

Many find the beautiful kicks of Tae Kwon Do to be its most attractive feature. The Tae Kwon Do artist has the ability to kick at any height and in any direction. Unfortunately, kicking range—the distance at which a person can kick, but not punch or grapple—represents only one-fourth of the entire spectrum of combat!

TAE KWON DO

The Ultimate Art

TRAPBOXING

It is an unmistakable fact that actual combat usually takes place in close quarters where kicking skill has little value. Even the untrained street fighter, with no martial arts skills, instinctively attempts to grab and hold the opponent. While this fact may present only a small concern for larger people who know how to wrestle, it proves to be a very shocking consequence for the smaller person, or the person with no in-fighting skills. If you are attacked, there is an excellent chance the opponent will be larger and will attempt to grab you or pull you to the ground.

Remember that combat may take place at long range, or what is called kicking range. Most Tae Kwon Do artists prefer to keep a full distance from the opponent to prepare and deliver kicks. When the opponent is somewhat closer, in what is called punching or boxing range, Tae Kwon Do stylists typically attempt to regain kicking distance. In Olympic Tae Kwon Do competition, punching is seldom encouraged. Generally, the Tae Kwon Do stylist is most effective at kicking, or long range defense because the art and its competition rules are designed to encourage low-range fighting. But there is more.

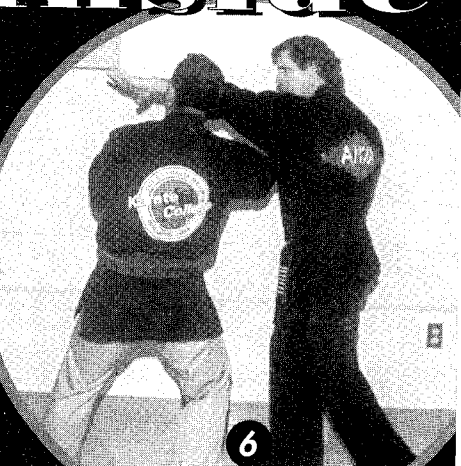
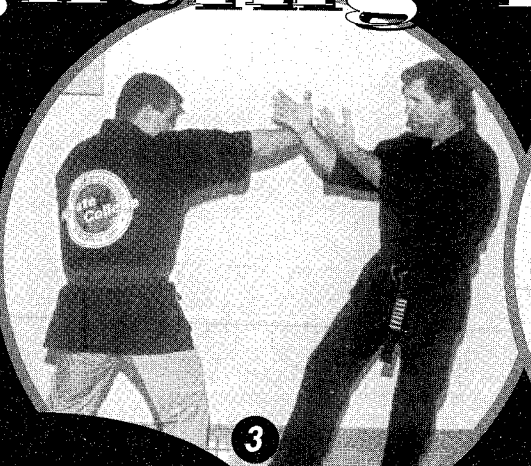
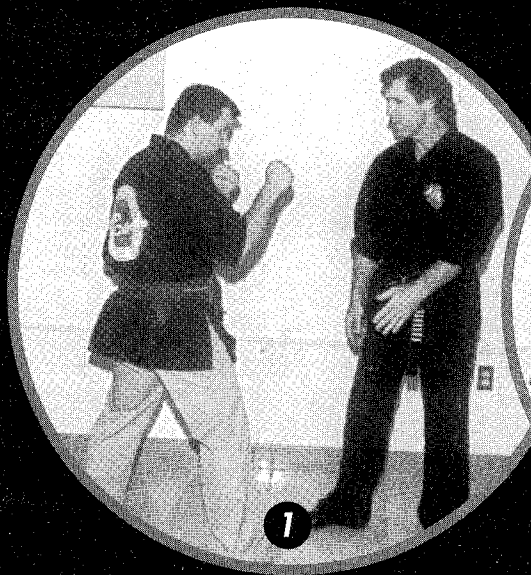
By Jerry Beasley, Ed.D.

GRAPPLING RANGE

Grappling range begins where the fighters are toe to toe. They are so close that grappling and trapping (the art of temporarily immobilizing the opponent's hands or feet) are natural conclusions. When the opponent has been grabbed or tackled, the two fighters almost always go to the ground. Judo, wrestling, and the newly introduced art of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, are martial arts that focus on ground fighting. Several thousands of years ago, the Greeks discovered that grapplers could almost always beat stand-up fighters who kick or punch in no-holds competitions. More recently, contestants in the Ultimate Fighting

Championships have found that the ground grapplers have successfully beaten fighters representing Karate, Kung-Fu, boxing and Tae Kwon Do!

Realizing that grapplers have the edge in actual combat, it would seem that all self-defense devotees would drop their arts and turn to grappling. The fact is that although functional, grappling arts, such as Judo and wrestling, have never been that popular in the United States. In this country, we prefer stand-up arts such as Tae Kwon Do. Moreover, more people practice Tae Kwon Do for interests other than effectiveness in actual self-defense.



