

No Holds Barred Fighting **The Clinch**

**Offensive and Defensive Concepts
Inside NHB's Most Grueling Position**

*The fifth guide in the
No Holds Barred Fighting
series by Mark Hatmaker*



750 Photos

Mark Hatmaker

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Photography by Doug Werner

TRACKS

Tracks Publishing
San Diego, California

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication

Hatmaker, Mark.

No holds barred fighting : the clinch : offensive and defensive concepts inside NHB's most grueling position / Mark Hatmaker ; photography by Doug Werner.

p. cm.

Includes index.

LCCN 2006906978

ISBN 1-884654-27-4

1. Wrestling holds. 2. Hand-to-hand fighting.
3. Wrestling--Training. I. Werner, Doug, 1950-
II. Title.

GV1196.4.H64H38 2006

796.812'3

QBI06-600321

Fighting Books by Mark Hatmaker

No Holds Barred Fighting:
The Ultimate Guide to Submission Wrestling

More No Holds Barred Fighting:
Killer Submissions

No Holds Barred Fighting:
Savage Strikes

No Holds Barred Fighting:
Takedowns

No Holds Barred Fighting:
The Clinch

Boxing Mastery



Books are always available through major bookstores
and booksellers on the internet.

Dedication

To Ed Gallagher,
Tadaaki Hatta,
M. Briggs Hunt, Cliff Keen
and Rajko Petrov
— astute minds and excellent coaches.
We stand on the
shoulders of these giants.

Acknowledgements

Phyllis Carter — editing
Kylie Hatmaker — stage direction
Kory Hays — partner, opponent, grimacer
Jackie Smith — graphic production

Warning label

Submission wrestling includes contact and can be dangerous. Use proper equipment and train safely. Practice with restraint and respect for your partners. Drill for fun, fitness and to improve skills. Do not fight with the intent to do harm.

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How to use the NHB (No Holds Barred) manuals

This book and the others in this series are meant to be used in an interlocking synergistic manner where the sum value of the manuals is greater than the individual parts. Our goal with each manual is to focus on a specific aspect of the twin sports of NHB/submission wrestling and to give thoughtful consideration to the necessary ideas, tactics and strategies pertinent to that facet of focus. We are aware that this piecemeal approach may seem lacking if one only consumes one or two manuals, but we are confident that when three or more manuals have been studied, the overall picture or method will reveal itself.

Since the manuals are interlocking, there is no single manual in the series that is meant to be complete in and of itself. For example, although *No Holds Barred Fighting: Savage Strikes* is a thorough compendium on NHB/self-defense striking, it is bolstered with side-by-side study of *Boxing Mastery*. While the book *No Holds Barred Fighting: Killer Submissions* introduces the idea of chaining submissions and can be used as a solitary tool, it is more meaningful with an understanding of the material that preceded it, *No Holds Barred Fighting: The Ultimate Guide to Submission Wrestling*.

The same can be said for this effort that examines the clinch. Our preceding volume, *No Holds Barred Fighting: Takedowns*, dovetails with the material that follows. While *Takedowns* and *The Clinch* can be consumed independently, I think you'll find them more effective if they are treated as a single volume.



Now that I've used some of your time by explaining the method to my madness, let's empty our teacups and examine the clinch.

Mark Hatmaker

Introduction



When the novice or casual observer of the NHB/submission wrestling game thinks of these twin sports, they are likely to envision crunching KOs, jarring takedowns and/or slick submissions. Seldom will images of two athletes engaged in a clinch come to mind. The reason, to be

frank, is that the clinch isn't exciting viewing. To the uninitiated, the clinch can appear to be nothing more than two sweaty competitors aggressively hugging and jockeying for position. The uninitiated view the clinch as the lull between the standup and ground game.

NHB/submission wrestling veterans take a view that is diametrically opposed to the one espoused above. To the informed, the clinch is a grueling chess match in which striking and/or the takedown is an inevitability. Careful observation of how a fighter conducts himself within the clinch often reveals much about his skills in other aspects of the game.

Any observer or participant of these twin sports, whether novice or experienced, knows that the clinch is a given. Barring a KO, a successful shot from the outside or a jump into guard to bypass the clinch, it is a major part of the game. As these two sports develop, we see a higher ratio of use of the clinch each year. This should come as no surprise to Western wrestling enthusiasts who are aware that many wrestling styles are almost entirely based on the clinch aspect of the fight. This fact reveals that there is much tactical and strategic value going on in that “hug between competitors.”

This guide strives to introduce you to the commonly encountered varieties of the clinch and make you aware of the offensive and defensive options within each. We’re not going to be stingy with the material we present, but please keep in mind, as I’ve already mentioned, this is a topic so vast that many wrestling styles are based on the clinch alone. There is no practical or economical way to present all the possible material without turning this into a book the size of the New York City Phone Directory.

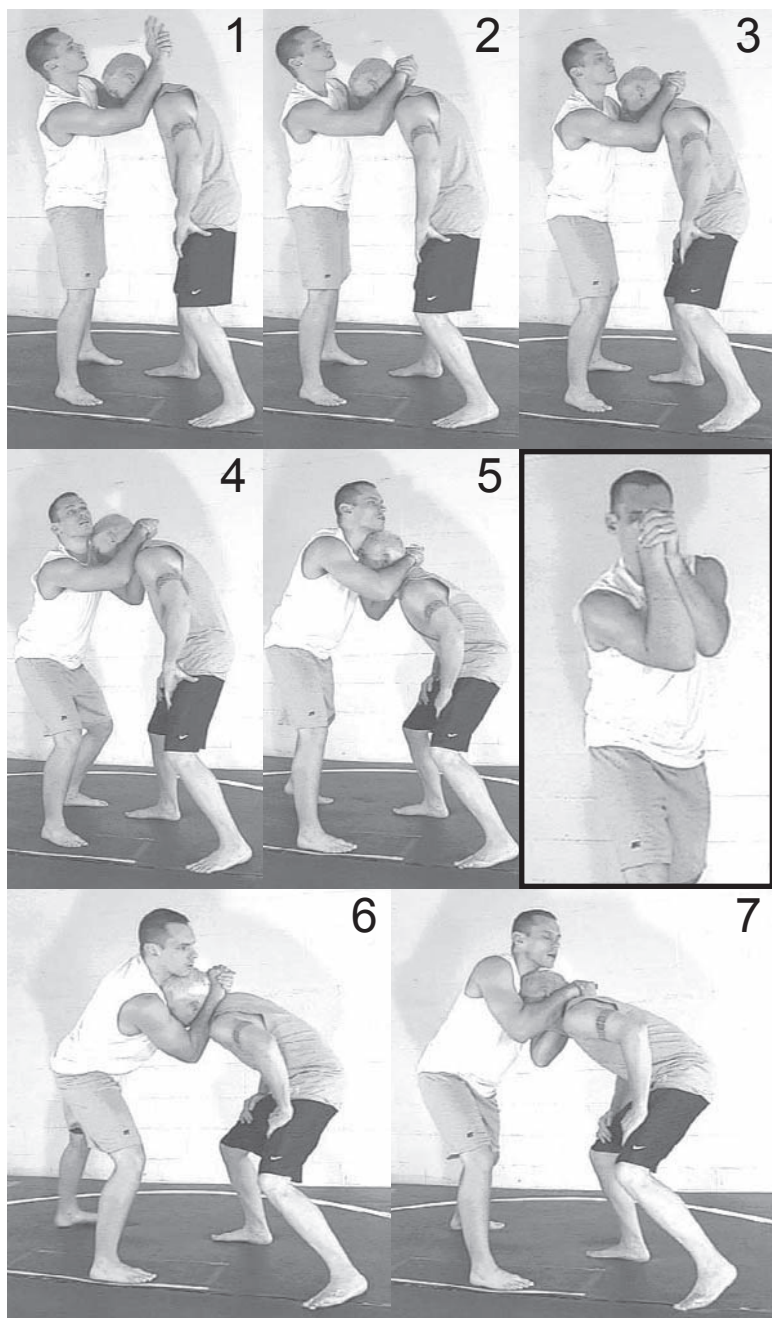
While this book doesn’t include all there is to know about the clinch, it does cover the vast majority of what you need to know as it pertains to the twin sports of NHB and submission wrestling. Greco-Roman enthusiasts and others engaged in clinch-only games will find much of value, but will need to continue to build on their game with other resources. NHB players and submission wrestlers should find more than enough between these covers to keep aggressively competitive. It will teach you where you need to be and keep you on your feet when you want to be.

1 Clinch varieties



There is a staggering number of ways two competitors can choose to clinch. Some involve gis or other forms of jacketed wrestling grips. Others utilize various forms of wrestling belts, while others start the wrestlers in grips that may seem a bit artificial to our UFC/Pride jaundiced eyes. Each tie-up has its value within a given game. For our twin sports, we limit ourselves to three main clinches and provide variations within each on a per-technique basis.

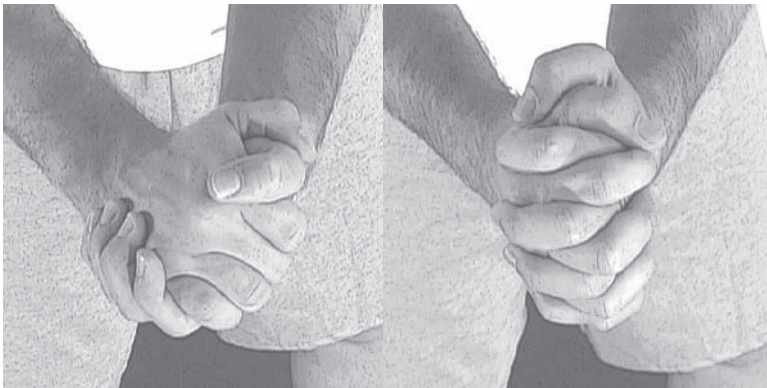
Clinch varieties



Head clinch

The head clinch is also known as the Muay Thai tie-up or the plum blossom. This clinch is ideal for the striking game but less effective in takedown potential.

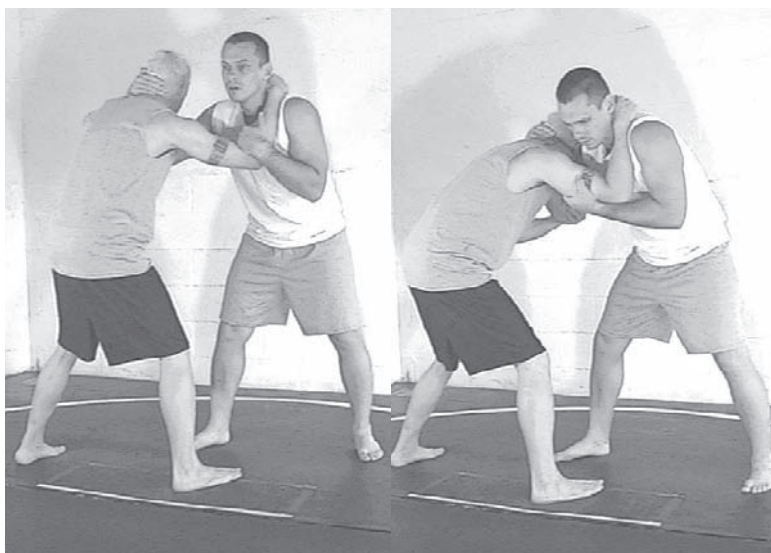
- Clasp your hands behind your opponent's head. Use a palm-to-palm grip.
- Caution: Do not interlace your fingers. Doing so puts you in jeopardy of breaking or dislocating a finger.
- Squeeze your elbows together.
- While squeezing your elbows together, strive to drive one elbow/forearm ahead of the other. This cants your opponent's head at an awkward angle. Anytime you can get your opponent's head out of alignment, do so.
- Do not leave his head free between your bodies — pull his head down with a series of short jerks and place his forehead on your upper sternum. Jerking the head is far more effective than a smooth pull. The jerking makes it harder for your opponent to resist, even if he is stronger.
- Once his forehead is planted on your chest, drive your chest up and forward and drag his head toward you as if you wanted to make his chin touch your solar plexus. This places his head at an even more precarious angle, and as you can see, makes the placement of strikes all the sweeter.



Palm-to-palm — Yes!

Interlaced — No!

Clinch varieties



Two ways to grip — Overgripping on the right. Undergripping on the left. Both work.



Head to head — Drive to push him off balance.

Collar and elbow clinch

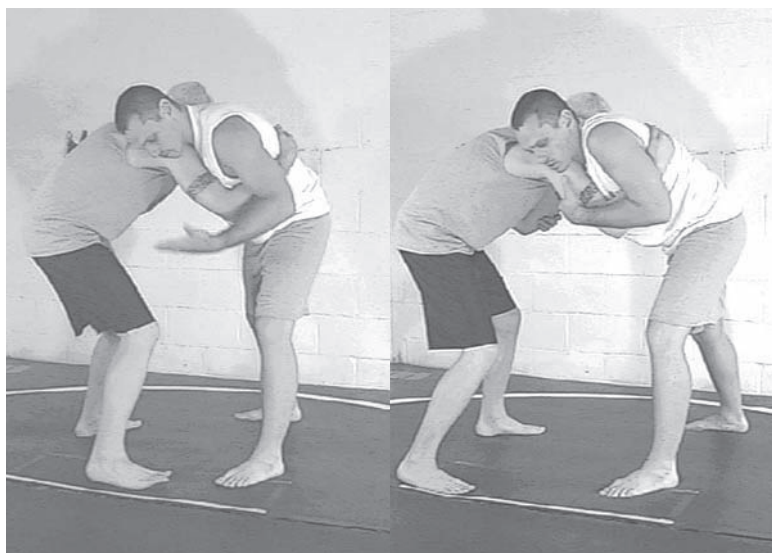
This clinch is the bread-and-butter of many wrestling styles, and we covered it in moderate detail in *Takedowns*. We won't repeat that material here, but we can't ignore this position and its relative value to the clinch game. The collar-and-elbow clinch is versatile for use in setting up takedowns, but due to the space between bodies that can be used to set up strikes, it is of negligible value in the NHB game.

- Place your right hand on the back of your opponent's neck. He will do the same.
- Grip his right forearm — the crook of his arm — with your left hand.
- This grip can be an overhook or an undergrip with a pinch.
- Use head pressure against his head to drive him off base (balance) or place your forehead against his right shoulder to defend against strikes (particularly headbutts if you choose to use this clinch in NHB).



Head to shoulder — Protection from strikes.

Clinch varieties



Over-under clinch

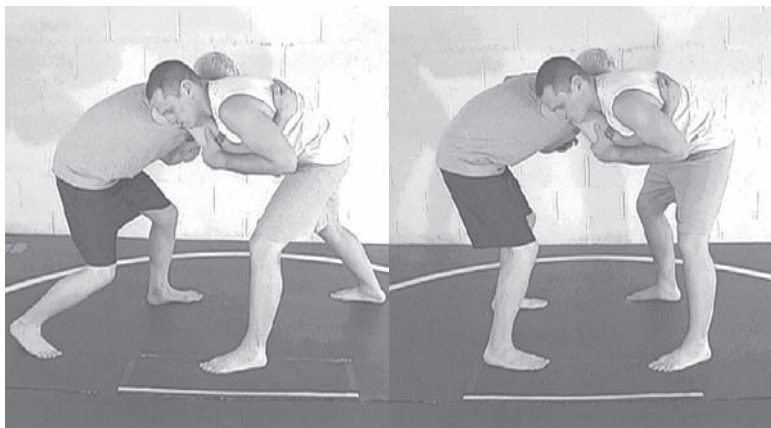
This is the go-to clinch seen most often in both NHB and submission wrestling. We will spend most of our offensive and defensive efforts on this topic. It only makes sense to play the percentages. It occurs commonly because:

1. It is a fallback to thwart shots.
2. The lack of space between bodies makes the fighter less susceptible to strikes than the previous two clinches.
3. And because some fighters, particularly later in the match, use this position to rest — rest being a relative term.

- Underhook your opponent's left arm with your right, placing the palm of your hand on his shoulder blade. Your opponent does the same.
- Caution: Do not over penetrate the underhooking arm. This sets you up for whizzers.
- Overhook his right arm with your left hand gripping him at the triceps.
- Squeeze his right arm against your body with the inside of your left arm.
- Your underhook shoulder will bury into his underhook shoulder (right versus right).
- You can stand square or with your overhook foot forward. More on this in the strike defense section.

OK, these are the three clinches that we will be dealing with in this volume. Before we start moving with these clinch shells, we have two interruptions from your author.

Clinch varieties



Good over-under clinch stances — Overhook side foot forward is best (left). Square stance will work.

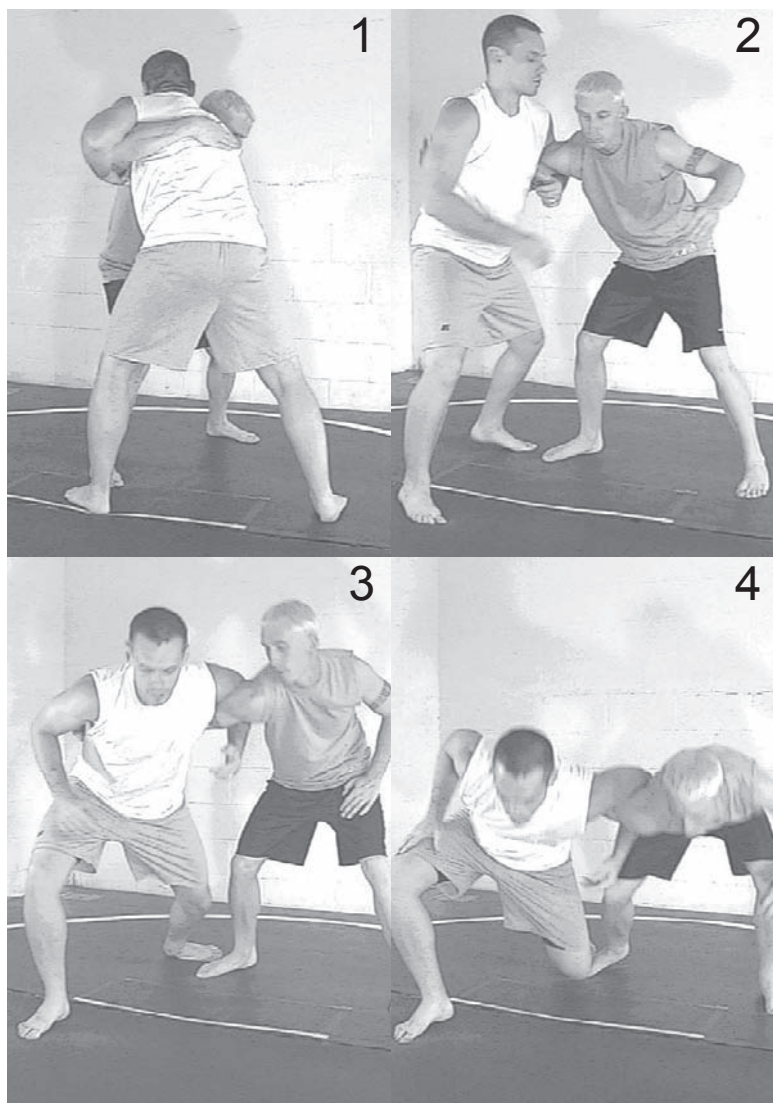


Bad idea — Overhook side foot back will not work.



Underhook penetration — Top arm position is correct. Bottom image shows arm traveling too far. See next page.

Clinch varieties

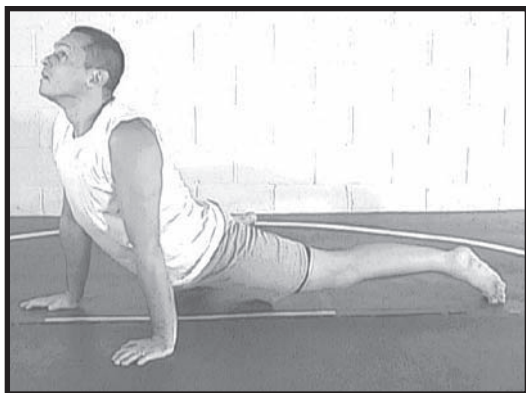


Underhooking too far — Kory's deep underhook enables Mark to apply a whizzer.

2 *Clinch conditioning*

Working the clinch is hard work — exhausting, grueling, oxygen-sucking work. Conditioning is of premium value. To be effective and efficient within the clinch game, you've got to have the stamina to play the game. As a rule, specificity is a prime consideration in your conditioning goals.

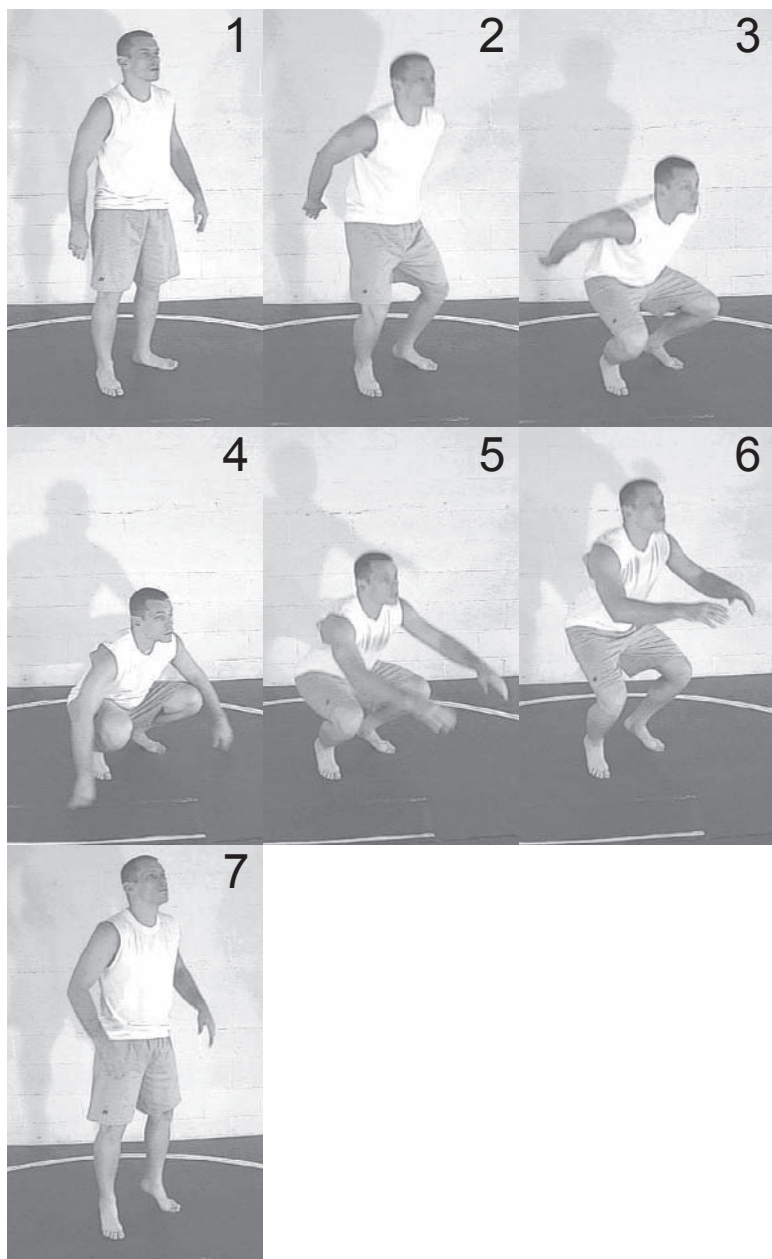
Specificity means that the conditioning activity should mimic the activity being conditioned for as much as possible. Thus, there is no



better conditioner for clinch work than working the clinch. It's as simple as that.

But what about conditioning when you lack a training partner? I suggest two exercises — and these should come as no surprise — the body-weight squat and the dive-bomber push-up. These are the easiest specific mimics I know. Numerous repetitions of squats prepare your legs for the grueling up-down and constant pushing your legs will encounter in a clinch war. The dive-bomber will build upper body endurance throughout the entire shoulder girdle with the added benefit of being specific to the motions needed in over-under pummeling.

Clinch conditioning



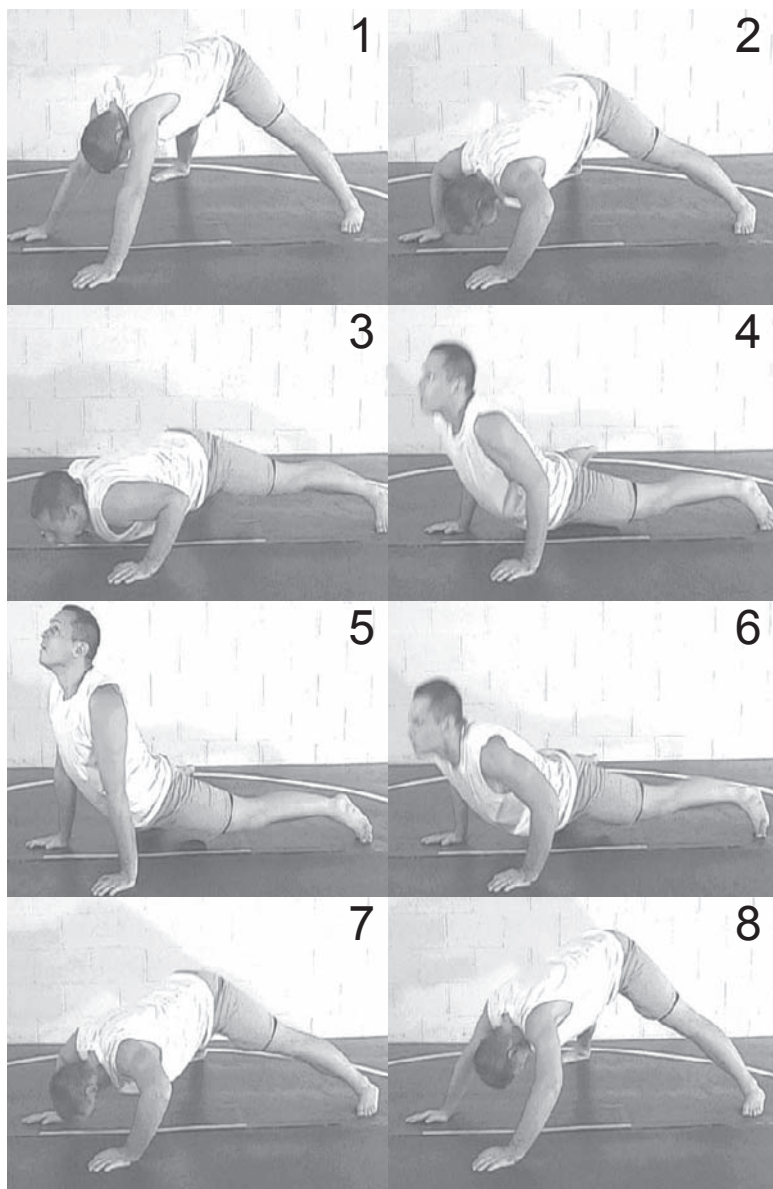
Squats

- ☒ Stand with your feet shoulder width apart.
- ☒ Squat down rising onto the balls of your feet.
- ☒ Your butt should make contact with your heels.
- ☒ Rise back to standing position. That's it.

Much ado is made by some about arm position while performing squats. Swing your arms, put your hands on your hips, keep your hands behind your head, it's your call. The key is the exercise itself — the squats.

How many? The minimum is 100 and 500 are enough.

Clinch conditioning



Dive-bomber push-ups

Some prefer the dand or half-dive-bomber push-up, but it works as only half an exercise. And, to be honest, the forward sweep is the easy half. Use the full dand or dive-bomber for true clinch conditioning.

- ☒ Place your hands on the mat shoulder width apart.
- ☒ Place the balls of your feet on the mat approximately 2-3 shoulder widths apart.
- ☒ Sweep down and between your hands as if to brush your chest on the mat. Then arch looking toward the sky as your hips stay low to the mat.
- ☒ Reverse this motion with a backward sweep following your original path to return to the starting position.

You'll find that these are tough to crank. Try 25-30 at a pop for starters and build to 50.

Although each exercise has the cache of specificity for the activity we are conditioning for, never lose sight of the fact that the activity itself is its own best conditioner.





3 It's OK to disagree

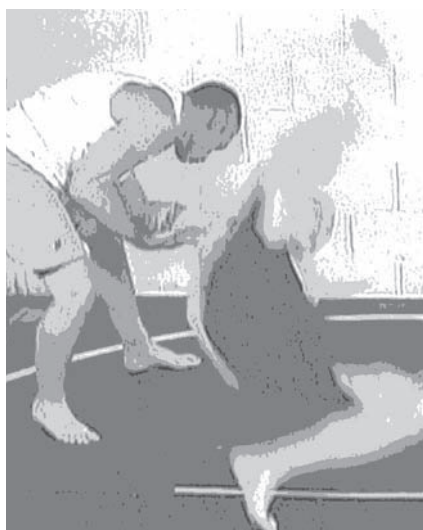


What am I
talking about?
Never agree
to a clinch.
Never. Never
ever. Clinch
agreement is

less of an issue in NHB, but often in straight submission wrestling, you see two competitors shake hands and rather than start the match, reach for each other in a passive way, tie up and only then go to work. This passive reach for a clinch is essentially a second hand shake and an agreement for a neutral position — an agreement to clinch.

What I am proposing once the formalities are taken care of, is to jockey for superior clinch position. Strive to slap the clinch of your choice into position. If your opponent seeks his own, maneuver out of it unless or until you can attain superior position within the clinch.

Agree to the handshake — it adheres to sportsmanlike conduct and it's the right thing to do — but after that bit of etiquette is out of the way, never agree with anything else your opponent proposes. Control the clinch or don't clinch at all.



4 Circling

I'd like you to engage in an imaginary experiment, or you can actually walk this experiment through. Imagine yourself walking at a fast pace. Got it? Not too tough, is it?

Now, imagine yourself walking backward at a fast pace. This is a little more difficult.

Now, imagine yourself walking forward and occasionally pivoting or pirouetting to move from facing the front to facing back — keep walking. Now, move from back to front.



You probably noticed a couple of things. Walking forward is easier and more natural than walking backward. It feels a bit more natural to spin back to front than it does from front to back.

These simple observations should be kept in mind as you use this manual. When most fighters clinch, there is a tendency to lean into each other and give each other weight. They stay stock still or attempt to drive into each other in an effort to move each other backward.

When in a clinch, if you can drive your opponent backward, do so. Your forward motion is far more natural than his backward motion. If your opponent is able to move you backward, rather than resist his momentum, pivot to change from “back-to-front.”

Why is it so important not be moved backward? Walking forward is easy and so is striking while moving forward. You seldom see an effective strike delivered while moving backward. What you do see are a gamut of effective strikes and takedowns from an opponent who moves forward or who circles when being driven backward.

When caught in the dilemma of playing an equally matched opponent who you can't drive backward and is unable to drive you backward — do not stay still. Begin circling even without his forward drive. Circling will upset his base, which reduces his number of effective strikes and can open his base to more viable take-down options.

With all this in mind, be aware that when you are driving an opponent forward, you are vulnerable to being pivoted on and circled out of position. Do not let that inhibit your aggressive drive. Save 10-15 percent of your drive to make adjustments in your footwork if he hits a circling gambit.

Simple thought experiment. Simple strategic rules. The photos in this book are stills, but when working the material in this book, you should be circling and driving at all times.

5 Pummeling

Pummeling. There's a word you don't see every day unless you are a grappling enthusiast. Pummeling is the upper body corollary of footwork and circling in regard



to the clinch. Remember my exhortation to never agree to a clinch but rather to take control of it. Some may ask, "How do I do that?" The answer is pummeling.

Pummeling is both an offensive and defensive tactic. It is used offensively to maneuver your clinch grips to a superior position. It is used defensively to stymie your opponent's attempts to pummel you into a weaker position. The beauty of pummeling is there is only one skill set

needed for offense or defense. The only difference is in regard to the time of its use.

The root pummeling skills for all three clinches we emphasize in this manual follow. But now I offer a few suggestions on the training needed for pummeling.

Pummeling

Begin with your partner at a slow contemplative pace. Give each other only mild resistance so you can focus on your footwork, body position, grips and circling. If too much pressure is applied too soon while learning pummeling skills, there is a tendency to move from clean technique to muscling inside the clinch. Don't get me wrong. Muscle has its place. But let's make it educated muscle.

Spend a lot of time pummeling. I mean a lot of time. After all, the clinch happens because two opponents navigate past open stance strikes and can't quite secure a takedown. You are clinching because you haven't KO'd him or you haven't been able to take him down. You have to clinch by strategic and tactical default. It is because of good matchmaking and/or your opponent's orneriness that you're stuck in this position.

The key to getting unstuck is often being the better pummeler, and the better pummeler is usually the better conditioned athlete. There are no shortcuts — you've got to put in the time. It is not uncommon to hear stories of elite Greco-Roman athletes spending an hour pummeling nonstop. With that in mind, let's go to observation number three.

I'm a big fan of round timers. Pick a time: 3-minute rounds, 5-minute, 8-minute, 10-, 12-, 15-, 20-, whatever. Then grab your partner and start the drill. The key is to log your rounds and to build clinch stamina.

As your skill with pummeling increases, vary the pressure and intensity. Use a 1-10 scale. One being a friendly hug, 10 is all-out NHB full-contact. Train with a

partner who understands the gradations. You can start at level 5 (about 50 percent intensity) then after a minute or so, one of you can call 7 or 8. Raise the intensity to that level for a minute. Then one of you calls 5, and you walk it back to the original pace. Continue the round in this interval manner. Allowing each fighter to take turns calling intensity numbers forces you to dig deep when you may be exhausted and might have only called for a 6, but he's shoving against you calling for a 9.

When practicing pummeling, work on all components — positioning, circling and hand position. But don't go for takedowns or strikes. You can manhandle each other in any other way with clinch intensity being your only weapon, but play the isolation game at this point.

Pummeling

Head clinch pummeling: Snaking

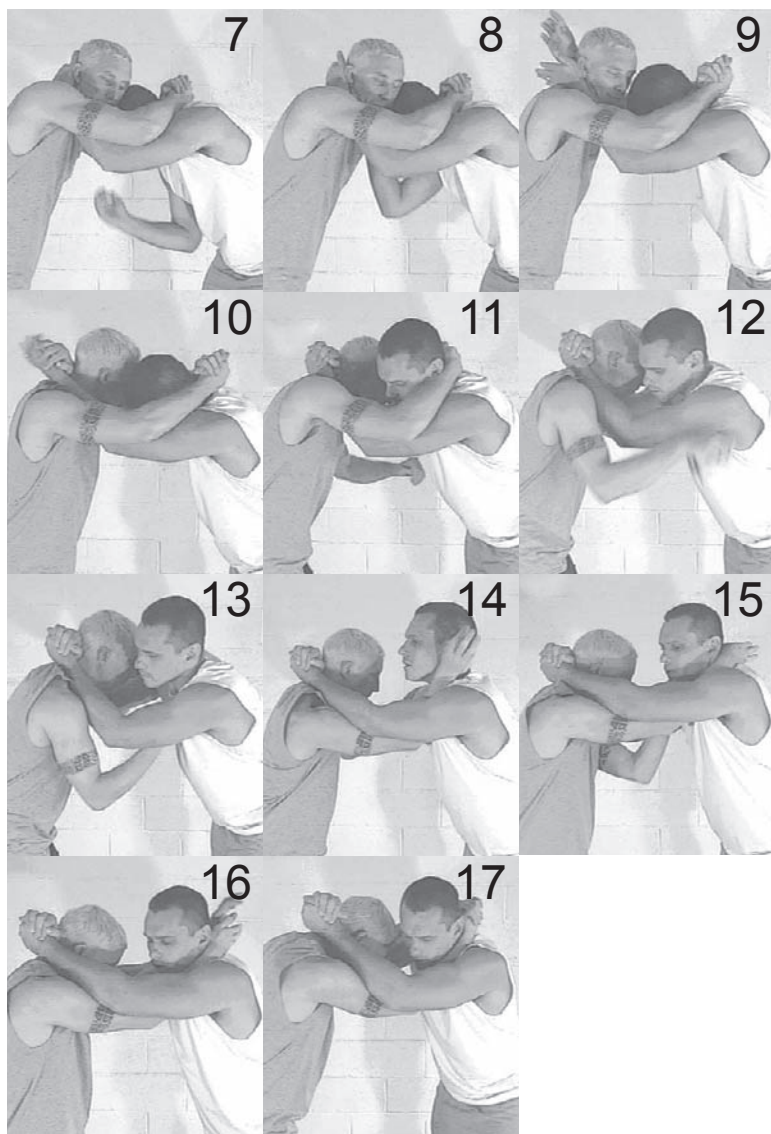
- ☒ One partner secures the head clinch.
- ☒ The other uses his right hand to snake along the inside of his partner's left arm to grip the back of his head.
- ☒ He then snakes his left arm on the other side to attain the complete head clinch.
- ☒ The partner who originally held the clinch now performs the same snaking.

Tips

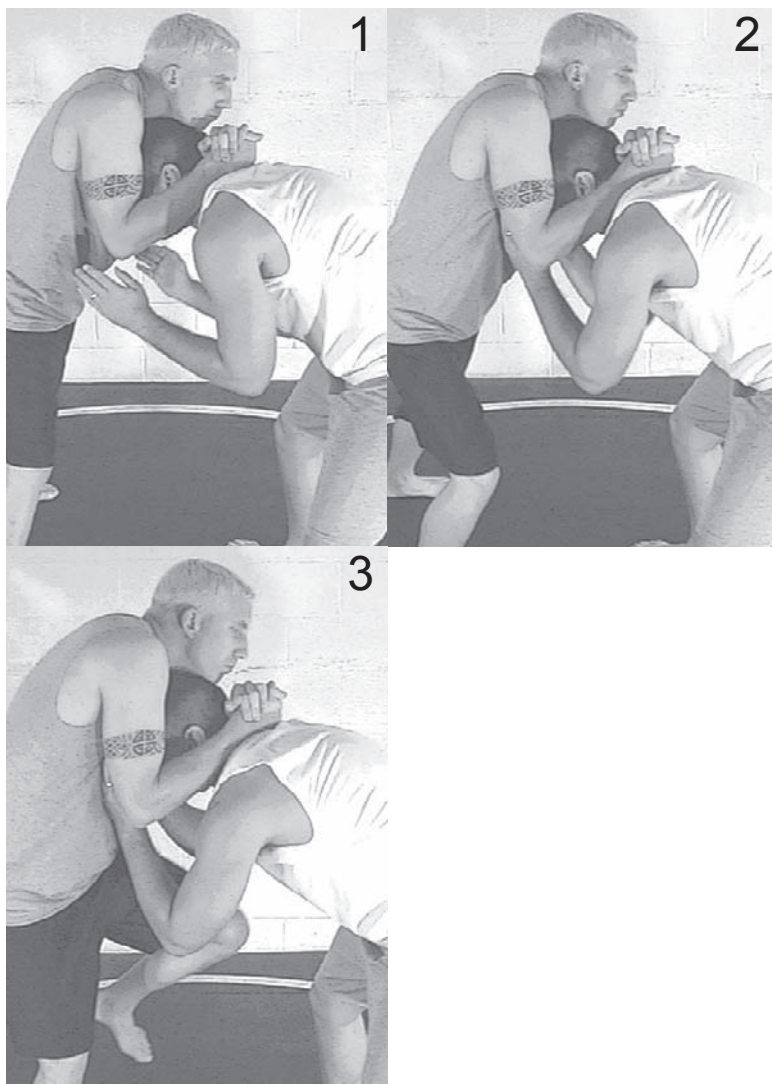
- ☒ Always snake one hand at a time — never both. One hand needs to be free for defense until you can gain neck control.
- ☒ Spend a few rounds with the right hand snaking first and then a few with the left snaking first. After building dexterity, feel free to interchange hands as you drill.



Snaking in a head clinch



Pummeling



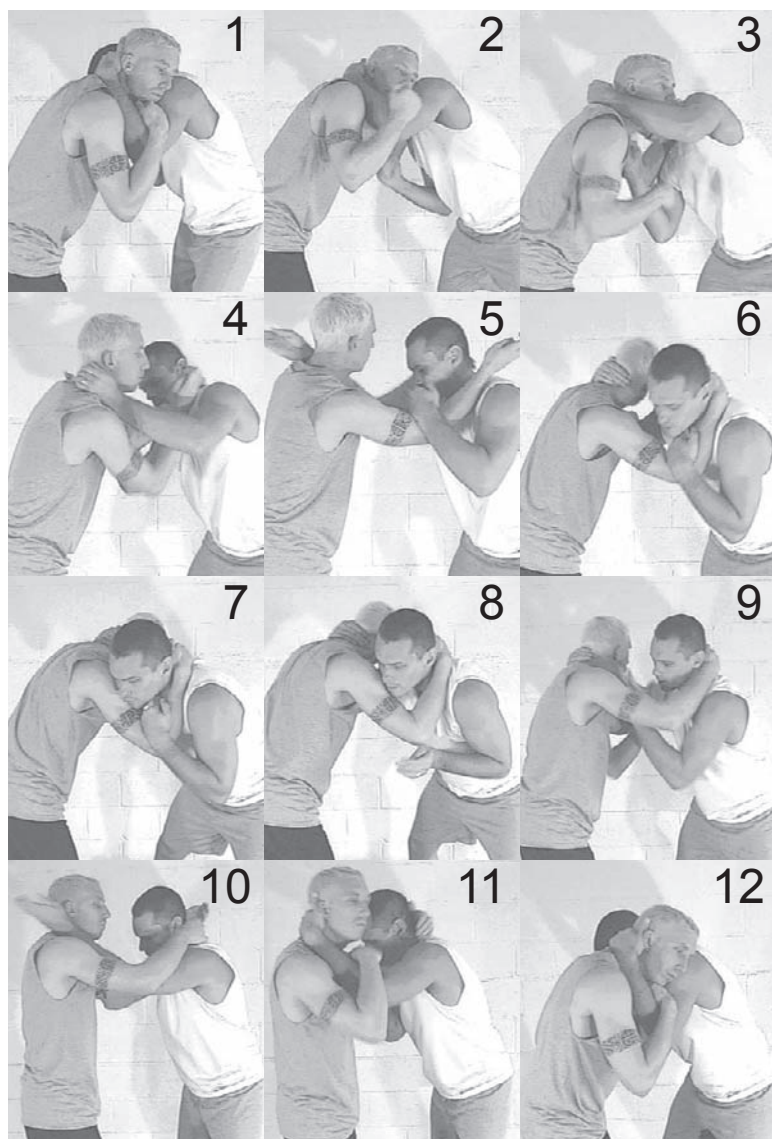
No — Snaking with two hands leaves you open to knee strikes.



