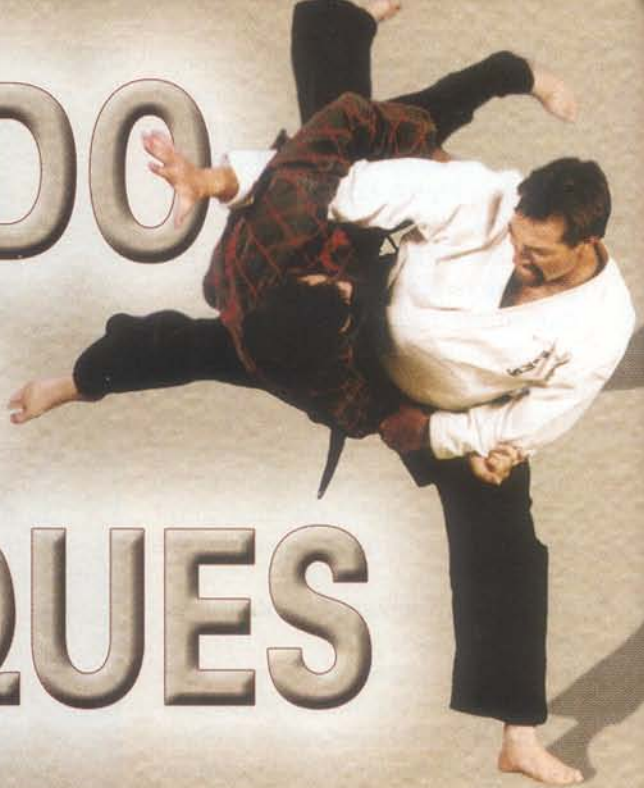


# 6 HAPKIDO BAITING TECHNIQUES



**YOUR OPPONENT WILL BE EATING OUT OF THE PALM OF YOUR HAND!**

**BY LES CONNARD**

*"Anything worth having is worth cheating for. Well ... in combat, anyway."*

*—Steve Petermann, Exec. VP*

*Jang Mu Won Hapkido Association*

Although the law prohibits insider trading in the stock market, it does not prohibit it in the martial arts. Using your knowledge of what your oppo-

nent will do before he actually does it is completely legal in the ring. Although this is often considered the highest level of fighting skill, it does

not necessarily take a lifetime to learn. In fact, if you master the material presented in this article, which is derived from Chong S. Kim's *jang mu won hapkido*, you will become so dominant over your opponents that they will feel like you are cheating.

If you have ever participated in a

*Requesting a roundhouse: As Ray Bouchereau (left) squares off with Brian Hummel, he holds his hands high to expose his stomach (1). When the opponent throws a roundhouse kick, Bouchereau moves in and blocks above the knee with his lead hand while using his rear hand to hook under the kicking leg (2). Bouchereau then lifts the opponent's leg with his rear hand as he reverses his body position (3). To finish, the hapkido practitioner hooks his left leg above the knee of the opponent's supporting leg and uses his arm and leg to launch the other man into the air (4).*



... martial arts demonstration, you know that the most impressive self-defense sequences happen when you know exactly which technique your opponent will throw in your direction. With this insider information, you have an extra fraction of a second to launch your counterattack. You then dispose of him in textbook fashion.

When it comes to free sparring, however, you have probably found that things don't work quite so smoothly. That's because you never know what your opponent will do until it's too late.

Obviously, the key to efficiently defeating any opponent in any situation lies in knowing what he will do before he does it. You can do that using a strategy I refer to as "limiting his options." All it takes to implement is a knowledge of distance, technique and body positioning.

### Forcing a Front Kick

Sparring matches are often nothing more than "monkey see, monkey do." You throw a front kick, and your op-



ponent returns one. You execute a roundhouse kick, and he sends one right back at you. The reason for this

*Forcing a front kick: Les Connard (right) faces Marc Buckler. Connard makes his stomach vulnerable to a front kick and holds his hands a little too high to accentuate the opening (1). Connard then raises his knee to make the opponent think he will execute a front kick (2). When the opponent responds with the expected kick, Connard aborts his attack, moves forward, executes a punch block under the kicking leg and grabs the opponent's lead hand to keep him from punching (3). Next, Connard raises his right hand to trap the opponent's knee and positions his right leg behind the other man's supporting leg (4). To finish, the hapkido instructor lifts the trapped leg and sweeps his leg out from under him (5).*



