

As outlined in the previous chapter; the Low Block is probably the first block that anyone beginning taekwondo will use. Most will be told that it is to be used solely against kicks, usually in ITF Walking Stance/WTF Front Stance.

Research has shown that, aside from middle or high Outer Forearm Block, this is one of the most versatile and powerful techniques taught to lower belts and indeed is so versatile that Professor Rick Clark of the Ao Denkou Kai has written a very successful book titled *75 Down Blocks*.

Aside from being easy for beginners to perform, this block relies very little on good technique to be powerful, although this does of course help. Generally performed in Walking Stance/Front Stance during patterns, it can easily be applied in virtually any stance



Low Block

The following applications are ones that research has discovered in Saju Jirugi, the first exercise taught to beginners in the ITF; Chon Ji, the first pattern taught to ninth Kup in the ITF and Taegeuk Il Jang, the first pattern taught within the WTF. Please assume that unless stated otherwise, the attack is always right-handed. This is purely because this book is using Pareto's 80/20 rule which states that you are most likely to meet the most common attacks 80 per cent of the time. Therefore, 80 per cent of the attacks that you face are most likely to be right-handed.

We have detailed two different methods of how to perform the Low Block so will now explore the other ways that the Low Block can be used.

The Low Block is not a technique which requires a high amount of skill to perform well, which is most likely why it is the first block to be taught to beginners. Similarly many of the techniques that can be used as alternative applications also lack the need for technical excellence.



Forearm Strike

The Forearm Strike or Smash is, to put it bluntly, a clubbing technique. It can be performed by a beginner on their first night within five to ten minutes. There are basically two different types of Forearm Strike: the Inward Outer Forearm and the Outward Outer Forearm. Obviously they can be delivered on a number of different planes but it boils down to just two strikes.

You might think that the Inward Outer Forearm Strike does not belong, but it does if you are using the WTF/Karate method of Low Block. The inward strike is performed by the hand that is 'blocking', the strike occurs whilst the hand is travelling to the opposite shoulder; it is just unfortunate that there is an attacker in its way.

INWARD OUTER FOREARM TO OUTWARD OUTER FOREARM STRIKE



The area used comprises of pretty much the whole of the forearm, from the base of the wrist to about 3 inches up from the tip of the elbow



The defender has a high guard whilst the attacker is trying to intimidate them by invading their space and poking them



The defender smashes their arm into the attacker's, raking towards themselves so that the arm is forced down and across the attacker's body. This makes it harder for the attacker to counter-punch



The defender immediately reverses the motion of their hand and performs an Outward Outer Forearm Strike to the attacker's neck on the left-hand side whilst stepping or shuffling forward with the left leg



Note how the defender's right hand is able to check the attacker's left hand, allowing the strike to go in



As you can see, a large portion of the forearm can be used to hit a number of points on the attacker's neck

SHORT ANALYSIS

As with any poking or jabbing movement, catching them at the right time can be difficult. This is the sort of 'attack' that is repeated, and usually repeated in some form of sequence. Once the sequence has been started the application is short and to the point.

The first strike clears the offending arm out of the way and gives the defender the initiative, whilst the second strike allows the defender to hit a vulnerable area. Because this is a 'flailing' technique, whether the defender hits the neck points or not is irrelevant as the next most likely target to be hit will be the jaw line or face of the attacker. The result will still be a stunning attack which will allow the defender to continue their attack if necessary.

ELBOW (USING THE 'ITF' CHAMBER)

If we take a look at the Thai Fighter we see similarities between his Elbow and the chamber and indeed the actual movement of the arms is also very similar. Breaking it down we can see how the taekwondo fighter can perform a parry, trap and Elbow whilst entering the chamber.



Left hand parries the incoming attack



Right hand grabs attacking arm