

REAL PUNCHING



**GEOFF
THOMPSON**

SUMMERSDALE

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About the Author:

Geoff Thompson has to be one of the most recognised and controversial martial arts writers and teachers of this century, with over 20 best-selling books and 20 instructional videos on the contemporary role of martial art to his name. His work is both innovative and thought-provoking. As an ambassador for the martial arts he has appeared on national and international television and radio – for several years as the *BBC Good Morning* self-defence expert – talking about and giving advice on self-protection and related subjects.

He has taught his unique method of self-protection to the police, the Royal Marine commandos, in local government, on Excel Bodyguard training camps and also on the professional circuit. Geoff's first book *Watch My Back – A Bouncer's Story* (released in the USA by Paladin Press) about his nine years working as a nightclub doorman is widely recognised as a cult book. His other books have also been highly successful. He has appeared in numerous publications including: *SG's Martial Arts*, *Combat*, *Traditional Karate*, *Fighters*, *Terry O'Neill's Fighting Arts International*, *Muscle Mag* (Britain – USA), *Black Belt Magazine* (USA) *Fighters* (Sweden) and *Australasian Fighting Arts* (Australia). He is currently Sub-Editor of *Martial Arts Illustrated*. He has also featured in mainstream glossy magazines such as *Loaded*, *Maxim* and *Esquire* and has published several articles with *GQ Magazine* (Britain – Paris).

Geoff has to be one of the most practised instructors of our day with a long list of combat qualifications. He is presently a Sambo Russian Wrestling coach (Moscow Sambo Federation), Olympic Greco Roman Wrestling Coach (FILA), Olympic Free Style Level 3 Wrestling Coach (FILA) Ju-Jitsu coach, British Combat Association Coach, EKGB (Karate) 5th Dan, JKA (Japan Karate

Association) 2nd Dan, Shoalin Modga gung fu 1st Dan, BJA (British Judo Association) 1st Dan, ABA boxing coach and BTBC Muay Thai boxing coach. He is a former UK weapons champion and is trained in the use of the Defensive Flashlight and the PR24 Side Handled Baton. He has also trained in Aikido and weapons.

In 1997 Geoff was flown out to the United States by Chuck Norris and Richard Norton to teach his unique method of self-protection on their international martial arts seminar alongside martial art greats: Benny 'the jet' Urquediz and Rigan and Jean-Jacques Machado.

As well as his books and videos Geoff has written a feature film based on his life and 12 television plays based on his bouncer books. Although recognised as an international authority on the art of self-protection, his work in reality and cross training in combat is still thought of as heresy in some quarters of the martial arts world.

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Chapter One

Body Mechanics

Before I segregate and dissect the various compartments of 'over all' punching I would like to take a look at body mechanics, the practice of body weight transference, after all, it is from here that 'power' is derived. The fist is only the implement that delivers the blow, the 'bullet' if you like. The body, or the gun, is the power source, the generator, or the engine. Punching without body sponsorship will relegate your blows to the realms of ineffectiveness. Paradoxically the puncher who does utilise full body weight transference when executing a punch will amass tremendous power. A 9 stone fighter in a street scenario who 'punches his weight' with accuracy will find no difficulty knocking unconscious an 18 stone adversary.

Body mechanics is a system where by one drives the body weight, via the hip (and the hara) behind a chosen punch. Many practitioners, especially heavier people, punch from the arm or the shoulder utilising only a small part of the body weight, this may still generate a small percentage of available power but it will be minimal. To produce maximum power one must punch from the stomach, some call this focal point the 'Hara' and hint of internal power, though more realistically the 'Hara' (to be found in the belly button area of the abdomen) is the body's centre of gravity, to punch from here enables you to utilise the entire body weight, down to the ounce.

In theory this appears simple, the hip (left side or right side, depending upon which arm you employ to punch) follows the path of the elected punch. A right cross sees the right side of the

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hip (from an orthodox stance) travelling forward along the same route as the punch, a left hook sees the left side of the hip (from an orthodox stance) travelling behind and along the same route as the punch. In the relevant chapters on individual punches I shall digress more.