Collar and elbow pummeling

Start collar and elbow pummeling in a neutral position. If your opponent disengages his elbow hand to snake for your neck and slap on a head clinch, you mirror his snaking with your elbow hand.

This brings you both to a collar and elbow tie-up with the hands having switched position.



Snaking in a collar and elbow clinch

Over-under pummeling

Train all of the clinches assiduously, but be advised that this is the one you should spend the most amount of time drilling.

- ☒ Begin in your over-under tie-up.
- ☒ Snake your overhook arm underneath his underhook arm as if you planned to leave both of your arms underhooked and lock on a front-body lock (front bear hug).
- ☒ While you are snaking, your partner is performing the same motion bringing you back to neutral.

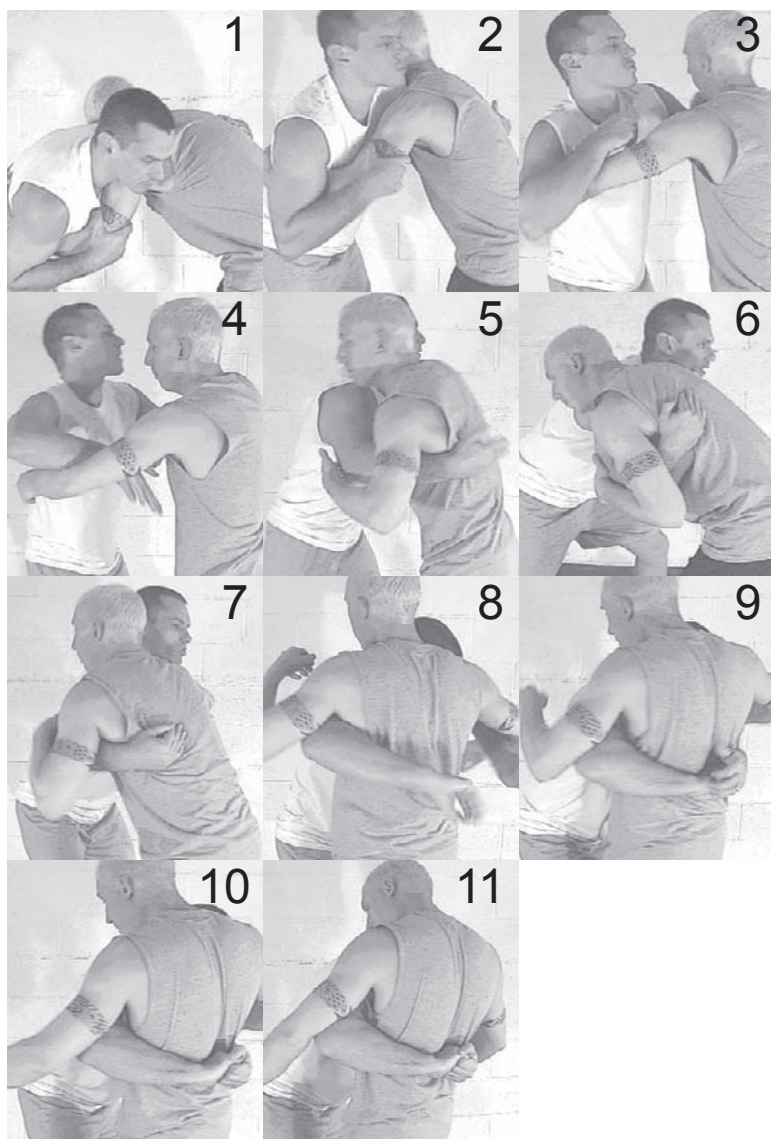
Tips

- ☒ While over-under pummeling, remember to pay attention to your shoulder and head placement as well as your footwork.
- ☒ Once this skill is attained, make it competitive. You can each strive for a front-body lock on the other. The first one able to lock his hands behind his opponent's back is the victor. Start again.
- ☒ As you increase the intensity, add the element of "gorilla thumping." Gorilla thumping is forcibly making contact with your underhook shoulders. This thumping helps to unbalance your opponent.

OK, you can clinch.

You can move inside the clinch.

Let's get the clinch fight moving.

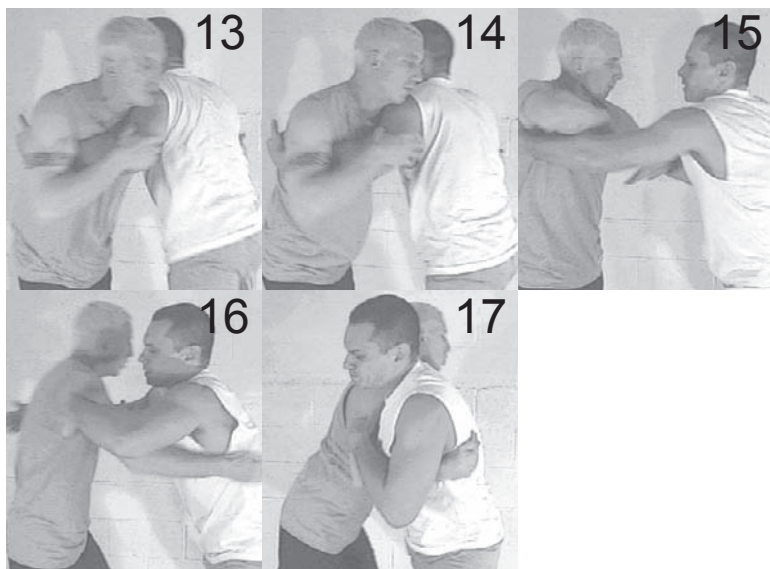


Snaking in an over-under clinch with tie-up

Pummeling



Snaking in an over-under clinch with gorilla thumping

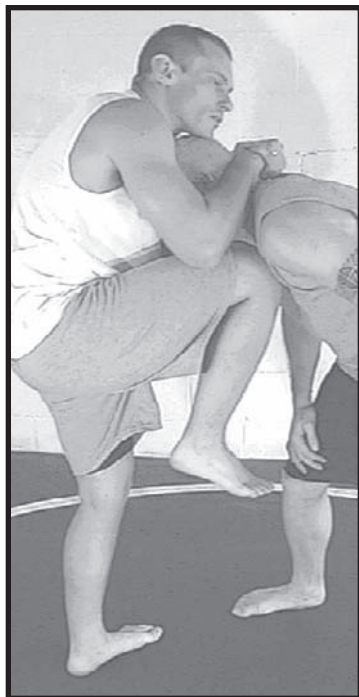


Pummeling



Gorilla thumping

6 Striking within the clinch: offense and defense



For an in-depth examination of striking both within and outside the clinch, see *Savage Strikes*.

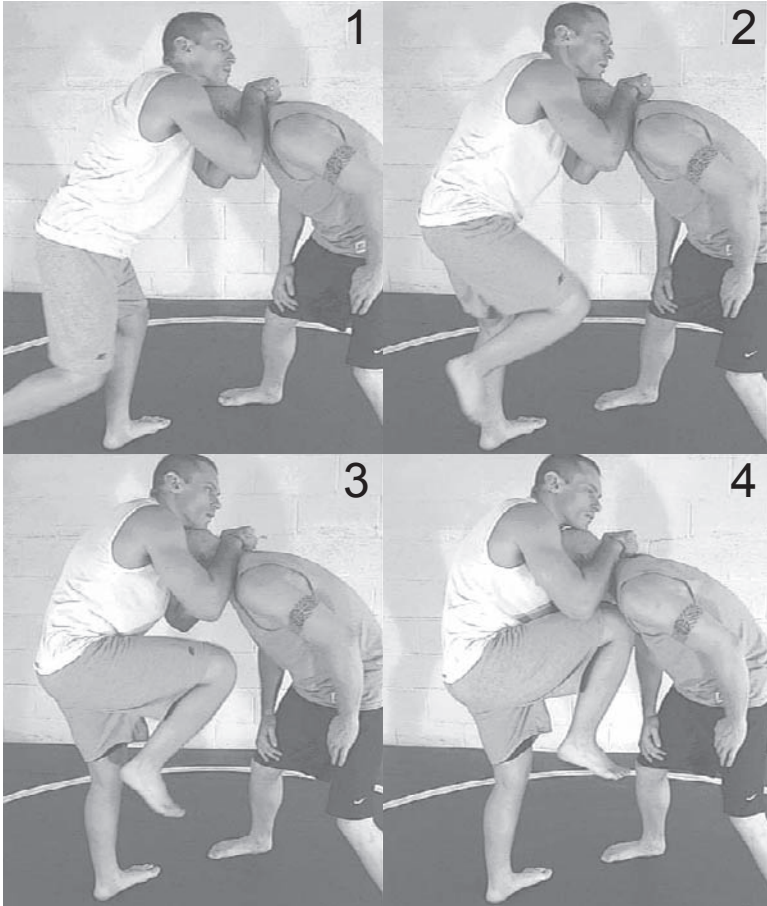
Here we do not cover every possible strike or striking combination available within the clinch, but the highest common denominators that you definitely need to be familiar with. Notice that we deal with strikes that are actually delivered only while clinching. A world of opportunities open up if you decide to disengage from the clinch and

strike, but for now we assume the clinch is just where you want to be, or are forced to be.

6.1 Head clinch striking offense

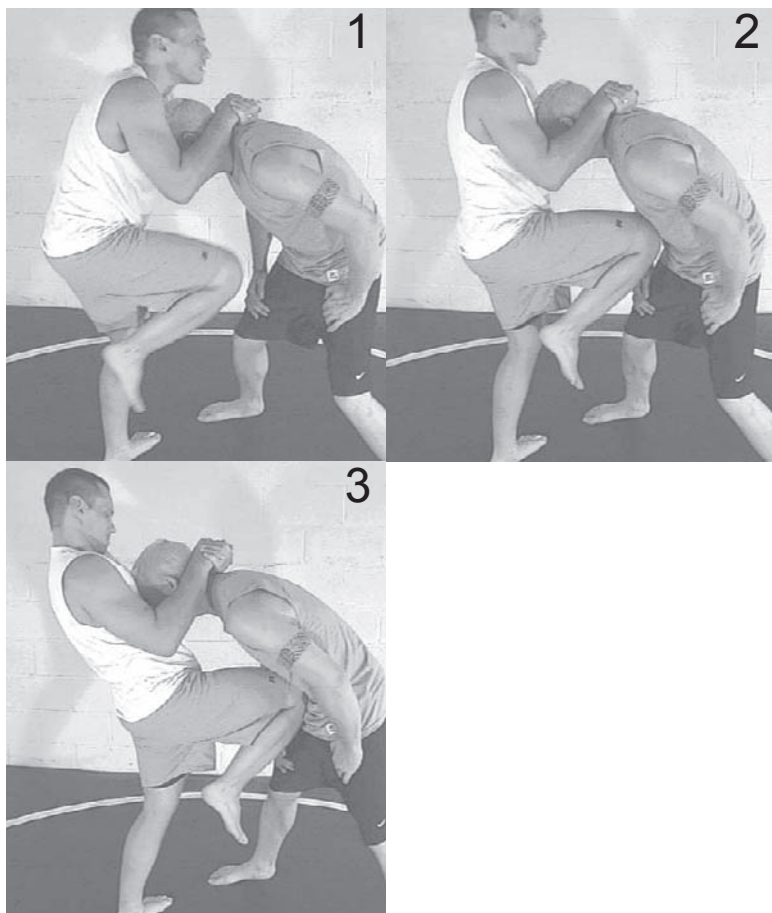


Up knee



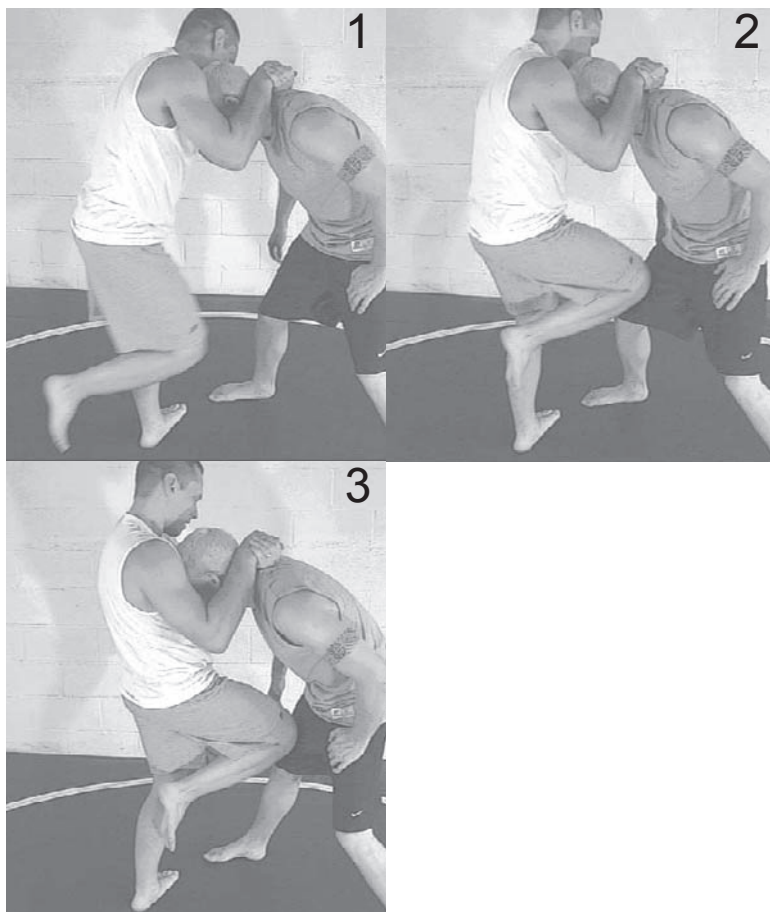
- ☒ While keeping clinch pressure on, drop one of your legs back (here the right leg).
- ☒ Jerk his head down while punching your hips forward and driving your right knee upward. The impact point can be the face, chin or throat. No need to be choosy.

High punch knee



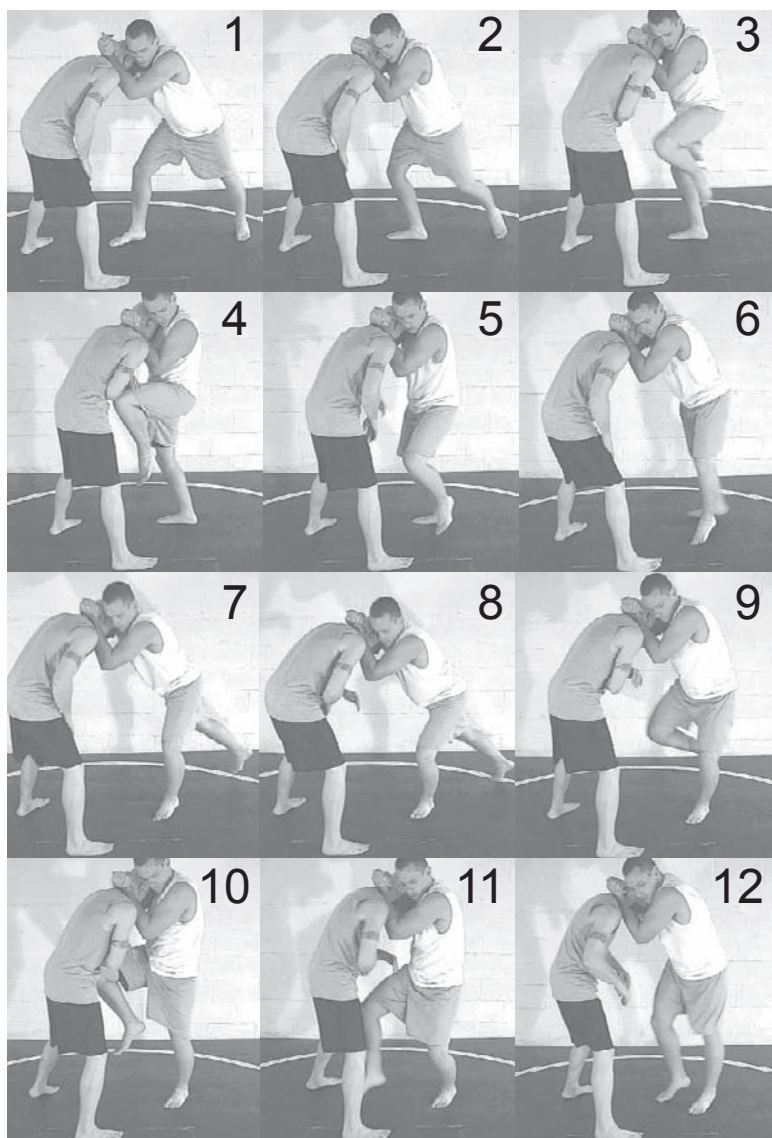
- ☒ Similar to the up knee, but here we drive the knee not up, but into the opponent's body.
- ☒ To deliver this shot, punch your hips forward to bolster the impact.

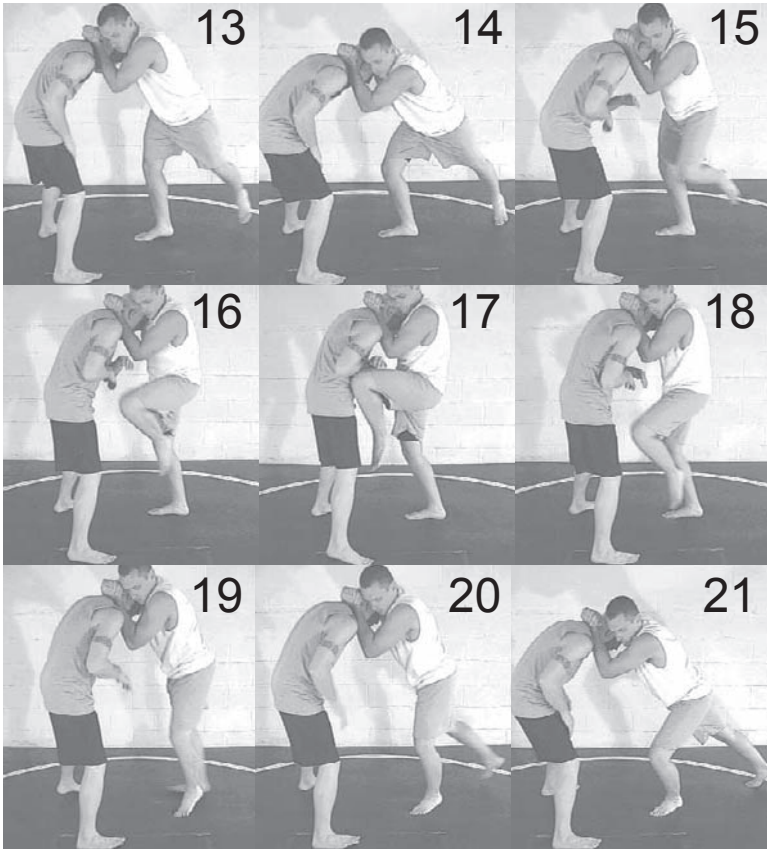
Low punch knee



- ☒ This is a rare but quite effective shot.
- ☒ Deliver like the high punch knee, except your target area becomes the front of your opponent's thigh.

Skip knee sequence

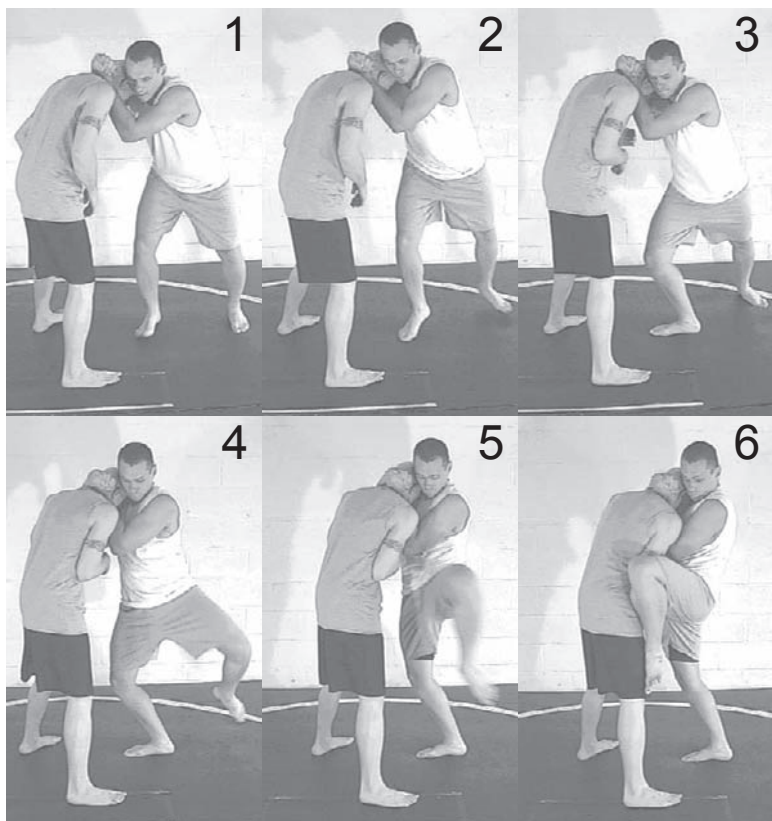




The previous three knees can be thrown in multiples with a change in levels if you choose. But you must learn how the footwork supplies the force for each shot.

- ☒ Perform the first knee as you would for a single shot.
- ☒ As you step the striking foot to the mat, skip your left foot back — you will now be right foot forward and left foot to the rear — set for the next knee.
- ☒ Fire the left knee, set the left foot on the mat and skip the right foot to the rear.
- ☒ Repeat as necessary.

High round knee



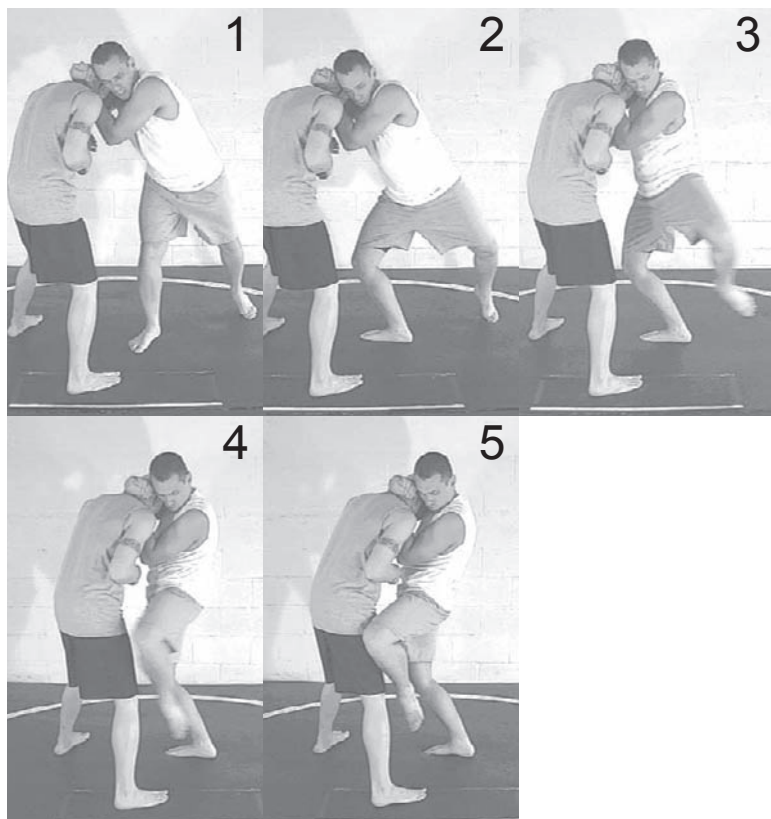
☒ Notice that this knee strike is delivered with the inside of the knee joint, not with the tip or point of the knee. Rotating the hips to accommodate a knee point strike is needless because this flat strike provides a surprising amount of wallop.

☒ The key to this strike is applying the unusual footwork.

Simply lifting and swinging your knee to the inside adds little impact to this strike.

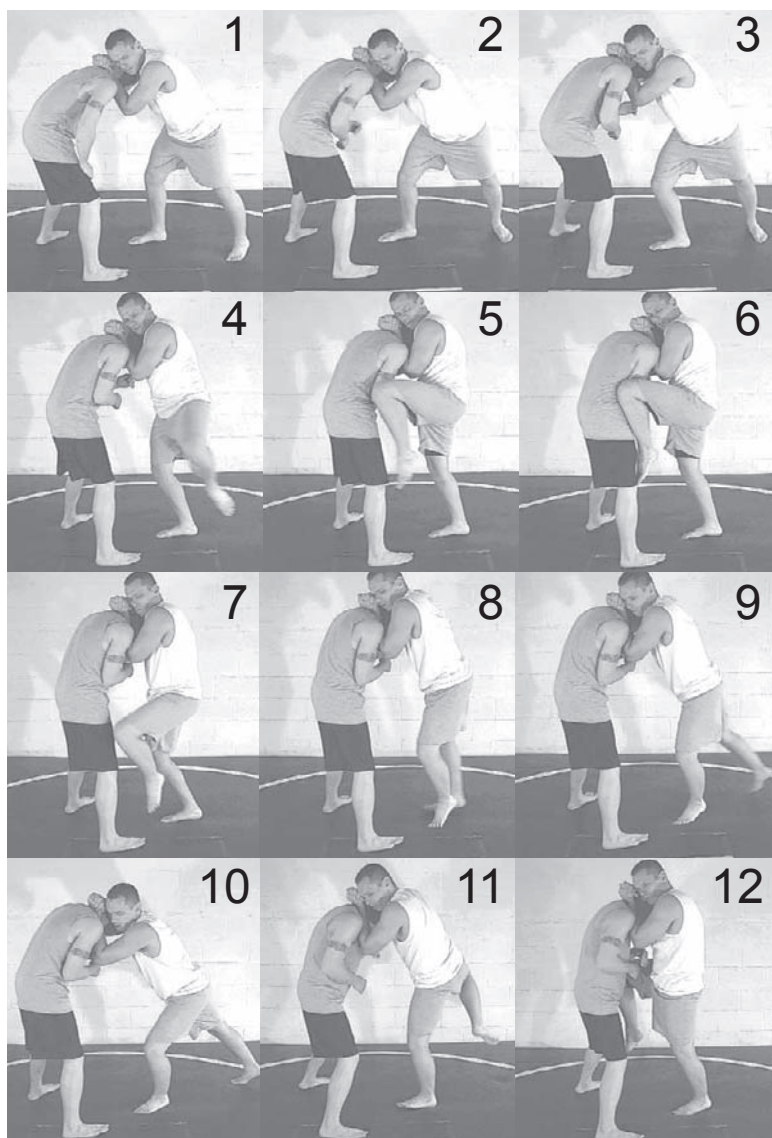
☒ To launch a high round knee (that will strike your opponent's torso) hop your right foot in front of your opponent's right foot while raising your left knee high and to the outside.

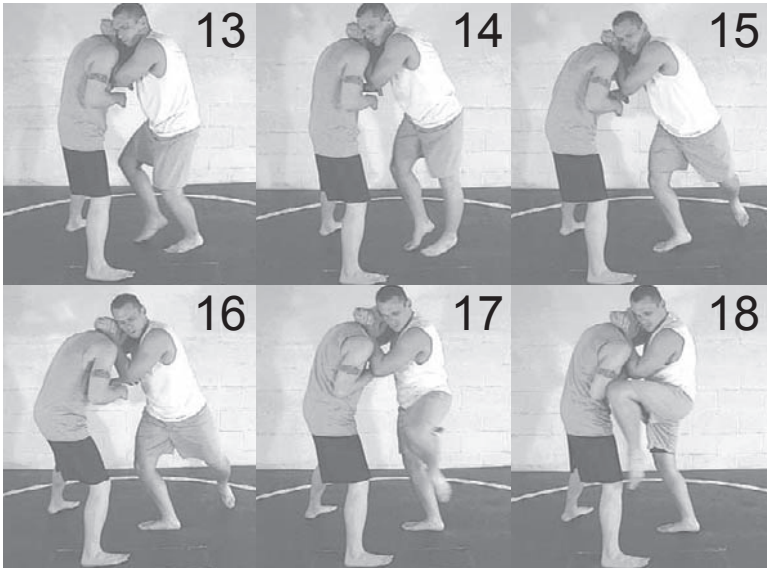
☒ Using the ball of the right foot as a pivot point, swing your entire body and allow the left knee to make impact.

Low round knee

☒ Perform like in the high version, but here the impact point is the outside of your opponent's thigh.

Skip round knee sequence





To perform skip round knees in succession, drill the following.

- ☒ Perform the left round knee.
- ☒ Once the left knee has made contact, hop the left foot to the mat in front of your opponent's left foot while raising your right knee to the outside.
- ☒ Execute the right round knee and repeat the sequence.
- ☒ Note: If the skip knee and skip round knee sequence have an odd dance look, you're probably on the right track.

Multiple knee drills

I recommend drilling head clinch knees at all levels and becoming versatile in delivering multiples. Like in boxing, combinations are king.

Skip knee drill

Execute skip knees for one round.

Skip round knee drill

Execute skip round knees for one round.

Skip knee/skip round knee drills

Drill the following sequences for a minimum of one round each.

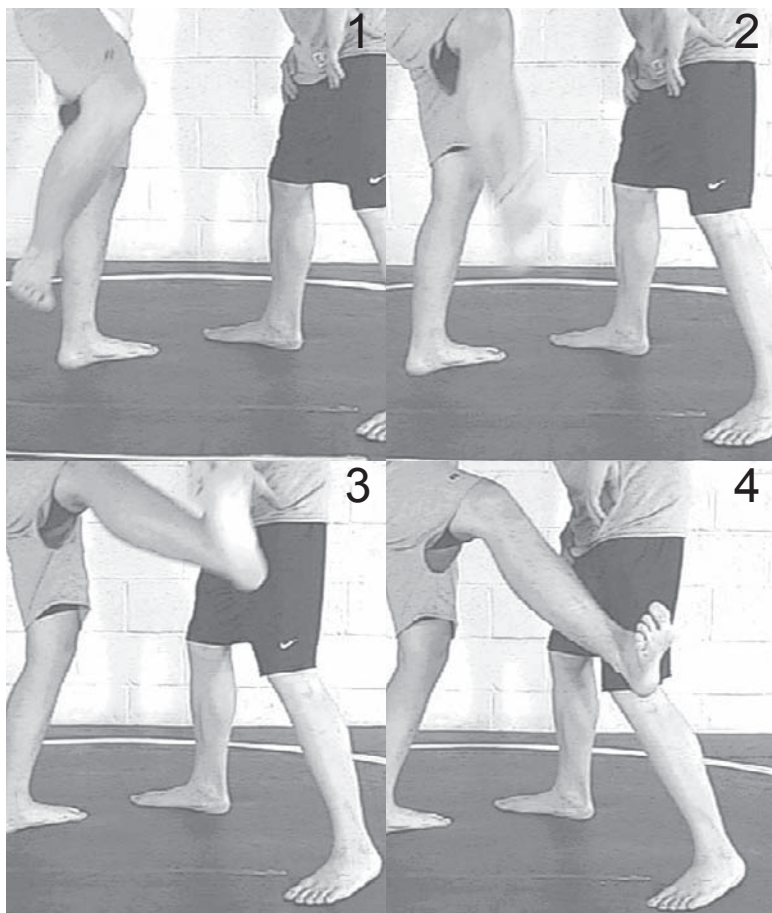
- ☒ Right skip knee/left skip knee/right round knee/left round knee.
- ☒ Right round knee/left round knee/right skip knee/left skip knee.
- ☒ Right skip knee/right round knee/left skip knee/left round knee.
- ☒ Right skip knee/left round knee/right round knee/left skip knee.
- ☒ Right skip knee/left round knee/left skip knee/right round knee.

Purring kick



- ☒ Use the inside arch of your foot to bark (kick) your opponent's shins.

Chop kick



- ☒ Raise your right knee and it to the outside.
- ☒ Use the back of your heel to chop into the side of his leg.
- ☒ Use this uncommon but effective strike to target the outside of his thigh or the outside of his knee.

Stomps



- ☒ Use your heel to stomp his toes, insteps or the juncture of his foot and ankle.

6.2 Head clinch striking defense

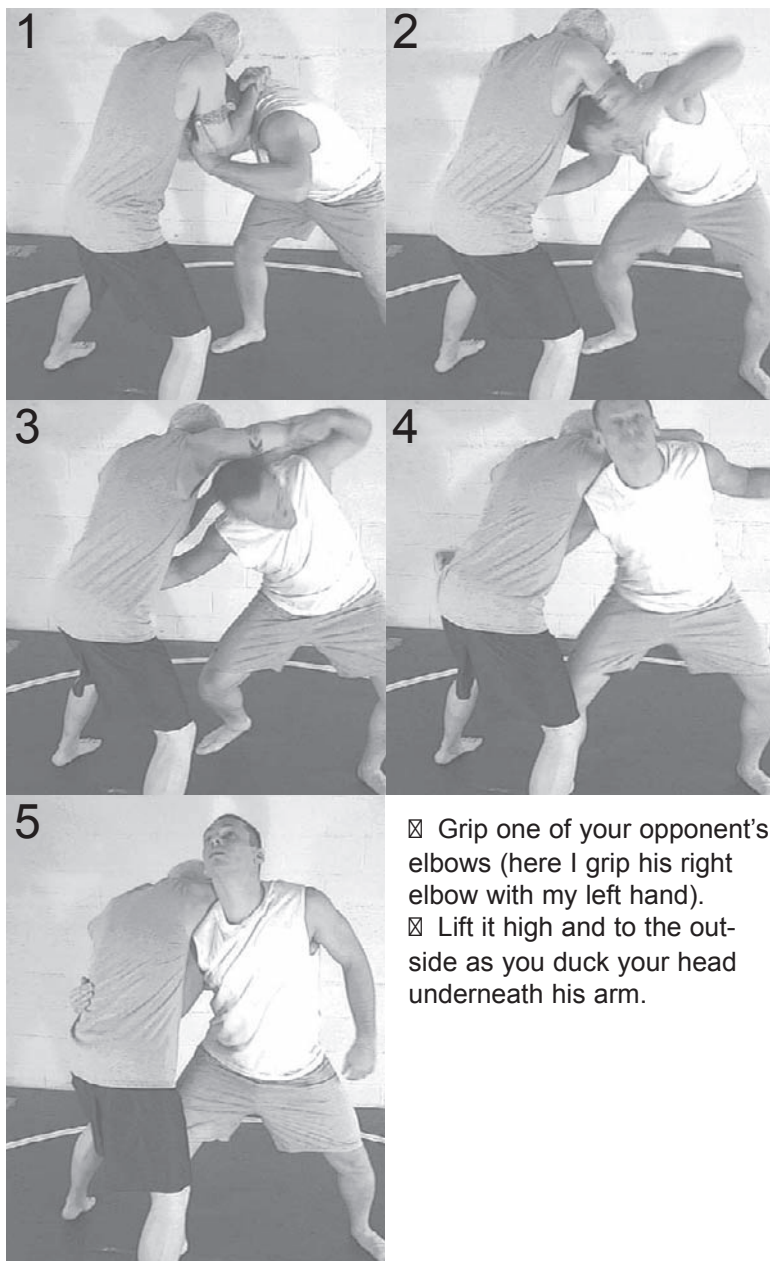
Being caught in a head clinch is bad news. The other two clinches have neutral points, but this one is



trouble if you are on the receiving end. We won't repeat the entire striking defensive arsenal that is covered in *Savage Strikes*. Here I show how to escape the head clinch ASAP. The pummeling section explained how to use the snake to escape. Now a look at one more escape and

one stalemate that will buy you some time and thwart his strikes if you are momentarily trapped.

Lift and duck under

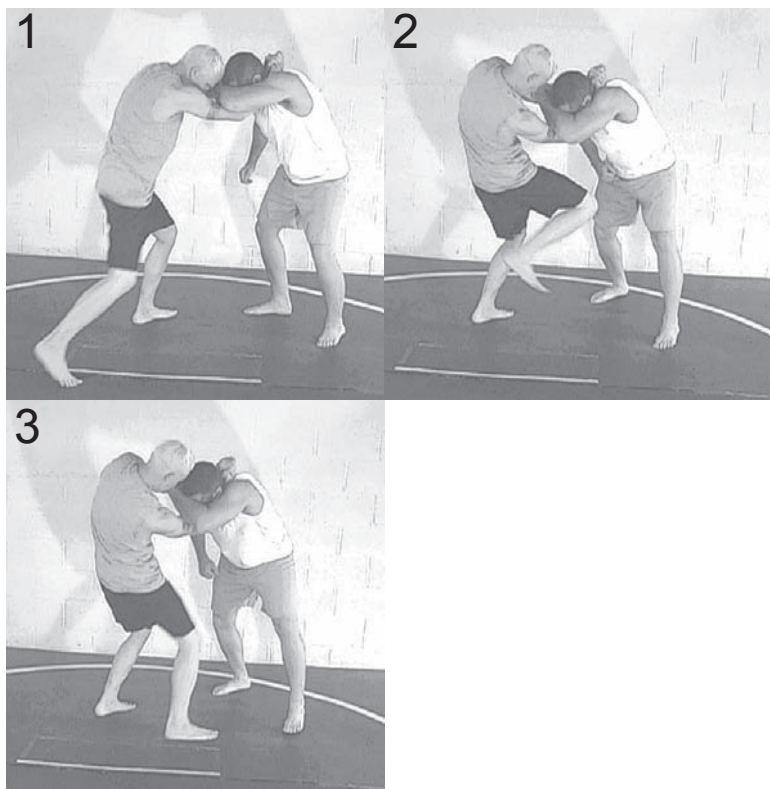


Headrest



It is never ideal to stay inside the clinch. I offer this only for when your escapes are momentarily thwarted.

- ☒ Snake one of your forearms over the top of both his arms and leave it in place.
- ☒ Strive to get your forehead on top of your own forearm.



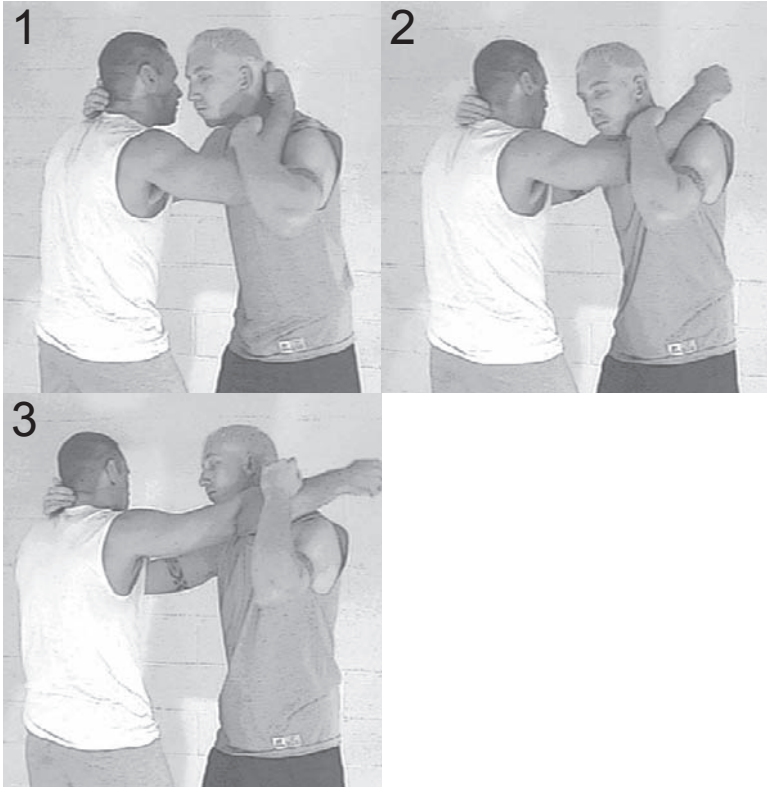
☒ In this position, you will be able to ride with him as he moves to make his knee strikes. Jerk on his forearms with your head-rest arm as he attempts to strike you.

6.3 Collar and elbow striking offense

Although a neutral position compared to the head clinch, it still provides a number of opportunities for striking. But its neutral nature means you are just as vulnerable to being on the receiving end. It is because of this vulnerability that I urge you to either be on the giving end of a head clinch or strive for the over-under clinch, where you will have better offensive and defensive control.



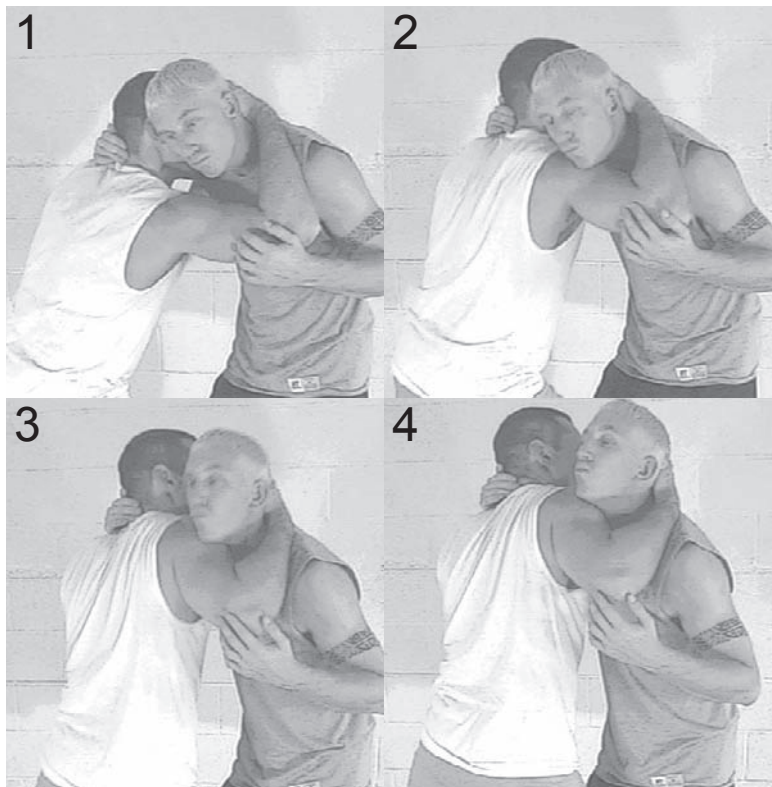
Poppers



These are short inner forearm shots that have a surprising amount of force behind them.

- ☒ Using your head control arm, forcibly extend your arm so that the inside of your forearm strikes your opponent in the area of the ear, jaw or neck.
- ☒ You can follow up with more strikes, as we show in *Savage Strikes*, use the popper as a takedown setup, or use it as a “roughing in the clinch” tool where you pop him and return to clinch control.

