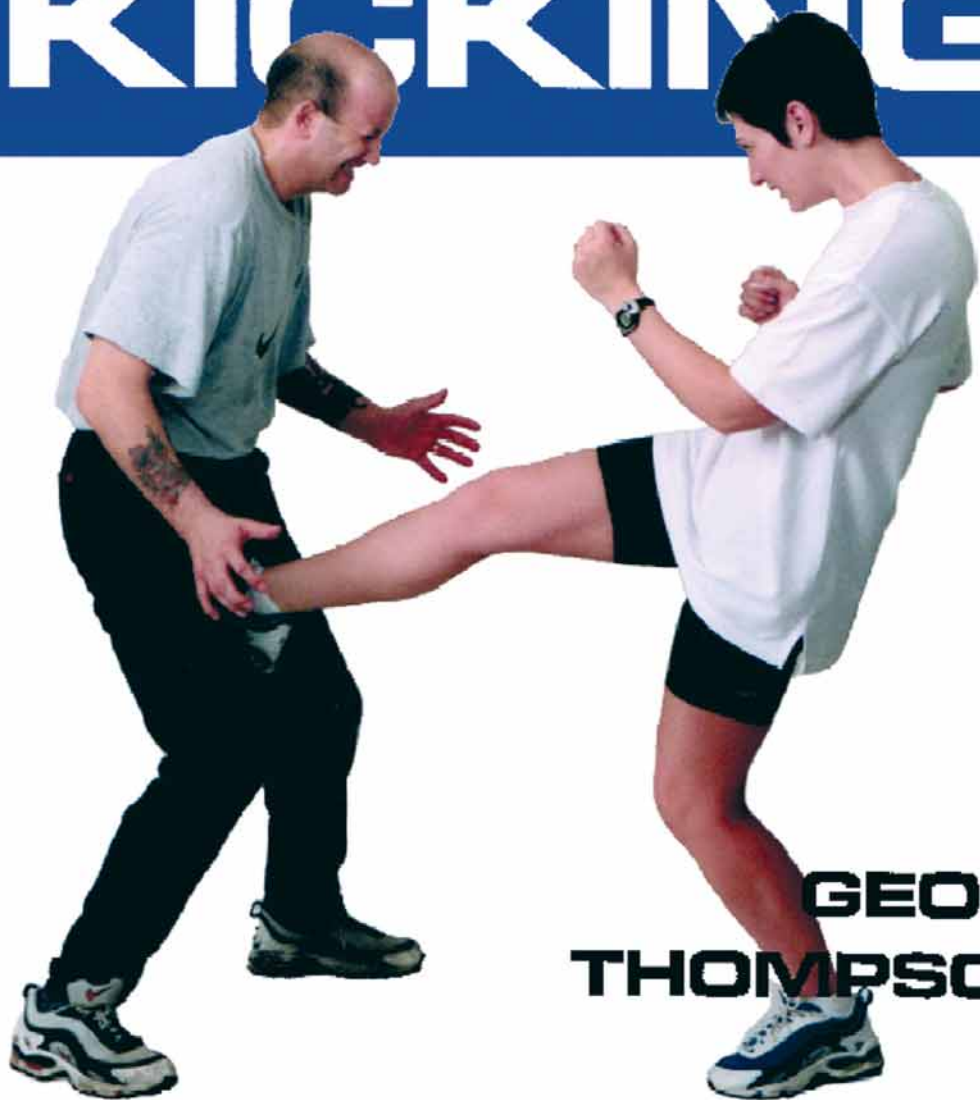


REAL KICKING



**GEOFF
THOMPSON**

SUMMERSDALE

First published 1994.

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Summersdale Publishers Ltd
46 West Street
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RP
United Kingdom

www.summersdale.com

Printed and bound in Great Britain.

ISBN 1 84024 087 3

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Foreword

For those amongst us who think kicking in the 'Full Contact Arena', or more realistically, 'The Pavement Arena', is about balletic grace and flashy high kicks, this book is not for them. This book is for the true kicking connoisseur, who wants to learn practical power kicking, which can effectively be applied to street survival, without fears of balance loss, slipping, or having the leg caught in mid-air.

Geoff Thompson, a leading self-protection specialist, has survived countless violent situations, and has had to use street proven skills to defend himself on our increasingly violent streets.

In this concise, professional, and down-to-earth book, Geoff thoroughly explains how to use your kicks in an effective and accurate manner in a street confrontation. Very few people I have met are able to kick as hard and as precisely as Geoff Thompson, who is undoubtedly one of today's most respected Martial Artists.

Anyone interested in the practical aspects of kicking for 'Real Self Defence' will find this book a great asset. Apply the techniques to your training - for your kicking arsenal will not be complete without them.

David Mears

Senior National Coach

(Global TaeKwon-Do Federation)

GIKO World Martial Arts Spectacular Champion

Introduction

Why Kicking?

I would like to start by thanking you, the reader for buying (or if you've borrowed it, thank you for reading) this book. It is said that small libraries make great men, I admire anyone who takes the time to read what a fellow martial artist (or human being for that matter) has got to say. If anyone is offended by my comments on the art of kicking please accept my apologies now before we start - sometimes insults are an inadvertent by-product in books of this genre. My intention is never to offend, only to educate.

Anyone who has read my previous works will know that I'm not a great fan of kicking for the street scenario, and mostly this is where my speciality lies. Some may even say that I am derogatory to the kicker, but that has never been my intention. Honesty, though, sometimes has a way of appearing offensive, especially if it hits close to home. It is my opinion that kicking is the weakest of the main artillery ranges (kicking, punching, grappling), of this I have absolutely no doubt. The pivotal factor with this rather controversial point is not whether kicks are or are not employable, it is whether or not we have the distance to employ them. Nine times out of ten we do not. The majority of confrontational situations happen at a range of about 18 inches, or conversation distance, this being punching range. If mismanaged, punching range quickly degenerates into grappling range and then to ground fighting. A good puncher who understands 'street speak' will enter dialogue, control dialogue and employ a pre-emptive strike that will end the altercation at the same range.

