

Mastering the Knife



Dr. Ted Gambordella



Introduction

I began my training in the martial arts over fourteen years ago in the little town of Alexandria, Louisiana. From the first I was interested in weapons, but I had great difficulty in finding any but a handful of people who knew anything about weapons. For many years I was only able to acquire little bits of weapons training from various teachers here and there. I tried to learn all that I could from books, but found that the number of books on weapons is almost as short in supply as the number of instructors with a knowledge of weapons. I also found that most of the books about weapons were written by the same man and were incomplete in their depth, for no books were available on the tonfa or the yawara, and only a few were available on the staff, the bo, and the knife. There seemed to be numerous books on the nunchaku, most poorly done, and a few books on the sai; but all in all the books available for the martial art student who was interested in weapons were few and far between.

So I decided to write my own books. I spent the last four years doing research and training with weapons, learning their use and applications. I was able to achieve a fourth degree black belt in weapons (kubojitsu), I had already written four other books and a movie script, "The Leopard," so I was familiar with what was necessary to write a good book. I wanted my book to have techniques that a beginner could learn, but that a teacher could also benefit from. I wanted to make the book easy to follow by avoiding any overuse of photos or confusing text. I wanted to include a basic practice Kata for each weapon, as well as techniques for the weapon's offensive and defensive use. Finally, I wanted to write a book that would serve as a manual on weapons for years to come—a book that a student or a teacher would be proud to own and would refer to whenever they had a question on weapons or wanted a new technique.

I feel that I have accomplished all of these goals in this book, *The Complete Book of Karate Weapons*. It is a book that I am proud of and one that you can be proud to have in your library. If you will read this book with an open mind and follow the techniques and exercises described herein, you can make yourself one of the few experts with weapons in the world today.

I could never have written this book without the help of many friends and fellow martial artists who appear with me in the instructional photos, both as technique partners and technical advisers. These men, some of the most outstanding black belts in the South, include: **Keith Yates:** fourth degree black belt. Winner of many kata championships and weapons kata championships at the top tournaments of the South. A master artist who also designed the cover of the book.

James Toney: fifth degree black belt. Teacher extraordinaire and tournament champion for many years. One of the most respected teachers in Texas.

continued...



Barry Guimbellot: third degree black belt. Probably the most successful teacher in Dallas, an outstanding example of character and leadership in karate.

Steve Weiss: second degree black belt. A modern jiu-jitsu expert who is also an expert in karate.

Ross Comerski: first degree black belt. A giant of a man and a giant of a teacher.

Finally, I must thank all of my teachers through my years of training for their help and knowledge, such great men as: Soke R. Sacharnoski, Soke A. Church, Soke K. Marx, Master HeYoung Kimm, Shihan B. Pearson, Dr. J. Marler, and Sensi B. Hathorn. These great men and excellent teachers gave the knowledge and training that enabled me to get to where I am today. I am forever grateful to them and their arts.

Last, let me take a moment to thank the most important force in my life, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Who gives me the strength and ability necessary to write this book and to share my knowledge with my fellow martial artists.

Dedication To Keith Yates, Jim Toney, Barry Guimbellot, Steve Weiss, Russ Comerski, and Steve Rich, without whom this book would never have been written.