Shrugs



Although not a devastating shot, shrugs are useful roughing tools.

- ☒ Use your neck control shoulder to forcefully drive up and into your opponent's chin.
- ☒ You can deliver more shots from this clinch, but since you are striking from such a vulnerable position, I urge you to disengage or work to a superior clinch.

6.4 Over-under clinch striking offense

Although a neutral clinch like the collar and elbow, it affords enough control that the offensive and defensive game is less of a crap shoot and more a game of skill.

Up knee



☒ Delivered much the same as the head clinch up knee, but the target is the liver-solar plexus region.

High punch knee



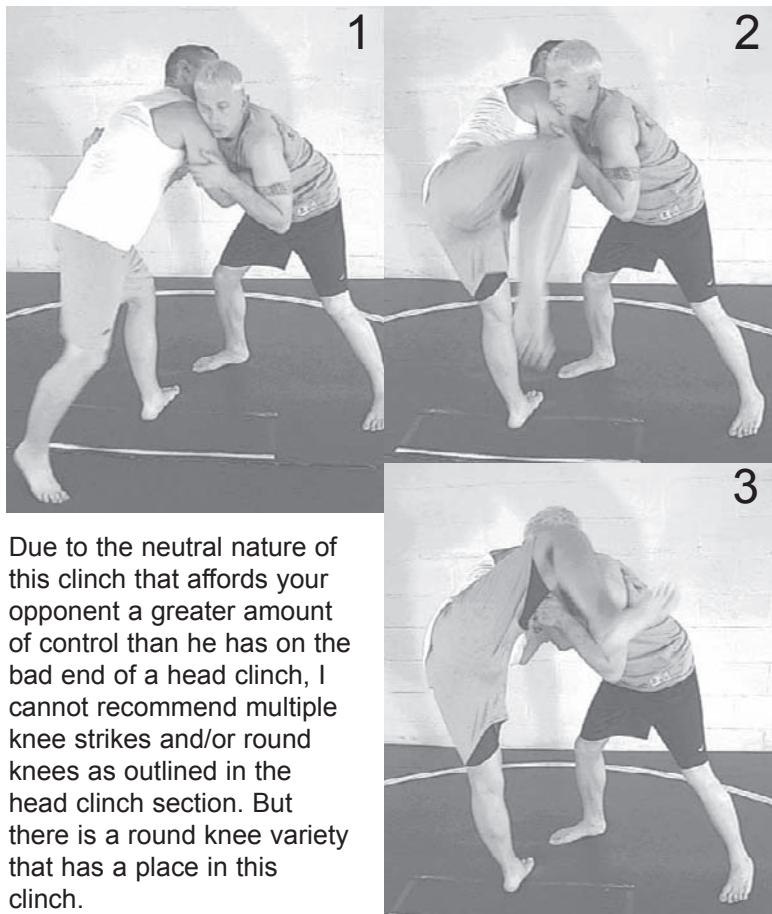
☒ Deliver like the head clinch version.

Low punch knee



☒ Another repeat from the head clinch.

High point knee



Due to the neutral nature of this clinch that affords your opponent a greater amount of control than he has on the bad end of a head clinch, I cannot recommend multiple knee strikes and/or round knees as outlined in the head clinch section. But there is a round knee variety that has a place in this clinch.

- ☒ You can use the knee on your overhook side to come high and over his underhook arm.
- ☒ Use the point of your knee to drive into his face or head.

Tips

I recommend using this only when you do not compromise your base or when your opponent has allowed his head to drift to the outside of your shoulder.

Purring kick



☒ Same as before.

Striking within the clinch: offense and defense

Chop kick



☒ Yep, the same.

Stomps



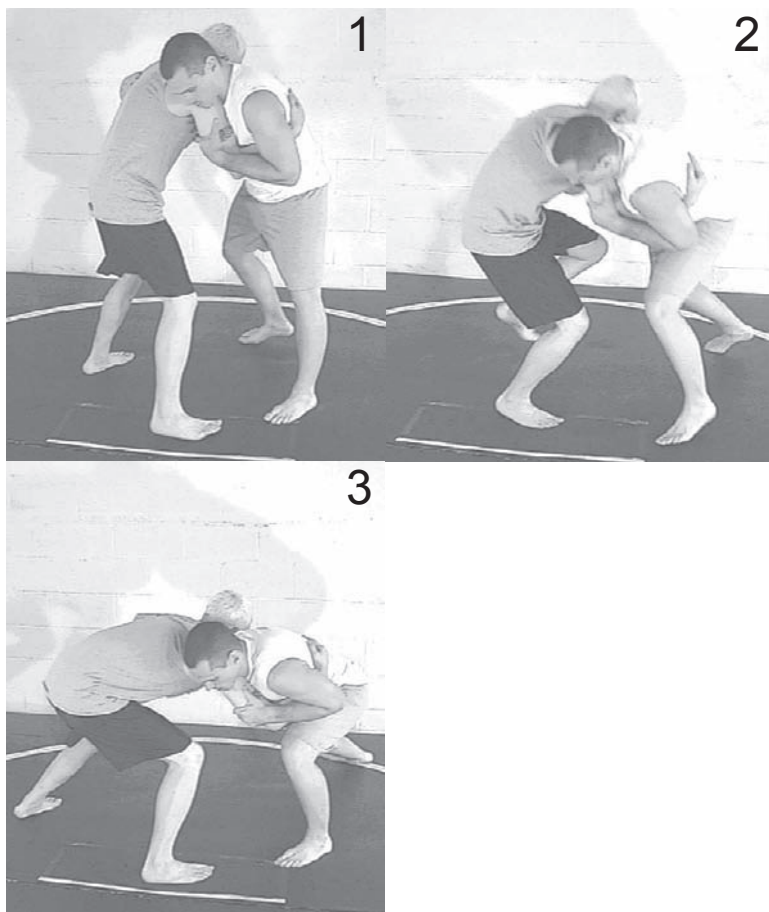
☒ Ditto.

Knee/kick/stomp defense drills

The vast majority of knees can be thwarted by applying proper weight to your opponent. Use the following drill to find this “safe” spot.

- ☒ Hook the over-under clinch. Be scrupulous about keeping the overhook foot forward and weighting “down” and onto his underhook arm. Simply leaning in gives him no weight.
- ☒ You and your partner take turns attempting to deliver controlled knee strikes and stomps.
- ☒ As you feel the strike coming (feel, not see) use your downward weighting to stick him to the mat or give him a quick jerk in the direction of choice to knock the stink off his strike.
- ☒ You will find when you play a proper overhook foot forward/weight down game, you will remove a lot of the striking problem.

Weighting down



Weighting down — Throwing your weight down hard and onto his underhooking arm will prevent knee strikes.

Short elbow



- ☒ It is possible to deliver a short elbow with the overhook arm from this position.
- ☒ Quickly whip the point of the overhook elbow across and into your opponent's head.

Tips

Strike him with the tip of your elbow. A forearm smash disperses the power of your strike. Immediately return your overhook hand to position. For more on elbows see *Savage Strikes*.



☒ Strike with the tip of your elbow, not the forearm.

Short hook



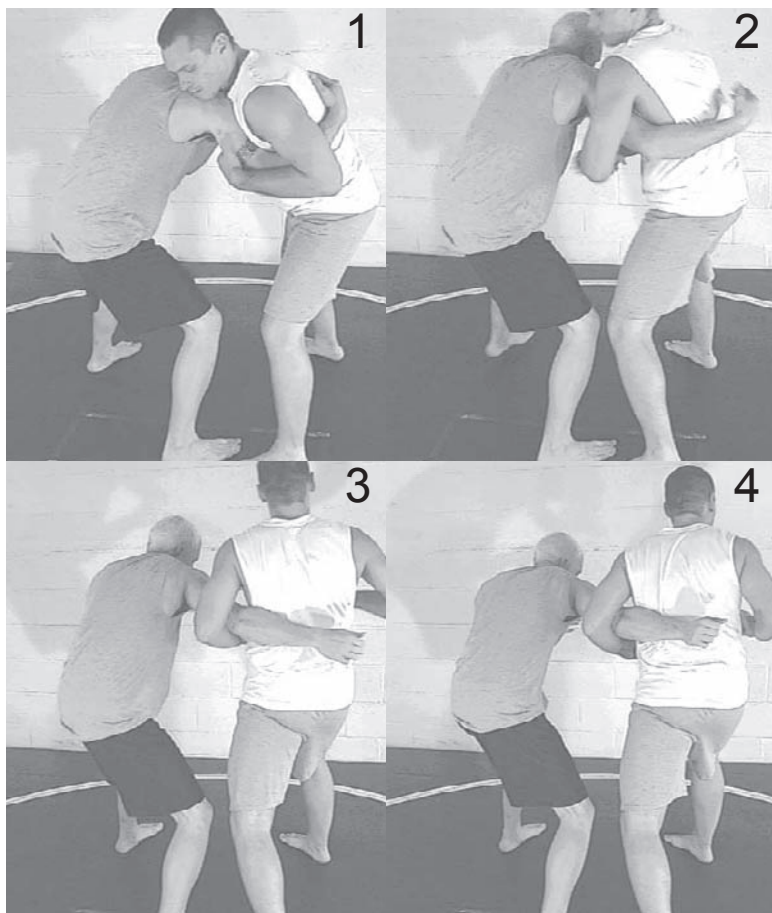
☒ Use the overhook arm to deliver a quick hook punch to your opponent's head.

Shovel hook



- ☒ Use the overhook arm to deliver a shovel hook to your opponent's short ribs.
- ☒ The shovel hook travels diagonally splitting the difference between a hook and an uppercut.

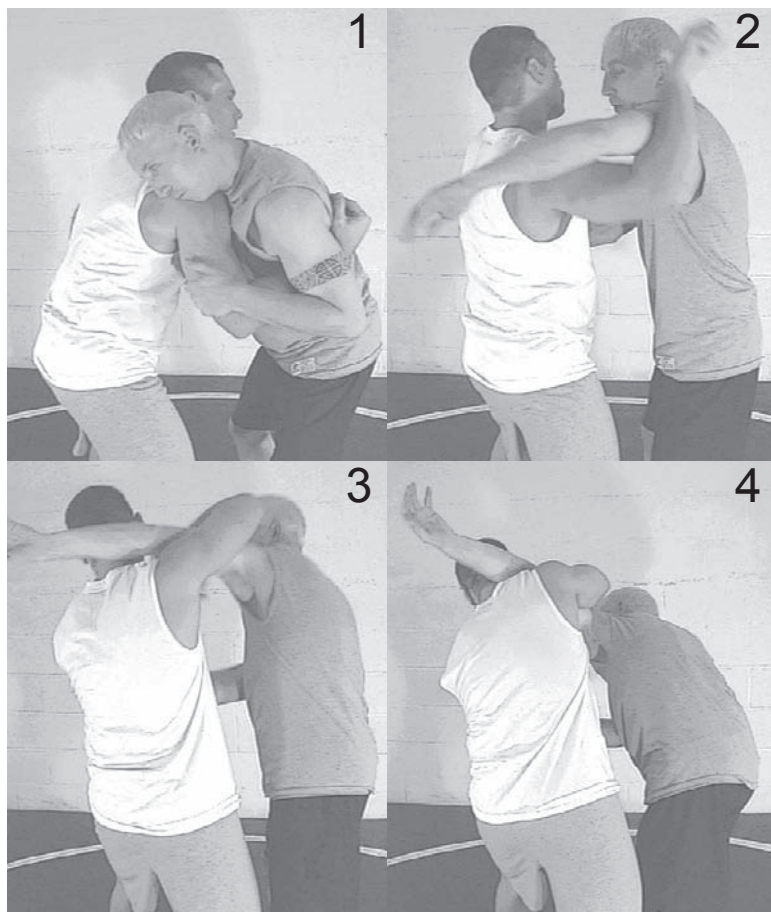
Overhook snap



This is a quick choppy shot. It is an attempt to wrench your opponent's elbow. Use it as a roughing move.

- ☒ Use the crook of your overhook arm to quickly pop into your opponent's underhook elbow.
- ☒ It is ideally performed when you have stretched your opponent's arm straight by dropping your hips back. Then deliver the snap as if you were throwing an uppercut between your bodies.

Underhook snap



This snap is a bit tougher to administer than the overhook, but it can be done.

- ☒ Use the crook of your underhook arm to snap up and into the elbow of your opponent's overhook arm.
- ☒ Brace his arm by pinching it between your neck and shoulder and throw the snap as if delivering an overhand punch between your heads.

Cooker

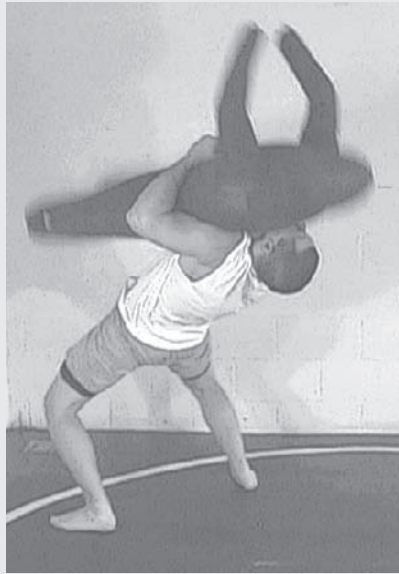


This tool is useful when you have a vertical surface to drive your opponent against like a fence or turnbuckle.

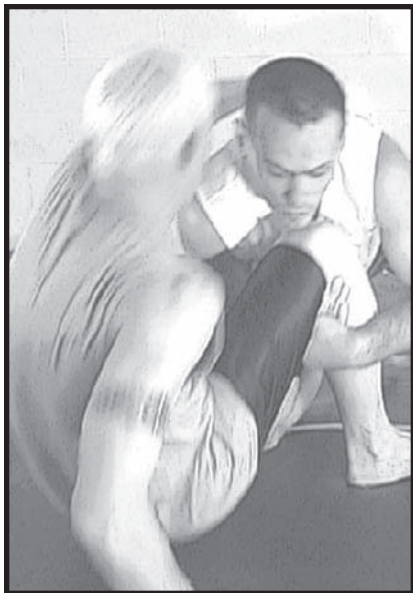
☒ Use your overhook hand to cover his mouth and nose. It's not a submission, but it plays hell with his breathing.

Let a dummy be your friend

No training partners? Get a dummy. Have training partners but they're sick of you dropping them on their skulls? Get a dummy. What a heavy bag is to a boxer, the throwing dummy is to a takedown artist. A throwing dummy allows you to slam with alacrity and hone your hard-dropping evil to a fine edge. Dummies don't come cheap, but, in my opinion, they're well worth the investment. For information on where to get yours, see the Resources section at the back of this manual.



7 Clinch takedowns



This is where the rubber meets the road. Striking is most effective outside the clinch, and takedowns are most effective inside the clinch. Now we present various techniques to get it done!

7.1

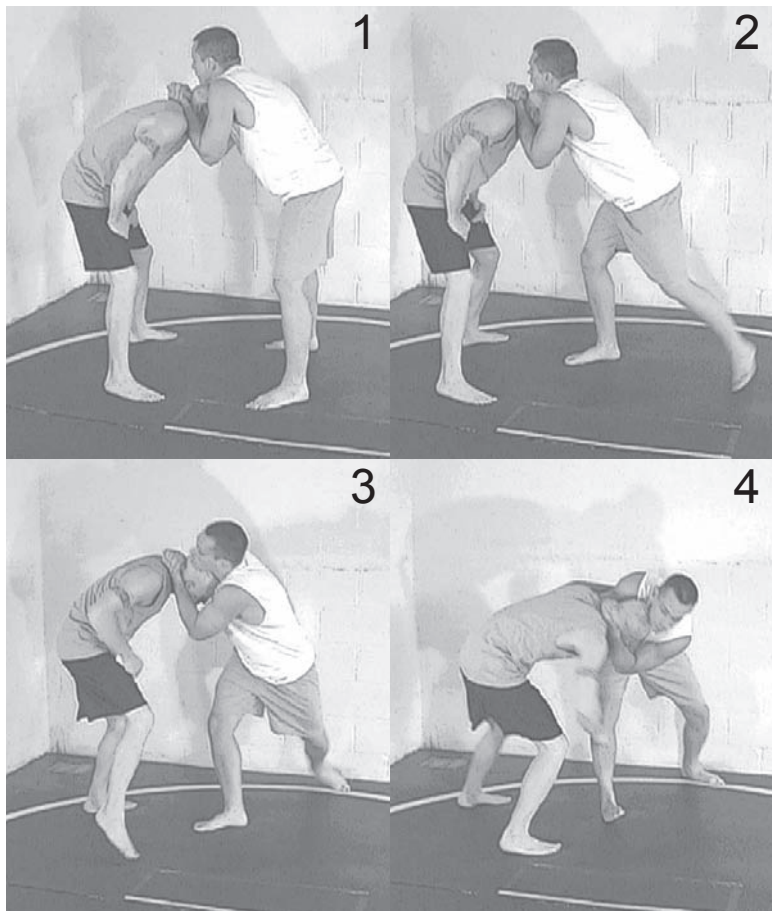
Head clinch takedown

There is only one high percentage head clinch take-down to offer for your arsenal. This single move will prove its value to you time and time again.

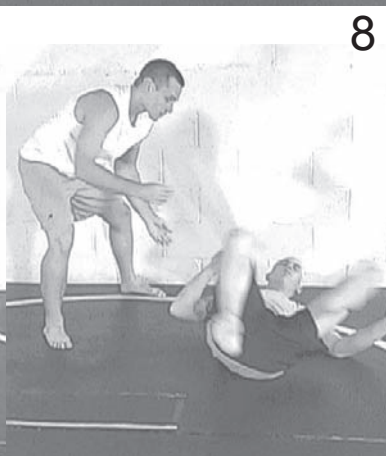
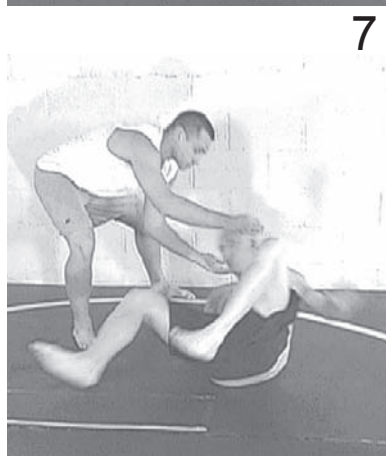
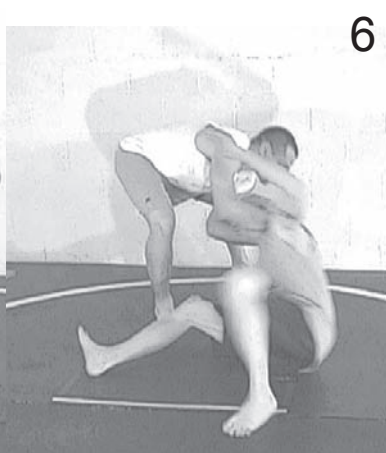
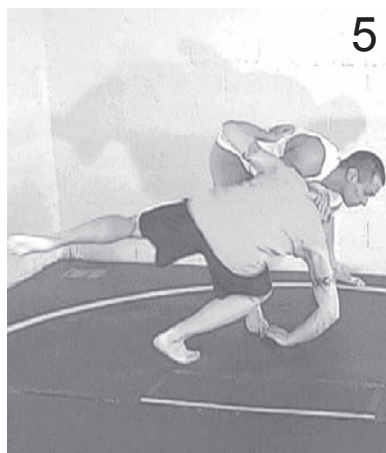


Clinch takedowns

Roll-out



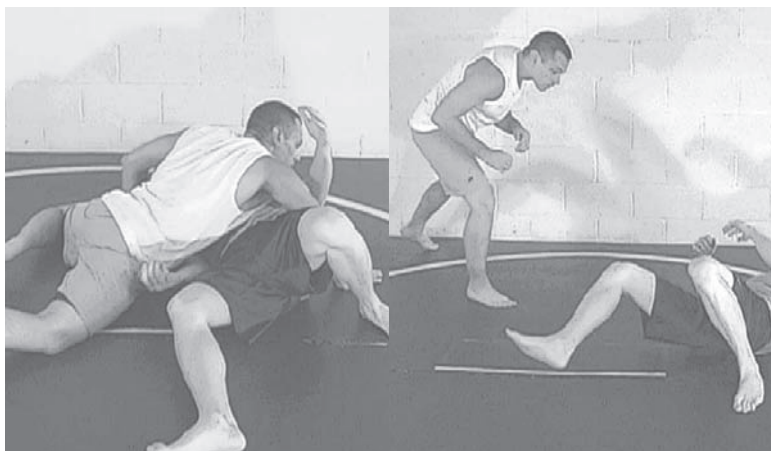
- ☒ Slap on your head clinch.
- ☒ To take your opponent to the mat (here I take him to the left), backstep with your left leg while pivoting on your right foot.
- ☒ Use your tight gripped forearms to cant his head toward his left shoulder.
- ☒ Bend forward at the waist while doing so, and he will hit the mat to your left.
- ☒ From here, cover him with a ride, soccer kick or back off to reengage.



Roll-out follow-up



Follow up the roll-out with soccer kicks ...



... a ride ... or back off to reengage.

7.2 Collar and elbow clinch takedowns

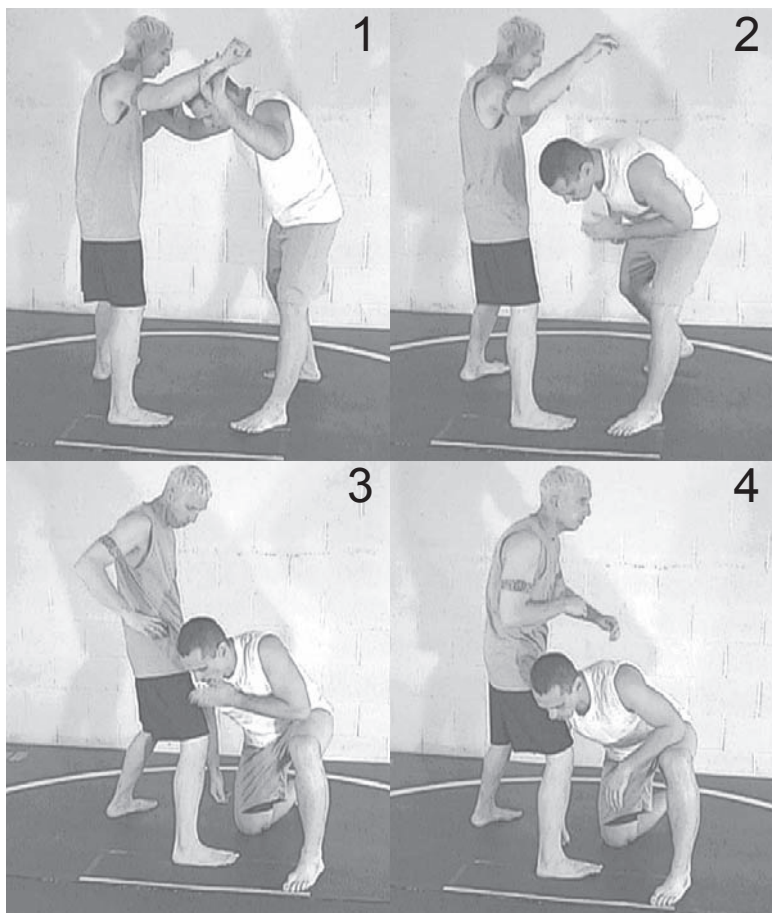
There are a vast number of takedowns possible from this clinch. We cover a mere handful in this manual. You can find more information in the companion volume, *Takedowns*. We are playing in the twin sports of NHB and submission wrestling with emphasis on the most commonly encountered clinch in these sports — the over-under.

I offer a few takedowns of high value for the submission wrestler but of less value for the NHB player. They are of less value because this clinch is far too open to striking. So train the following with an eye on the submission game and maybe, just maybe, an opportune use in NHB.

Before we hit these takedowns, I must digress a bit to define two concepts: closed leg diving and freezing the leg.

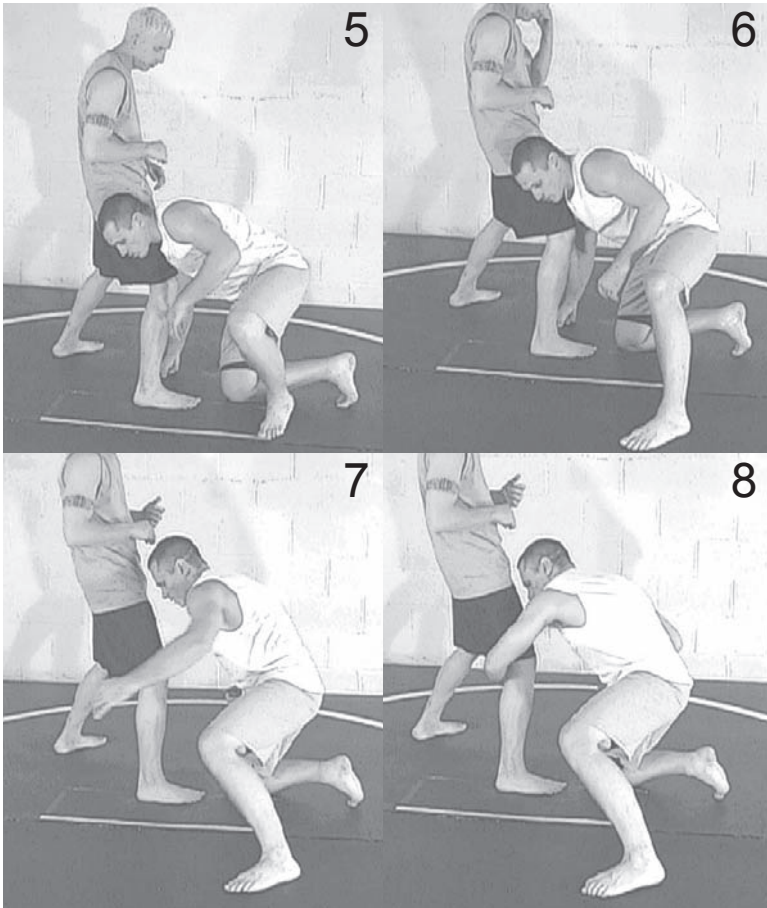


Closed leg diving



If you've read *Takedowns*, you are familiar with the concept of leg diving. In that manual we demonstrated it from the open position (no cohesion/no clinching with your opponent). Here we take a look at leg diving in its natural state — from the closed or clinch position. Keep the following closed leg diving rules in mind as you train the takedowns in this section.

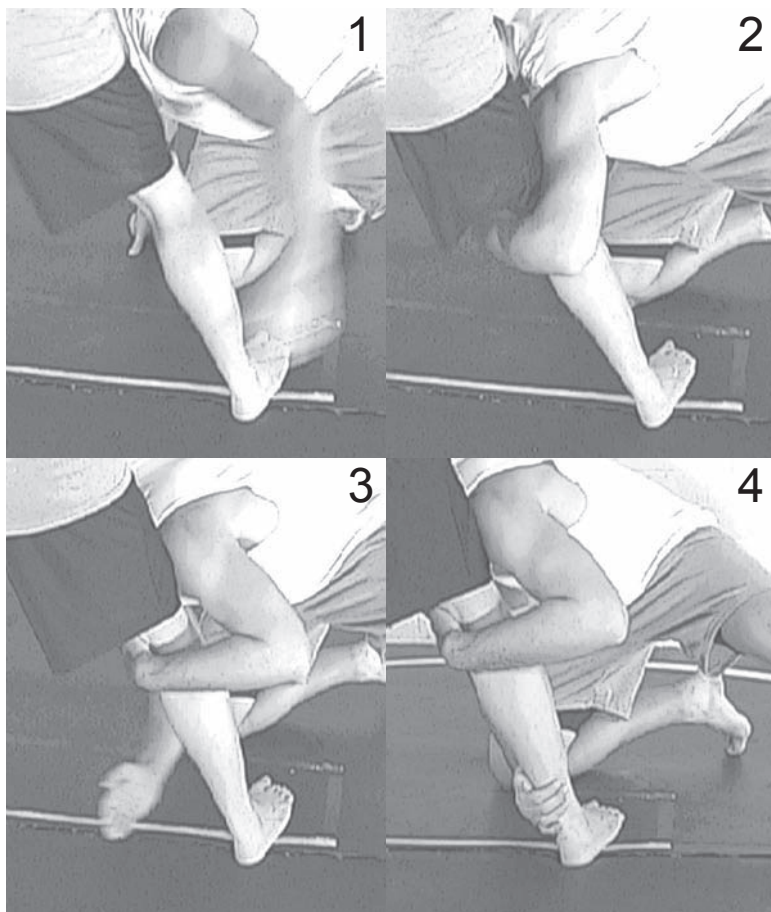
☒ Dive (drop) directly to the leg with no shooting in. These are gravity assisted drops with no need to shoot as you are “already there.”



- ☒ Lead from the shoulder and not from the waist or feet. In other words, when it is time to dive, let the shoulder make the first move to the attacked leg.
- ☒ Drive the leading shoulder into the attacked leg.

If this advice doesn't make sense yet, it will once you get to the actual takedowns. There is nothing passive or slow about these closed leg dives.

Freezing the leg



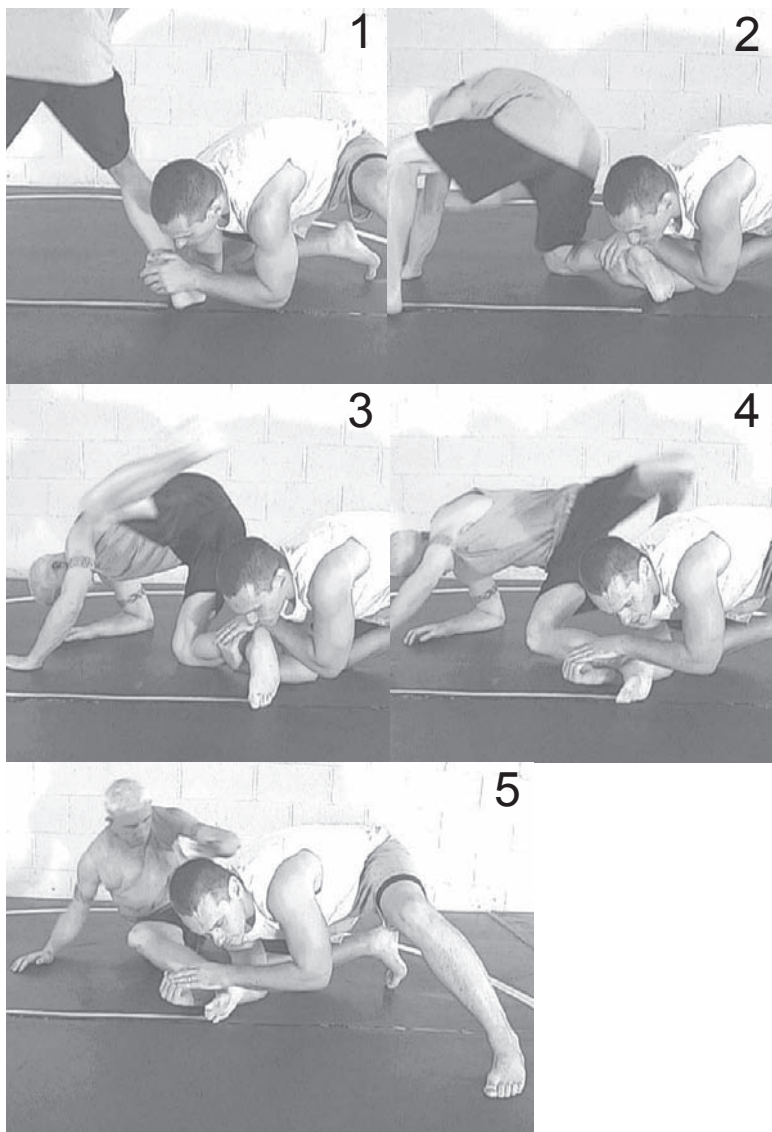
To freeze the leg is to grip the attacked leg in a manner that reduces his countering opportunities, stymies guard dropping and maximizes the stealing of balance you need to execute a closed leg dive. Make the following leg freezing tips first nature.

- ☒ Aggressively overhook the attacked leg with your near arm (right arm attacks left leg and vice versa).
- ☒ To get the idea of how aggressive to be, think of this overhook as a missed hook punch.
- ☒ Grip the knee with the crook of your arm while you pinch the leg between your neck and shoulder.
- ☒ While hitting the knee overhook, you must simultaneously slap and grab his ankle with your other hand.
- ☒ This knee-ankle grip is the ideal closed leg dive position.
- ☒ Gripping two hands on the knee allows him to gate with the knee (hinge) and seek elevators or hit the bottom scissors (guard).
- ☒ Two hands on the ankle or shin allow him to post on his knee and spin out for the short offense.

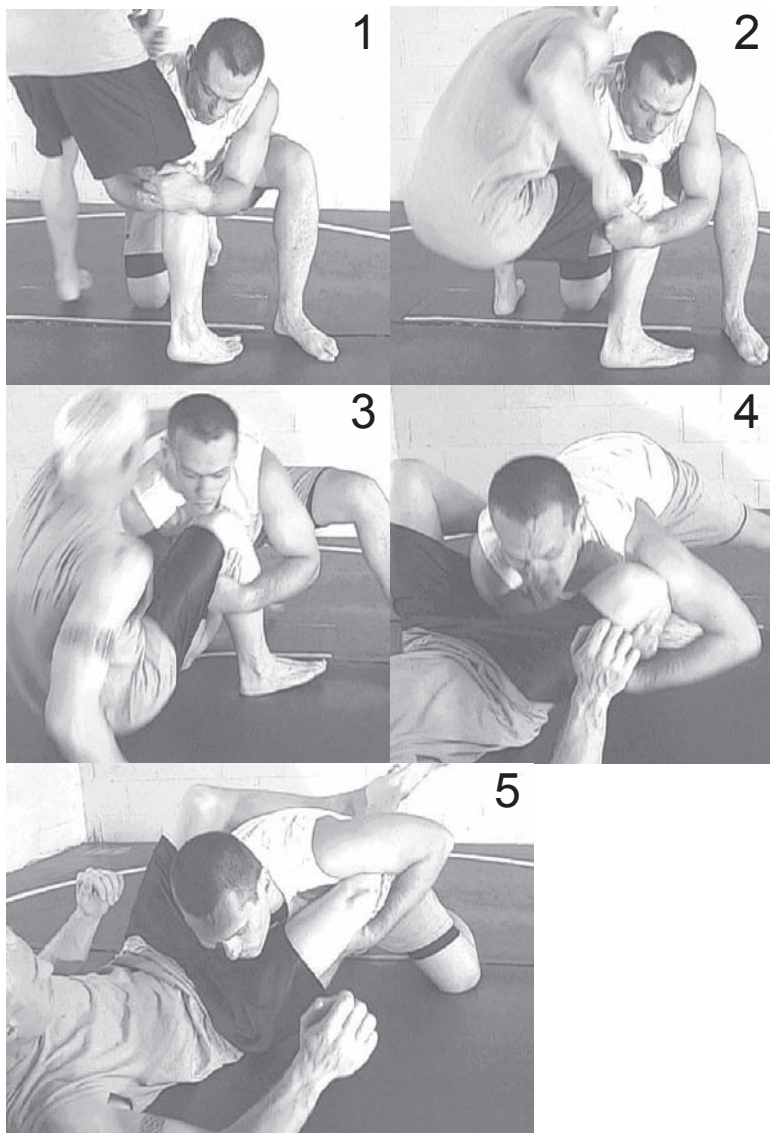
It's the ankle and knee. Period.

With the previous two concepts in mind, let's get to the drops for this clinch.

Avoid hitting only ankle or knee



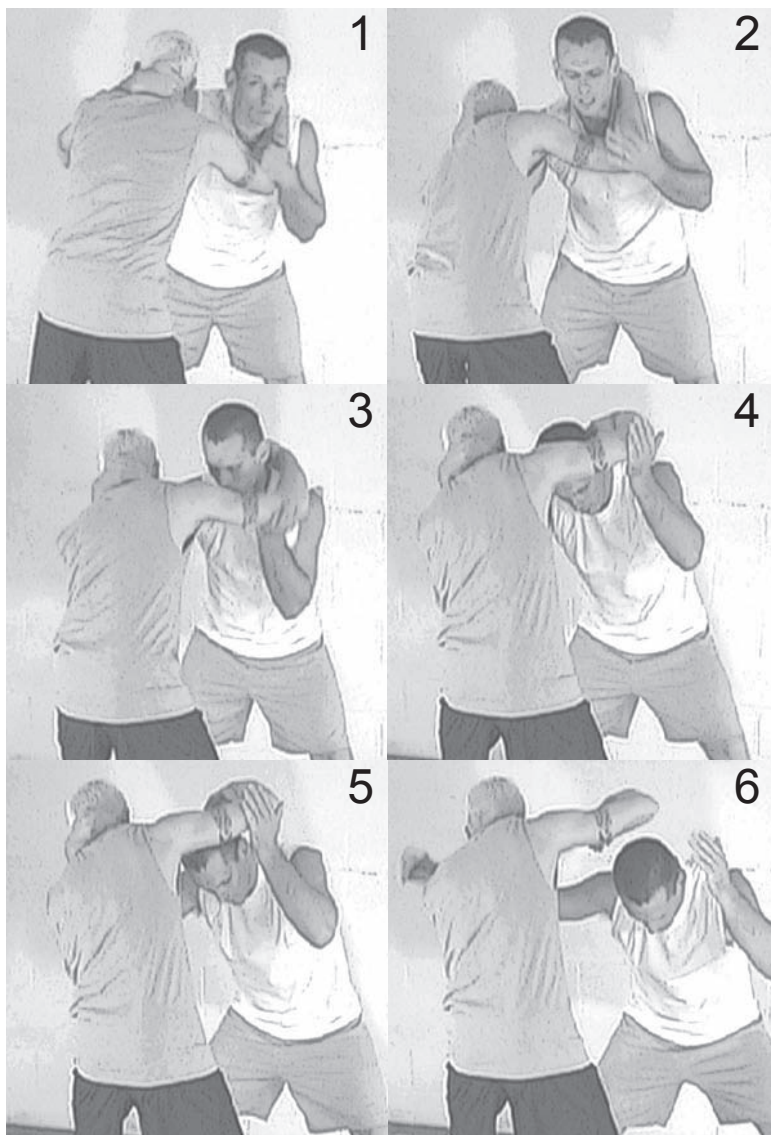
☒ ***Only ankle*** — Two hands on the ankle or shin allow him to post on his knee and spin out for the short offense.

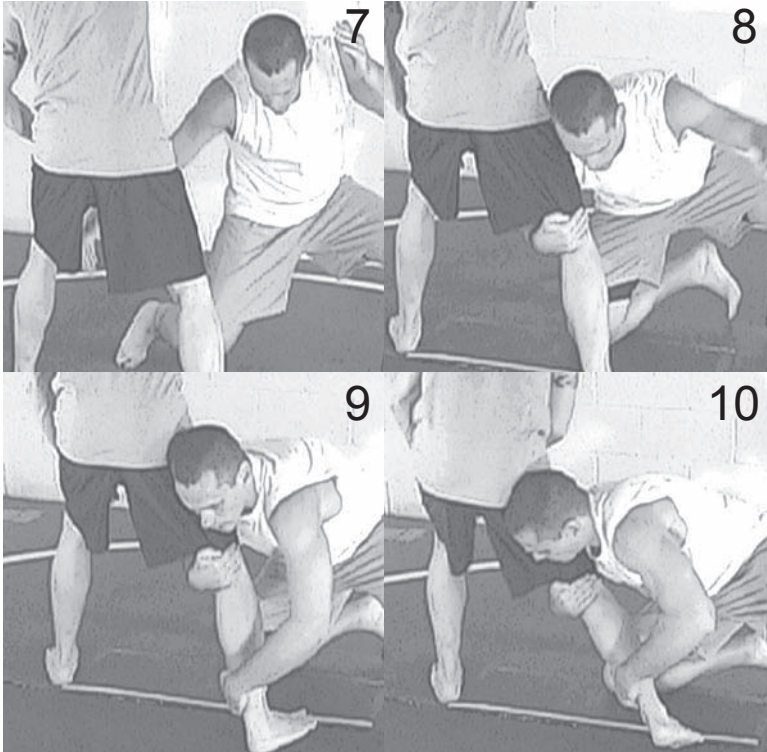


☒ **Only Knee** — Gripping two hands on the knee allows him to gate with the knee (hinge) and seek elevators or hit the bottom scissors (guard).

