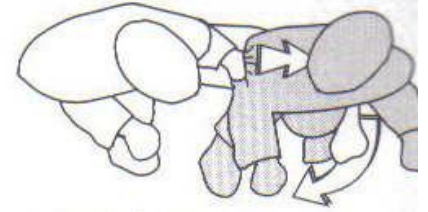
After the lower parry, add a low roundhouse kick before the attacker's kicking foot touches down. If the impact turns his body so his back is facing you . . .

Driving foot sweep

Trap the outside of your opponent's ankle; force his upper body past its support.

Hook the opponent's ankle—not his calf or the back of his knee. Bumping into a chair that hits you at the knee will only stop you, but tripping over a rock can take you down because it traps your momentum down low. With *foot sweeps*, always think *low*.

Push with your upper body; hook with the ankle.



Driving foot sweep

Front leg sweep



As your opponent's attention is drawn upward, he pulls away anticipating a follow-up high roundhouse kick. Sweep out his inside foot as you pull his weight back to the inside foot.

As you sweep his foot out from under him, pull back on the front shoulder. Once he's down, finish him off.

Driving foot sweep



If the attacker leans away from the roundhouse kick, follow up by driving into him and redoubling his momentum.

As he lunges off balance, sweep his back leg and uproot him. Once he's down, finish him off.

Reverse foot sweep



... grab the opposite shoulder and pull backward on his leeve as you sweep his ankle from the inside out.

Open your body and drop into horseback stance as your attacker goes down. Stay close and keep him under control to finish him off.

Inside Thigh Kick / *uchi momo geri*



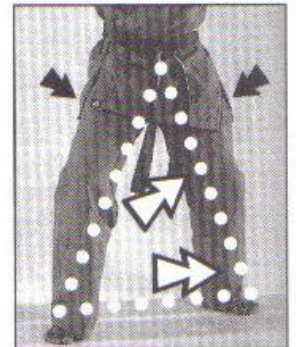
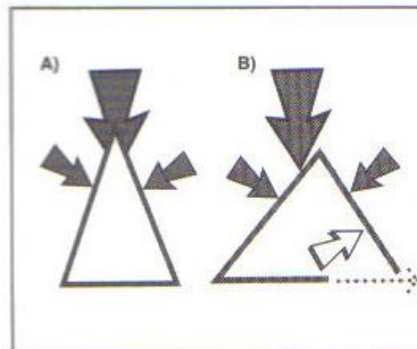
Two-handed grab and inside thigh kick

Enshin strategy typically moves us outside an attack in order to counterattack from a blind spot position. The inside thigh kick, however, provides an immediate counterattack from a front position that draws the opponent forward and off balance. Even if the inside thigh kick does not take down your opponent, it will unbalance him enough to create an opening for a strong movement to the blind spot.

Hook your opponent's neck with two hands to control his upper body. Pull his head forward as you drive a shin kick to the inside of his thigh. (You can also target the lead ankle with the top of your foot, driving it backward and to the outside.) By forcing the opponent's upper and lower body in opposite directions, you can easily unpend him.

Attacking from the inside out . . .

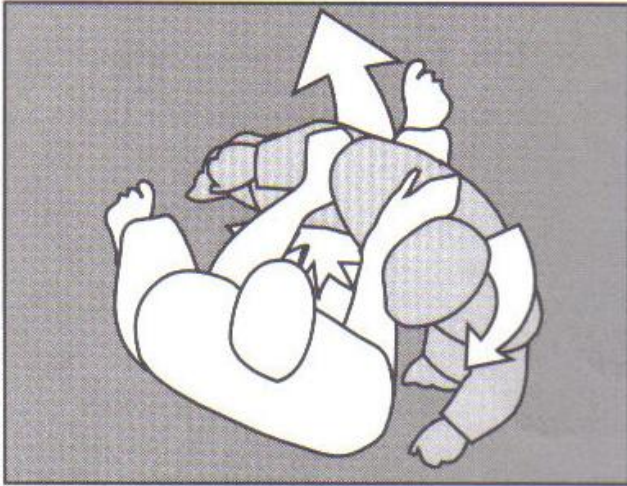
A triangle can support enormous weight by transferring vertical force into its two legs braced one against the other (A). However, if you negate the bracing power of one leg of the triangle, the structure cannot stand (B). Think of your opponent's legs in fighting stance as two legs of a triangle. If you undermine the support in one leg by driving it outward from the bottom, the fighting stance will collapse.



The inside thigh kick works best at close distance, where you can take control of the opponent's upper body.



Against the right roundhouse kick, move to Position 2, outside the kick's impact zone. As the kicking leg touches down, counterattack with a short underpunch to keep the opponent busy.



Take out your opponent's support by driving your power inside out

- This is one of the few times you don't move outside first. Move straight in at an inside-out angle.
- Control the upper body first: your opponent's leg, hand, neck, and head.
- Force down the head.
- Pull the opponent's weight onto his front foot.
- Use the shin or knee to create maximum impact against the inside of the thigh. Your kick will take out his support as you pull his upper body forward onto his front foot.
- You can also target the inside of the ankle with a hooking action (see below).
- For variety, show an outside move to "open up" your opponent, then follow up with the inside thigh kick—*uchi momo geri*.

target the inside of the thigh or ankle while pulling forward on the upper body. When targeting the ankle, use a hooking motion of the ankle similar to a sweep—*ashi barai*.



Pull him forward and off balance as you attack the supporting leg.



As your opponent goes down, turn his shoulders and open your hips for leverage. He will fall in the space you have just vacated, and you end up positioned close enough to keep control.



Immediately hook the neck at close distance to take control of the attacker's upper body. Follow up with the inside thigh kick before moving out to the blind spot position.