Photos by Steve Rich

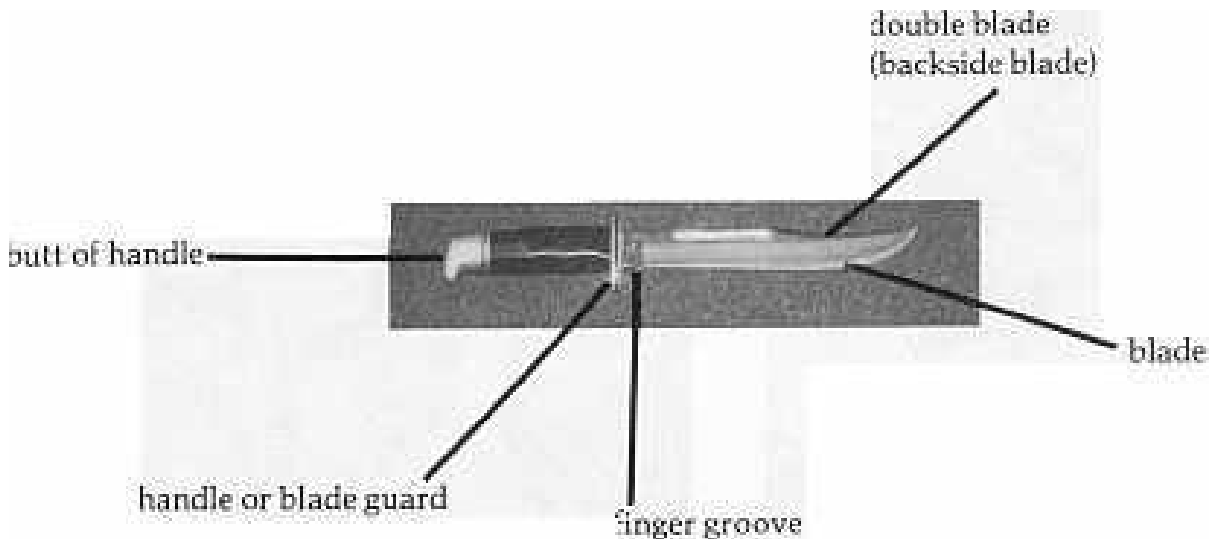


Mastering the Knife

The knife is probably the most common weapon in the world today, because it also serves as a tool for eating and work. It has been used by men from ancient times for defense and attack and still remains the favorite weapon of defense today.

The karate knife is a little different from a regular knife because of its construction. There should be a blade guard for protecting the hand of the user from the blade, as well as for gripping purposes, and a finger spot which the little finger wraps around when holding the knife for defense. This finger spot is on the blade, but is smooth and will not cut the hand. The handle should be very hard, for it is also used for striking, and the blade should be double bladed at the end, for cutting and slashing forward or backwards, but not double all the way down, for the protection of the user and for blocks.

The knife is the most dangerous weapon available for the beginner, because it is not just effective for defense, but can kill you when practicing if you handle it sloppily or carelessly. Therefore, I suggest that you practice your techniques with a rubber knife until such time as you are very proficient and a margin of safety is assured. Never joke with the knife or be foolish. The knife is a deadly weapon and must always be treated with respect.





Holding Positions



The basic grip: hold the knife in the hand with the little finger wrapped around the guard and in the finger groove provided there.



Now wrap the rest of the fingers around the handle and extend the thumb down the top with the fore finger down to the end of the handle.

The blade should be pointed down and extended flat against the side of the forearm.

Side view



Front view





Holding Positions



The knife can be held like this and concealed almost completely by using one or two fingers down the handle (for this photo I have let a little of the blade show so that you can get an idea of how I am holding the knife).



To carry the knife behind you, place it in your belt with the blade pointed down and the handle under the belt.



This makes it very easy to reach back and grab the knife for use.



Basic Stance



The modified cat stance: the left arm is across the body to block and to hide the knife while the right hand holds the knife.



The front thrust: the knife is thrust straight out in front of the body. Used for striking the eyes, stomach, groin, and throat.



The overhead stab: this is a power stabbing position. The blade should be pointed up and the thumb on the back of the handle for support.



The front slash: the knife is held with the blade out and slashes across the body. Used to cut the face, chest, back, legs, and arms.



Basic Stance



The side slash (backhanded): the knife is held so that it extends out the side of the hand. Used for slashing the body. The palm is facing down, and the wrist is moving in a backhand motion.



The forehand slash: the palm faces up here, and the wrist moves in a forehand motion. Used for slashing faces and body parts.



The front thrust: the knife is held straight down the arm, and the forefinger goes down the side of the blade for thrusting accuracy. Used for thrusting into the eyes, throat, and groin.