Clinch takedowns

Pull and dive

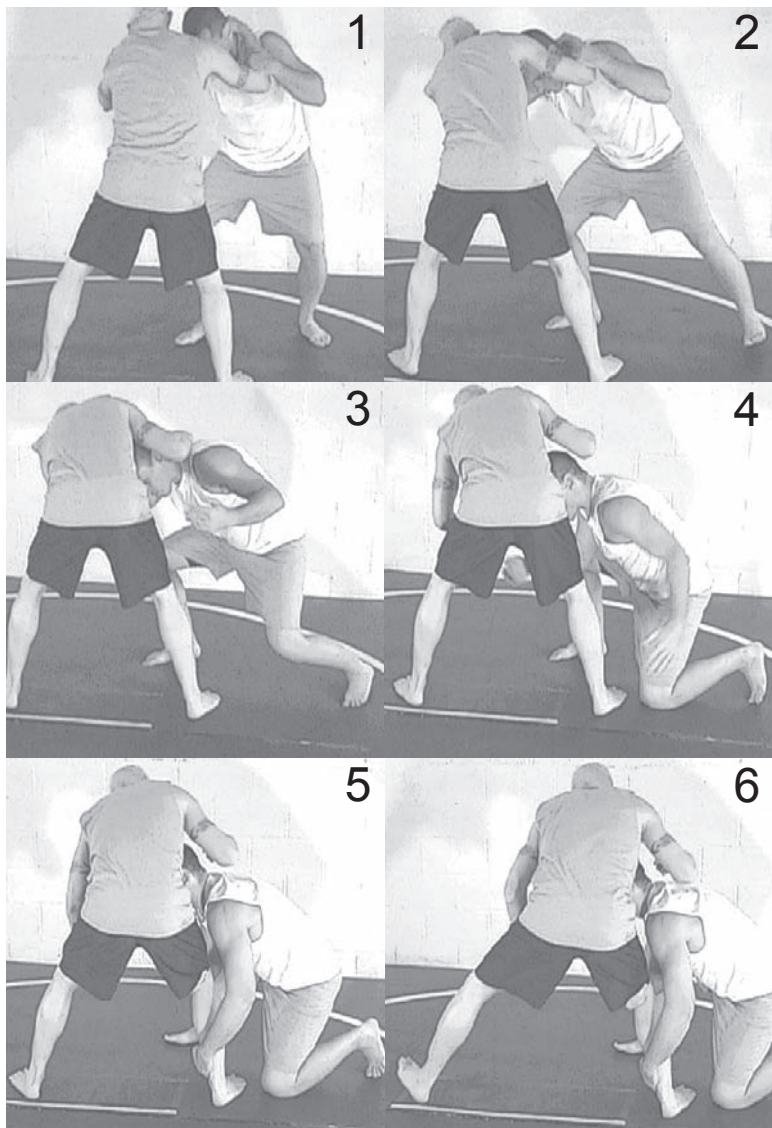


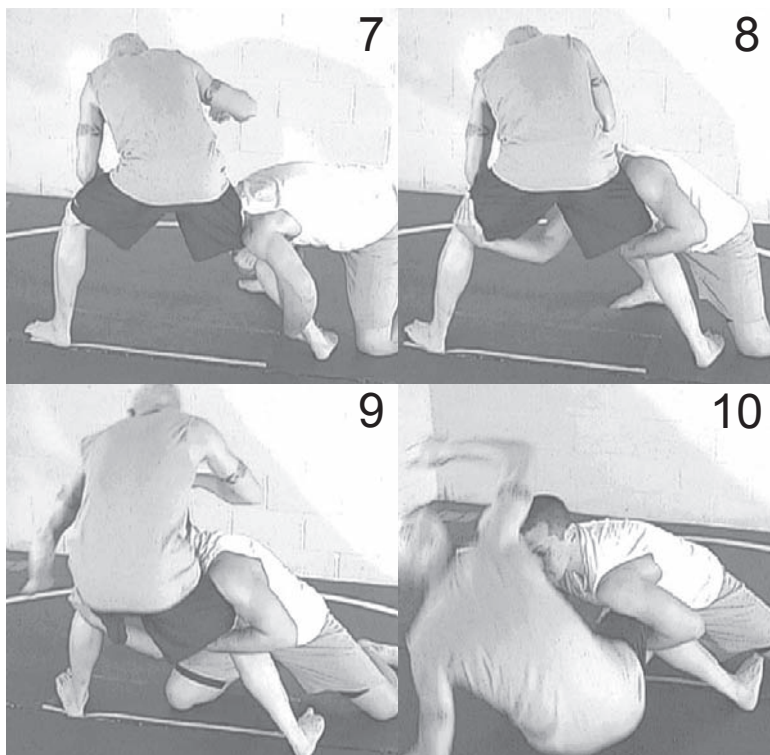


- ☒ Hit your tie-up (we have a right hand on the neck in all of these examples).
- ☒ Pull on his neck with your right hand taking him to his left while pushing the bottom of his elbow up — not to the right.
- ☒ Drop and dive your left shoulder to his right knee and freeze it.
- ☒ Turn the corner to get behind him and drive.

Clinch takedowns

Pull and navy drop

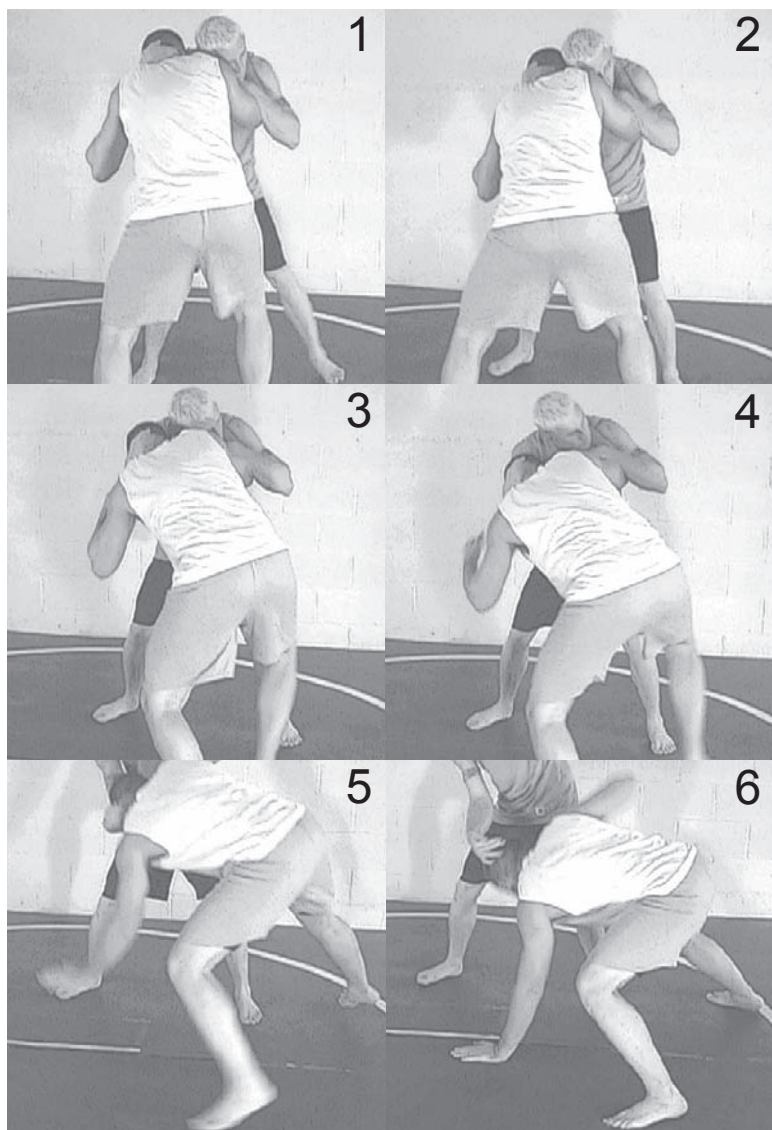


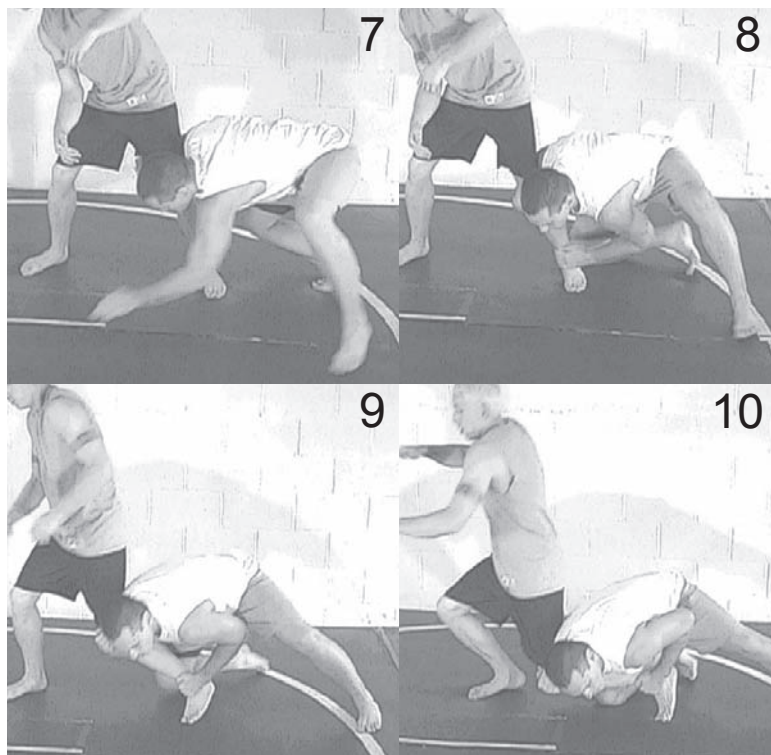


- ☒ Punch and drop as before, but instead of spinning behind or freezing, we hit a variation. This is a nice go-to when your opponent steps his free leg forward to stop his fall.
- ☒ Drop and freeze the knee.
- ☒ Underhook his free leg behind the knee with your right hand.
- ☒ Drive through him to drop.

Clinch takedowns

Push and dive

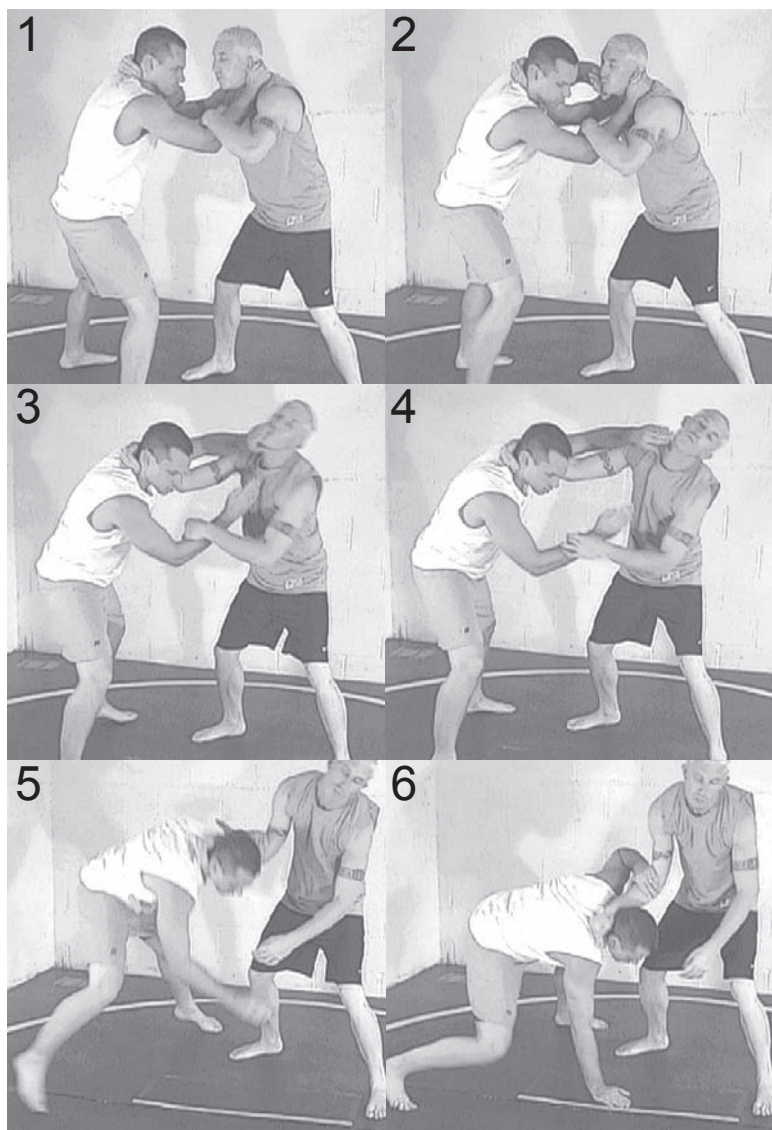


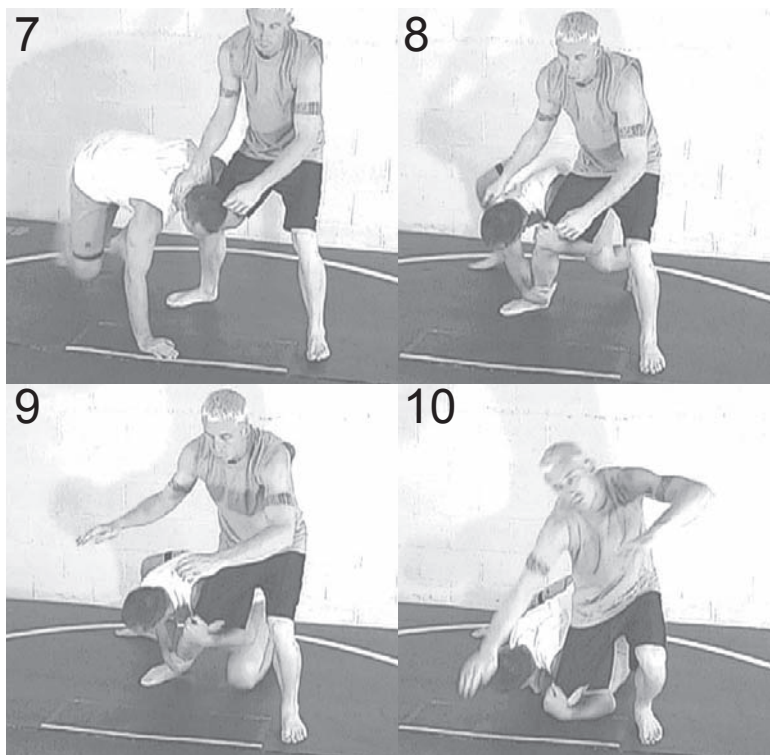


- ☒ Use your neck control hand to push his neck, take him to his right and unweight his left leg a bit.
- ☒ Drop and post on your left palm. This exposes you for strikes, but it is quite effective in the straight sub game.
- ☒ Pivot on your left palm and hit a go-behind and leg freeze.
- ☒ Drive your shoulder through him to drop.

Clinch takedowns

Chin and push dive





- ☒ Use your elbow control hand to shove his chin and unweight his right leg.
- ☒ Drop and post on the right hand.
- ☒ Pivot for your go-behind.
- ☒ Freeze the right leg and drive to drop.

We've presented a low number of options for this clinch, but see *Takedowns* or *The Complete Grappler* for much more on this topic.

7.3 Over-under clinch takedowns



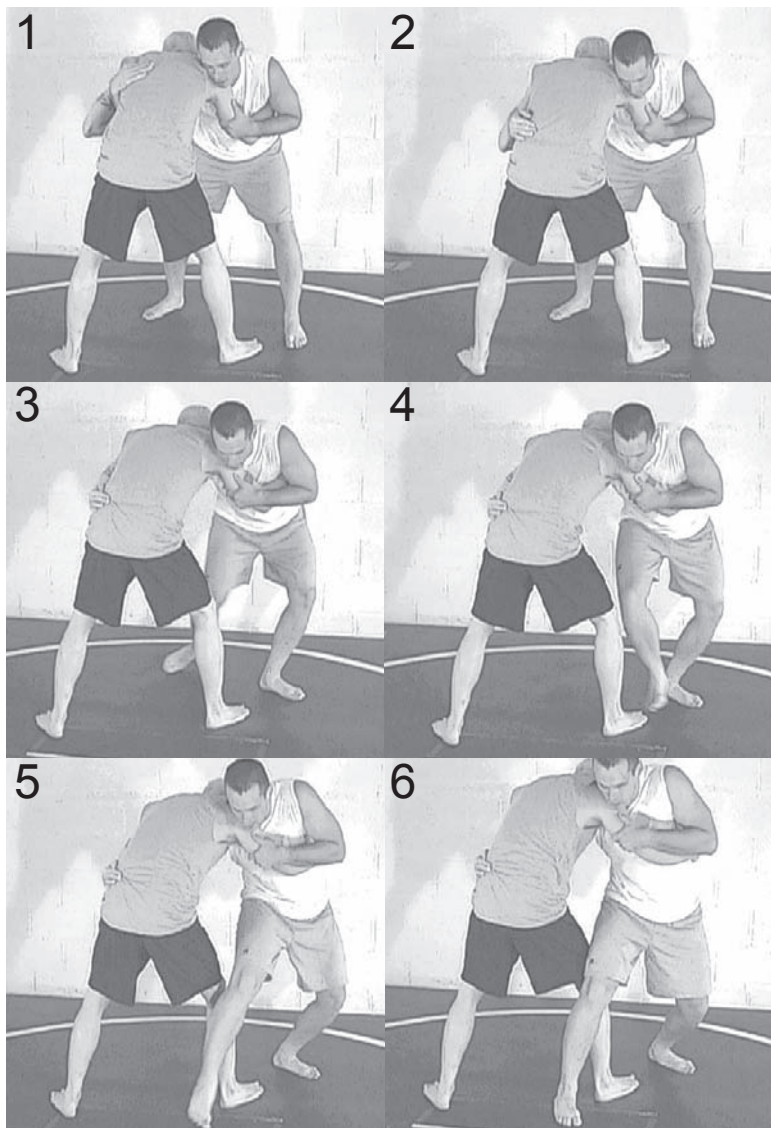
This clinch is the most commonly used in both submission wrestling and NHB. This is the meat of this guide. Keep in mind that a book this size cannot go into every possible drop or variation available for this clinch, but we present you with a good number of high percentage moves — both familiar and surprising (for your opponent, that is). We break these over-under takedowns into a few broad classes. Let's get to work.

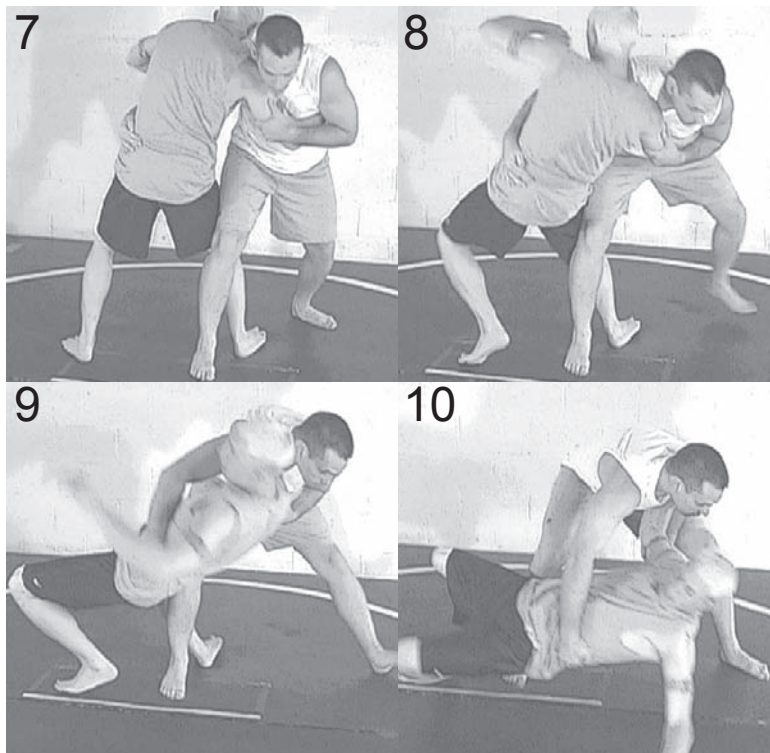
For consistency, we run all of these with a right under-hook and a left overhook.

7.3.1 Trip takedowns



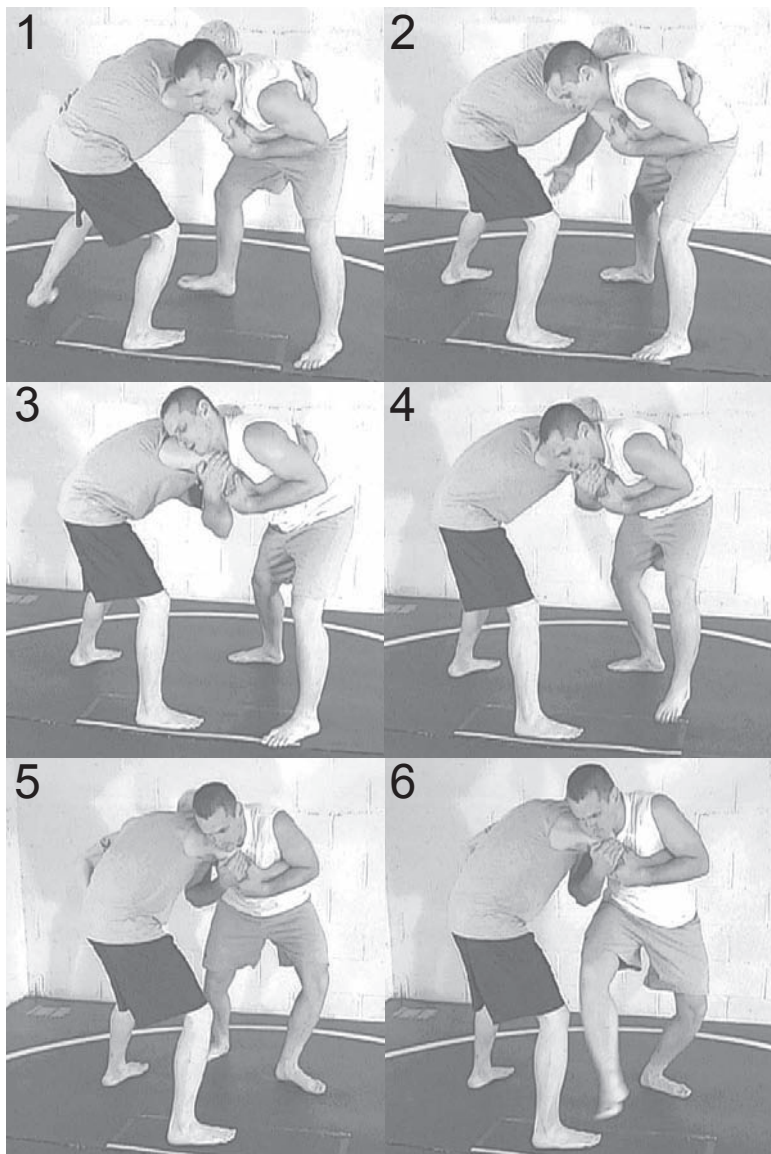
Body chancery with back leg trip

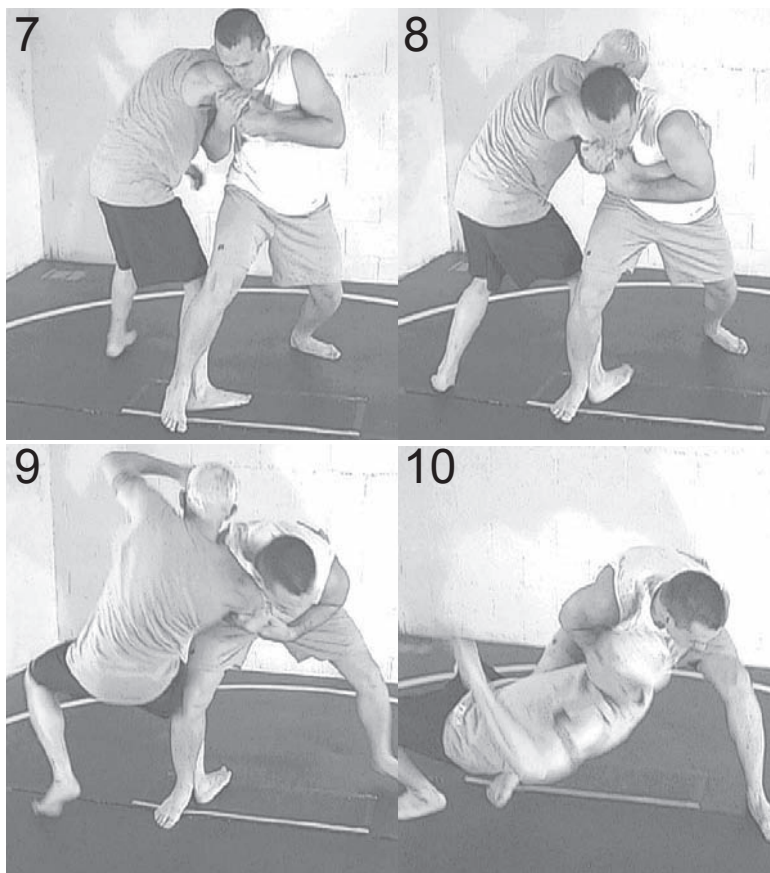




- ☒ Step your underhook foot to the outside of his underhook foot — heel-to-heel is ideal.
- ☒ Seatbelt his waist with your underhook arm.
- ☒ Drive into him to drop.

Two-on-one with back leg trip

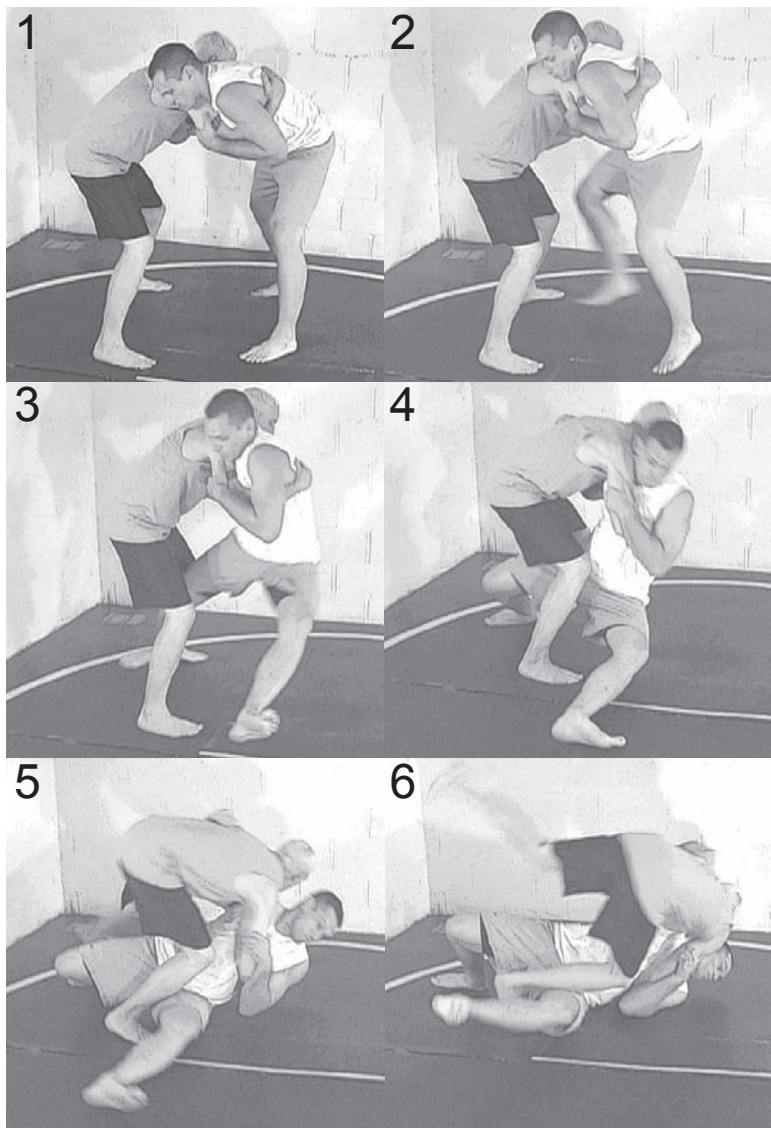




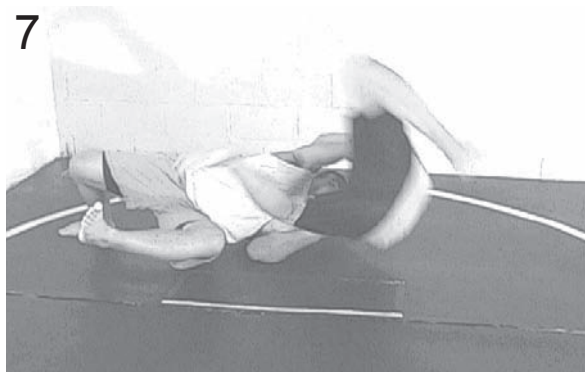
- ☒ Keep your overhook.
- ☒ Underhook his underhook with your underhook arm.
- ☒ Step your underhook side foot behind his underhook foot — heel-to-heel.
- ☒ Once in position, bend at the waist to execute the drop.

Clinch takedowns

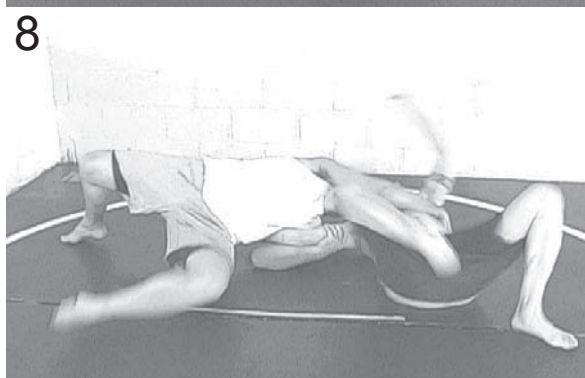
Lateral drop



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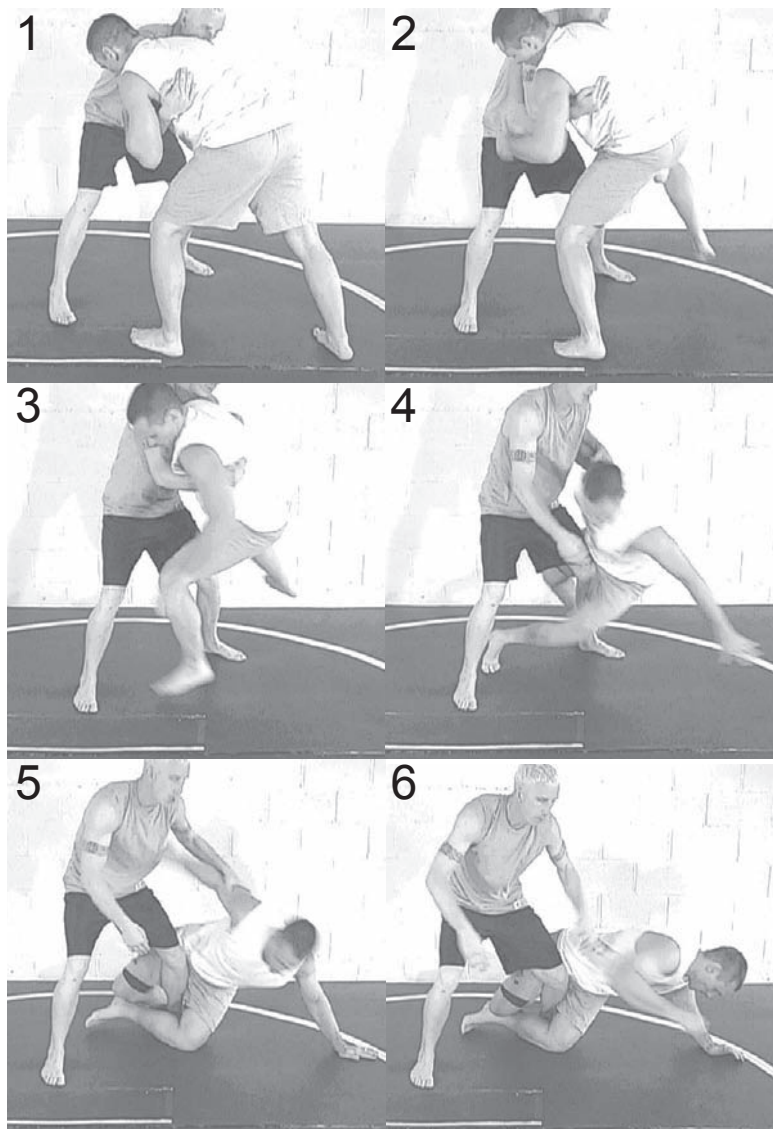


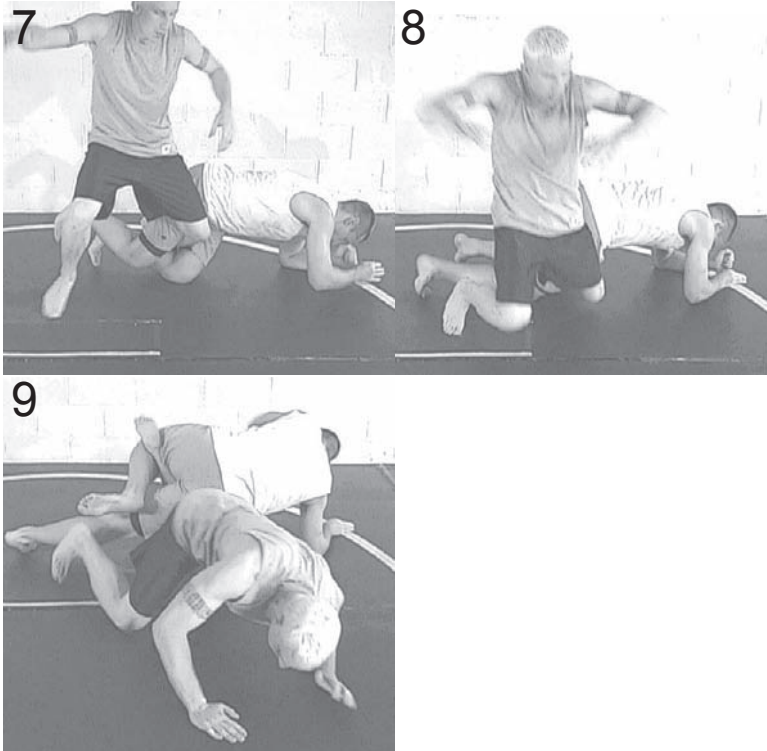
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- ☒ Keep your over-under grips in place.
- ☒ You must commit deeply on this one.
- ☒ Step your underhook leg between his legs.
- ☒ Step your overhook leg deep to the outside of his underhook leg.
- ☒ Drop to your overhook side hip and turn toward your overhook side to throw him to the mat.

Scissors leg trip





The footwork is similar to the lateral drop.

- ☒ Maneuver to your underhook side.
- ☒ Step an overhook leg between his legs.
- ☒ Release your hand controls.
- ☒ Your step between his legs will catch his overhook foot behind your knee.
- ☒ The front of your rear knee catches him behind his knee.
- ☒ Roll toward your stomach.

Clinch takedowns

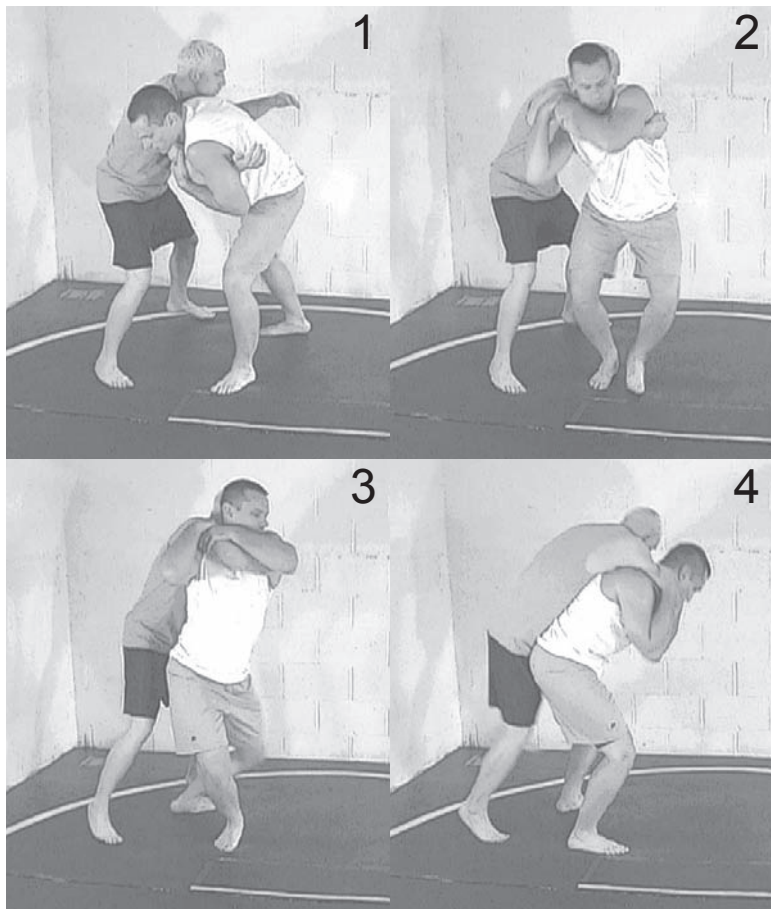


7.3.2 Flying mares and arm throws

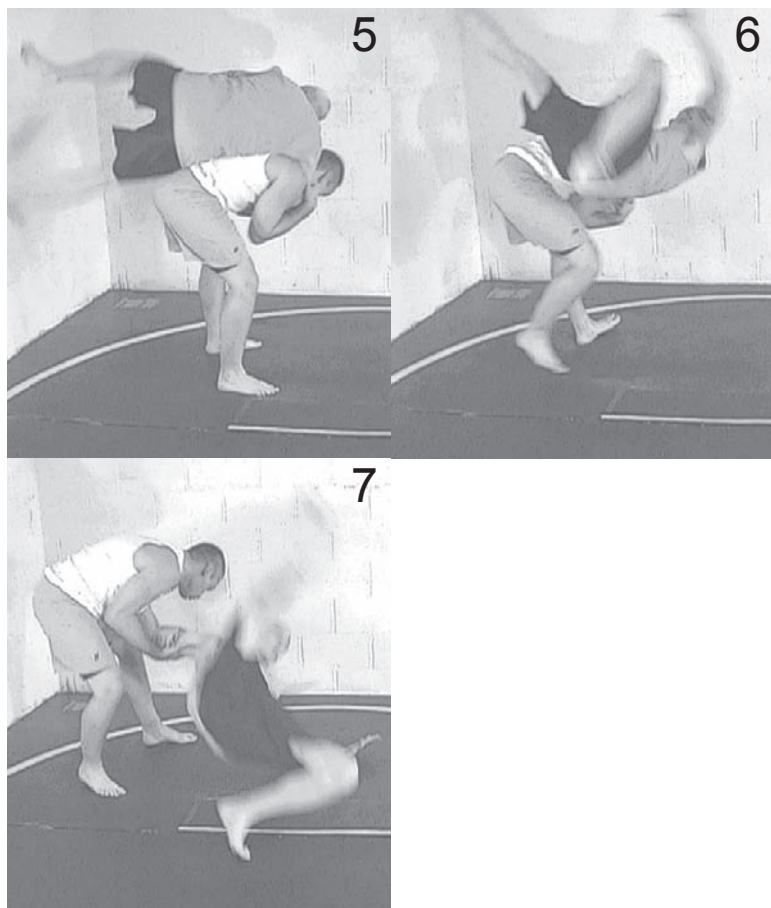
These high fliers are crowd pleasers and more commonly associated with show wrestling. But as good Greco and judo players can tell you, they are indeed the real deal.



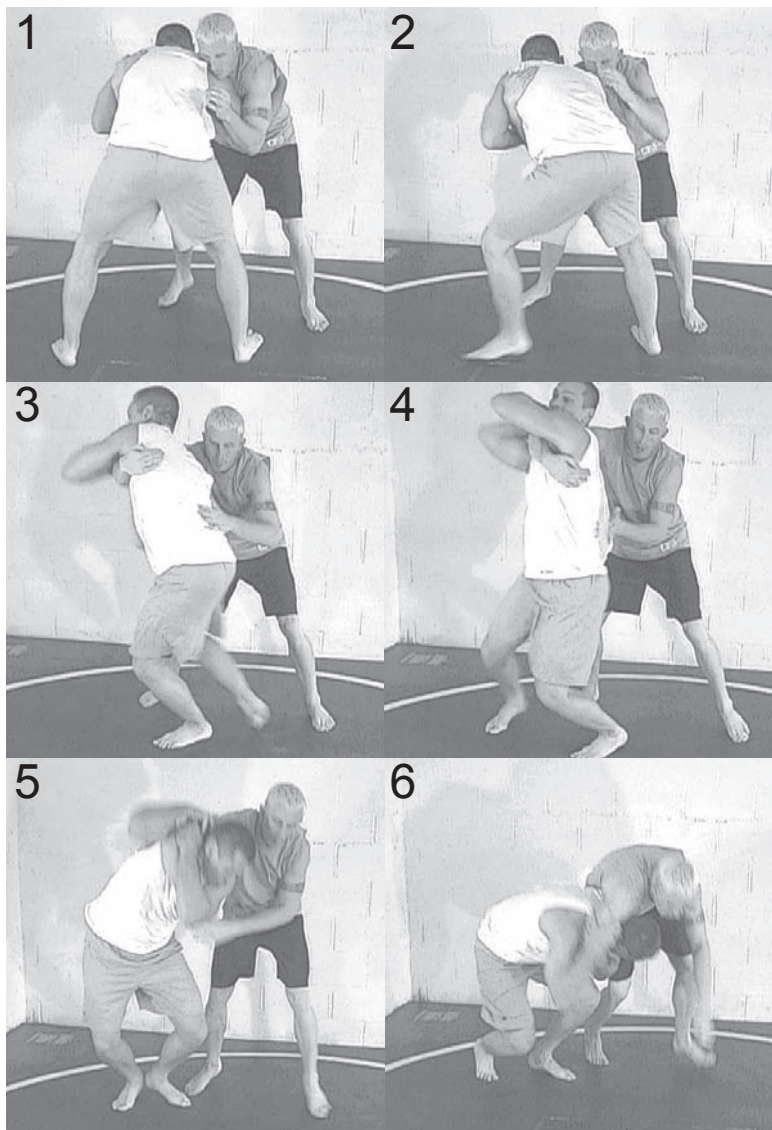
Flying mare



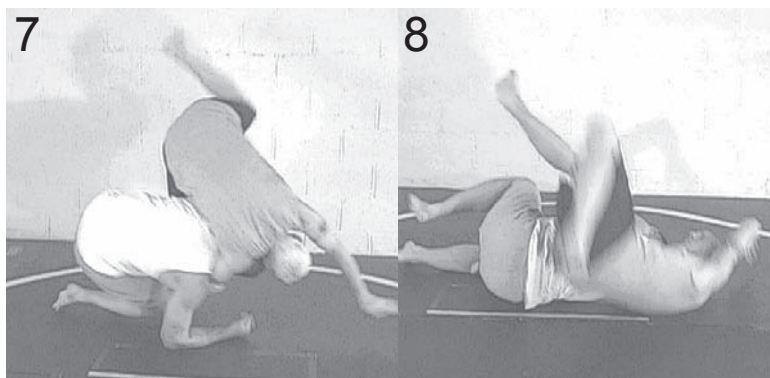
- ☒ Drop your underhook arm out and use this arm to underhook his right arm.
- ☒ While setting this underhook, you back step. Step your right foot in front of his right and your left moves into position in front of his left — your back will be to your opponent at this point.
- ☒ Using this double tie-up on the arm, bend forward at the waist (you can go to your knees with this throw as well) to bring him over the top.