One-Handed Grab / *Hiki Kuzushi* . . . 52
Two-Handed Grab / *Hiki Mawashi* . . . 54
One-Armed Hook and Knee Kick . . . 56

Block & Grab Combinations from Fighting Stance . . . 58

Upper Block . . . 59
Middle Outside Parry . . . 60
Lower Parry . . . 62
High Parry, Lower Block . . . 64
Shin Block . . . 66
Crossover Shin Block . . . 68
Back Leg Shin Block . . . 69
Foot Stop . . . 70
Offensive Movement—Attack and Grab . . . 72

Sabaki Takedowns . . . 74

Forward-Rolling Throw . . . 76
Front Throw . . . 78
Back Throw . . . 80
Foot Sweep . . . 82
Inside Thigh Kick . . . 84
Back-of-Knee-Joint Kick . . . 86
Finishing Off . . . 88

Sabaki Strategy: Combining Defense & Offense . . . 90

Sabaki Defensive Strategy: Rhythm & Timing . . . 92

Back Kick Setups . . . 100

Inside Thigh Kick Setups . . . 108

Axe Kick from Fighting Stance . . . 110

Following up the Axe Kick . . . 112

Sabaki Follow-ups . . . 114

More Sabaki Follow-ups . . . 116

Drawing the Attack: Sabaki Traps . . . 118

Sabaki Traps For High Roundhouse Kicks . . . 120

Sabaki Traps For Punches . . . 122

Advanced Defensive Strategy . . . 124

Sabaki Escapes . . . 126

Escaping One-Handed Counterattacks . . . 128

Escaping the Two-Handed Grab . . . 130

Defense Against Combination Attacks . . . 132

Defense Against Middle-Distance & Driving Attacks . . . 134

Defense Against Combination Kicks . . . 136

Defense Against Spinning Back Hook Kicks . . . 138

More Defense Against Combination Kicks . . . 140

In the Dojo—Training . . . 142

Training Philosophy . . . 144

Sabaki Training With Armguards . . . 146

More Sabaki Training With Armguards . . . 148

Holding Armguards Against Combination Attacks . . . 150

Heavy Bag Training . . . 152

How to Use the Heavy Bag . . . 154

Heavy Bag Combinations . . . 156

Breaking Techniques . . . 182

Conditioning the Hands, Feet, and Shins . . . 184

Breaking Techniques for Fixed Boards . . . 185

Positioning the Break . . . 186

Breaking Suspended Boards . . . 187

The Horizontal Bat Break . . . 188

Multiple Bat Breaks / Vertical Bat Break . . . 189

Ice Breaks . . . 190

Self-Defense . . . 192

Self-Defense & Sabaki Movement . . . 194

Defending Against the Grab . . . 196

Self-Defense Against Multiple Attackers . . . 198

Grappling Techniques . . . 200

Grappling Takedowns . . . 202

Aerial *Sutemi Waza* . . . 204

More *Sutemi Waza* . . . 206

Self-Defense: Using What's At Hand . . . 208

Self-Defense Against A Handgun . . . 210

The Sabaki Challenge . . . 212

Introduction

Basic Punches . . . 1

Pigeon-toed Stance & Fighting Stance . . . 2

Straight Punch from *sanchin dachi* . . . 4

Backhand Side Strike & Backhand Liver Strike . . . 6

Backhand Roundhouse Strike & Hook Punch . . . 8

Basic Strikes from Horseback Stance . . . 10

Basic Blocks . . . 12

Upper Block & Middle Outside Parry . . . 14

Lower Parry . . . 16

Block & Punch, Combinations in Basic Stance . . . 18

Basic Kicks . . . 20

Front High Stretching Kick & Axe Kick . . . 22

Knee Kick . . . 24

Groin Kick & Front Kick . . . 25

Roundhouse Kick . . . 26

Side Stretching Kick, Side Kick & Knee-joint Kick . . . 28

Back Kick & Spinning Back Hook Kick . . . 30

Combination Kicks in Basic Stance . . . 32

Basic Training Routine . . . 34

Basic Sabaki Movement—Blind Spot Position . . . 36

The Sabaki Pattern . . . 38

Sabaki . . . is a Japanese word meaning "to channel power efficiently." It can refer to the effort of breaking a horse or damming a river. In karate it means the natural way to use an opponent's power and momentum against him, regardless of size.

Developed by Kancho Joko Ninomiya—1978 All-Japan Champion and Grandmaster of Enshin Karate—*sabaki* is a revolutionary blend of circular movement and blind spot positioning that instantly turns any attack to your advantage. Using hundreds of motor-drive photo sequences and illustrations, Kancho Ninomiya demonstrates Enshin's unique strategies from basic punches to advanced techniques.



Kancho Joko Ninomiya: 1978 All-Japan Tournament

Whether you are training for health, competition, or self-defense, *The Sabaki Method* can show you how to turn defense into offense, anticipate attacks, condition the body, and focus the mind. Kancho Ninomiya takes the mystery out of karate. Learn to build your body's repertory of natural movements into a system of empty-handed self-defense that is effective, fun, and easy to learn.

Sabaki (training) means staying open to the world at large and responding to others in a way that blends energies in new directions. Whether it is a question of repelling an attack or building relationships, the combined energy . . . that comes from sabaki is an effort of cooperation, openness, and respect.

—from the Introduction

Kancho Ninomiya's Sabaki Method is an exciting new approach to karate that anyone can do. I am delighted to see it now in book form for the very first time. Ninomiya's dedication to the martial arts is second to none. He truly understands and lives the budo spirit.

—Kancho Gakku Homma
Founder and Chief Instructor
of Nippon Kan Cultural Center in Denver
and author of *The Structure of Aikido* and
Aikido for Life



Distributed to the book trade
by Publisher's Group West



Frog, Ltd.
Berkeley, California