

Article Title: Yes you can strike back

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Bio: Sensei Rick Wilson has been training in martial arts since he was a child; He has had brief training in Boxing, Judo, Jujitsu, and Tae Kwon Do. He then focused on the art of Uechi Ryu Karate Do/Pwanganuun Chu'an Fa.

Abstract: Striking from the bottom must be done aggressively. It must take the offensive role. It will give an opportunity to dismount your opponent. There can be no defensive attitude taken – you must attack. It must be done with the attitude that you WILL WIN. Your opponent WILL be defeated. There is no tapping out on the street. You must strike back.

INTRODUCTION

In a street situation the ground is the last place you want to be. Too many videos of street fights show someone's friend rushing up to kick the other guy in the head. This is dangerous and potentially lethal. You do not want to be on the ground, but life in a street fight never goes as expected. You could have been jumped from behind, or simply slipped on ice, and you are where you least want to be. This is why all martial artists must be prepared to protect themselves while on the ground.

Once on the ground the bottom of the mount is the worst position to find yourself in. No one can spread pixy dust and make a person invincible under there, but there are ways to STRIKE BACK. Yes, STRIKE back, and more. This is not an article on grappling. This is about striking.

It is often said that the person on top of the mount can strike while the person on the bottom cannot. This is demonstrated by the top person placing their fist in the bottom person's face and showing that the bottom person cannot reach the top person's head. The correct statement is "it is difficult to strike a person in the head from the bottom of the mount." So don't try. There are many good targets on the human body other than the head.

POSITIONING

The top person must be prevented from setting themselves too high on your chest. They should be kept farther down on your hips. To check if they are in the right position (during practice) see if your elbows can be placed against your side. If they try to ride up, then move your hips while driving an elbow down into their leg just above the knee.

You must raise hands and bring your forearms close together to protect your face. Your head should be held up off the ground so that, if struck, there is at least some room to absorb the punch. The top person must NOT be allowed to reach across and grab your arm or they can pull it across your body. This will leave you completely vulnerable to their strikes. Therefore be conscious of the centre line and do not cross that line or you will be open to be pinned and also open for a follow up choke.



(Figure 1)

It is hard to put mass into a strike from the bottom of the mount when striking upwards. So, once again, do not try. Instead use your chest, back, and shoulder muscles to pull the strike straight down from their protective position into your opponent's torso (body compression). Extend the arm fully driving a hammer fist (Figure 2), shuto (knife hand) crane beak (Figure 3a and b) or shoken (one knuckle strike delivered like knocking on a door Figure 4a and b) into your opponent's body. The solar plexus is also a very good target. This body action is done very much like performing a sit-up.



Figure 2



Figure 3a



Figure 3b

This body compression method must be used to generate power or you will only be striking with arm power and it will be ineffective.

If you doubt the strength of these strikes, have a partner take the mount position with a striking pad and try them out. Done properly the effectiveness should be clearly evident.



Figure 4a



Figure 4b

The torso is not your only target. Your opponent's weapons can also be struck. When they strike down, combine a block with a strike (Figure 5). An excellent attack is also a knife hand or tiger paw to the arm. The middle of the biceps is a nice painful target. The tiger paw can also strike up into the shoulder joint. (Figures 6a to d).



Figure 5

If the person does sit higher on your chest, drive your elbows down into their torso or thighs. Striking will allow you an opportunity to affect a dismount. Please note that both hands are “alive” and in constant contact with the aggressor whenever possible to control or strike.



Figure 6a



Figure 6b



Figure 6c



Figure 6d

Another target for striking is the aggressor's hands. Grapplers will have a harder time if you can damage their ability to grip. Tiger paws are an excellent weapon for this purpose.

EVADING

If the aggressor is placed correctly they will want to be higher on your body than you need them to be. You want to place the aggressor down over your hips where you should have the ability to add side to side movements of your body to evade strikes. This may also open up an opportunity to strike into your opponent's ribs from the side. While shifting to the outside to avoid a straight downward strike, your opponent's arm can be scissored in between your arms, striking to the back of their elbow (Figure 7). This can badly damage the elbow and lead directly into a dismount by turning your body into the back of the injured arm.



Figure 7

Important Note:

Striking will allow you an opportunity to affect a dismount. The goal is to escape the bottom of the mount into a strategically superior position.