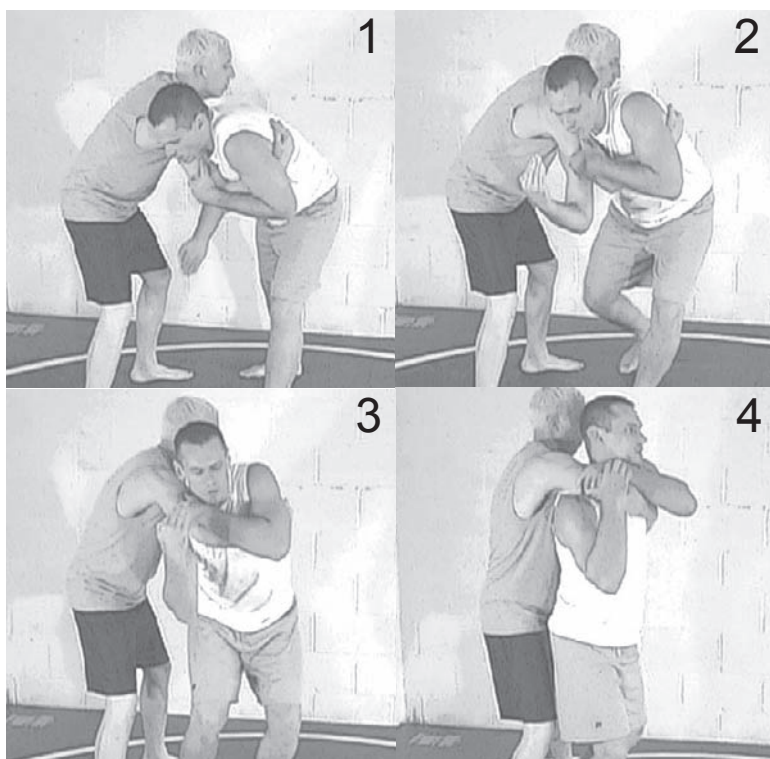
Inside-out arm spin



In this more variant, you will pass your hips all the way across his body so that the leverage is applied only across your neck. Seem risky? Give it a shot and you may become a fan.



Another view



Clinch takedowns

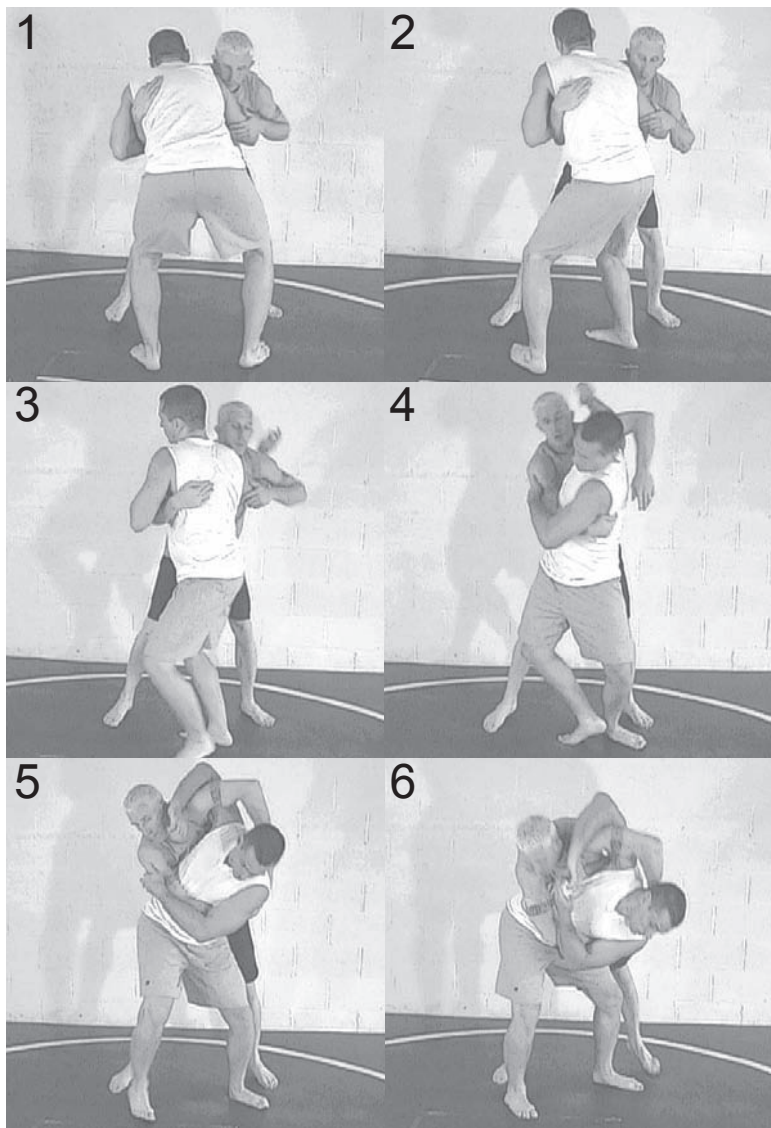


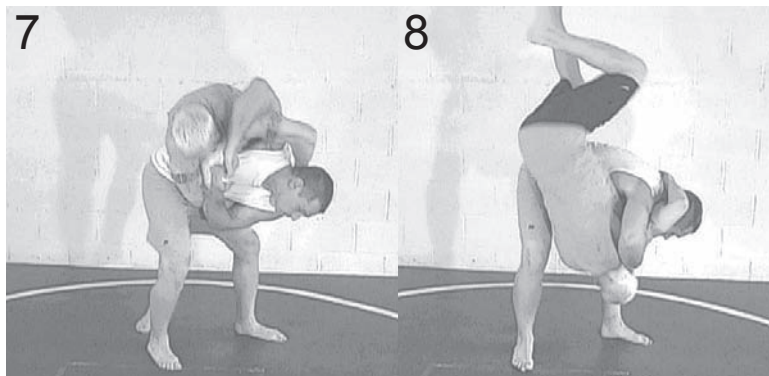
7.3.3 *Hip throws*

Hip throws should be old news to players of the twin sports. They all use a backstep into your opponent's hips and a rocking over the waist motion to take his base. The difference is in the tie-up position.



Over-under double arm tie-up to hip throw



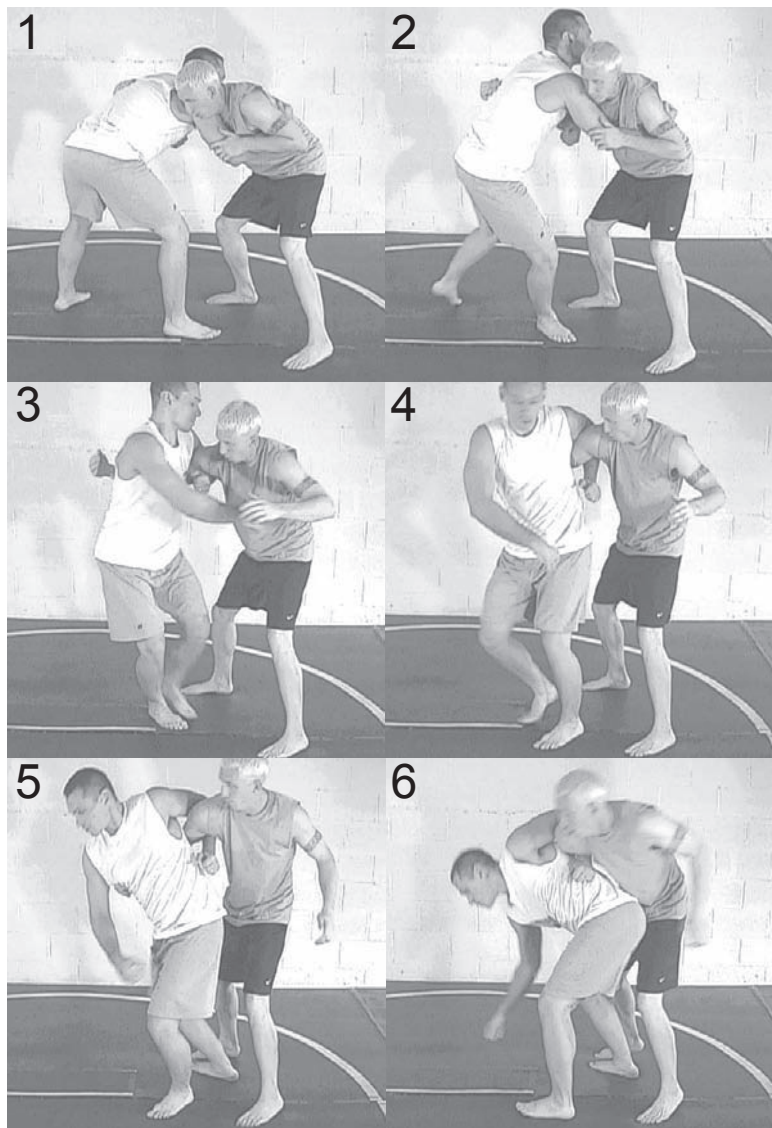


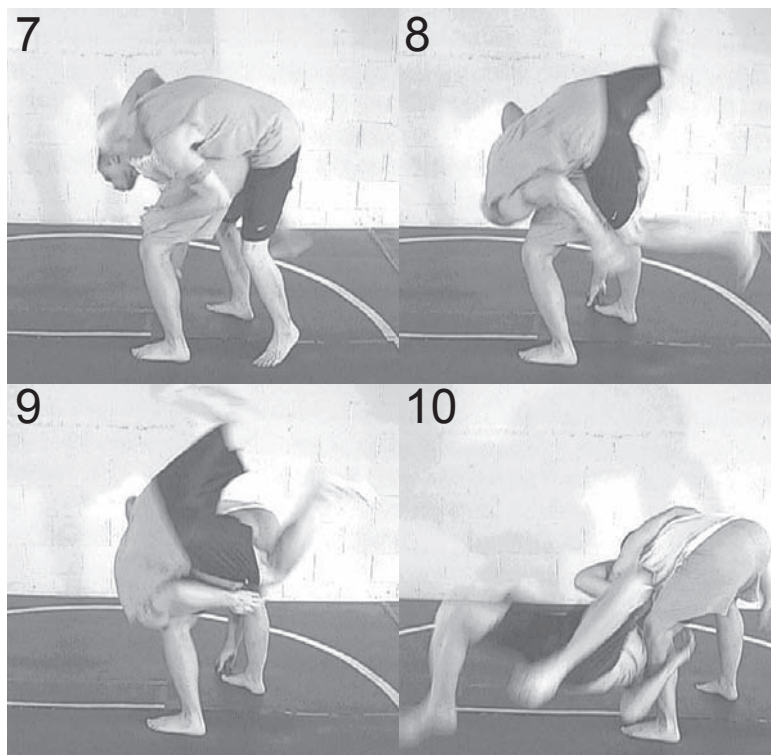
Close-up of grip



- ☒ Hook your overhook tight.
- ☒ Bring the crook of your underhook arm over his overhook arm as if throwing a corkscrew hook between your bodies.
- ☒ Hit your backstep and throw.

Single arm tie-up hip throw





- ☒ Overhook him deep with your overhook arm using the crook of your arm.
- ☒ Back step and clear your hips to the opposite side of his body.
- ☒ Hit your hip throw.

Clinch takedowns



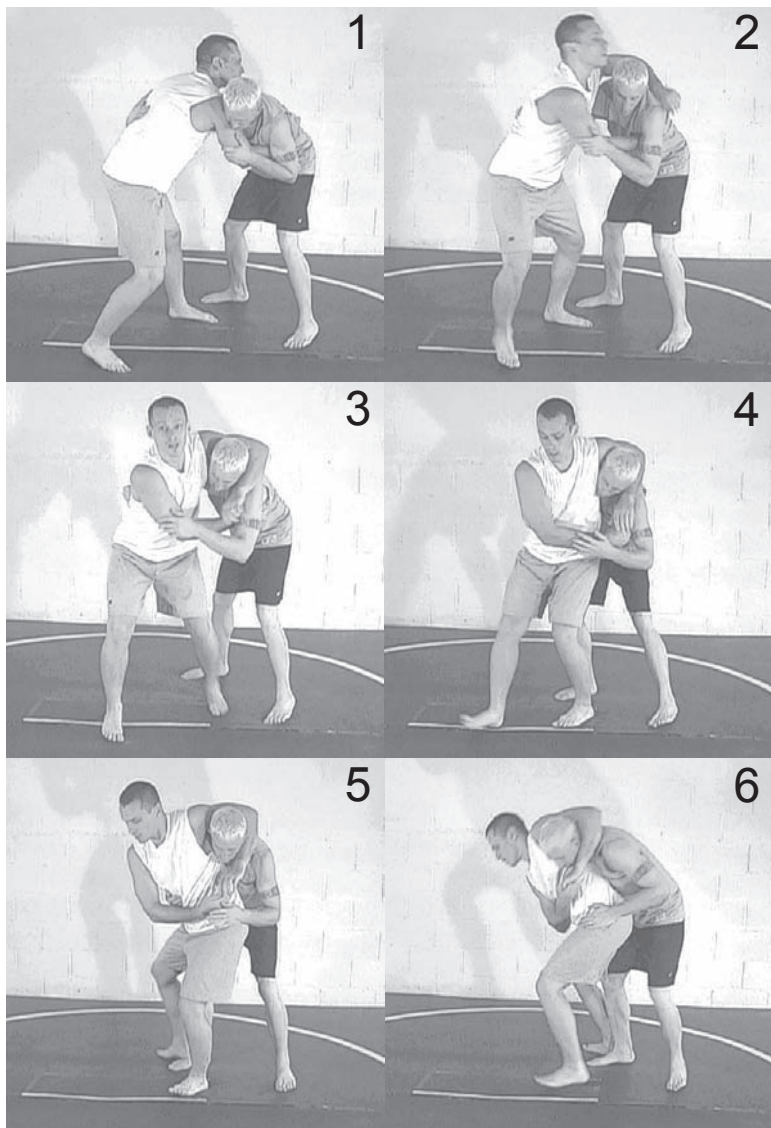
7.3.4 *Headlock throws*

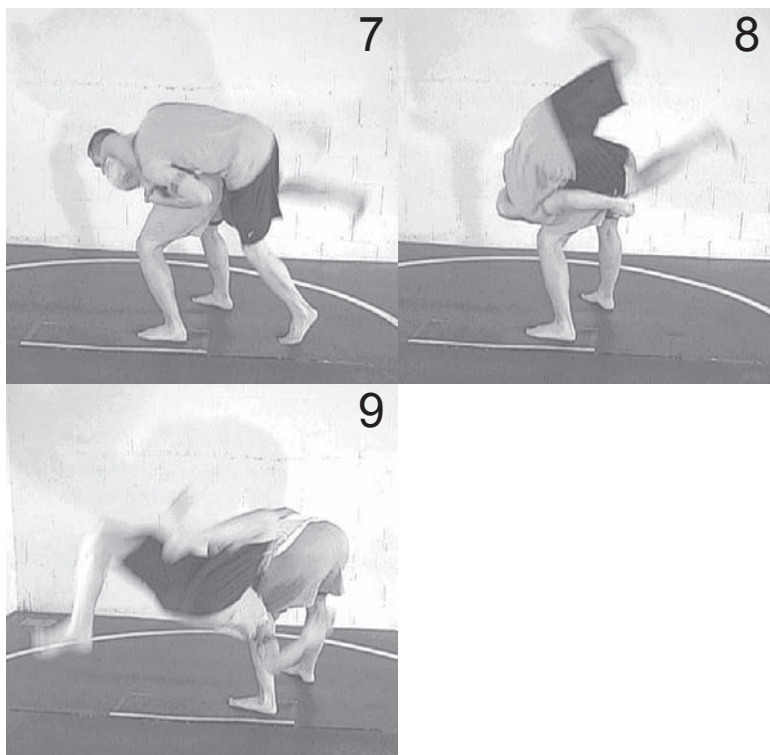
The name for this class of throws is actually a misnomer because

- a) they are actually a hip throw variant and
- b) these are head holds and not headlocks, but that is a lesson for another day.



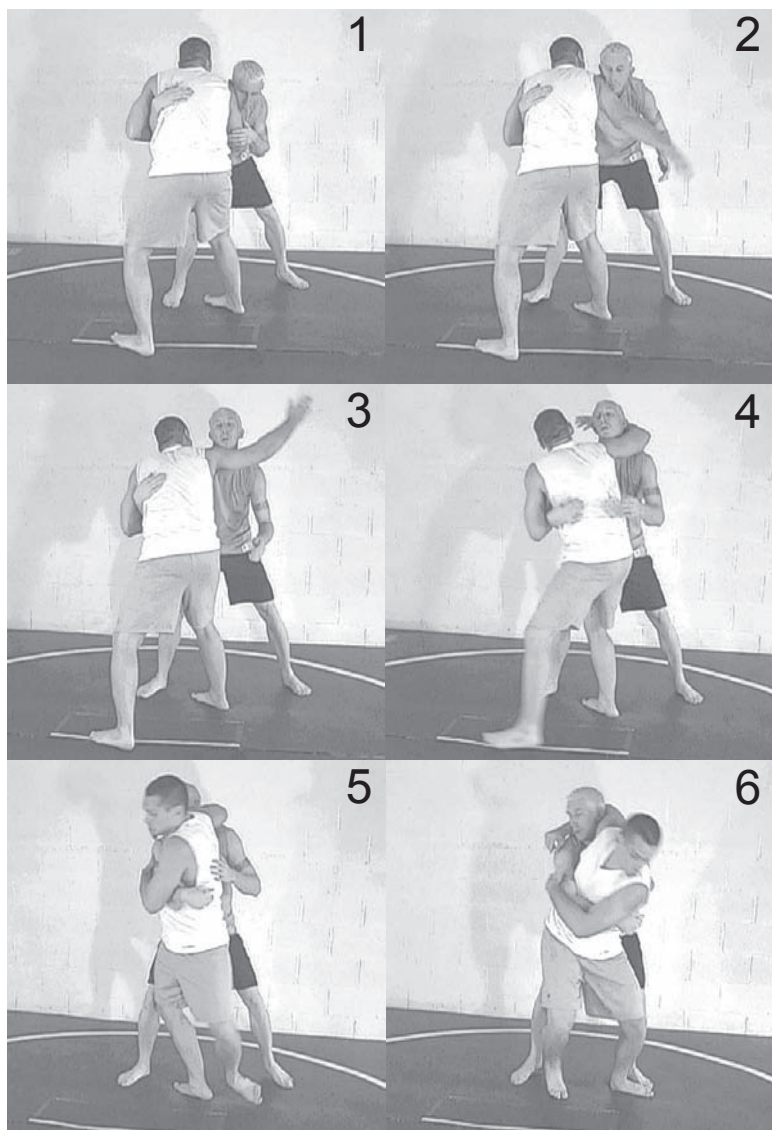
Slide to headlock throw

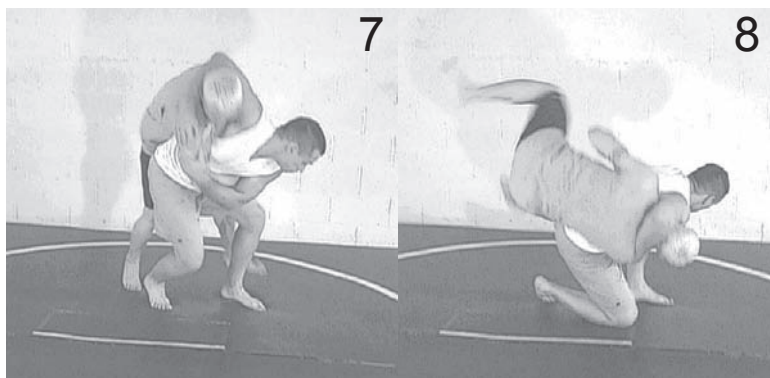




- ☒ Slip your overhook arm to a head hook grip.
- ☒ Use your underhook hand to grip his overhook arm.
- ☒ Hit your backstep and throw.

Drop out headlock throw





- ☒ Drop your underhook arm out of position.
- ☒ Use that arm to hit a head hook.
- ☒ Hit your backstep and execute a hip throw.

Clinch takedowns

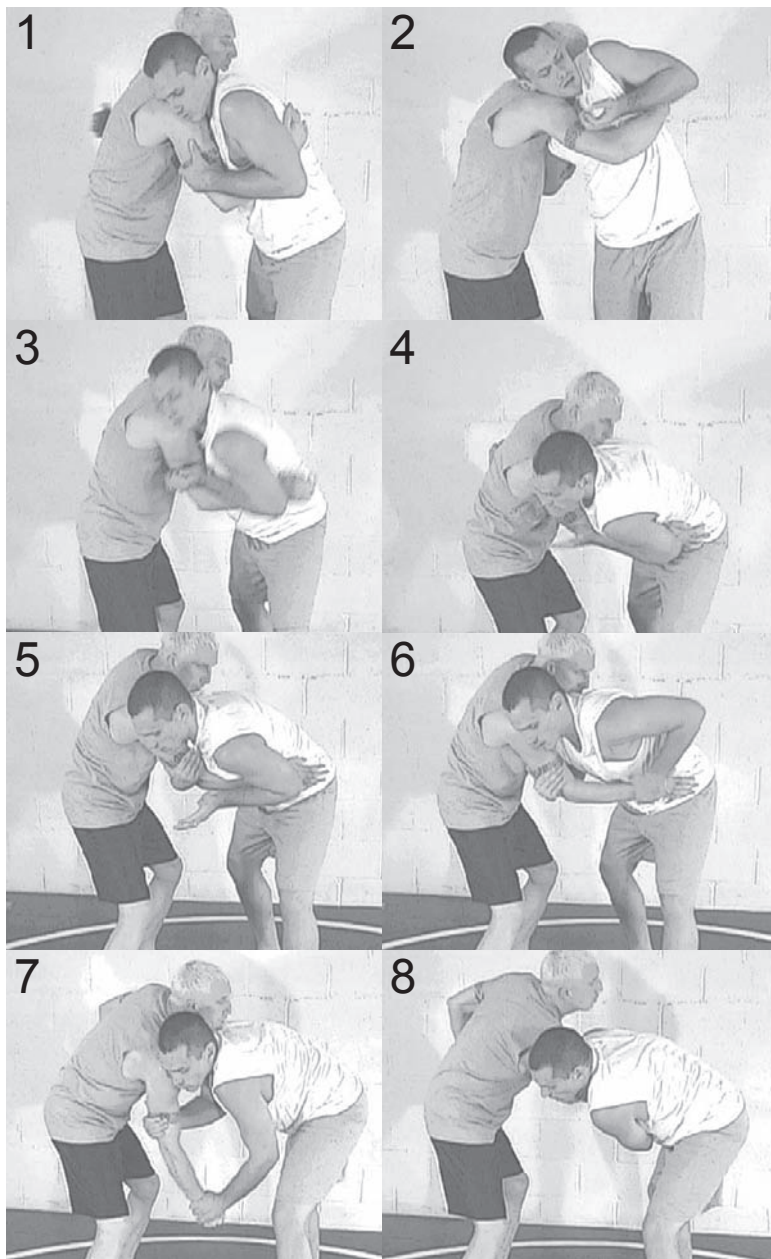


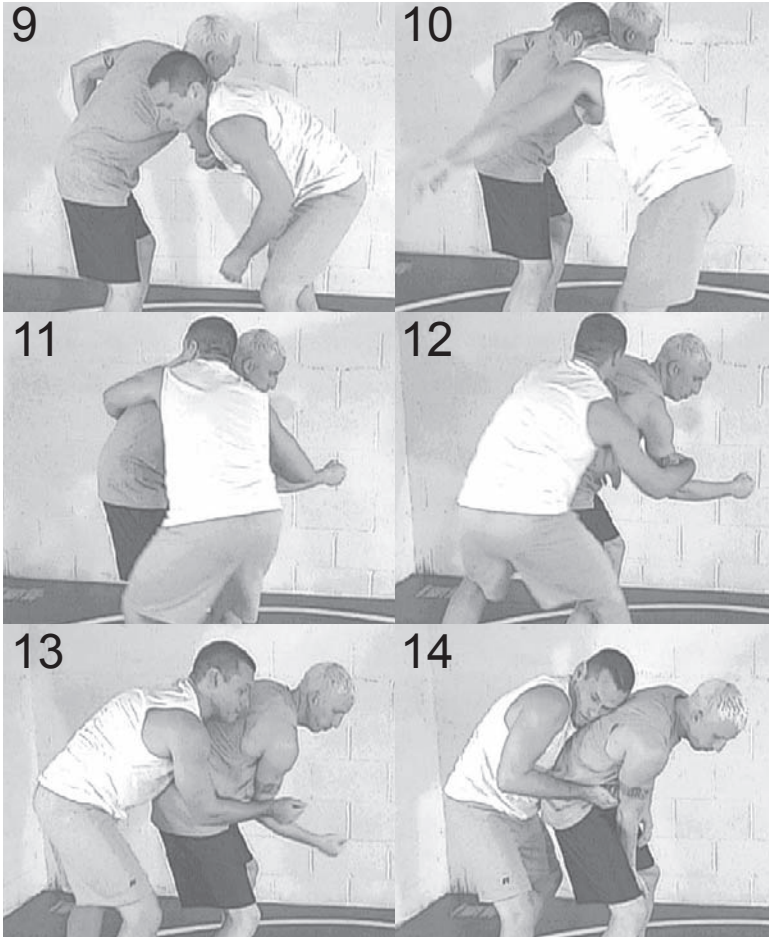
7.3.5 Arm drags and go-behinds

There is a world of material on arm dragging and go-behinds. Only a few that work out of the over-under clinch are presented here.



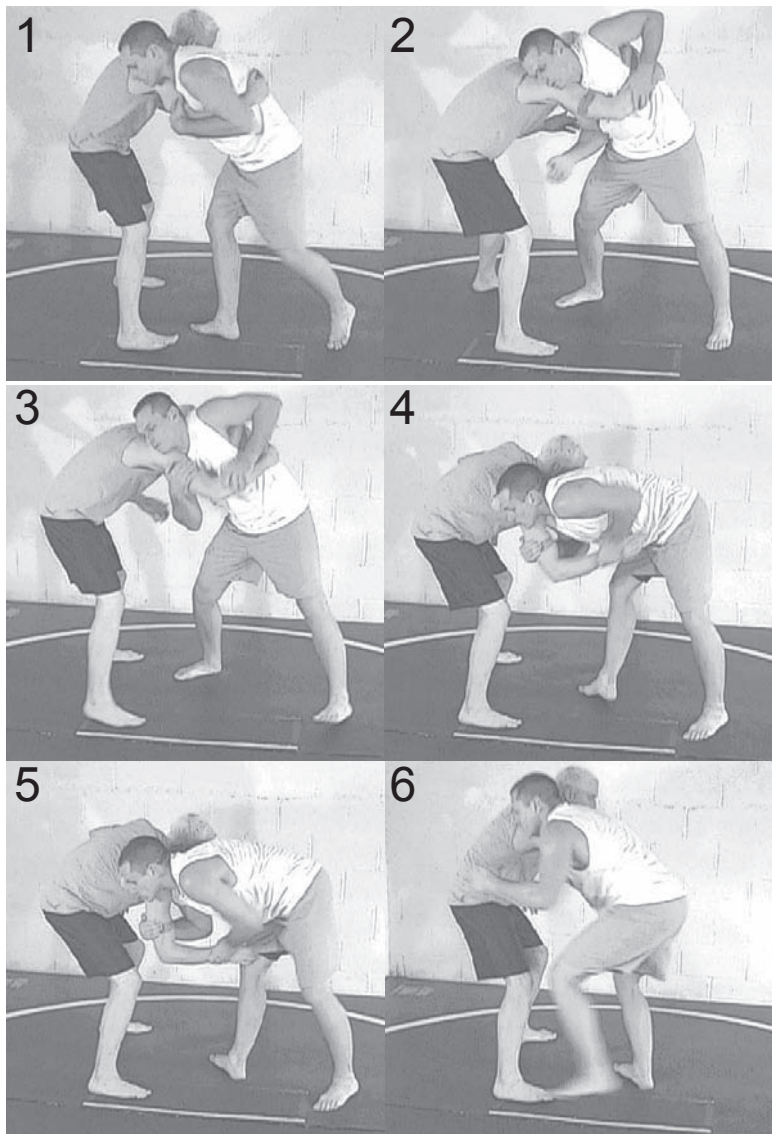
Over-under arm drag and go-behind



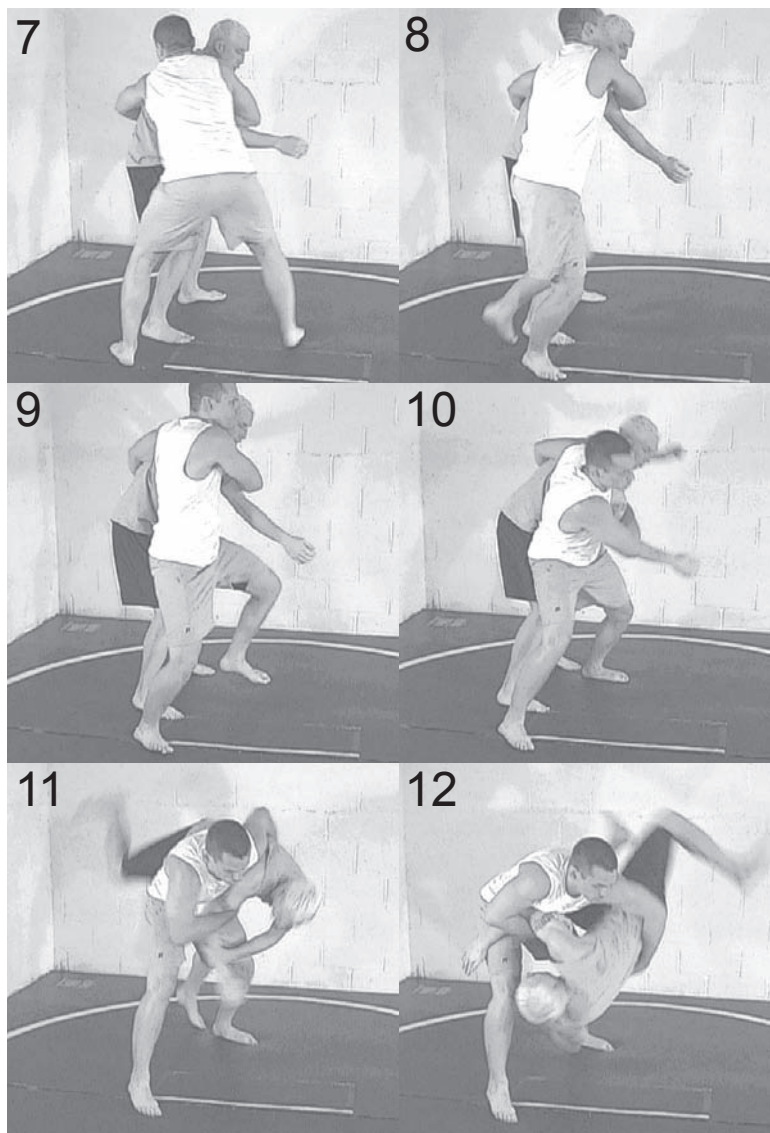


- ☒ Use your overhook elbow to pry down on his underhook forearm.
- ☒ Drop your underhook arm out and grip his underhook triceps.
- ☒ Drop your hips back and pull his underhook arm 45 degrees and across his body with your underhook hand.
- ☒ Keep your arm drag grip in place, step behind him and grab his waist for a go-behind.

Arm drag and go-behind to hip throw

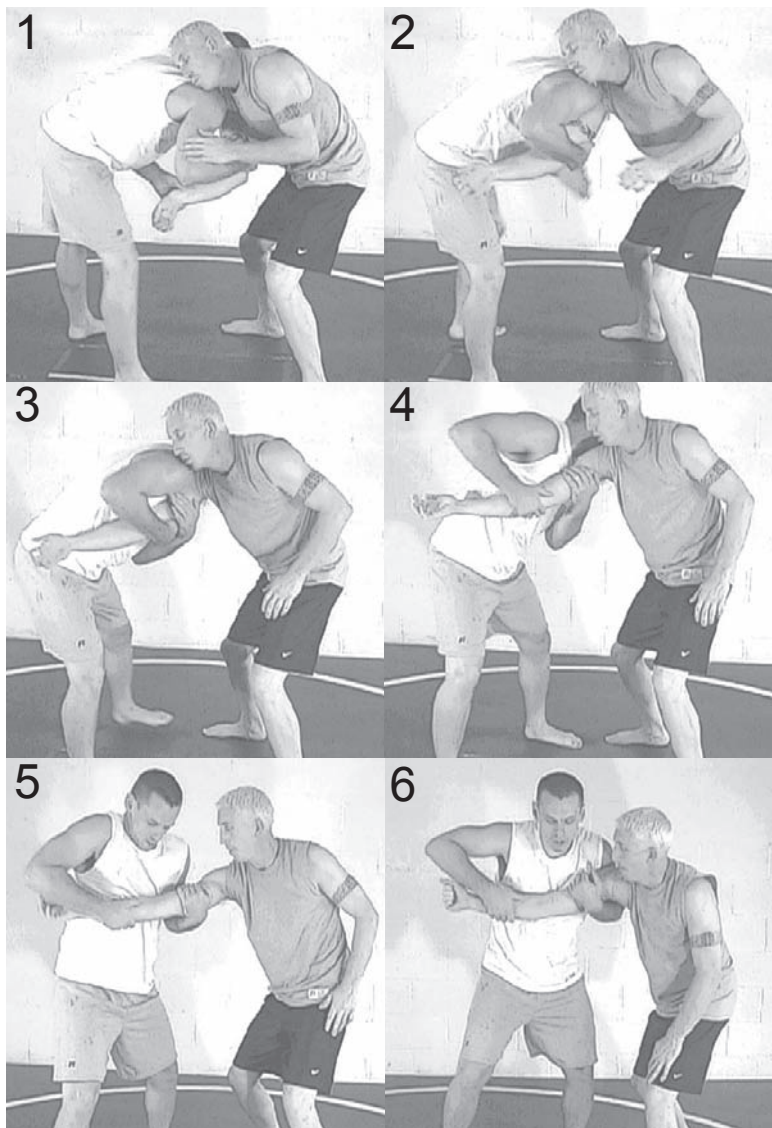


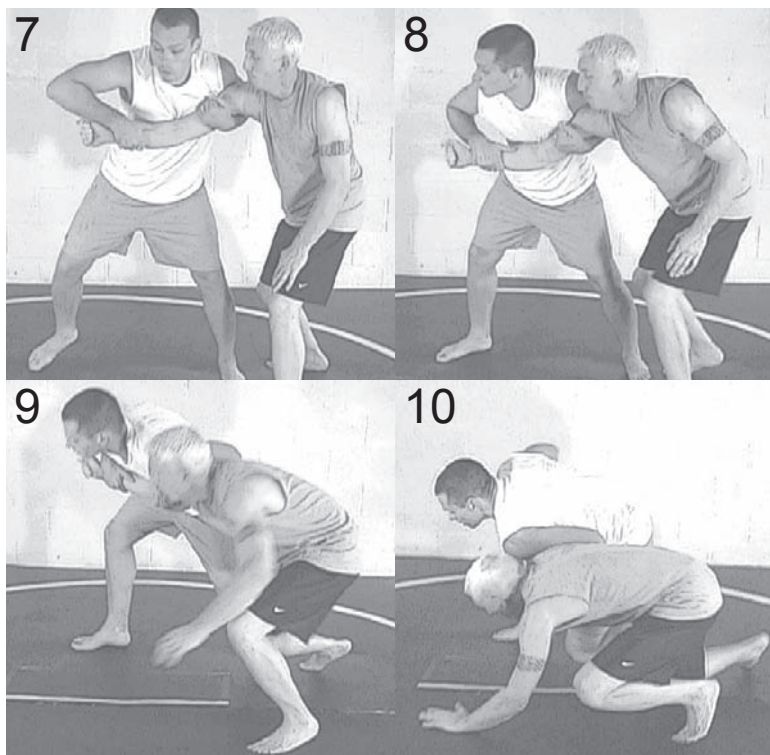
This one could be listed under the hip throw section, but since it involves a skill we just learned (arm drag/go-behind), it fits here perfectly.



- ☒ Hit your drag, go-behind and grip his waist
- ☒ Backstep your hips across his arm-drag side hip.
- ☒ Keep your grips in place and hit the hip throw.

Arm drag to outside Russian 2-on-1



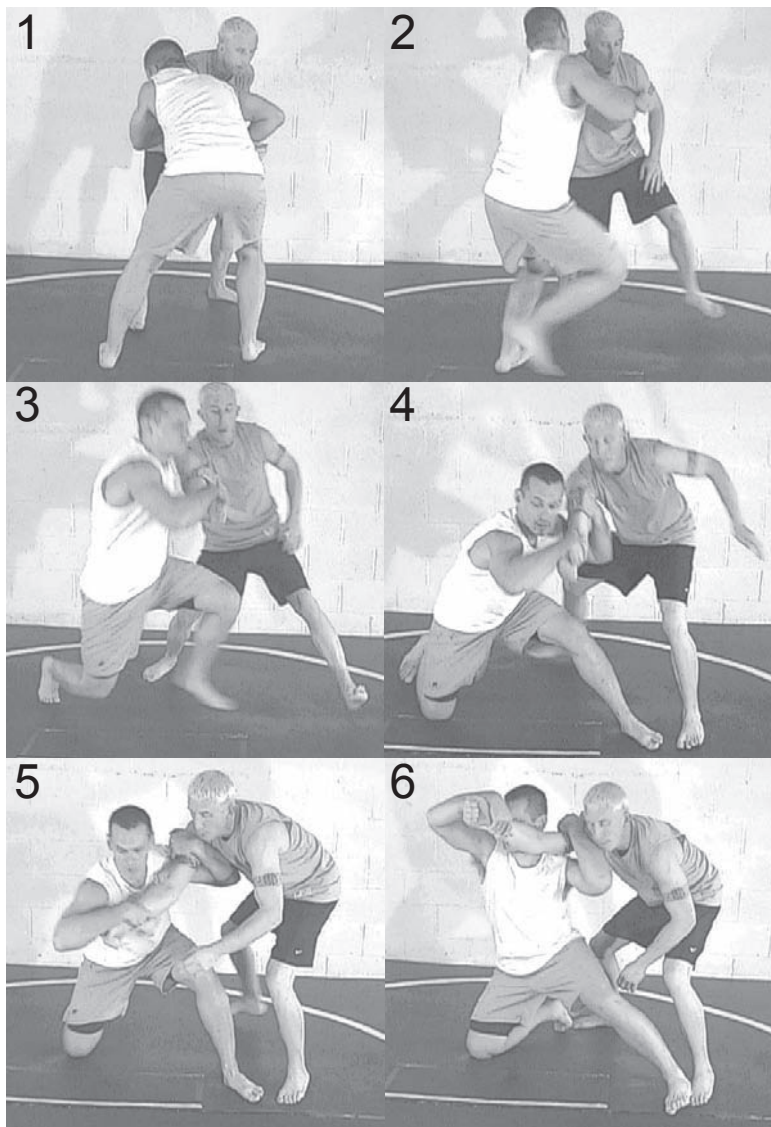


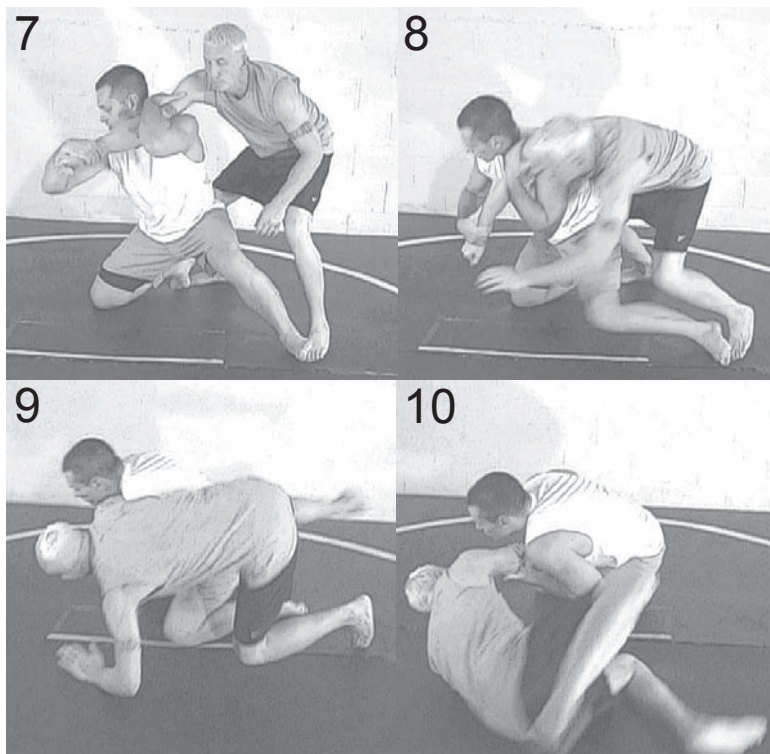
- ☒ Hit your arm drag.
- ☒ Once you've passed his arm between your bodies, underhook and hug his triceps with your left hand.
- ☒ Slide your right hand to his wrist.
- ☒ Straighten his arm and apply downward pressure with either your chest or shoulder to push him to the mat.



Two ways to grip his arm.

Outside Russian 2-on-1 to mare





- ☒ Here you've hit the preceding move but your opponent begins circling in front of you to escape the pressure.
- ☒ Keep your grips and step your left leg in front of his legs.
- ☒ As you step, bring his attacked arm on top of your shoulder.
- ☒ Go to your right knee as you bring him over the top in a mare.

Clinch takedowns



7.3.6 Body lock throws

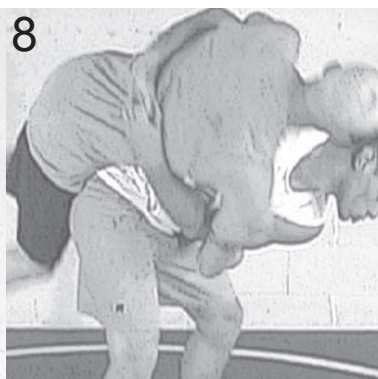
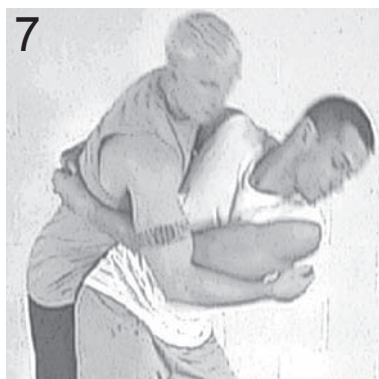
These throws work when you pummel yourself into a good position and get your hands locked.