The groin stab or underarm stab: the knife is held with the palm facing up and out to the right. Used for stabbing the back, groin, and abdomen.



Basic Stance



The overhead stab: the knife is held with the blade pointing up and the wrist in the hand shaking position. Used to stab the head and back.



The Throat Slash Using the Wrist Flick

This is an excellent and dangerous move that allows the knife to remain hidden to the last moment.



Begin by holding the knife concealed down your right forearm.



Now punch straight out with the hand as you would in a normal punch.



At the last second, flip the wrist very hard to the left and this will cause the blade of the knife to come around and out, for slashing the throat or eyes.



Throwing the Knife

There are several different methods used for throwing the knife, but the most practical one is to use an overhand throwing motion with the knife and let it flip over and then go into the target area.



Hold the knife so that it is balanced on your forefinger; this is the point at which the knife can be controlled most easily. A good knife should be balanced properly.



Now throw the knife in an overhand motion, just like you were throwing a ball.

With much practice you will be able to hit a very small target.



Striking Areas



Slashing the throat: the knife is held so that the blade is away from the body and you draw the blade across the throat, cutting it open.



Stabbing the throat: thrust the end of the knife into the soft part of the throat.



Take the point of the knife and stab it through the larynx, and then tear it out the front of the throat.



Striking Areas



Cutting the throat from behind: take the blade of the knife and draw it across and down the throat.



Slash the ligaments of the knee, or muscles of the calf with the knife.



Cut the achilles tendon with the knife.

Stab the knife into the groin or lower stomach.





Striking Areas



Stab the knife into the lungs and up into the heart.

Cut the spinal cord.



Stab the kidneys.



Striking Areas



Cut the forearm muscles and bicep.



Slice open the web area between the fingers.



Slash the side of the face or throat.

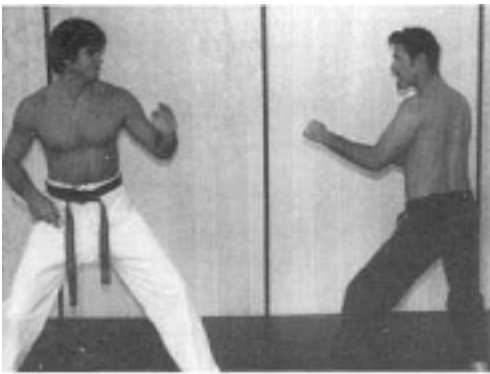


Poke the point into the eyes.



Techniques for Using a Knife Against an Unarmed Attacker

Special Note: I do not feel that there would ever be any need to use a knife against an unarmed attacker and do not advise or suggest you ever do so for any reason. These techniques are here to show karate techniques of defense using a knife and no further implications should be inferred or are intended.



Prepare for the attack.



Block the strike with the left arm and...



...counter with a slash of the throat.

Finish with a stab into the back.





Techniques for Using a Knife Against an Unarmed Attacker



Prepare for the attack.



Block the punch with your left, and slash across the muscles of his forearm with the knife.



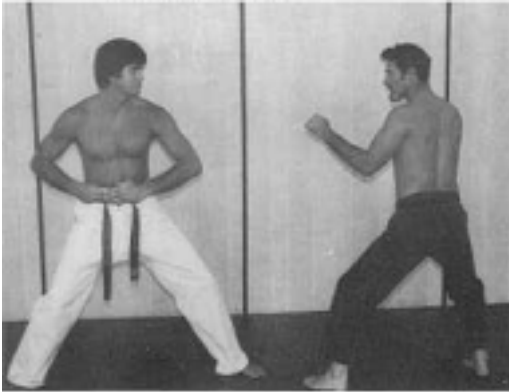
Finish him by coming over and slashing open the throat...

...then stabbing his back.





Techniques for Using a Knife Against an Unarmed Attacker



Ready for the attack



As he punches, block with your left, step up and thrust the knife into his throat.



Finish him by stabbing down into his throat.