Real Kicking

This book is based on nine years of experience working with and controlling violence and violent people. It is also based on over 300 street fights (250 of those were with my ex wife). I have worked the doors with some of the best kickers in the country, probably the world, and we have all reached the same conclusion (some of us learnt the hard way): there is very little room in the REAL world for kicking technique. Then why write a book on kicking? Because a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. If that link is your kicking ability then you are only as strong as that. To be a complete martial artist you must know all ranges, after all you cannot destroy what you cannot create. If you only ever employ kicking technique once in your lifetime in a real fight and it works for you, then it will have been worth it.

Kicking is an effective art if kept in context, i.e. used as part of the support system rather than as an initiating, attacking tool. Kicks are best used in one of four ways:

- 1) If you are outside of punching range and find that there is a large gap between you and your attacker (there very rarely is) kicks may be used to bridge that gap, even then the understanding should be that the feet are being utilised to set up the hands.
- 2) Short range kicks can sometimes be used whilst inside vertical grappling range to weaken an opponent before throwing him, or using sweeping kicks from the same range.
- 3) In the rare circumstance of engagement in a 'square go' on the common, kicking can become effective for taking a boxer or grappler to his or her weaker range.
- 4) Kicking technique is an unparalleled 'finisher' when employed on a falling or felled opponent.

Real Kicking

We are living in a martial arts society that is aroused by celluloid peer pressure, starting way back with the charismatic Mr Bruce Lee who exploded onto our screens with a myriad of spinning, hooking, turning, jumping, even somersaulting kicks that mesmerised, hypnotised and . . . fooled a whole generation of 'would-be's'. This 'movie love affair' has left the subliminal and damaging message that we, as martial artists, not only have to win, we have to do so in style, this of course being synonymous with the superfluous kicking arts. Even the late, great was quick to add that his screen portrayals were fantastical and demonstrated only for 'dramatic effect', a complete parallel to the innovative art he tendered to those wanting workable technique for the 'real' world. What we have to realise as martial artists is that, yes, kicking has its place on the curriculum of 'martial' but it is in the wings as a valuable part of the support system and not on the front line with the main artillery. If I may quote from my book 'Real Self Defence':

"As attacking tools the feet can be both powerful and accessible, though less immediate than the hands and harder to master. Basic low kicks are favourable if you choose to employ the legs as attacking tools. Kicking techniques can be irreplaceably destructive, in theory, in practice 'live' situations lack the space and distancing to employ the 'kick' to its full potential and just by the fact that you are using your legs as attacking tools renders you less mobile."

Great kickers (they are few) will doubtless disagree with me, and as exceptions to the rule probably can and will utilise kicking techniques where I deem them ineffective. If you look at people on a skill scale of one to ten, probably only the nines or tens will be able effectively to employ kicking, the rest, even given perfect circumstances, will not. Even the nine and tens, though, would, I'm sure, agree that when aiming at the masses one is obliged to promote techniques that will work for the majority

as opposed to the minority. The distance that you are given in a 'real' situation is nearly always punching range: I can see little reason for changing that range to employ another, especially when the other is weaker.

The foremost problem with the traditionally taught kick is its retraction after connection with target, particularly the contest kick which lingers on contact, long enough to show the referee the scored point. Also, in the dojo the kick is often recovered far too slowly, sometimes the kicker even pivoting on the support leg for several seconds before implanting it back on terra firma. The reason for this laxness? Here no penalty is served up on the lazy kicker. A slowly retracted or thrust kick in a 'live' situation will be heavily penalised by a leg grabbing or forward moving opponent who forces the said kicker over; both former and latter could end in your defeat.

For this reason kicks need to be kept low, hard and retraction sharp, otherwise keep them on the floor where they will be better served as appendages to the hands. To test the viability of your kicks I recommend that you 'pressure test' them. If you worked in a factory making manifolds for cars I could guarantee that not a single manifold would leave the factory without first being pressure tested, as a single fault could affect the workability of the car. We work in a factory called the dojo or gym, we give people technique and character and send them out in to the big wide world . . . without any pressure testing at all. Then we wonder 'what went wrong?' when the said technique and character fail us. The best way to pressure test kicking technique is to allow progressive sparring, that is sparring with no rules. See if you can work your kicks against someone that is determined to grapple you, or box you unconscious, or elbow, knee, bite, but, etc. this is the way to pressure test not only kicking but also character.

Real Kicking

Kicking is the weakest of the main artillery, as a support system it is excellent.

It is a near impossibility here not to repeat some of the material from my previous books, because all of them involve some aspects of kicking; indeed at times I may even quote directly from them if I feel it is relevant, so if you have heard some of it before please bear with me.

One thing I would ask is that you not expect overnight mastery of the techniques herein; it can take a lifetime. This book will give you the route but it is you that has to travel it. I could give you a book on Renoir but it wouldn't automatically make you a great impressionist. The legendary Japanese swordsman MIYAMOTO MUSASHI said, "One thousand days of training to forge . . . ten thousand days to polish."

Whilst this book is based on what I would class as 'street workable', there is also a slight overflow, (drawing, feinting etc.) into strategies that are slightly peripheral to its main aim, hopefully this overflow will help you in the dojo with sparring and partner work because to be honest if I stuck to purely effective techniques I wouldn't fill many pages. Treat this book then as an overview and take from it what you feel will work for you. The techniques you may take or leave but the concepts of real world fighting and the place of kicking therein must be observed and remembered if survival is your prime aim.