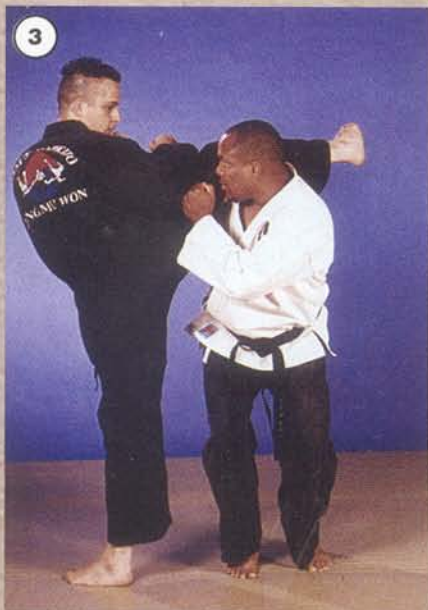
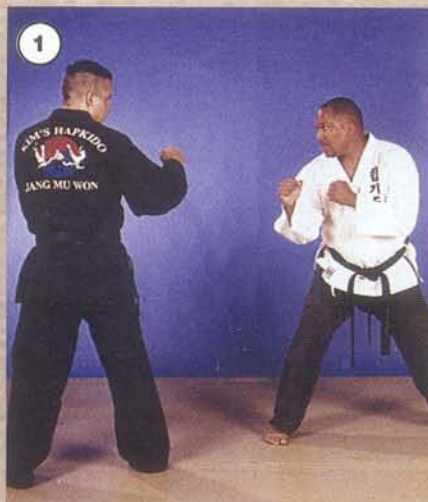
parroted behavior is body position, which holds that the easiest kick to return is often the one you just blocked. When you attack with a front kick, you are in the perfect position to be hit by a front kick. So why not take advantage of that?

The easiest way to get your opponent to throw a front kick is to make him think you will throw one. If you are standing so your stomach is facing his and you chamber your lead leg for a front kick, he will probably prepare to fire one at you. That's when you abort your kick and initiate your defense. (Although the photos that accompany this article show a proven jang mu won hapkido response, the exact method you use depends on what your art teaches.)

### Soliciting a Side Kick

In competition, the side kick is often used to attack the side of the torso. Fighters seldom get a chance to drive one into their opponent's chest, and lifting one all the way up to the head demands a lot of energy and flexibility. Therefore, the best way to get your opponent to throw one is to stand so the side of your body faces the side of his body. If viewed from above, your shoulders and his would form a straight line.

From his point of view, your ribs are his best option. If you lift your lead arm to expose them slightly, you will make them even more inviting. Depending on the distance, he will try either a stationary lead-leg side kick or a sliding side kick. No matter which one he chooses, you will have prepared for the attack and will be able to instantaneously begin your favorite defense.



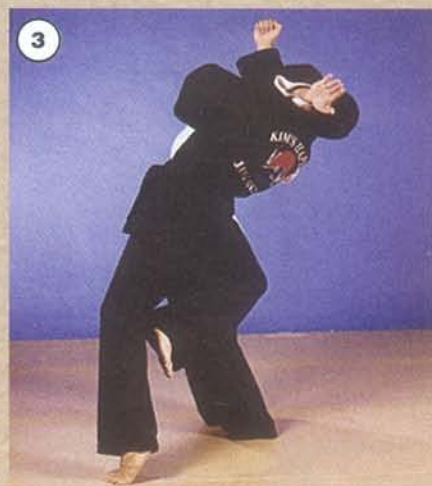
*Haggling for a heel kick: Charles Moore (right) and Greg Muttart face each other in a side-to-side orientation with Moore's head slightly exposed (1). When the opponent begins his heel kick, Moore moves in, hooks his lead arm under the other man's knee and holds his rear hand up to block a possible punch (2). The hapkido practitioner then places his feet together so he will be able to lift the opponent's kicking leg and knock him off-balance (3). To finish, Moore elevates the opponent as he uses his lead leg to sweep his supporting leg (4).*

## NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR OPPONENT

A skilled fighter who truly understands sparring will seldom take the bait you offer. If you give him an obvious option and he knows what you want him to do, he will throw something else.

Of course, now that you know the most popular methods for baiting an opponent, you will be able to avoid traps that your opponent sets. Once you sense his game plan, you should use an attack that does not give him what he wants, one that does not mesh with his understanding of which techniques can be executed from your body position and distance.

For example, your opponent leaves his gut open to encourage you to throw a front kick. You are wise to his plan, so you throw a backfist to his head. Now, a backfist to the head from this position is a little awkward, but the fact that he does not expect it means it could score. At the very least, you will not have fallen into his trap. —L.C.



*Begging for a backfist: As Marc Buckler (right) and Erik Navarrete square off, Buckler holds his hands low and uses his head as bait for a backfist or heel kick (1). When the opponent steps forward with his lead leg, Buckler knows his attack will be a backfist, so he slides in and blocks above the elbow while guarding his ribs with his right arm (2). The hapkido practitioner then hooks his right arm under the opponent's punching arm, reverses his body position and hooks his supporting leg (3). As Buckler pulls the other man's upper body downward with his arm, he lifts his lower body into the air with his leg (4).*

## Requesting a Roundhouse Kick

To get your opponent to attack with a roundhouse, you should stand slightly off kilter, with your body about six inches away from his centerline. Because that positioning makes it hard for him to land a front kick or side kick, he will usually opt for a lead-leg roundhouse.

The safest way to apply this baiting strategy is to begin slightly out of range and inch toward him while adjusting your lead arm to expose your

***"WHEN IT COMES TO FREE SPARRING, HOWEVER, YOU HAVE PROBABLY FOUND THAT THINGS DON'T WORK QUITE SO SMOOTHLY."***

stomach. He will eventually launch the roundhouse kick, and as soon as he does, you will be able to start your most effective defense at exactly the same time.