PRACTICE DRILLS FOR STRIKING

A good drill is to have the top person slap either the chest or shoulder of the bottom person. Do not try to touch the face unless you are using eye protection, because there is a chance of an accidental finger in the eye. The bottom person will slap to the top person's chest or arms. This is a good, safe, way to increase your speed. You can also use boxing gloves, although they take away the pointed strikes.

Using a blindfold will force you to learn to strike from the ground even when you cannot see. A wonderful chi sau (sticky hands) drill done on the floor.

DEFENDING AGAINST THE ELBOW

A fist hurts, an elbow will crush. The bones of your forearms must be placed in the path of the attacking elbow. Once it hits your forearms there will be a BRIEF moment before they can recover their balance and rise up to strike again. In this moment, your outside elbow will drive upwards to the side of your head while your other hand crooks into a crane beak and drives downwards towards your stomach hooking your opponent's wrist. (Do not grab the wrist just hook it.) This will move your opponent's elbow upwards and their hand downwards. Turn your body into the elbow. (In practice go SLOWLY or you will damage your partner's arm.) Continue turning into the arm to effect the reversal. (Figures 8a to d)



Figure 8a



Figure 8b



Figure 8c



Figure 8d

For Uechi Ryu practitioners this is the elbow strike in Seisan form.

The elbow can also be driven straight down. Here we need to slip and strike upwards with the forearm. This is done by using a guiding motion with one hand while sliding the other hand on the opposite side of the attacking elbow to strike into the face. Because they are striking with their elbow they will bring their head down to you (Figure 9).



Figure 9

A final point about elbows is that you are also armed with them. They are difficult to use from the bottom while on the ground because they can be swept across the centre line for a pin and choke. However, they are excellent to use when “meeting” a striking hand. The fist will lose to the elbow every time. This is a version of FMA’s defanging the snake.

EFFECTIVE WEAPONS

When the opponent is flat on top of the bottom person it becomes much harder to place a good solid strike. Now more effective weapons must be used. The shoken fist or one knuckle strike is that weapon. This can be made with either the first or second knuckle. By decreasing the area over which the power is spread, the effect of the strike is increased (Figure 10).

When striking to the ribs, the arm must not come too far away from the body. If this happens the strike is only using arm power. Swing your arm down as tight as you can adding in your chest, shoulder, and back muscles using the body compression described earlier. By striking down into the opponent's ribs with an effective weapon they are forced to bring their arm down to protect themselves. This will make it difficult for them to execute techniques, such as a choke or arm lock.



Figure 10

From this position striking to head is hard to make effective. Heel palms are mere nuisances when driven straight in. To use a heel palm strike effectively drive it in and over on an angle to crank the neck with the strike (Figure 11). However, it is more effective to use a tiger paw to rip across your opponent's face. This is less damaging to your knuckles but can tear and cut their skin.



Figure 11

The other very effective strike zone is at the base of the skull. This can be struck with a ridge hand or tiger paw. This location requires very little strength to put the aggressor's lights out (Figure 12a to b).



Figure 12a



Figure 12b

Short cupped hand strikes over the ears can disrupt the opponent giving you a chance for more devastating strikes.

RIPPING AND TEARING

Striking is not the only weapon available. Ripping and tearing are also excellent tools. This is done by grabbing, twisting, and tearing at the flesh of your opponent. There are many good areas to tear:

- The love handle area (Figure 13a).
- The biceps.
- The arm pit.
- The upper chest (Figure 13b).
- The inner thigh.
- The groin.
- The neck (Figure 13c).
- The eyes (in life threatening situations. Figure 13d)
- The trachea (in life threatening situations.)



Figure 13a



Figure 13b



Figure 13c



Figure 13d

All of these are painful and can distract your opponent while you escape. You can also dig your fingers into pressure points; however your opponent may be prepared to accept the pain.

VITAL TIP

DO NOT MAKE THE COMMON ERROR OF TURNING ON TO YOUR STOMACH TO AVOID YOUR OPPONENT'S STRIKES. This will take any opportunity to strike back away and leave you at the mercy of your opponent's choke.

CONCLUSION

Striking from the bottom must be done aggressively. It must take the offensive role. It will give an opportunity to dismount your opponent. There can be no defensive attitude taken – you must attack. It must be done with the attitude that you **WILL WIN**. Your opponent **WILL** be defeated. There is no tapping out on the street. You must **STRIKE BACK**.