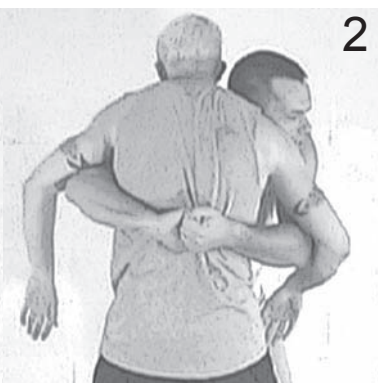
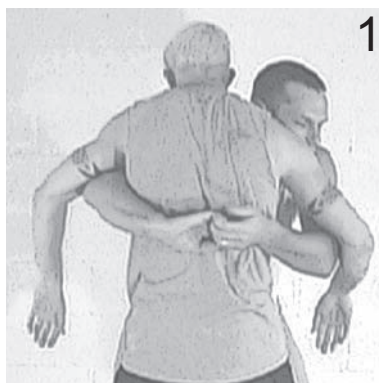
Front body lock hip throw



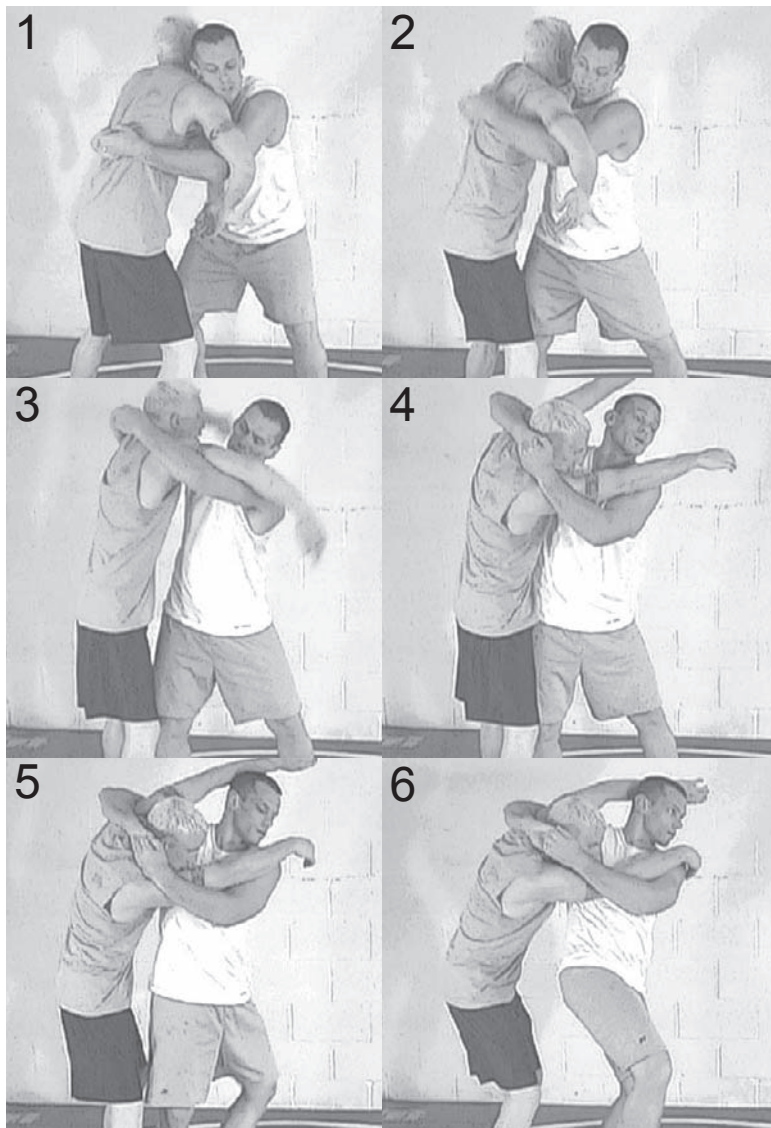
- ☒ Pummel to your front body lock.
- ☒ Back step and clear your hips.
- ☒ Hit your hip throw.

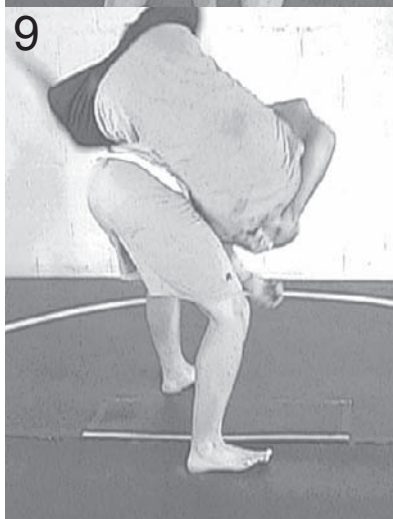


Another view



Front body lock slide to head lock hip throw





- ☒ Hit your front body lock.
- ☒ Your opponent sags his hips to prevent the throw.
- ☒ Keep your grip and slide your arms up his body coming underneath his arms to his head level.
- ☒ Hit your backstep and then hip throw.

Clinch takedowns



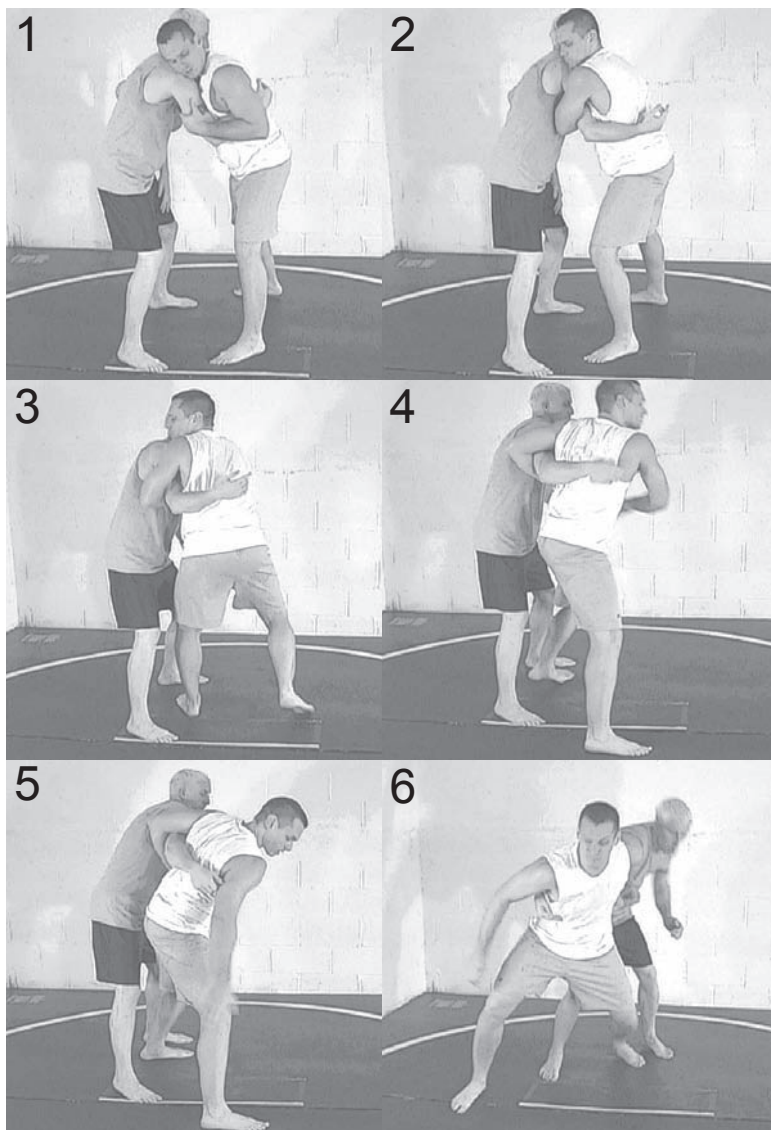
7.3.7 *Whizzer throws*

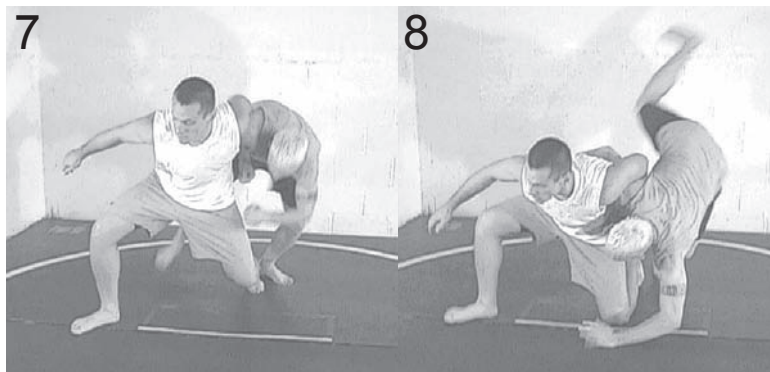
If you can overhook deeply enough, you can hit this go-to tool.



Clinch takedowns

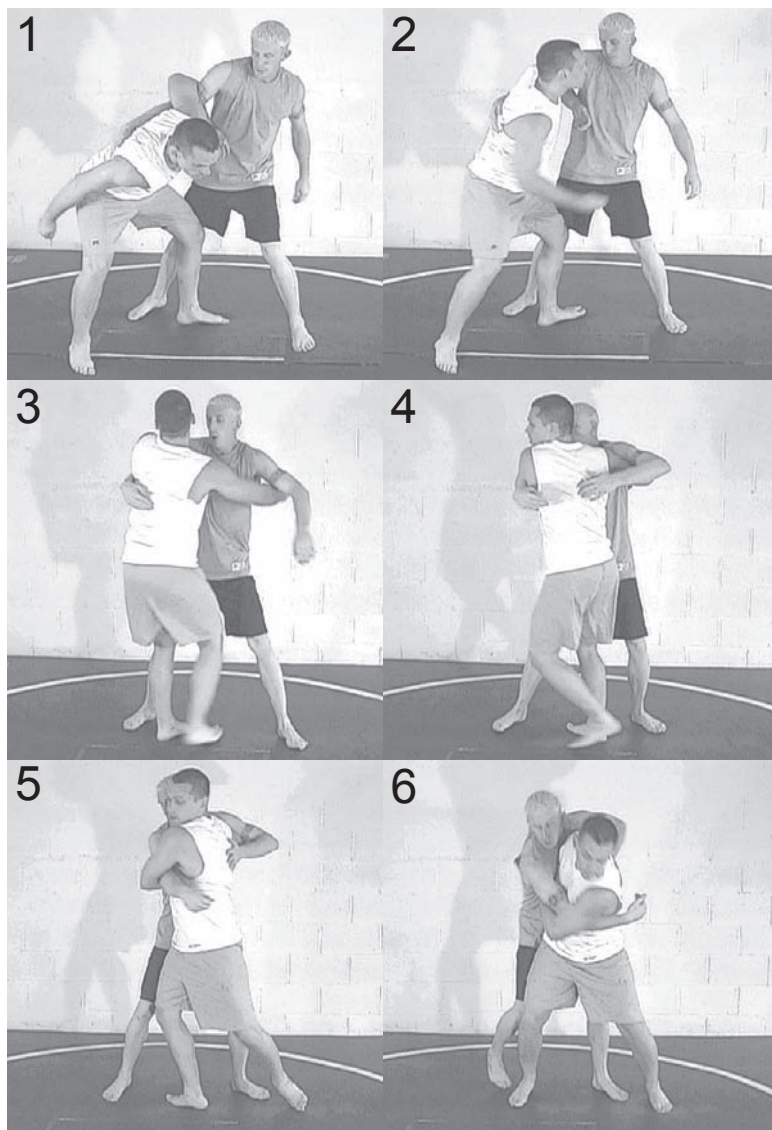
Whizzer

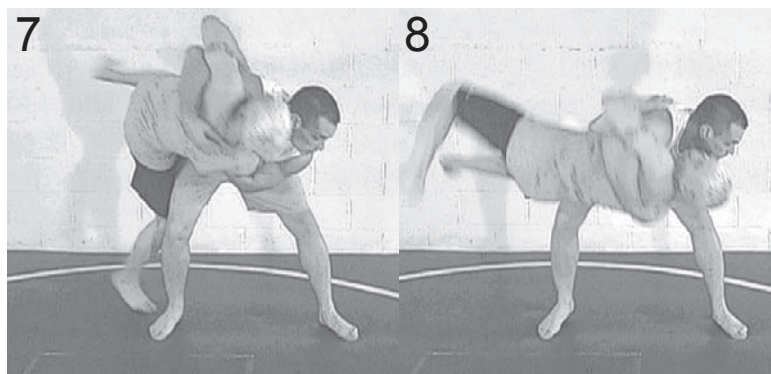




- ☒ Sink your overhook deep.
- ☒ Drop your underhook out.
- ☒ Back step with your right while driving your whizzer shoulder to the mat.

Whizzer to pancake





Fire back with this sequence when you find your whizzer thwarted.

- ☒ Hit your whizzer if he rises up for base.
- ☒ Step your right foot back into him as you hit your underhook again.
- ☒ Pull hard with your overhook.
- ☒ Hit hard with your underhook and drop him back toward his right shoulder.

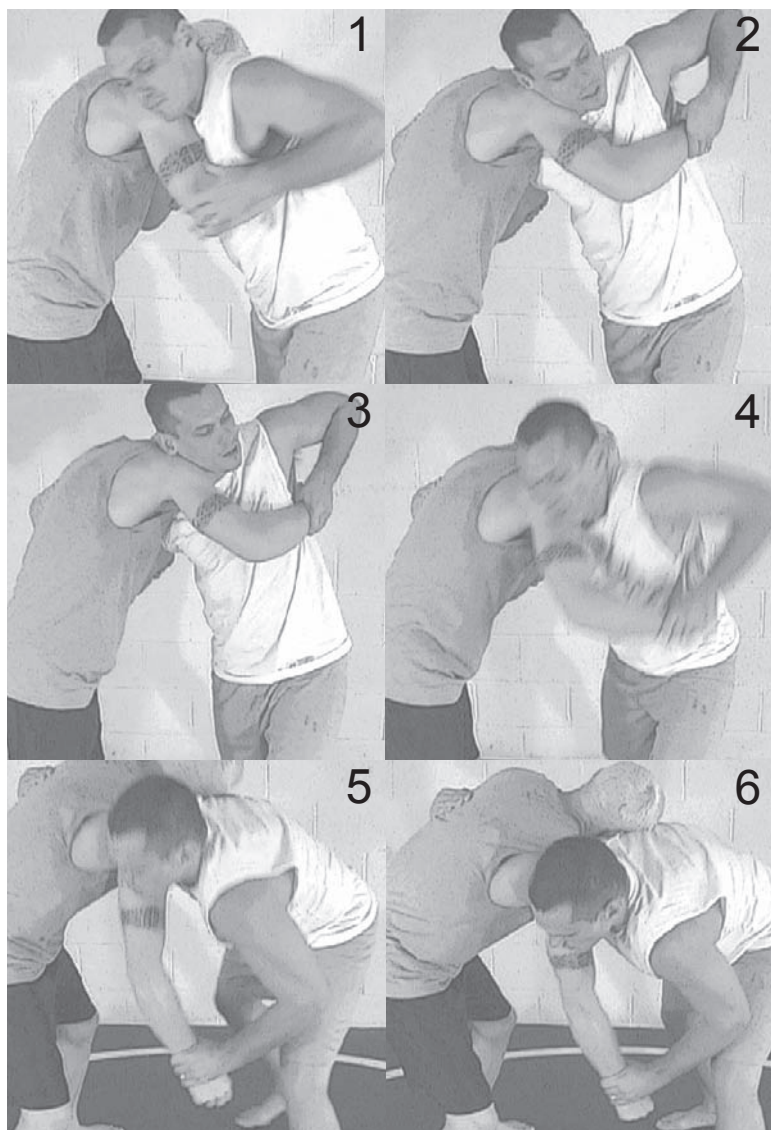
7.3.8 Duckunder throws

Duckunders are bread-and-butter wrestling moves, but you will find them more commonly in the head and arm tie-up. Since we covered those to some degree in *Takedowns*, they aren't repeated here.



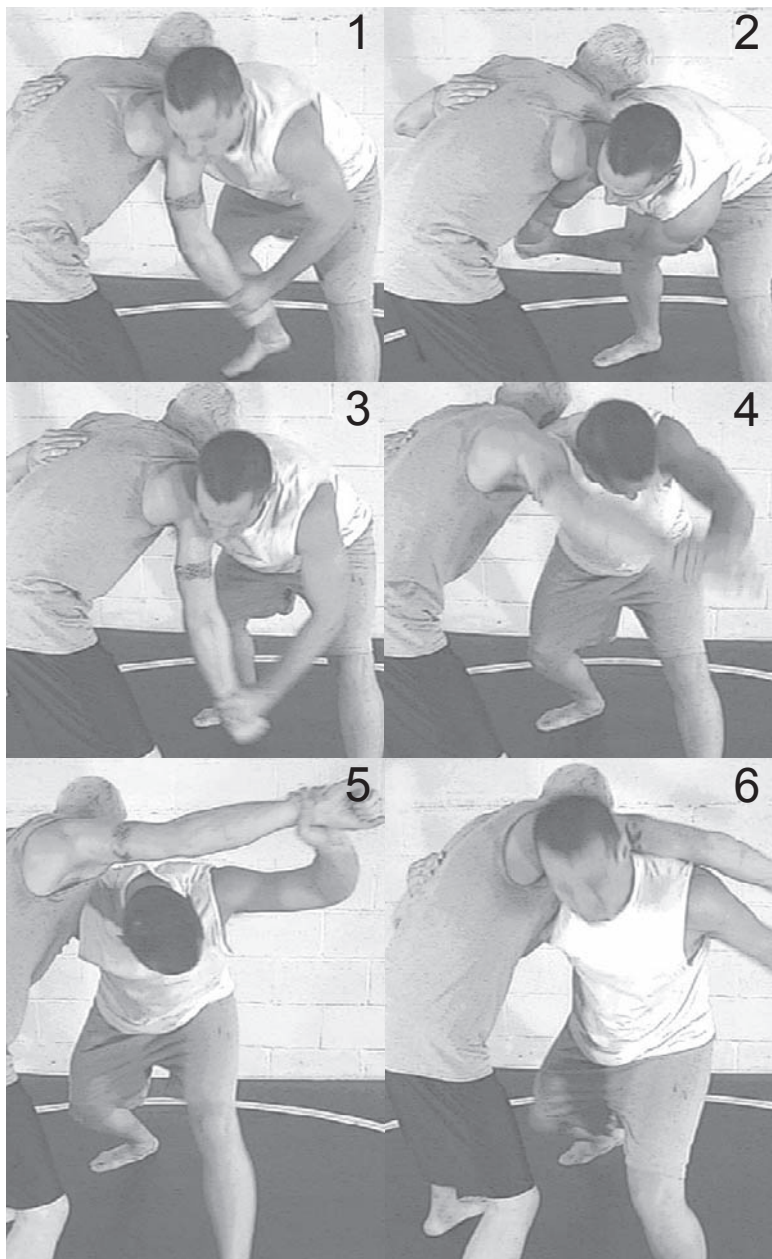
Duckunders inside the over-under clinch are tough to hit, but they do have their place. With that in mind, let's take a look at a few duckunder ideas.

Wrist control



- ☒ Slide your overhook hand to his underhook wrist and grip it tightly.
- ☒ Drop your base a bit to gain stiff-arm control.

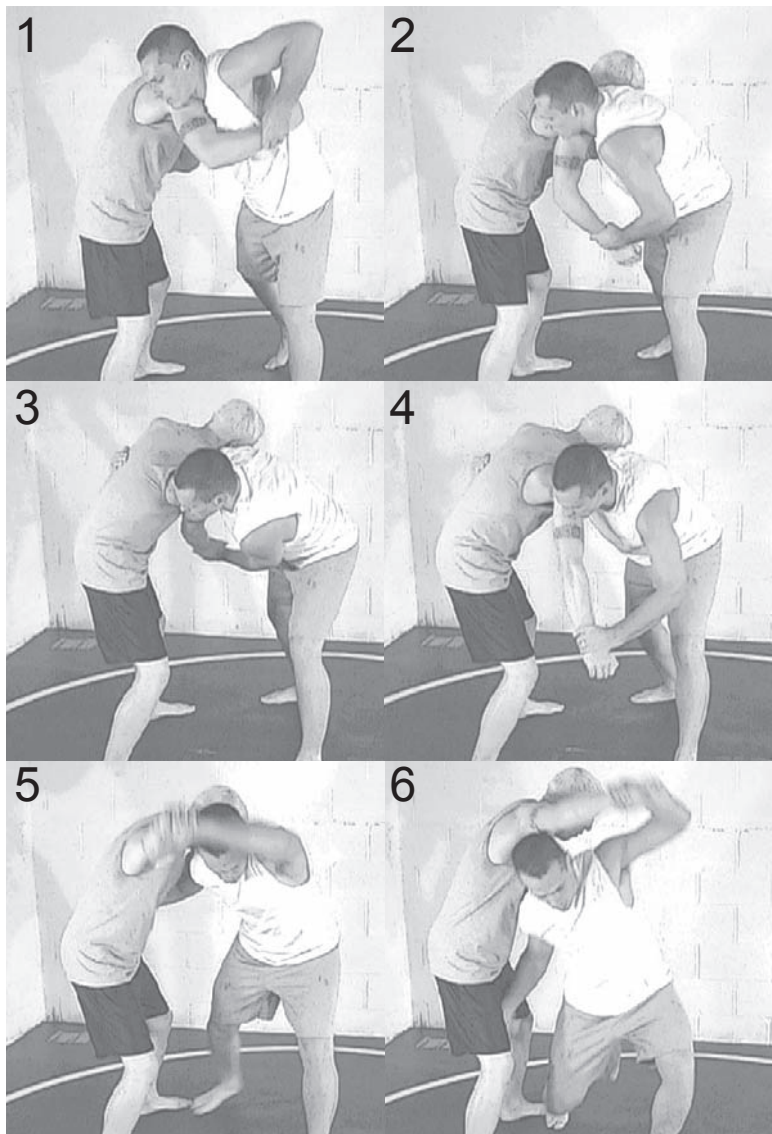
Duckunder from wrist control



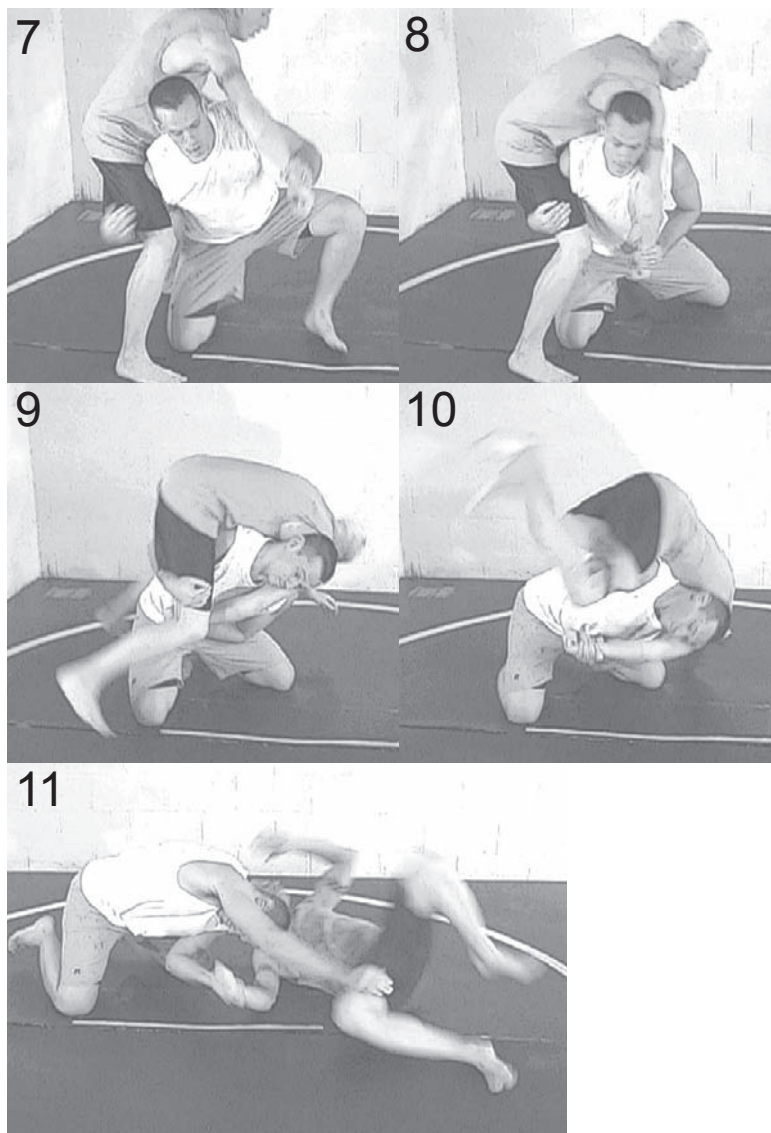


- ☒ Gain wrist control.
- ☒ Swing his controlled arm to the inside.
- ☒ As he fights his arm back to the outside, duck under his controlled armpit with your head and hit a go-behind.

Inside fireman's carry



- ☒ Attain the underarm sneak position.
- ☒ Drop to both knees directly under him.

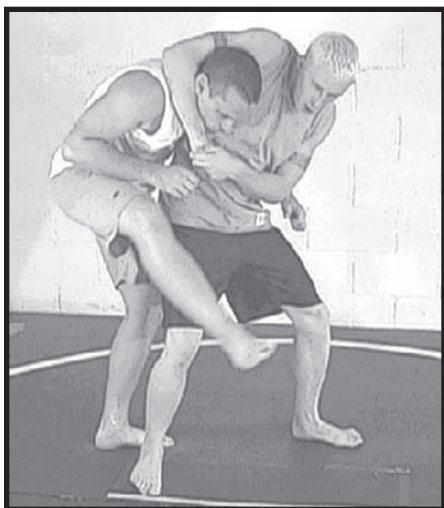


- ☒ Underhook his crotch with your underhook arm.
- ☒ Rock him over your shoulders to the mat.

8 Countering clinch takedowns

I'll be honest. Stuffing takedowns and counterthrowing deserves a text unto itself, but we would be remiss if we didn't address the topic basically. Rather than take

this discussion into the stratosphere with all of the available material, let's keep it simple and play the high percentage ideas.

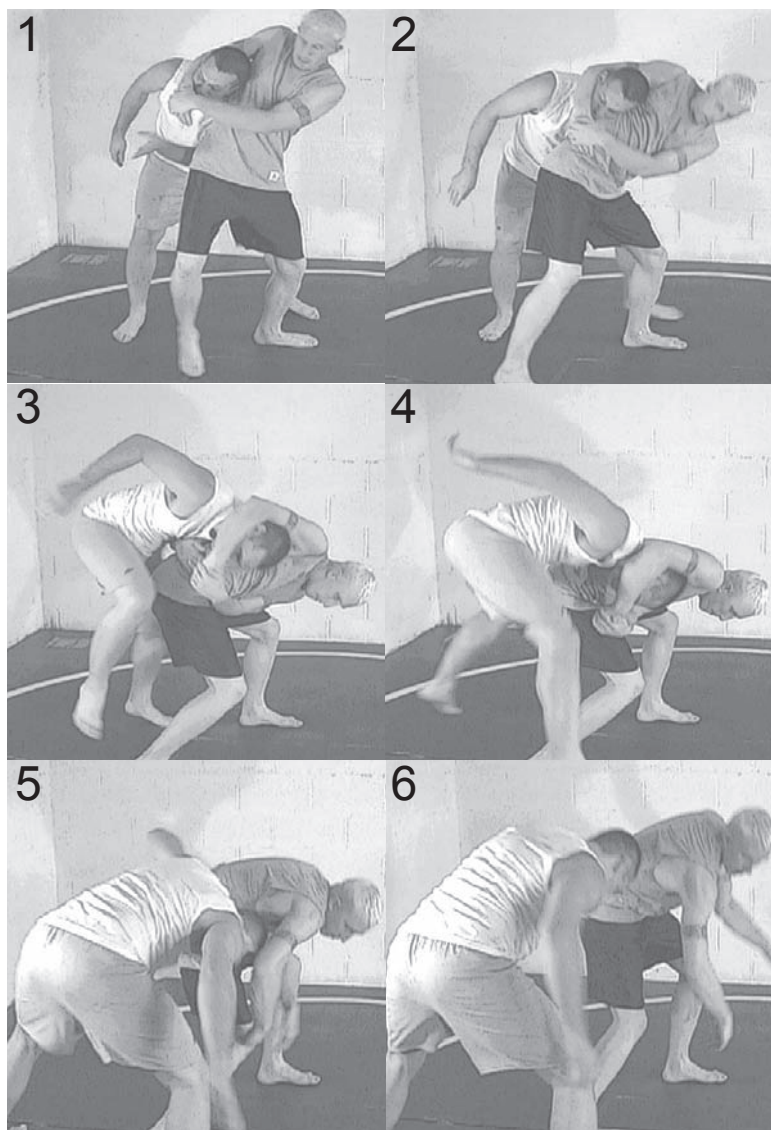


Having a good pummeling and positioning game is your primary counter-throw tactic. I have every confidence that if you play this

portion of the game well, you won't need the info that follows. But here it is, just in case.

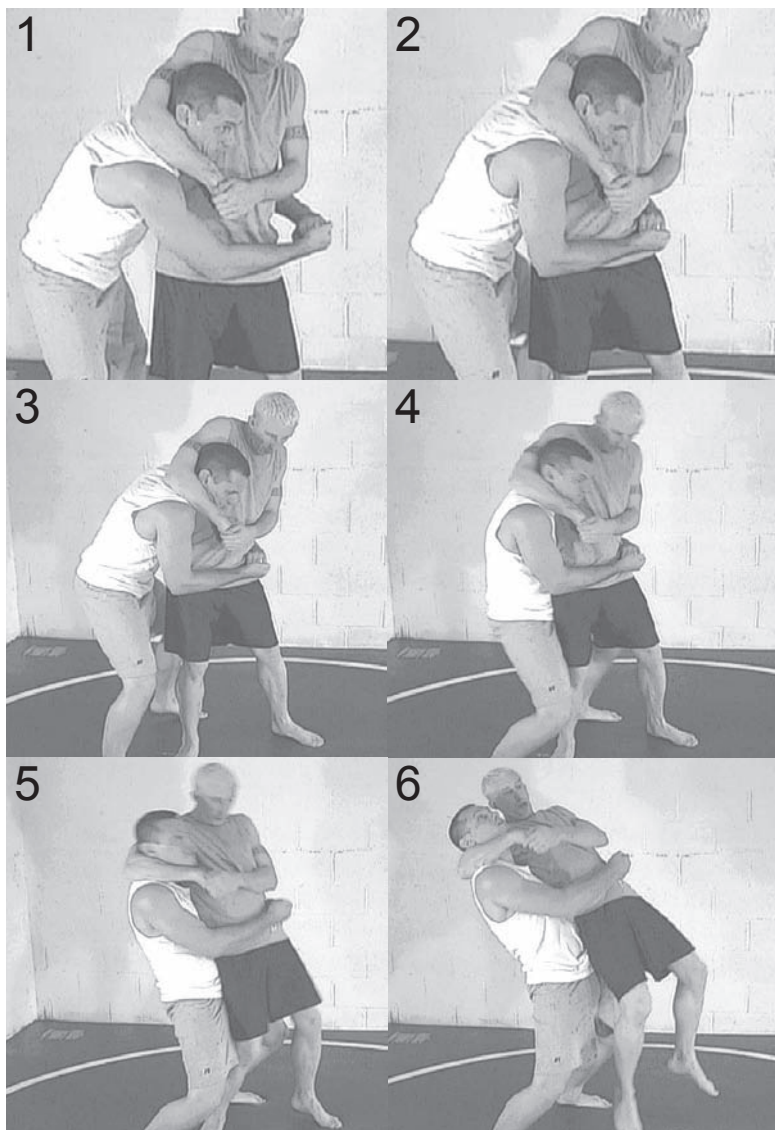
The vast majority of takedowns you encounter inside the clinch are of the hip toss/headlock throw variety and having a good counter game will cure much of what ails you. There are also backcast opportunities, which are covered later.

Bar and travel versus hip toss or headlock throw



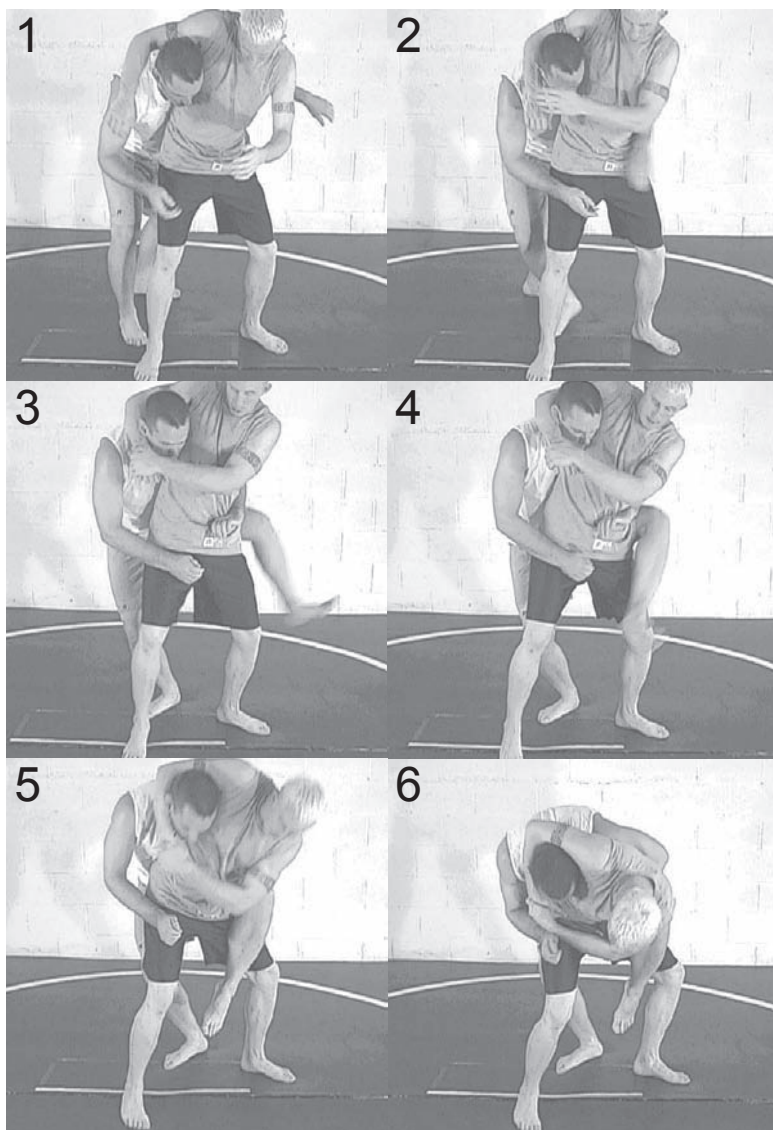
- ☒ Place your far arm (the arm away from the direction being thrown) on your opponent's back.
- ☒ Push away with this arm and use this push to help travel your body to a standing position in front of your opponent.

Hips through versus hip toss or headlock throw



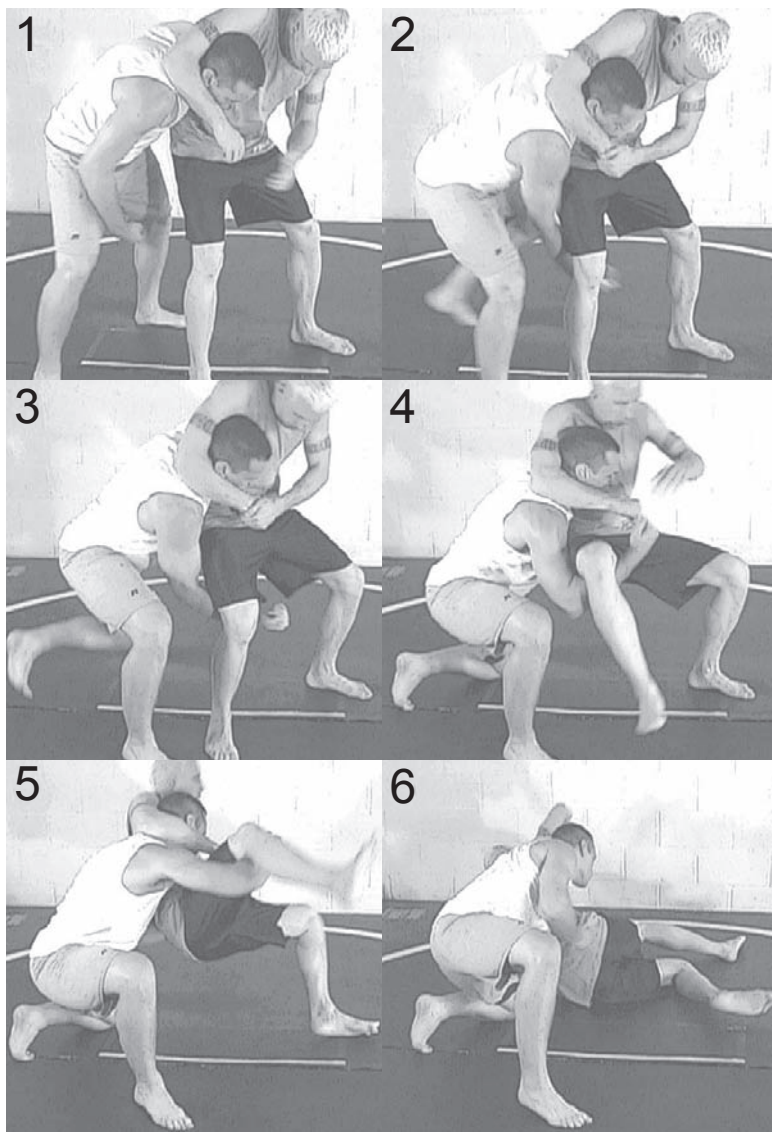
- ☒ Attempt to body lock your opponent.
- ☒ Drive your hips through him to take his base.

Grapevine versus headlock throw



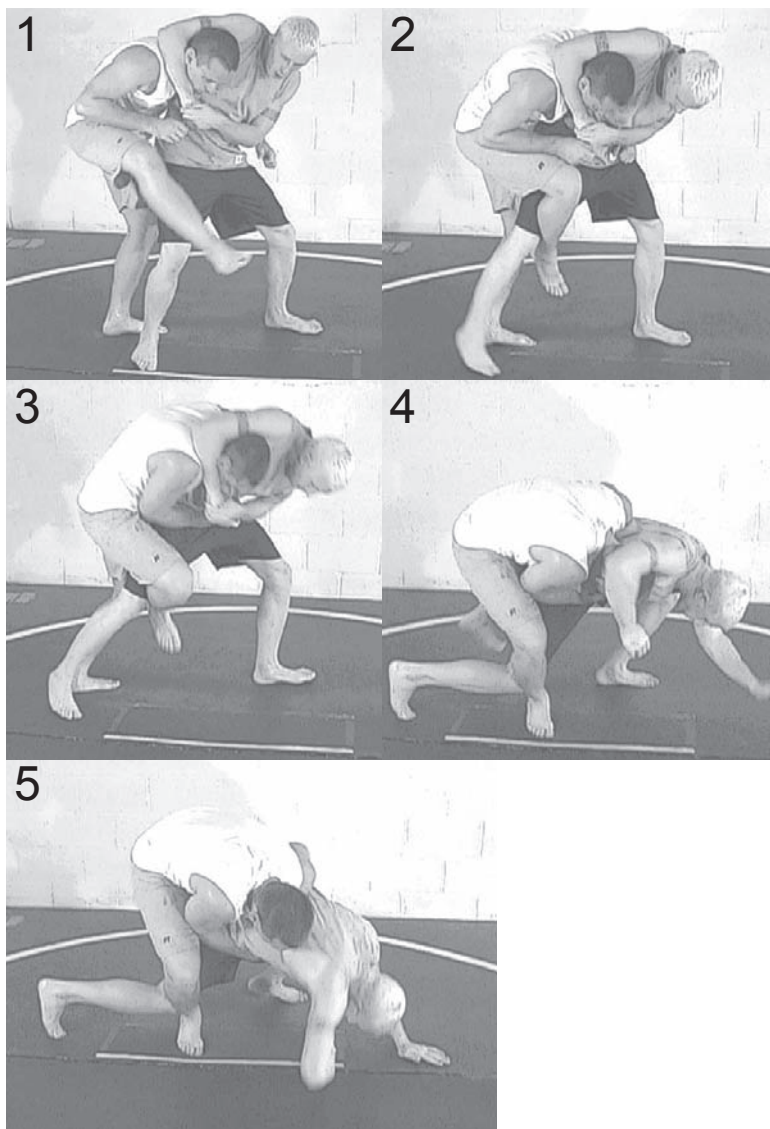
- ☒ Overhook his leg farthest from your head with your far leg.
- ☒ Grapevine it tight to block the throw.

Near leg pickup versus headlock throw



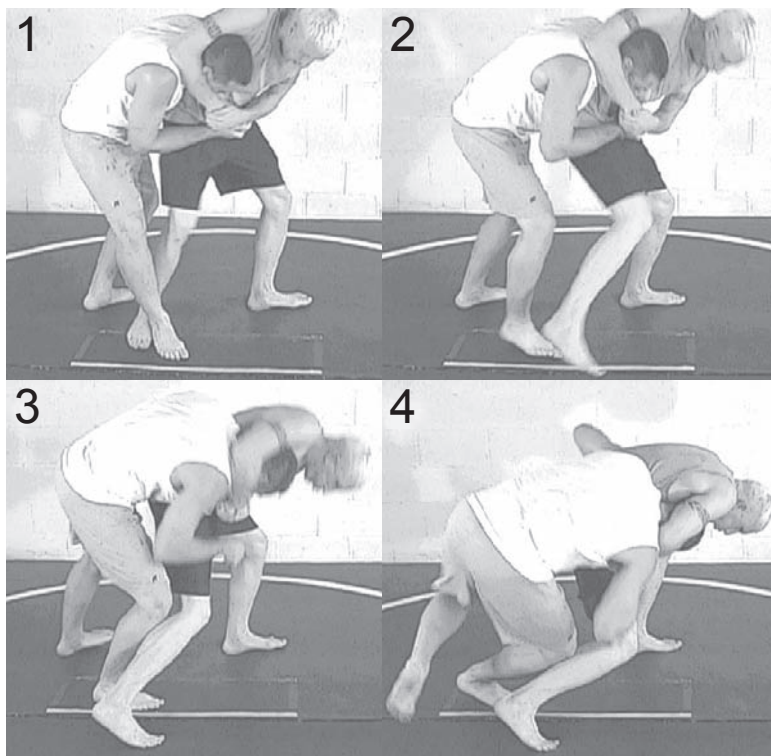
- ☒ Drop your far knee to the mat.
- ☒ Seatbelt with your far arm.
- ☒ Underhook his near leg with your near arm and dump him toward your far knee.