Techniques for Using a Knife Against an Unarmed Attacker



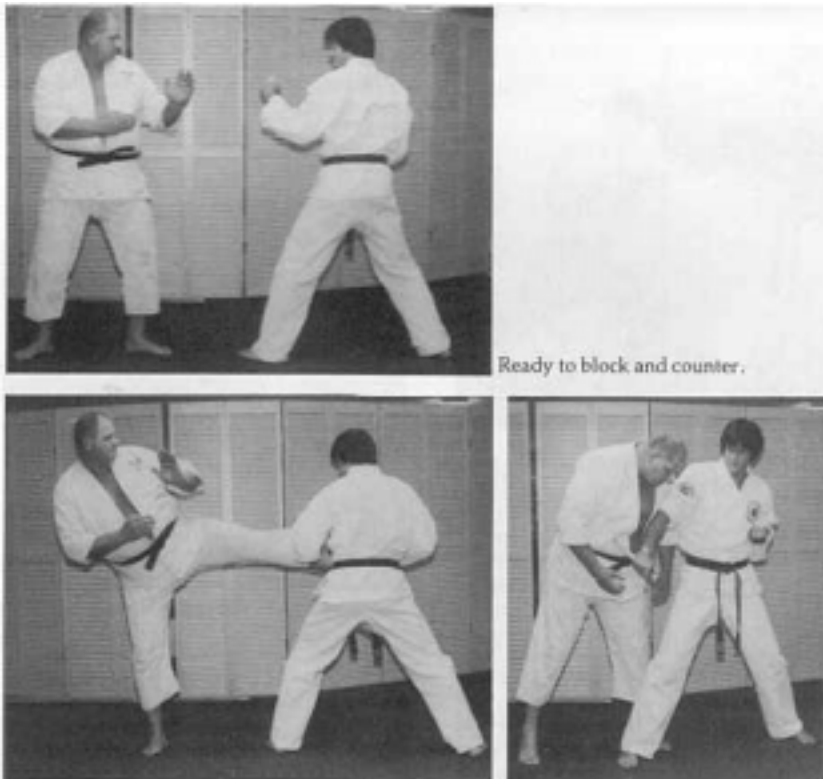
Block the punch by a middle block with your right arm, and then flip the knife over and cut open the wrist.



Now step in and thrust the knife into his abdomen.



Techniques for Using a Knife Against an Unarmed Attacker



Ready to block and counter.

Block the kick with the left forearm and cut the leg open with the knife in the right hand. Now spin to your right and come back with a backward thrust into his abdomen.



Come up and slash the knife across the face, then finish him by stabbing his back.



Techniques for Using a Knife Against an Unarmed Attacker



Ready for the attack.



You counter but he grabs your hand, holding the knife.



Reach up and grab hold of his wrist and turn under his arm to your right.



Now bend your arm toward his body, and he will not be able to stop you as you thrust the knife into his abdomen.



Finish him with a stab to the back.



Defenses Against an Armed Attacker

A man attempts to slash you with a knife.



Move very fast as he moves at you and...



...block the knife arm with your left forearm.



Now quickly come up with a snap kick into his groin.

Knock him to the ground,
and finish him with a shuto
to the throat.





Defenses Against an Armed Attacker

A man attempts to slash you with the knife.



Duck backwards very fast and let the slash go by...



...then move in to block the knife arm with your left forearm and right wrist before he can return to slash again.



Lock his wrist up and drop to the ground taking your hands over your head and throwing him to the ground.



Close up of wrist lock.



Throw him to the ground and take the knife and finish him by stabbing his throat.



Defenses Against an Armed Attacker

A man attempts to stab you.



Block up with your left arm and reach behind with your right and lock his knife arm.



Throw him to the ground...

...and finish him with a shuto to the throat.