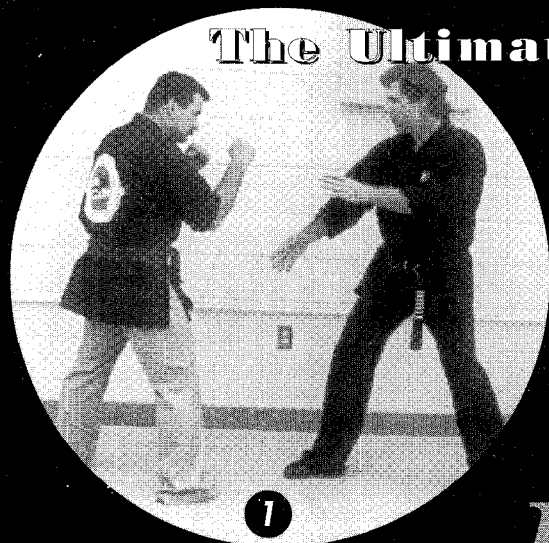
Of Fighting Inside

(A1): Tae Kwon Do and trapboxing expert Dr. Jerry Beasley, right, employs a redirection trapping technique against a punch thrown by Canadian police defense expert Dale Kliparchuck. The trapboxing technique is an adaptation of the Tae Kwon Do inside block where the blocking hand (A2-A3) is brought up in a circular manner to halt the attack. The trapboxer turns the block into a trap (A4). By holding the arm, success with the Tae Kwon Do round kick is insured. Trapboxing follow-ups include (A5) an eye attack and (A6) an elbow strike that can also be used to initiate a takedown.

The Ultimate Art Of Fighting Inside

TAE KWON DO TRAPBOXING

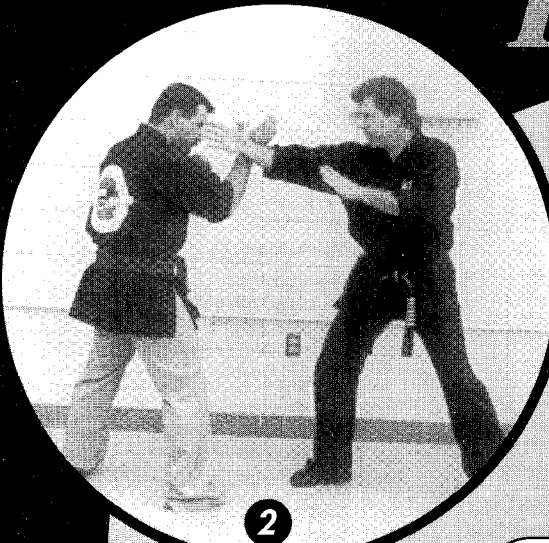
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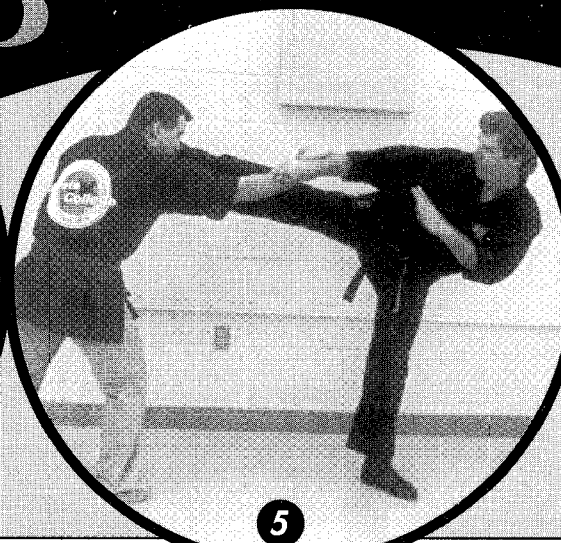
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(B1) In this sequence the Tae Kwon Do trapboxer initiates an eye strike only to have the opponent block (B2). Beasley then turns the strike into a trapping technique (B3) to set up a Tae Kwon Do round kick (B4-B5).



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TRAPBOXING & JEET KUNE DO

On television and in the movies, the typical street fight scene involves two fighters moving about in kicking range. Since kicks, especially spinning, jumping and multiple, are more flashy and better attract attention, the movie producers and fight choreographers almost always portray combat as a kicking contest. In reality, however, the typical street fight begins when one person pushes, hits or grabs another. In order to kick, the victim must first gain distance and, simultaneously, escape from a hold or recover from the force of the first blow. This is a difficult task.