In practice, of course, this is not quite as easy as it sounds, it requires great skill which is only born from much practice and perseverance. Like a finely tuned engine every thing must work in conjunction if smooth running is to be attained and maintained, if one small particle is out of 'sync' with the rest, smooth running will be lost. If the hip travels through too soon, power is lost, too late, power is lost, if the hip is not fully extended, power is again lost, if the hip is over extended, balance is impaired, if you over concentrate on hip commitment you may under-concentrate on other important factors like targeting, if the punch is off target all is wasted any way. Add to this list 'Kime' (body focus) and you have one more factor to consider. Every system, consciously or subconsciously, employs 'Kime' though they may not label it as so.

Kime is a means of focusing (or tensing) the body on the moment of impact, (the attacks impact upon the target) the muscles collectively 'tense' for a split second when your punch connects with the target, adding markedly to the power input of the said strike.

Kime must also run in conjunction with the hip thrust. Kime too soon or too late and its input is greatly or completely lost.

For the blow to maximise kime and hip thrust must culminate at the exact instance when the punch connects with the target, if they do not and are out of sync then you will be out of 'luck'. Once the three factors are running nicely in conjunction and power has been attained you will (should) be 'punching your weight'. For

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those who strive for more (greedy) there is another advancement, 'Travelling' (this doesn't mean punching some one on the train) 'Travelling' with a technique is an advanced concept. In the 'crawl', 'walk' and 'run' syndrome travelling is the 'sprint'. To 'Travel' is to add to all of the foregoing criteria a step or a shuffle along the same route as the punch adding the momentum of moving body weight to hip thrust and kime.

For instance, from orthodox stance, when throwing a right cross you would step or shuffle forward with your left lead leg followed directly by your reverse right leg, this would be employed in conjunction with the hip thrust and kime. Theoretically it sounds easy, in practice it is not so. A step too close or not close enough to the target will put your distancing out, forcing the punch to lose power due to its over close proximity to the target, or miss the target completely because it is not close enough. If your 'step' before or after the punch the generated forward momentum will be lost and the 'travel' wasted, if the 'step' is too slow it will 'telegraph' your chosen punch. The extra power gained by travelling is amassed from the forward momentum of your body weight, to harness this power completely your forward moving leg and thus the body weight, should land in time with the impact of the blow or still be moving forward as the punch strikes the target, indeed a difficult task, but, with much practice it is easily attainable.

Putting it down on paper makes it all seem rather complicated, don't be discouraged by this veil because once lifted it will all seem rather simple, as Bruce Lee said, and I quote,

“BEFORE I STARTED TRAINING IN THE MARTIAL ARTS A PUNCH WAS JUST A PUNCH, A KICK JUST A KICK, WHEN I STARTED, A PUNCH WAS NO LONGER JUST A PUNCH, A KICK NO LONGER JUST A KICK. NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND TRAINING A PUNCH IS, AGAIN, JUST A PUNCH, A KICK JUST A KICK.”

Chapter Two

Stances

Choosing a stance is important, a bad posture will relegate your punching to lacklustre.

There are only two stances that are worthy of contention when it comes to choice, orthodox stance (left leg leading) and southpaw stance (right leg leading). As a general rule of thumb the orthodox stance is employed by the right handed fighter, the southpaw stance by the left handed fighter. Both former and latter leave the strongest hand at the rear, a little like chess where the weaker pawns lead the board and protect the stronger ruck, king and queen at the back.

This is my recommended system of use.

If you are left handed and opt for the southpaw stance please reverse the forthcoming instructions which are based on the orthodox fighter.

ORTHODOX STANCE: Left leg leading with the left foot turned slightly inwards, toes gripping the floor to enhance balance and stability. Rear right foot turned inwards on the ball of the foot to enhance speed of movement and aid hip twist. Legs shoulder width apart at a 45 degree angle (this angle offers ultimate balance and stability and should be maintained at all times).

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