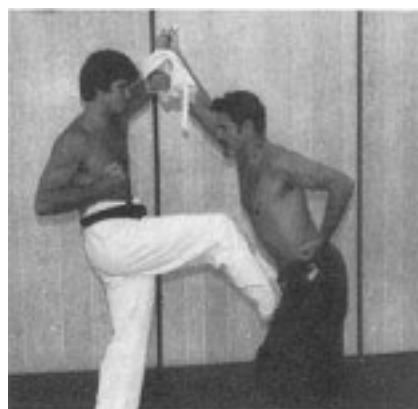


Defenses Against an Armed Attacker

Using a Coat or Gi Top to Block the Knife Attack



Wrap the gi around your forearm and block up with it to stop the knife arm.



Counter with a snap kick to the groin, done very fast and hard.

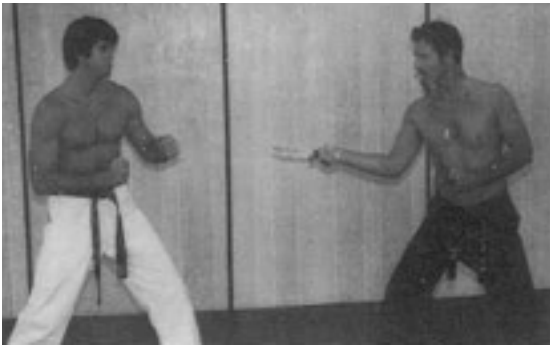


Finish him with an eye gouge.



Defenses Against an Armed Attacker

A man attempts to stab you.



Block his knife arm with a crescent kick to his forearm area. Do not kick the knife, this will cut you.



Finish him with a heel kick to the throat.

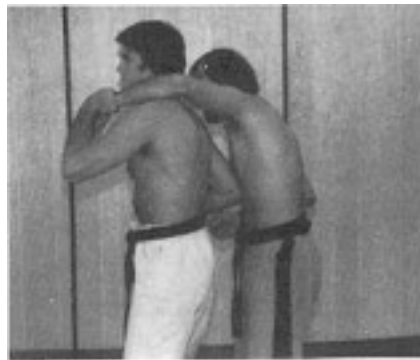


Defenses Against an Armed Attacker

A man has a knife against your throat from behind.



Always raise your arms as if giving up.



Grab his knife arm and elbow him with the left elbow.



Now, step behind holding his knife arm.

Continue to step and finish him with a shuto to the back of the neck





Defenses Against an Armed Attacker

A man holds a knife at your throat from the front.



Quickly lean back with your abdomen and strike his forearm near the elbow with your left hand.



Before he can move, kick his groin, while continuing to push the knife out of the way.

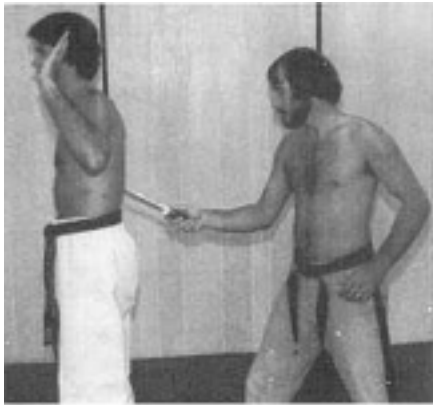
Finish him with a hard shuto to the neck.



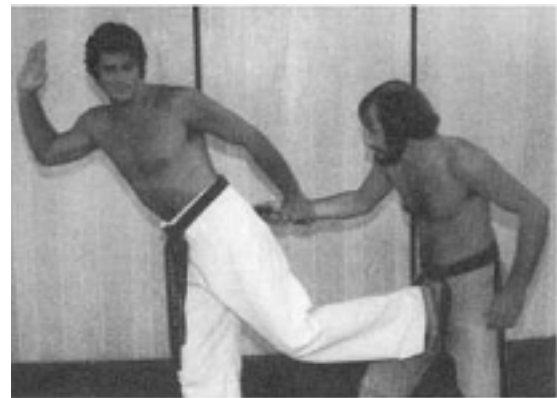


Defenses Against an Armed Attacker

A man holds a knife at your back.



Raise your arms as if to give up.



Now quickly swing your left arm around back to knock the knife away and smash a heel kick into his groin.



Kata



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



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Kata





Kata