In developing Jeet Kune Do, Bruce Lee researched a number of arts. He worked with Tae Kwon Do stylist Jhoon Rhee and Tang Soo Do stylist Chuck Norris, and no doubt included some of their instruction in developing his kicking skills. Lee also employed Hapkido stylist Ji,

Han Jae to act in a movie, but found Hapkido techniques to be contrary to his Jeet Kune Do strategy. Because Lee had engaged in numerous actual fights, he knew from experience that the fighter must go toe to toe almost immediately. The minute the fighters clinch (grab each other while standing), kicking skills are no longer useful. Lee's original art of Jeet Kune Do uses trapping and striking skills based on his experience that, in a real fight, the in-fighting techniques would prove more valuable than all of his kicking skills combined.

When two fighters clinch—which will almost always occur—those with knowledge of what to do inside will remain standing. Those unskilled in the toe-to-toe clinch will be taken to the ground where the superior ground fighter wins. The standing clinch occurs in almost all actual fights and permits only two choices as stand-up fighters: excel at kicking so no one can get past our feet (virtually impossible to insure), or invest time in supplementing Tae Kwon Do skills with techniques from both boxing

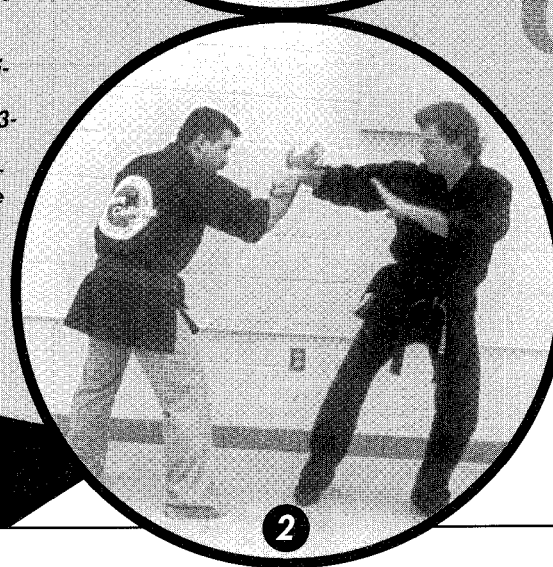
C1) Once again using the interception strategy of the Tae Kwon Do trapboxer, Dr. Beasley, on right, initiates a trap (C2) to set up a side kick (C3-C4). At long and medium range, trapboxing enhances the potential of Tae Kwon Do.



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and trapping.

In viewing a boxing match, you will notice that boxers invariably go to the clinch or toe-to-toe position, and have developed the important skills of mobility and defensive head positioning. At kicking range we can afford to block attacks thrown at the head. When we are in boxing range, we cannot block. We must move the head to avoid being hit.

Blocking skills must be redeveloped into trapping skills when the fight takes place at close range. The art of trapping involves a strategy that permits us to temporarily immobilize the opponent's weapons and to follow-up with a strike or hold (choke, etc.). Trapping involves slapping, holding, or redirecting the opponent's weapons in an attempt to gain distance, time and position.

The weapons of the trapper include fights, fingers, forearms, feet, knees, elbows, head butts, biting, pinching, takedowns, chokes, locks, and holds. It can be said that the trapping expert takes the mobility and defense skills of the boxer with the offensive skills of the trapper, we

now have, perhaps, the ultimate art of fighting in close while in the stand-up or clinch position.

The trapboxer has as his primary strategy the ability to neutralize the attacker's offense through immobilization (trapping) and, through positioning and mobility (boxing). The trapboxer then can deliver offensive strikes from the arsenals of both trapping and boxing. Trapboxing is neither boxing nor solely trapping. Rather, it is a new martial art intended to supplement kicking skills and prepare the kicker with in-fighting techniques that may insure victory over defeat.

Because of the structure of the human body, we can punch faster than we can kick, and we can grab (or grapple) faster than we can kick. Because kicking involves long-range fighting, it becomes easier to block a kick than to block a punch. In theory, kicking, because it involves larger muscles and a greater distance, would seem superior to punching. However, because a high degree of flexibility is required for speed and much more energy is required to

move the legs, the theory apparently does not prove to be true in most self-defense encounters.

Tae Kwon Do is an outstanding art that involves much more than simply the skills of self-defense. By supplementing the art with either group grappling (if one prefers mat work) or trapping skills (if one prefers stand-up fighting), the art of Tae Kwon Do is made more practical for the uncertainties of an actual street encounter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Jerry Beasley is a renown martial arts researcher and educator. A full-time martial art professor in physical and health education at Radford University in Virginia, Dr. Beasley directs the popular Karate College Summer Camp and the American Independent Karate/Tae Kwon Do Instructors (AIKIA) with partners Joe Lewis and Bill Wallace. Beasley received his first through fifth dan ranks in ITF-style Tae Kwon Do (1971-80), and his sixth through eighth dan ranks in the Joe Lewis American Karate System (1985-95). He is the creator of the new martial art of Trapboxing and a certified instructor of Jeet Kune Do.