## Haggling for a Heel Kick

To offer your opponent a chance to score with a heel kick, stand in a position that leaves you open for a side kick but do not expose your ribs. Instead, move your head slightly toward him. Chances are, his response will be a lead-leg heel kick targeting your head. Although that would ordinarily be something to worry about, your foreknowledge of the attack will allow you to effortlessly neutralize it.

## LEAD LEG VS. REAR LEG

In general, the best fighters do not begin their attack with a rear-leg kick because it is easy for the other person to avoid. Consequently, the first four baiting techniques described in this article pertain to lead-leg attacks. Once you learn how to counter those lead-leg attacks, defending against a rear-leg kick will seem like a walk in the park.

It is important to understand that where and how you stand determine your opponent's options. If you are far away, he might launch a flying kick or jumping kick off his rear leg. If you are a little closer, he might try a rear-leg attack, a jumping kick off his lead leg or a flying hand strike. If you are closer still, he might opt for a lead-leg attack, a stepping or jumping hand technique, or a tight spin kick or back kick. If you are up close and personal, he might use a hand, elbow or knee strike or take you to the mat.

Knowing which options your opponent has at the various fighting distances is essential to your success and survival. For instance, if you are within lead-leg striking distance, the likelihood of being attacked by a flying kick is minuscule. Therefore, it is not an option you should worry about. Your focus should be on attacks that are more likely to occur—attacks your body position is begging him to try—so you can be ready for them.

—L.C.

## Pleading for a Punch

In general, if your body faces your opponent's body, he will feel compelled to punch you. Every time you launch a kick from your rear leg, your body squares up with his and you give him an opportunity to pummel your chest.

Once you are ready to deal with his punch, simply stand so your chest is perpendicular to his centerline and make sure you're within reach of his lead leg. Because this position also leaves you open to a lead-leg front kick, you must be prepared to counter that as well. Use your powers of observation: If he leans slightly backward, the kick is coming. If his shoulder moves, a punch is imminent. Have a defensive technique ready to go for both attacks.

**"REMEMBER THAT SPEED PLUS TIMING EQUALS VICTORY. YOU DON'T NEED TO HAVE THE SPEED OF BRUCE LEE TO BEAT YOUR OPPONENT. YOU NEED ONLY KNOW WHAT ATTACK HE WILL INITIATE AND MOVE FORWARD AT THE MOMENT HE BEGINS."**

## Begging for a Backfist

The backfist is frequently used in competition because it is fast and efficient. However, if you can apply your block above your opponent's elbow, his backfist will never hit you. The best way to get in deep enough to effect such a block is to move in as soon as he begins his attack, and that requires you to know the technique will be executed before you see it happen.

To manipulate your opponent into throwing a backfist, you must make



*Soliciting a side kick: To bait the opponent into throwing a side kick, the hapkido stylist (right) exposes his ribs while he stands at the proper distance and position.*

him think it is his easiest or only option. That means you must make your head available while you make your body difficult to reach. Stand in the position described for the side-kick baiting method, but cover your ribs and expose your head. You should be within striking distance of his lead leg. Then, as soon as you detect the backfist, begin your premeditated defense.

## Keys to Success

Remember that speed plus timing equals victory. You don't need to have the speed of Bruce Lee to beat your opponent. You need only know what attack he will initiate and move forward at the moment he begins. That's how old, fat guys manage to beat young, quick guys: They give them bait and set the youngsters up for a fall.

Always look into your opponent's eyes. It will make him feel uncomfortable, and that can work to your advantage in the ring or on the street. The real benefit of staring into his eyes, however, is that you will know when he is going to move before he moves. His eyes will open wider just prior to his attack. This facet of human nature was captured brilliantly in the movie *Tombstone*. In the final gunfight between Johnny Ringo and "Doc" Holiday, the camera closes in

on the fighters' faces. It shows Ringo's eyes open wide just before he draws his gun. Holiday is able to draw first because he sees Ringo's intention is his eyes.

Keep in mind that a skilled martial artist will know that his eyes can give away his plans, and he will probably be able to deceive you. If you find yourself in the ring with such an opponent, you will have to delay your counterattack until he actually



*Pleading for a punch: To leave himself open to a punch, the hapkido practitioner (right) faces his opponent straight-on while standing within range of his lead leg.*

moves in response to your baiting technique.

The best way to boost your ability to employ the aforementioned methods for baiting your opponent is simple trial and error. Once you gain a moderate amount of ring experience, you will be able to feel your opponent's temptation to take the bait you offer. And that will enable you to move as he moves and deploy your favorite defenses successfully. As Chong S. Kim, founder of jang mu won hapkido, likes to say, "The difference between good technique and so-so technique is only paper thin, but the outcome is as wide as the ocean." ✕

*About the author: Les Connard is a free-lance writer who has trained under Chong S. Kim since 1978. He operates Kim's Hapkido in Monrovia, California. For seminar information, call (626) 821-0024.*