Forward trip

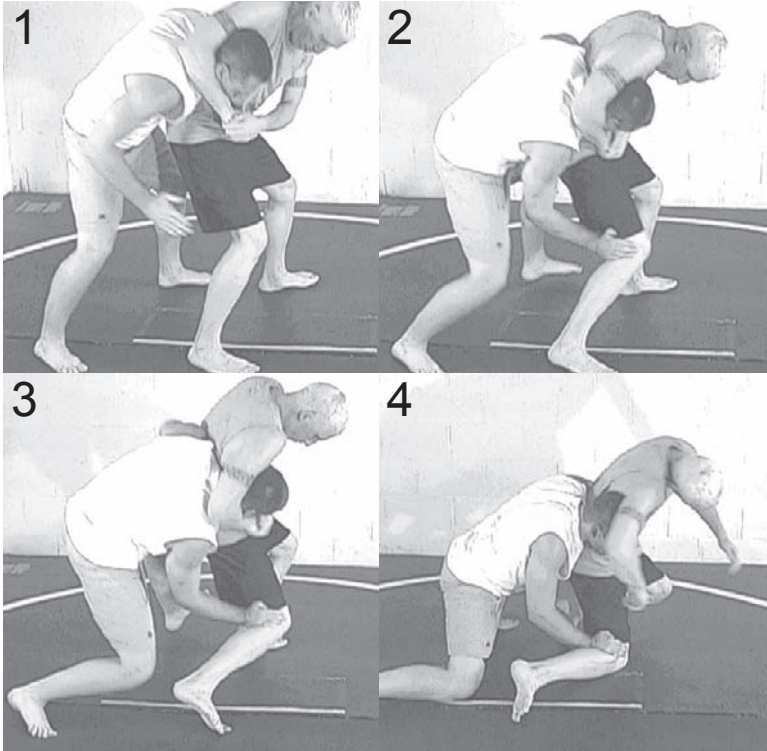


- ☒ Hook your near-side leg above his attacking-side knee. Hooking below his knee allows him to step or post out of your counter. See next page.
- ☒ Drive into him with your hips to hit the mat.

Hooking below his knee is a problem



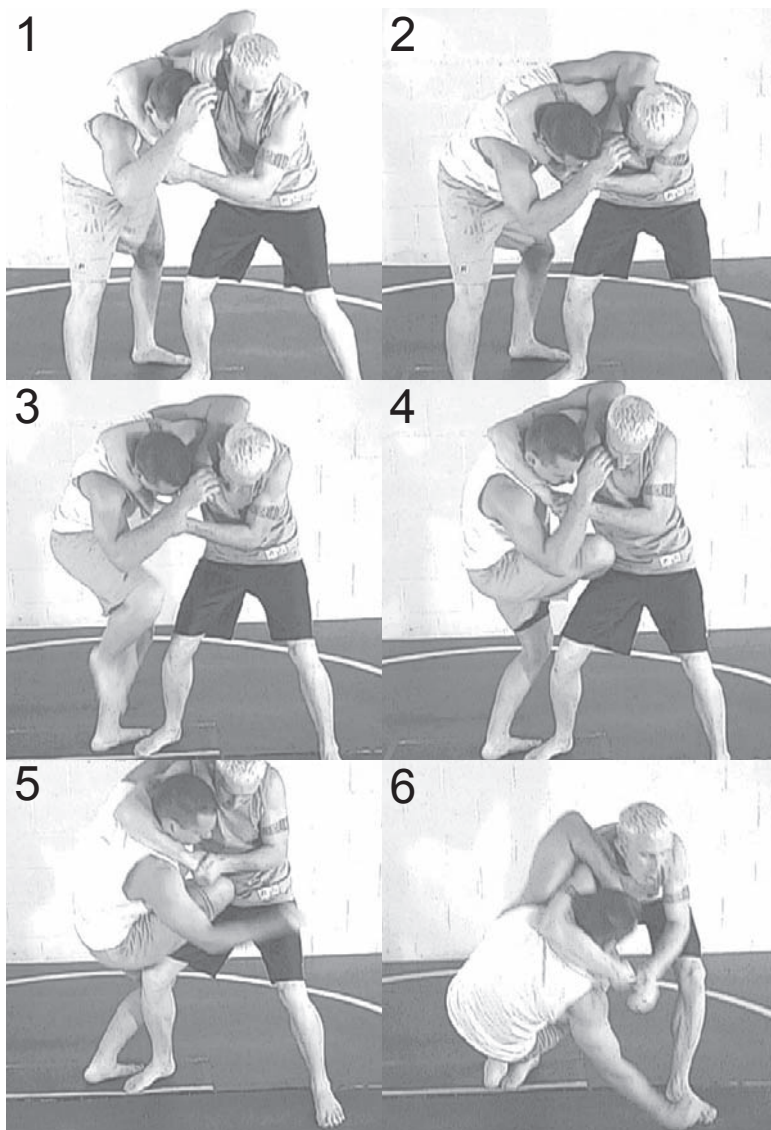
Knee buckle versus free arm throw



You can use this easy counter against any hip toss or headlock throw in which your near-side arm (the one nearest the direction of the throw) is free.

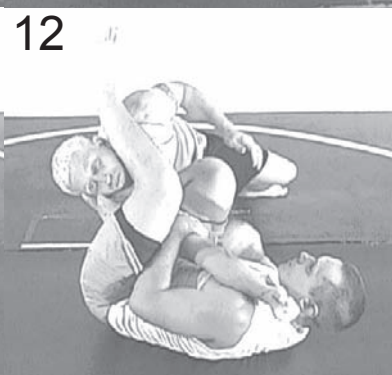
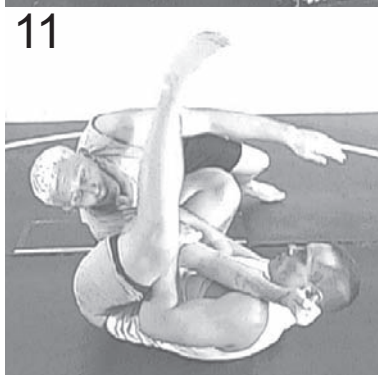
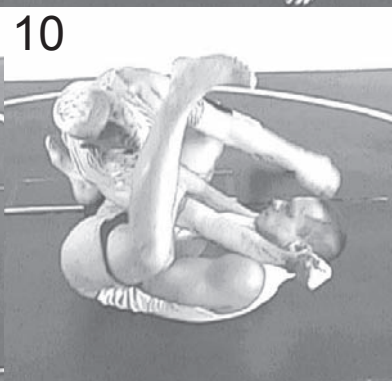
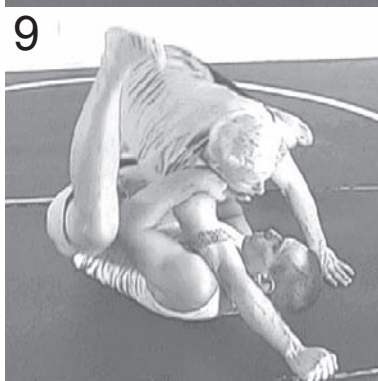
- ☒ Use your near-side palm against the back of your opponent's near knee.
- ☒ Shove his knee 45 degrees and down to the inside to take his base.

Brace and frame to arm bar versus headlock throw



This one is last in this progression because it requires a more complex skill set.

☒ Place the outer edge of your free forearm against the near side of his neck.

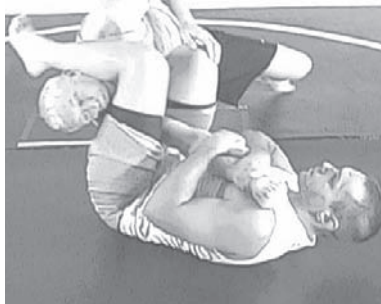


☒ Here's where timing comes in. As he executes the throw, drive your outside shoulder toward the mat between his legs using the throw's momentum.

☒ Bring your near-side shin across his stomach.

Countering clinch takedowns

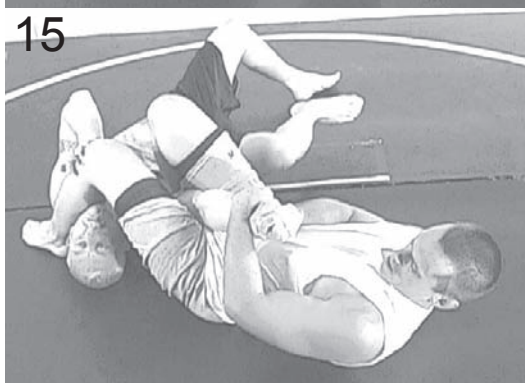
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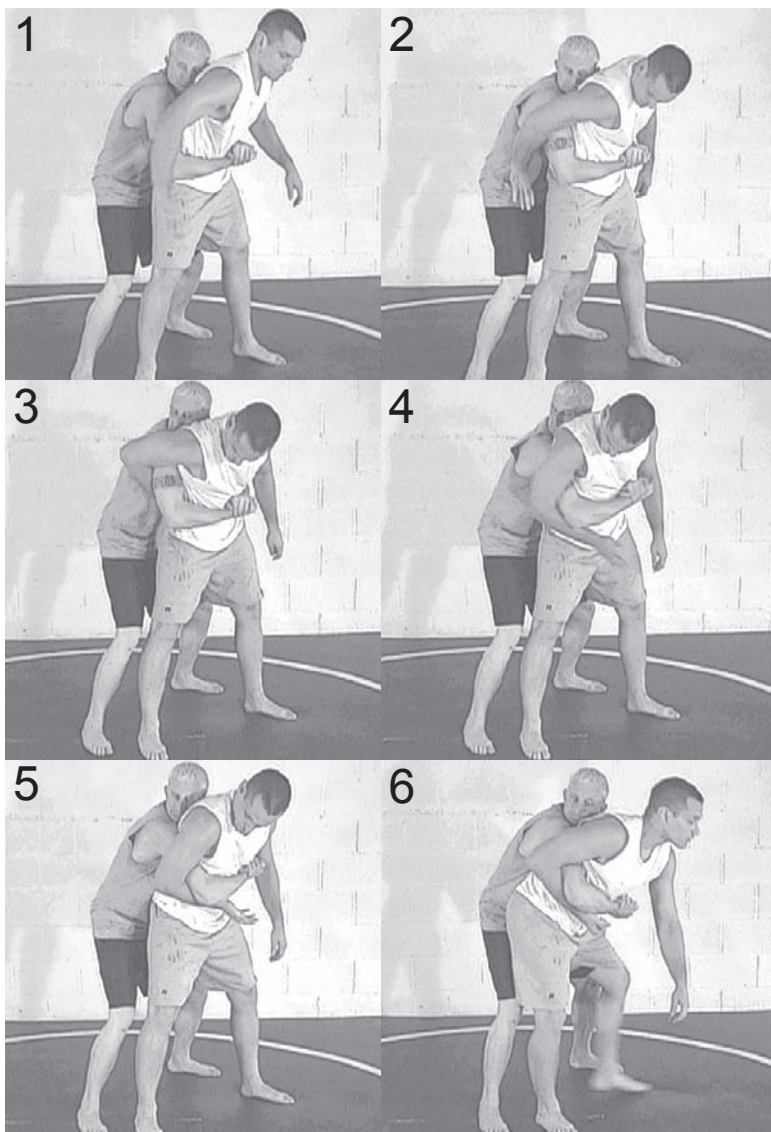
☒ As you hit the mat, overhook his head with your far leg and hit a short arm bar.

8.1 Counterthrows versus the go-behind

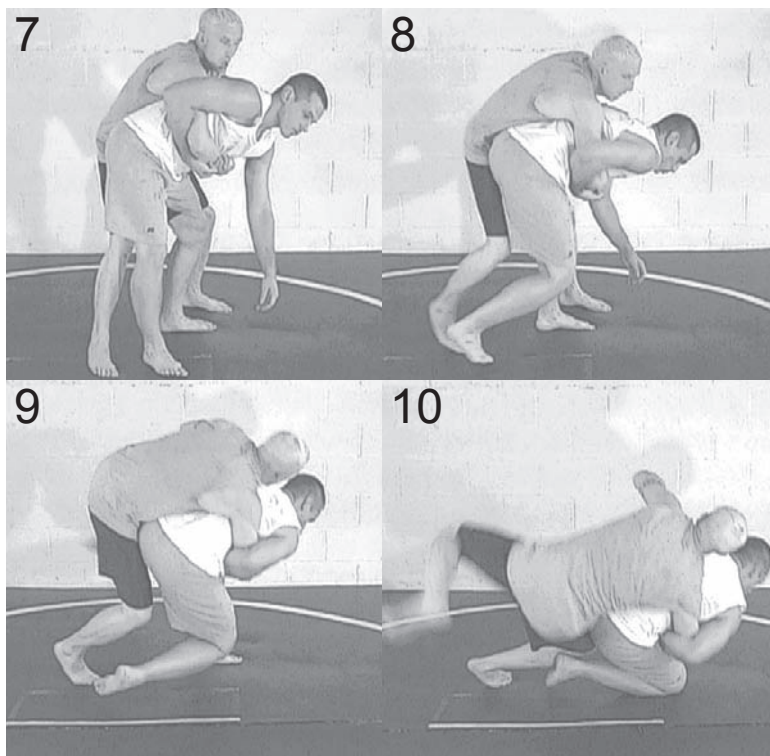
It's a good idea to have a few tosses in the arsenal when your opponent is able to get behind you with a rear-body lock.



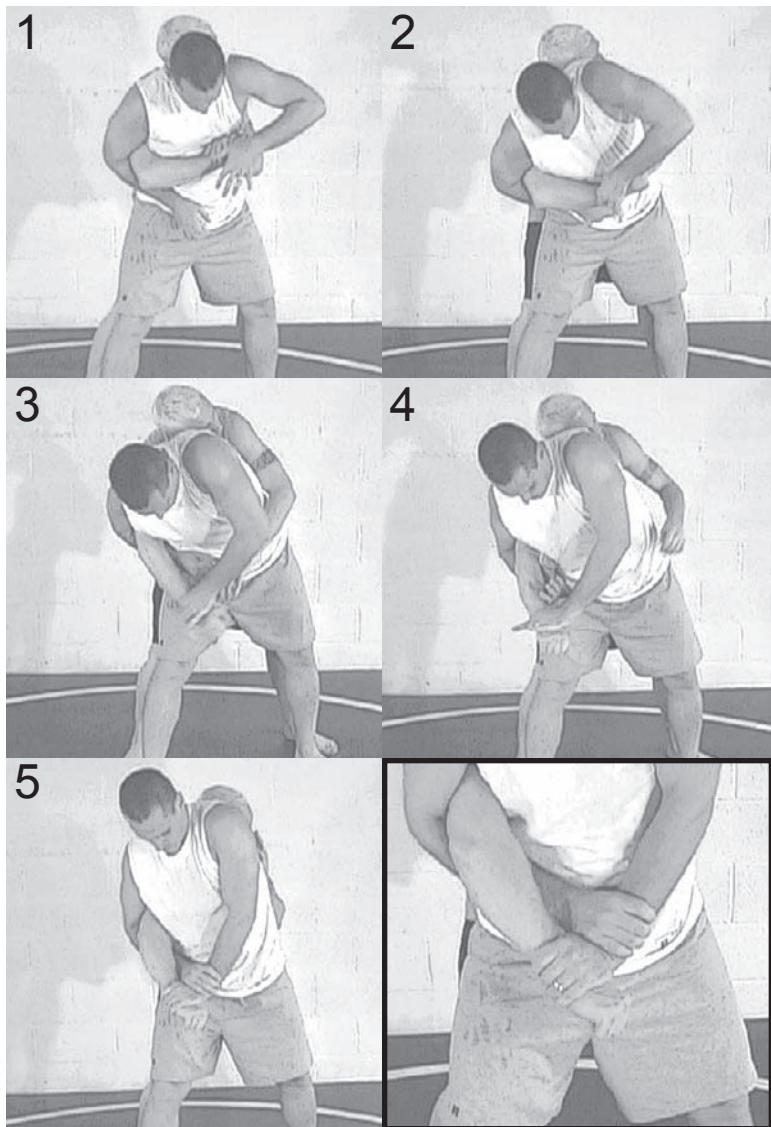
Single arm hip throw



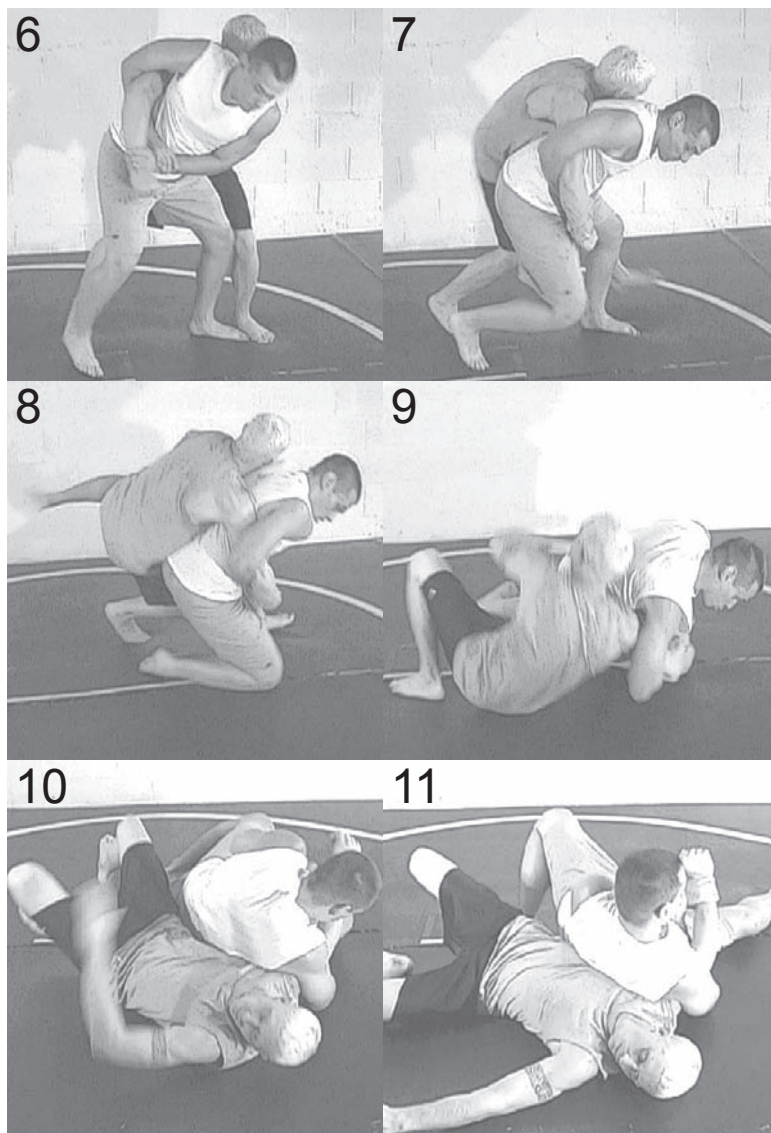
- ☒ Once he is behind you, hug and tie up one of his arms.
- ☒ Clear your hips and hit your throw.



Double wrist lock throw



- ☒ Hook a double wrist lock grip on one of his arms.
- ☒ Clear your hips and hit a hip throw.
- ☒ You can ride this double wrist lock to the mat for a tap.



These few counters should serve you, but remember — pummeling well is the key.

9 Backcast — the money move

Backcast. Suplex. Souplesse. German Suplex. You'll hear this high-arching crowd pleaser called many names. I learned it as a backcast, so that's what we call it here. This is a bone-jarring, neck-crunching takedown if there ever was one. Unfortunately, it's easy to move into a lazy fall-back, flat-backed version that essentially turns into pulling an opponent into a top saddle (mounted position) on top of you. For some excellent footage of the backcast performed to perfection, take a gander at the UFC match between Dan Severn and Anthony "Mad Dog" Macias. Dan cranks out several picture-perfect backcasts and shows why this skill should be in everyone's arsenal.

To hit this move correctly, you've got to abide by the rule of the proper back arch — there's no way around it. Cheating to a quasi flat-back position spells trouble. In other words, if you are not going to take the time to learn to do the move right, then don't do it at all. To backcast, you must have faith in your back arch. So before we get to backcasting, let's take a look at how to build that back arch.

Six steps for building a solid back arch

A prescription to build a back arch follows. The steps are in a specific sequence, and I recommend that you feel confident and comfortable with each step before proceeding to the next.

Step one: Neck bridge

This exercise is a staple of wrestling and conditioning enthusiasts for good reason. It builds strength along the spine and neck while mimicking the position needed for a good arch. It doesn't really matter how far you bridge — top of the head, forehead, bridge of the nose. All positions work for back and neck conditioning or escaping. It does matter in regard to building a good back arch for backcasting. In the back arch, the higher the bridge the better.



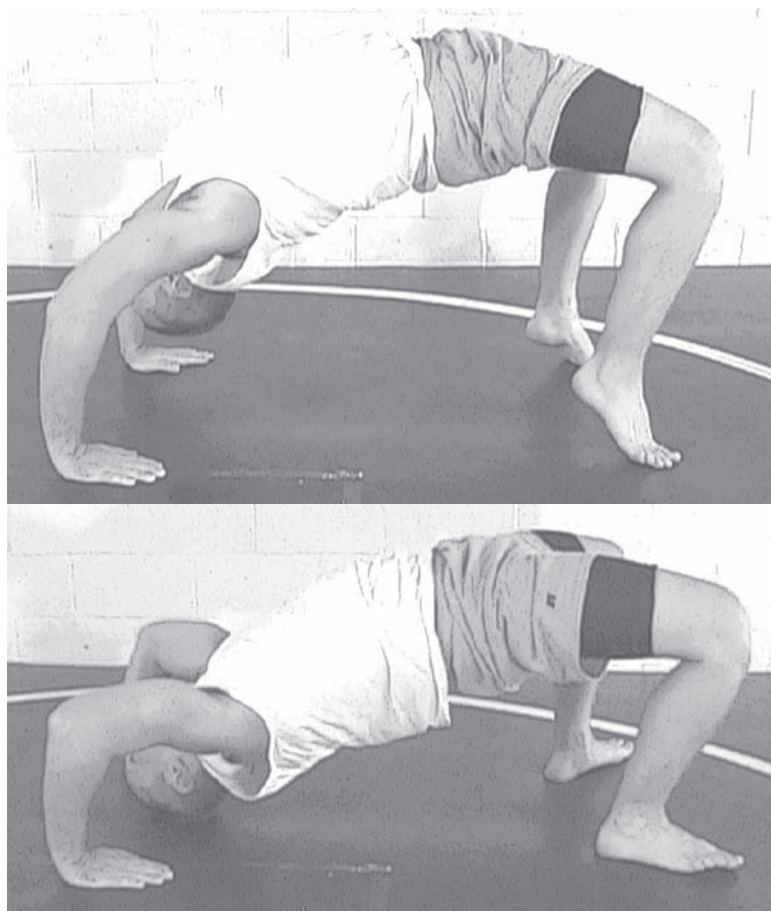
- ☒ Lie on the mat with your heels near your butt.
- ☒ Rock onto your head and support your weight with your head and your feet. You can bridge onto your toes or the balls of your feet. That's up to you.
- ☒ Strive to move the bridge of your nose to the mat and hold this position.
- ☒ Once you reach the limit of your flexibility in this arch, hold the position for at least a minute per session.
- ☒ I recommend crossing your arms on your chest to get used to the idea that you will be body locking in all backcast efforts.



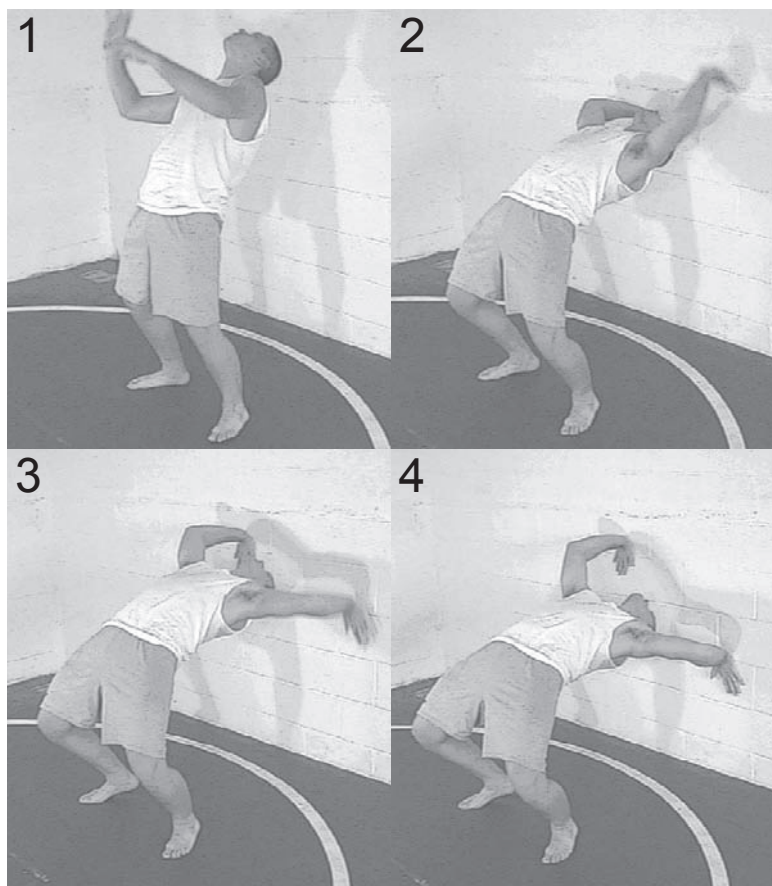
Step two: Hand bridge

This also is called a gymnastics bridge. It is not as essential as the neck bridge, but it is a useful step in the upcoming fear management of dropping backward.

- ☒ Lie on the mat with your heels close to your butt.
- ☒ Place the palms of your hands on the mat above your shoulders with your fingertips pointing toward your body.
- ☒ Press into a high arch with only the balls of your feet and your hands supporting your weight.
- ☒ Hold for one minute.
- ☒ It is possible to hit a few repetitions of reverse push-ups while in this position. Although a good conditioner, this is not an essential exercise in building the backcast.



Hand bridge push-ups

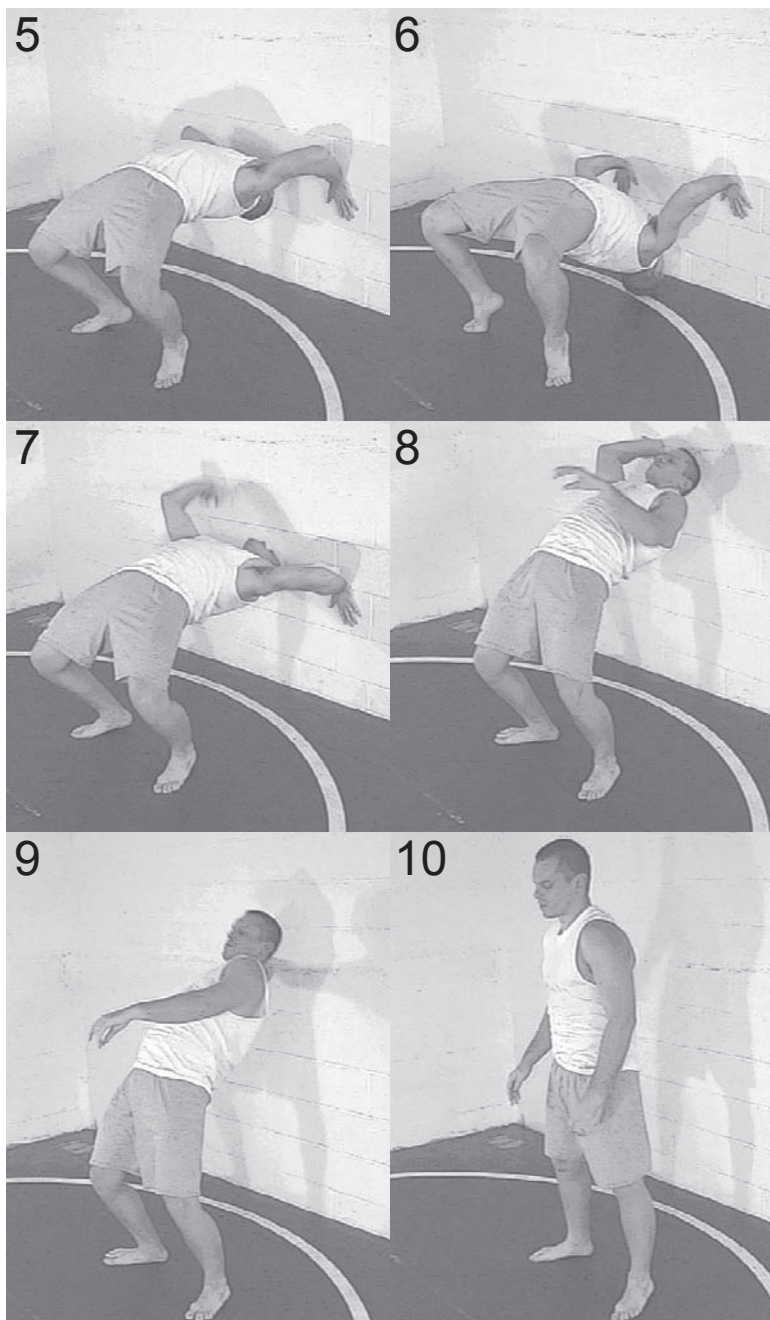


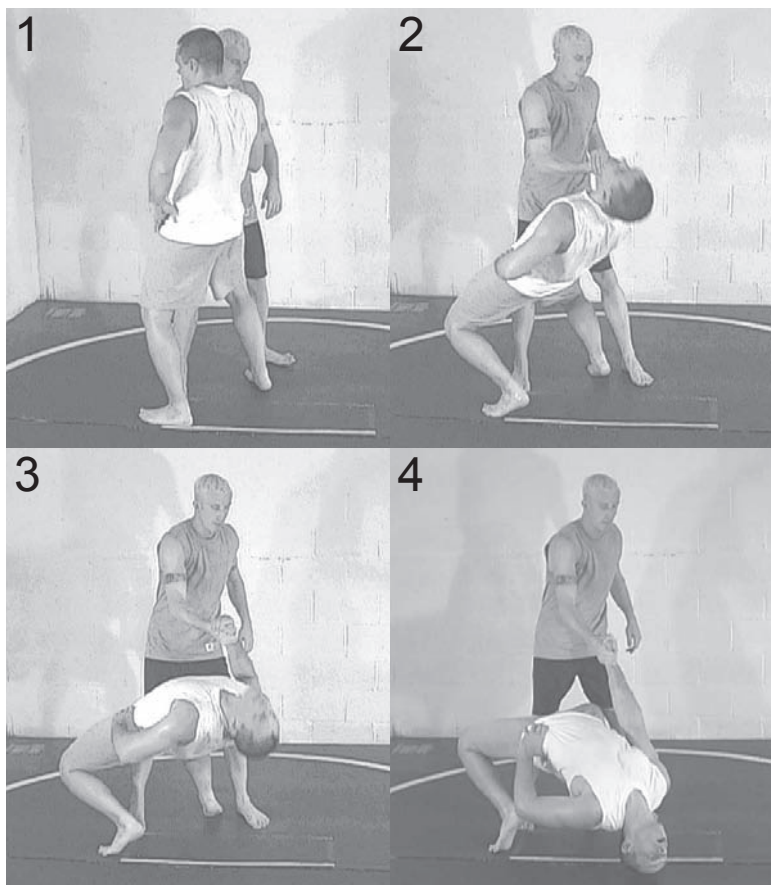
Step three: Wall walking

Once you feel comfortable with the neck bridge, it's time to move to the wall.

- ☒ Stand with your heels touching the wall and take one natural step forward.
- ☒ Bend backward and place your hands on the wall.
- ☒ Walk your hands down the wall until the top of your head comes in contact with the mat.
- ☒ Reverse this hand walk to return to standing. Repeat.

The point of this exercise is to build confidence in taking yourself backward from a standing position. Ideally, you will increase the speed of your wall walks.

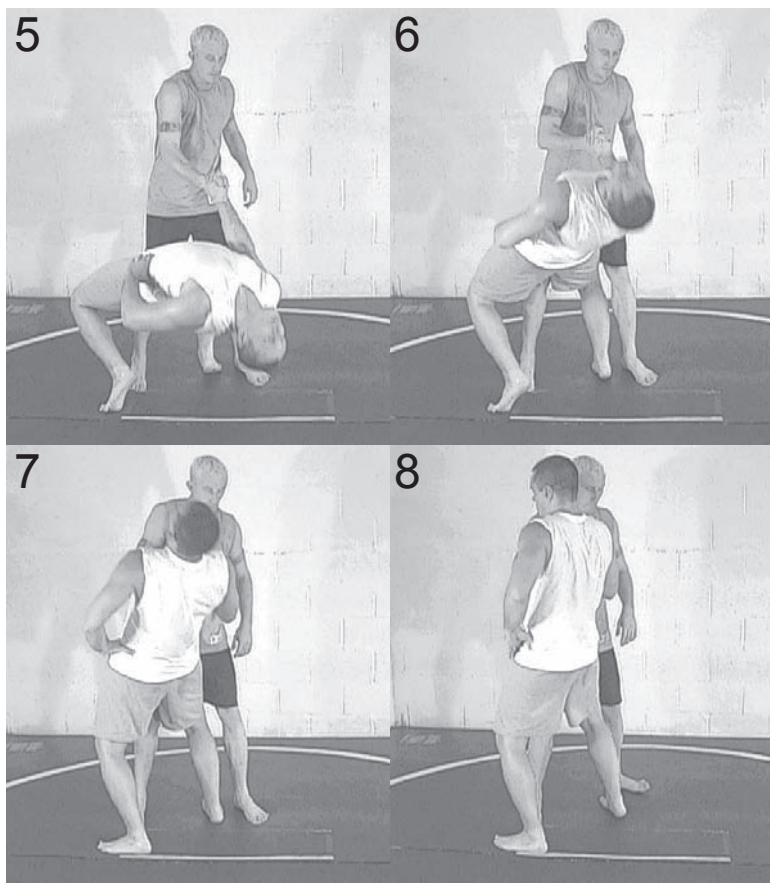




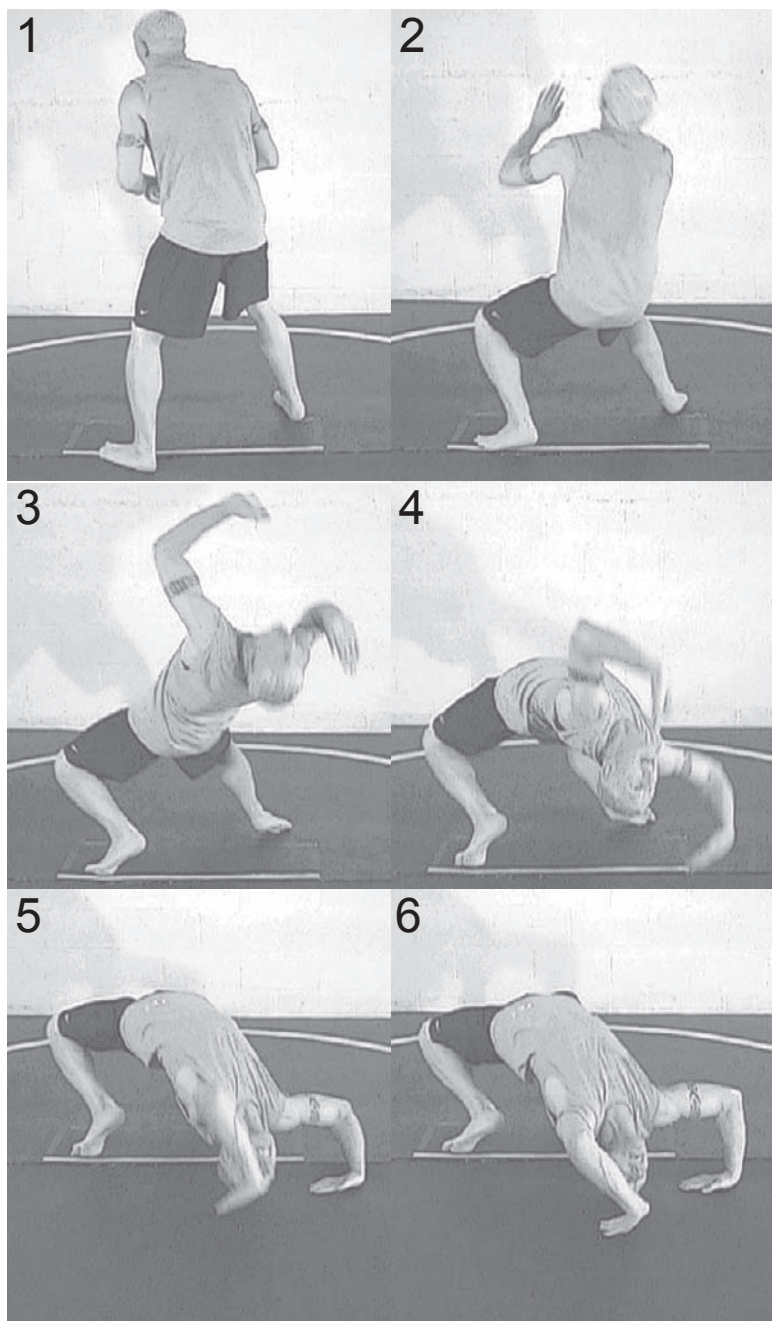
Step four: Partner bridge drops

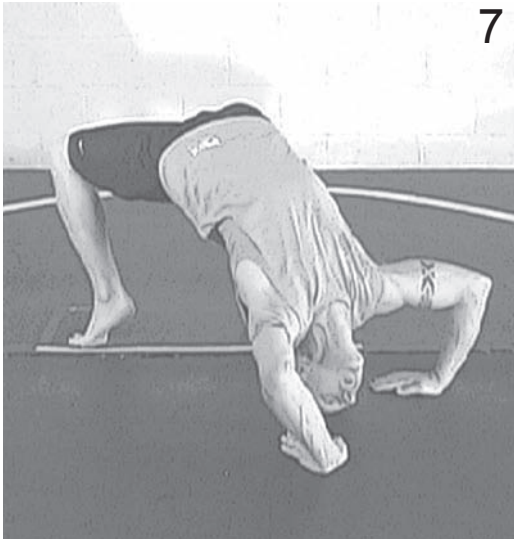
Feel good about wall walking? It's time to take it a little further. Grab a partner.

- ☒ Stand facing your partner with your feet straddling one of his.
- ☒ Grip one of his hands in a palm-to-palm grip.
- ☒ Trust yourself and your partner as you arch and drop your forehead to the mat.
- ☒ Your partner's grip on your hand allows him to control your decent so that you do not merely smash your head into the mat.
- ☒ Work this drill until you feel comfy. You're going to need confidence for the remaining steps.



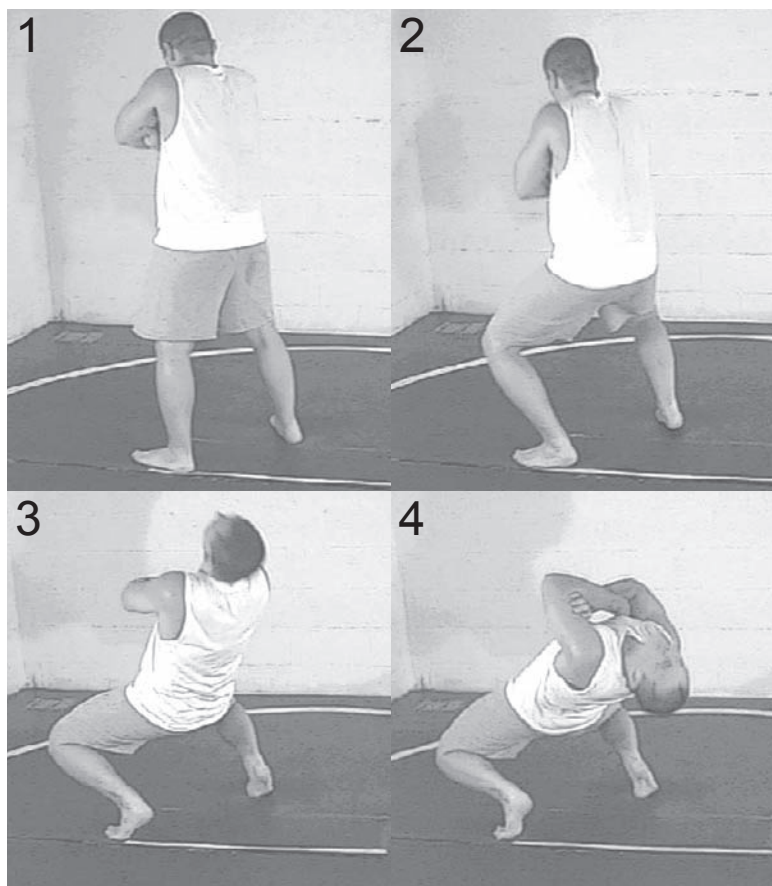
Backcast



***Step five: Fall into a hand bridge***

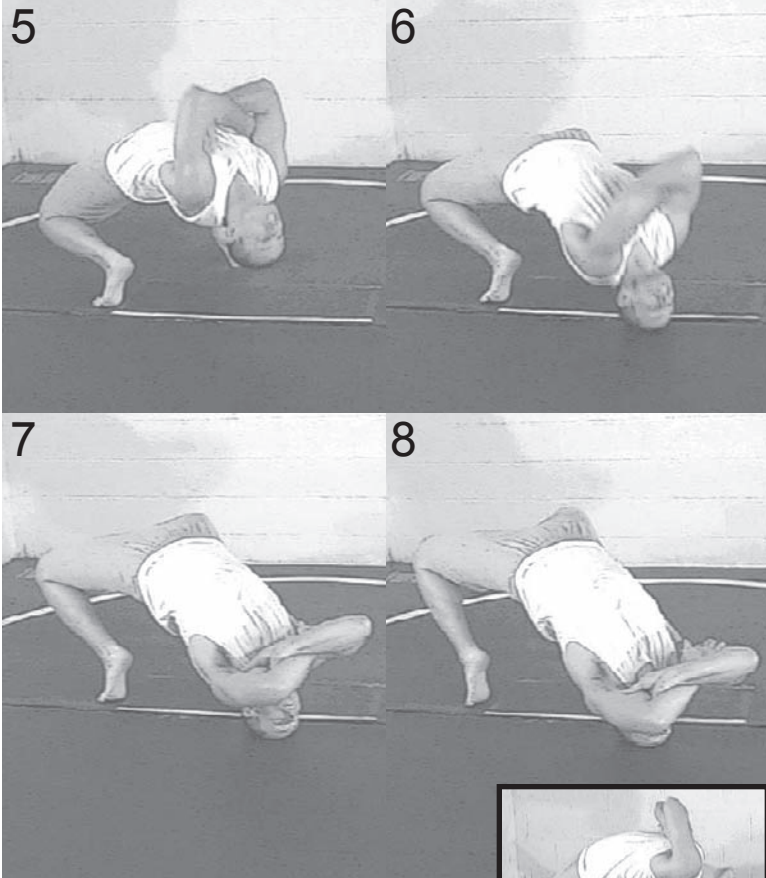
This is a gymnastic move, but it has its place in this progression. Before attempting this step, be sure that you have built shoulder flexibility and a bit of strength to hold the hand bridge.

- ☒ It is wise to begin this over a crash mat or with a spotter.
- ☒ Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart.
- ☒ Arch backward deeply and strive to control your descent as you drop into a hand bridge.
- ☒ Once you have the flexibility and the strength to hit the static hand bridge, you are ready to fall into it. Just do it!



Step six: Fall into a neck bridge

Some do not advocate this last step at all feeling that it is dangerous and/or unnecessary. I include it because I see value in it. This is dangerous only if you have not adequately prepared yourself with the preceding steps, or if you learn this sequence without the aid of a crash mat or spotter. If you choose to skip it and move directly to backcasting, you may meet with success, but the confidence that dropping into the neck bridge provides, will pay much in assertive dividends.



- ☒ Stand with your feet slightly more than shoulder width apart.
- ☒ Cross your arms over your chest.
- ☒ Arch as you did in the fall into the hand bridge and control your descent by driving your knees in front of your toes.
- ☒ Fall onto the top of your head or your forehead.

If you work these steps assiduously, you will build a strong, confident, high arching backcast. This form of neck bridge dropping will steer you clear of the flat-back suplexes that pull an opponent into a top position.

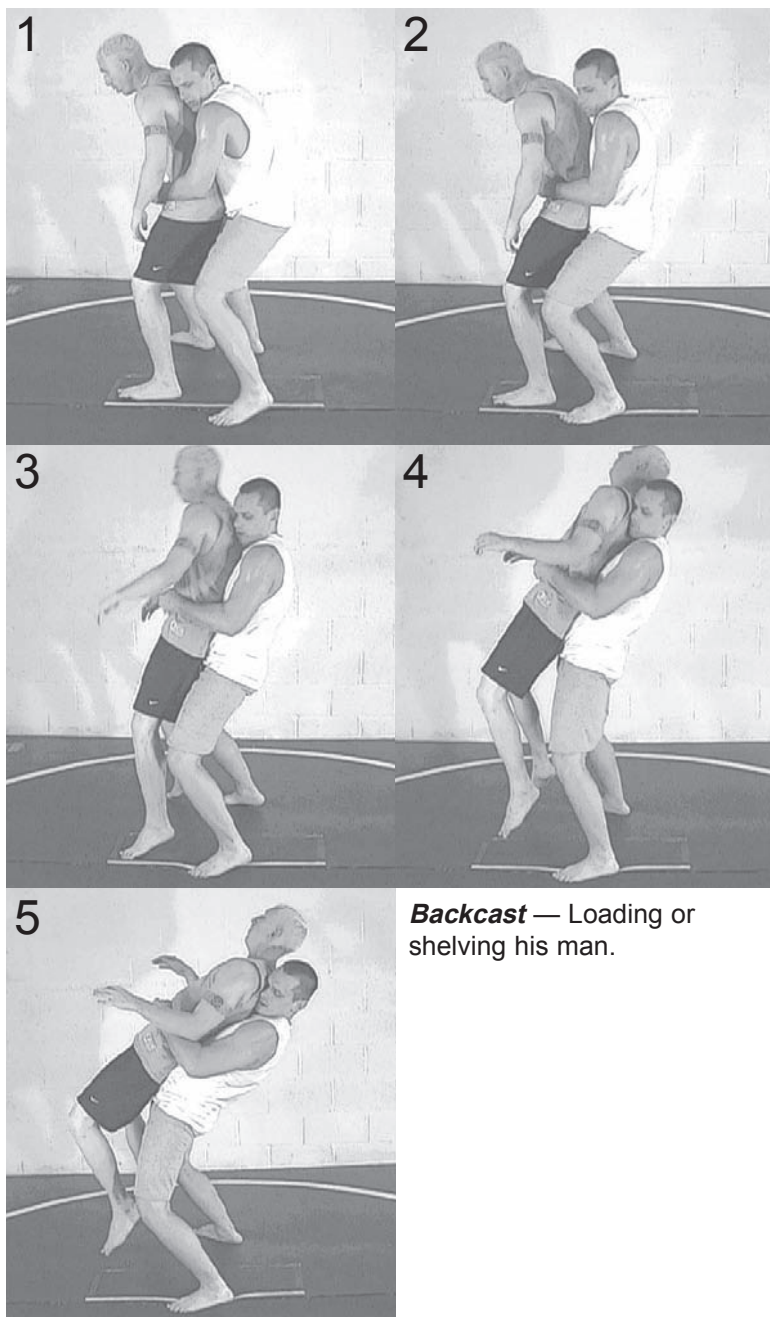
Backcast shelf

Before we get to the backcast and its variations, there is a concept you must keep in mind. Paste this phrase in front of your neocortex and consult it before attempting any backcast: If you can't put it on a shelf, don't backcast.

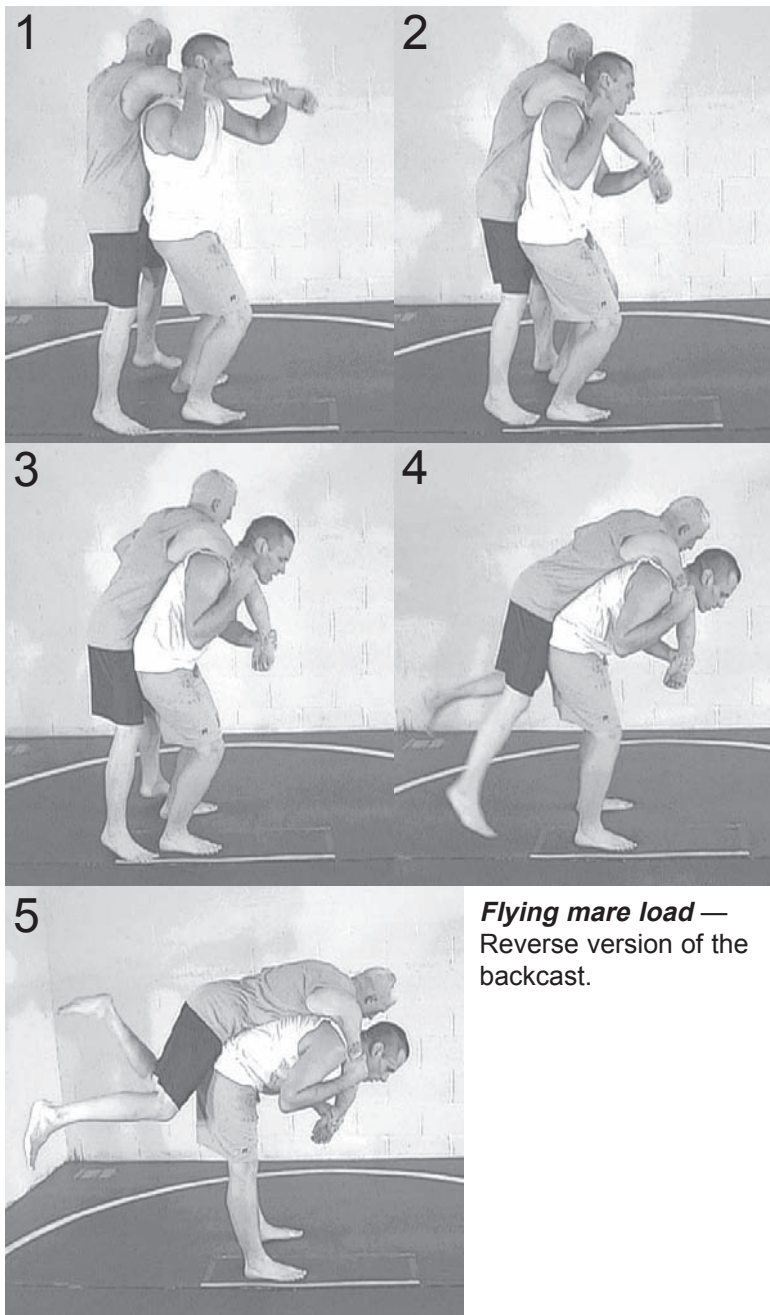
You may be asking, "What the hell does that mean?" Let's look at a reverse version of a backcast, a flying mare load. To hit a flying mare, you must load your opponent onto your hips, with your hips below his. A good test for how much control you have over your opponent in a mare is to load him without the throw being completed (this is an academic point — I'm not advocating a pre-throw load test). If you can bend over and keep your opponent comfortably on your hips in a static position, then you have properly loaded or "shelved" him.

Let's go to the backcast:

- ☒ Body lock your partner and get your hips lower than his.
- ☒ Hit a slight back arch, just enough to lift him from the mat.
- ☒ If you can get to a point where he rests comfortably on your hips with little effort being applied from your body lock, you have properly shelved your man. If you can shelve him and you trust your back arch, you're home free.



Backcast



Last thoughts

It's time to work through the standard backcast and a few of its more common variations. But first, a couple more points.

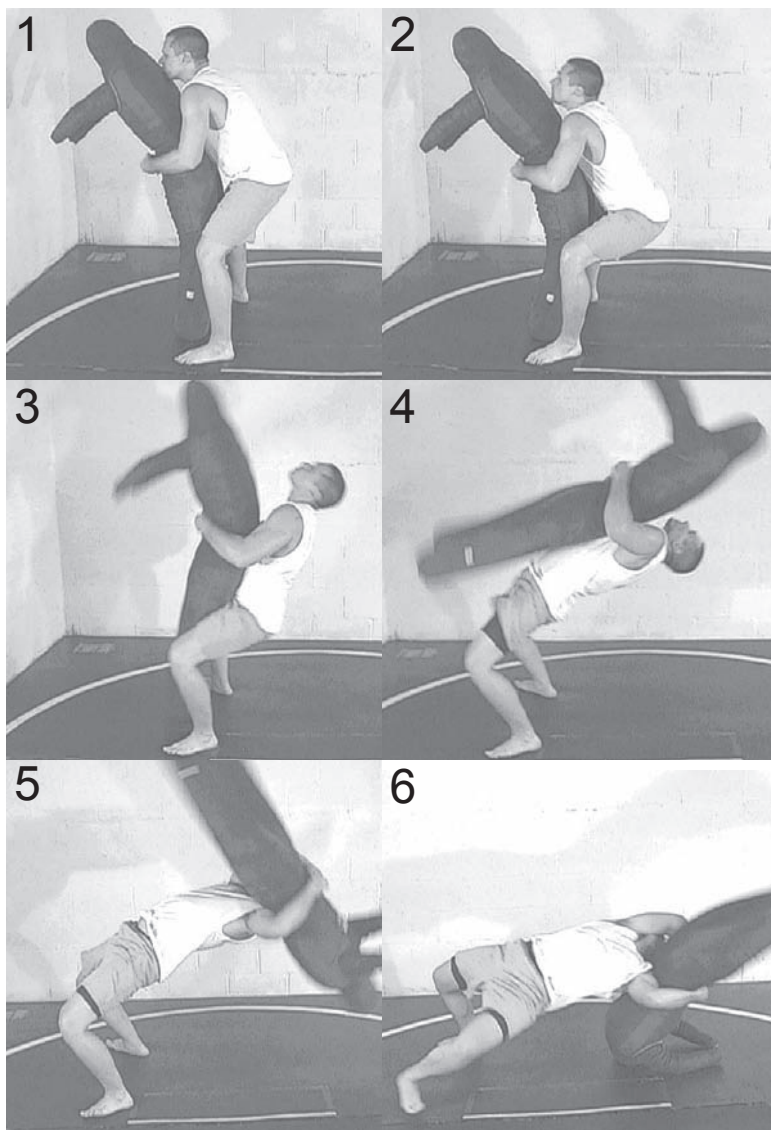
Backcasting is easier than the steps involved to get there. In a proper backcast your head will never touch the mat in the initial impact. Your opponent's head will always be the contact point.

This is why the backcast is easier than the fall into a neck bridge, but you cannot ignore that step. Falling into a neck bridge is what educates you into falling into a deep bridge and eliminates flat-backing, where you will indeed impact your head.



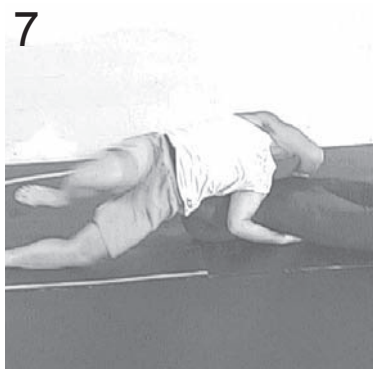
Train safely. You can see that a proper backcast plays hell with your partner's neck and head — this may be fine in a fight, as are full-contact blows, but in training it's more than a little rough on the noggin. For this reason I suggest the use of throwing dummies to drill this take-down. For throwing dummy sources see the Resources section at the back of this manual.

Rear backcast

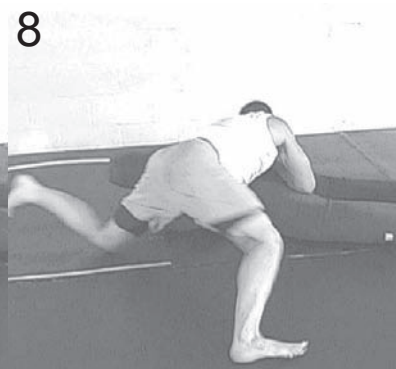


- ☒ Grip your opponent in a rear body lock.
- ☒ Shelf him.
- ☒ Hit your back arch.

7



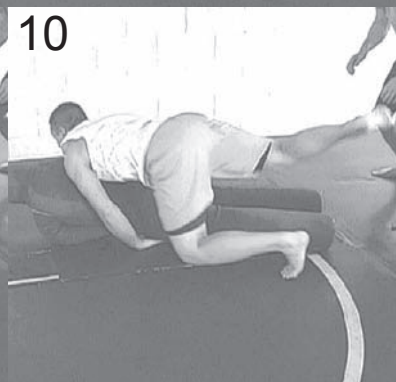
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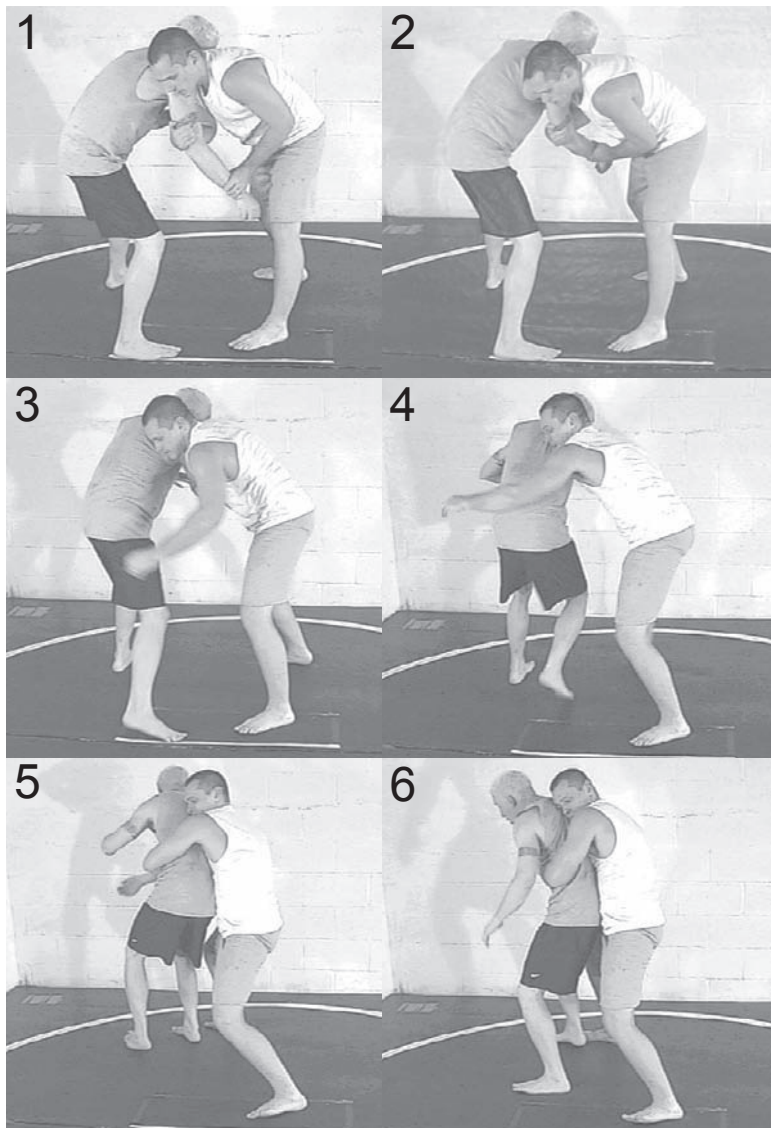


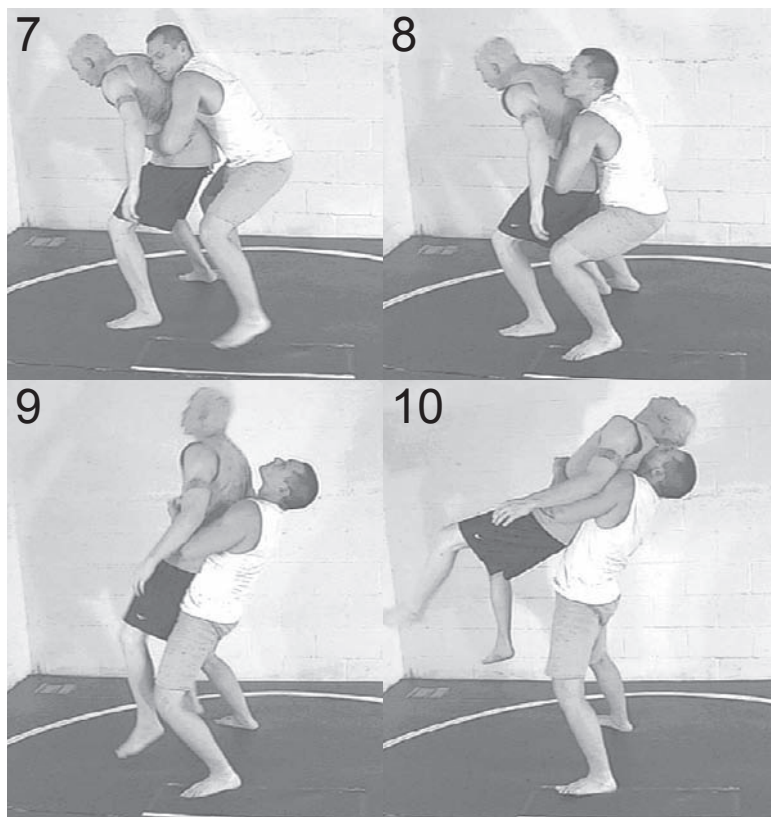
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☒ If you are wondering how to get to his back from an over-under clinch, keep reading.

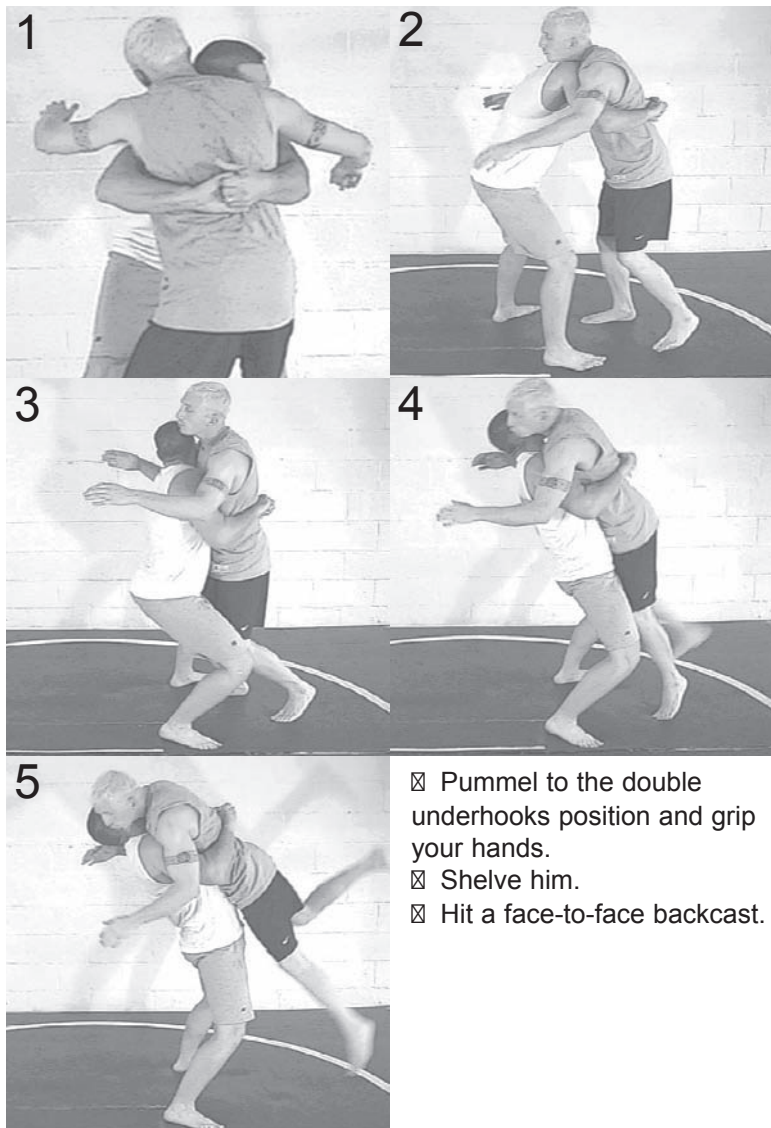
Arm drag to go-behind to rear backcast



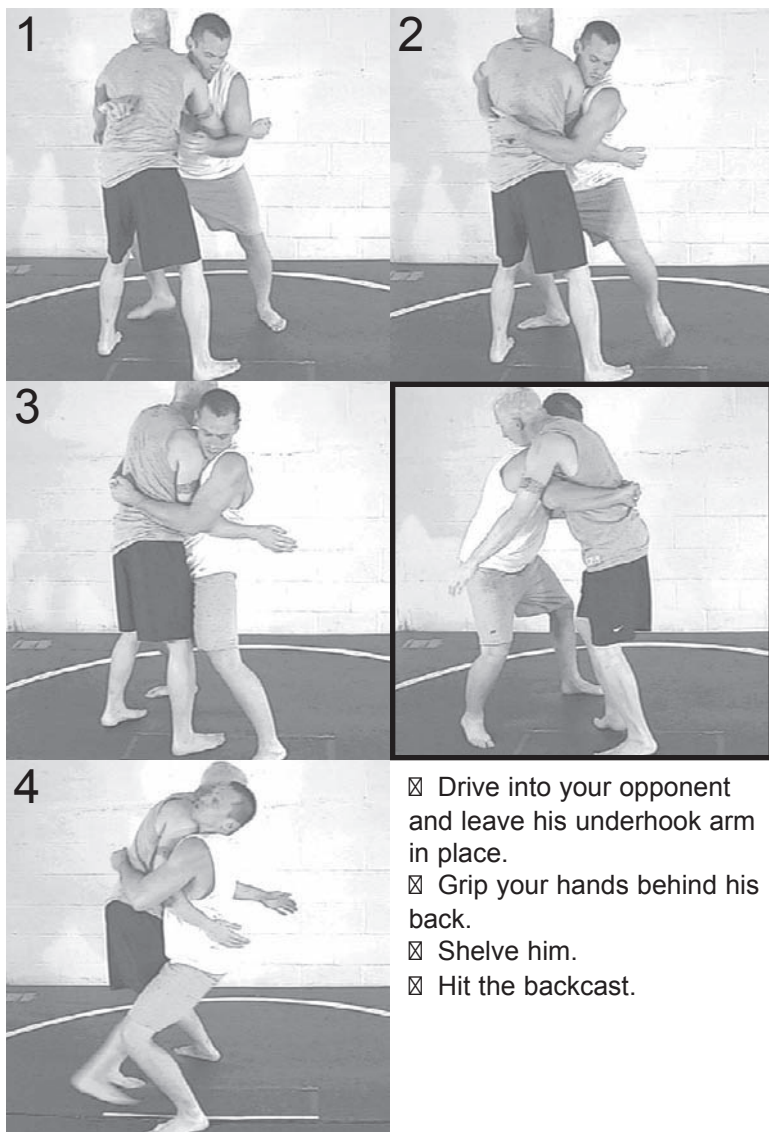


- ☒ Use the tip of your overhook elbow to drive his underhook arm down.
- ☒ Remove your underhook hand and grip his underhook triceps.
- ☒ Pull his underhook arm 45 degrees down and across his body.
- ☒ Step behind your opponent and hit a body lock.
- ☒ Hit the backcast.

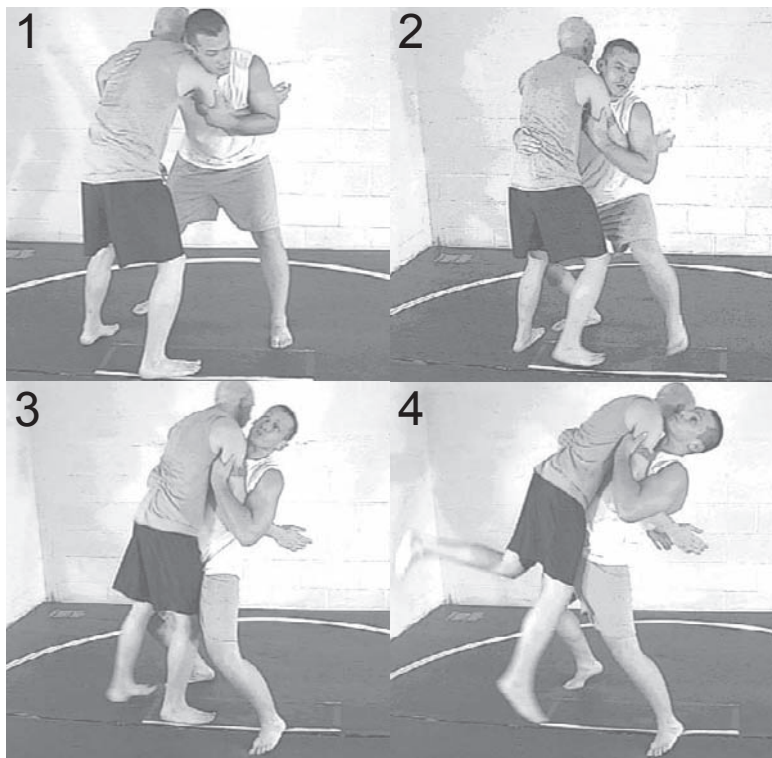
Front backcast



Arm included front backcast



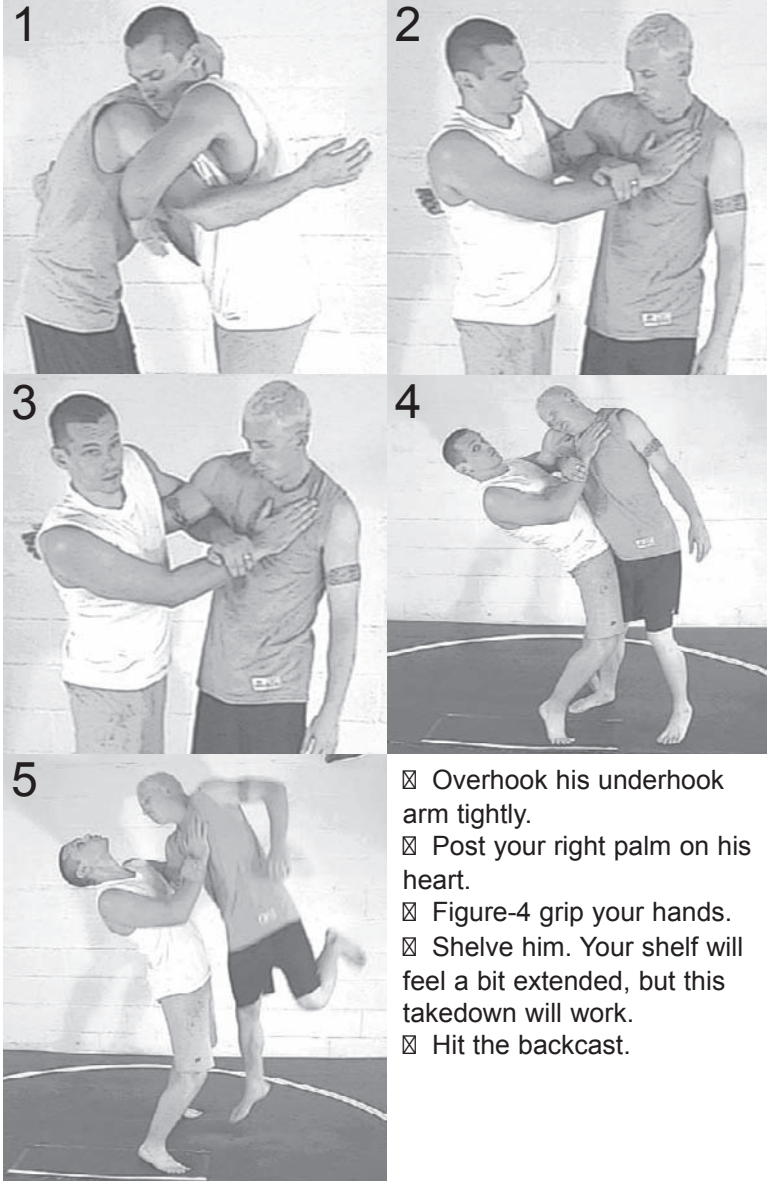
Single arm and waist hold front backcast



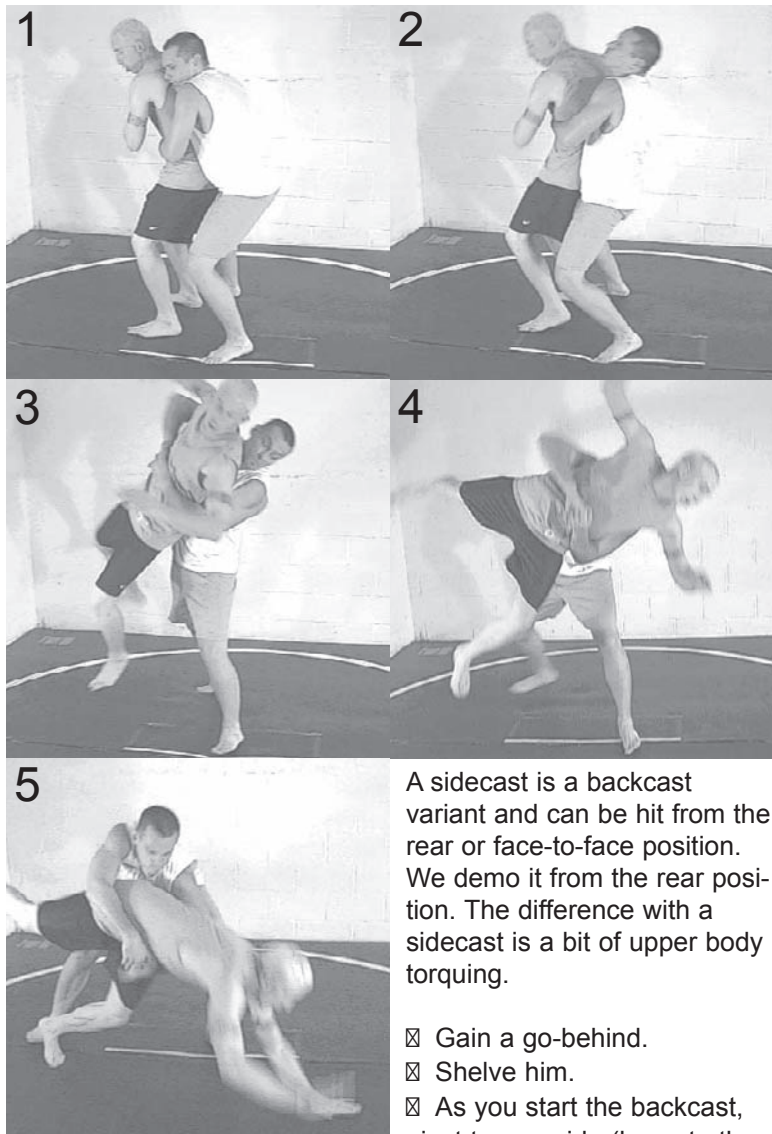
Here, you have driven into him but cannot clasp your hands.

- ☒ Overhook his underhook arm tightly.
- ☒ Grip his waist tight with your underhook arm.
- ☒ Shelf him.
- ☒ Hit your backcast.

Figure-4 stopper backcast



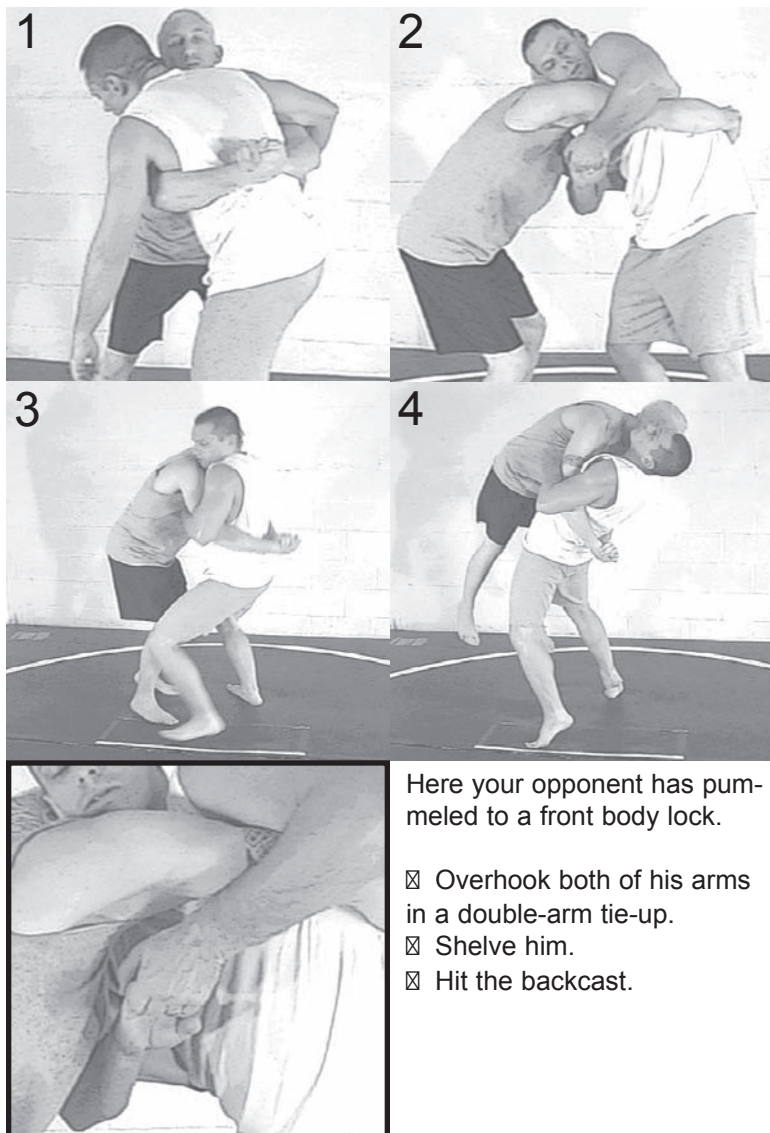
Sidecast



A sidecast is a backcast variant and can be hit from the rear or face-to-face position. We demo it from the rear position. The difference with a sidecast is a bit of upper body torquing.

- ☒ Gain a go-behind.
- ☒ Shelf him.
- ☒ As you start the backcast, pivot to one side (here, to the left).
- ☒ Follow him to the mat to blanket ride.

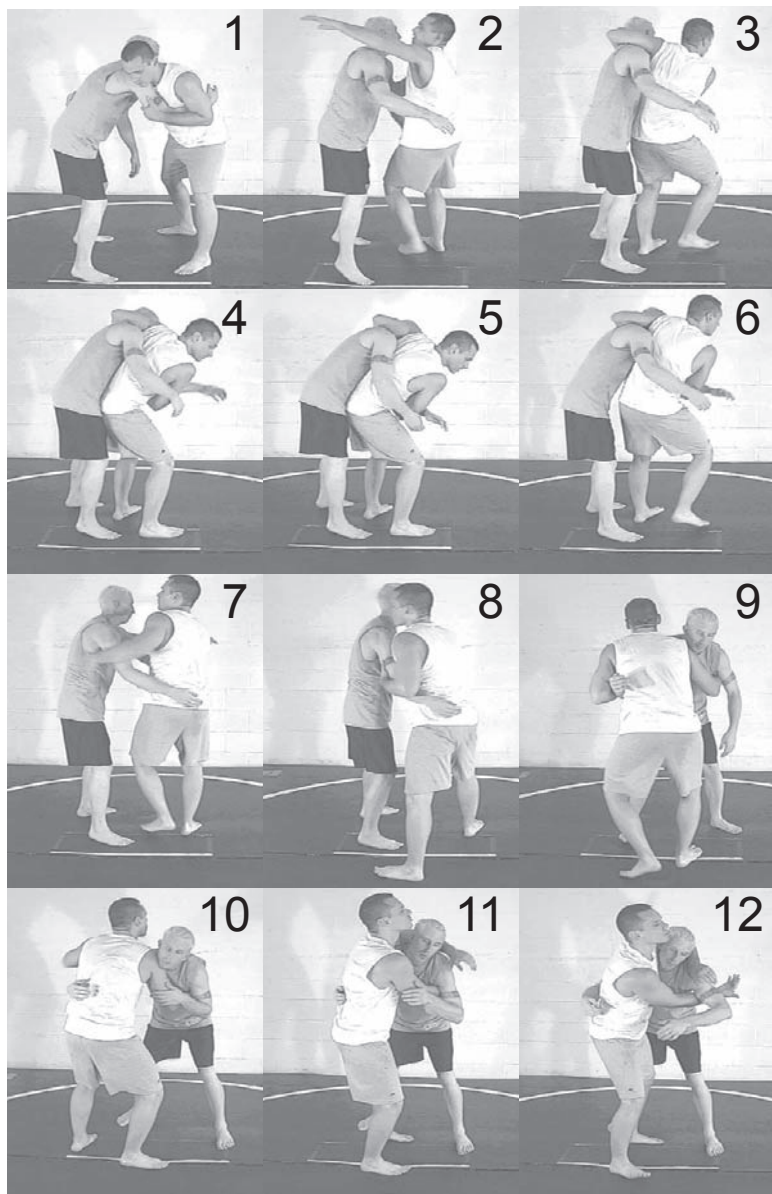
Front backcast as counterthrow



Here your opponent has pummeled to a front body lock.

- ☒ Overhook both of his arms in a double-arm tie-up.
- ☒ Shelf him.
- ☒ Hit the backcast.

Front backcast as combination throw

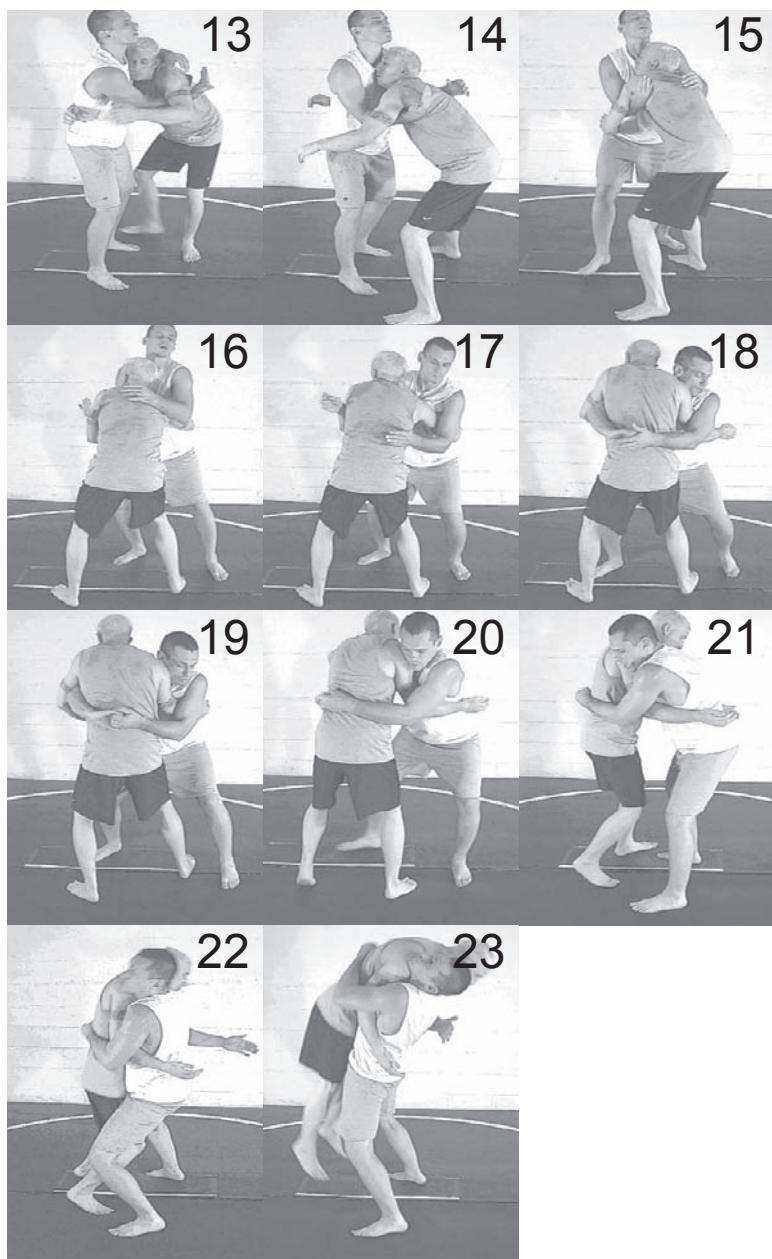


Sequence continues next page

Takedowns should be chained into combinations just as you box in punching combinations and wrestle in movement and submission chains. Instead of listing all the varieties of combinations, here's one to get your brain rolling.

- ☒ Hit a head hook with your overhook arm and attempt a head-lock hip throw.
- ☒ If the throw is successful, that's gravy. If the opponent counters by maneuvering in front of you to halt the throw, go to the next step.
- ☒ Drive into him and lock your hands in an arm included front-body lock.
- ☒ Shelf him.
- ☒ Hit your backcast.

Backcast

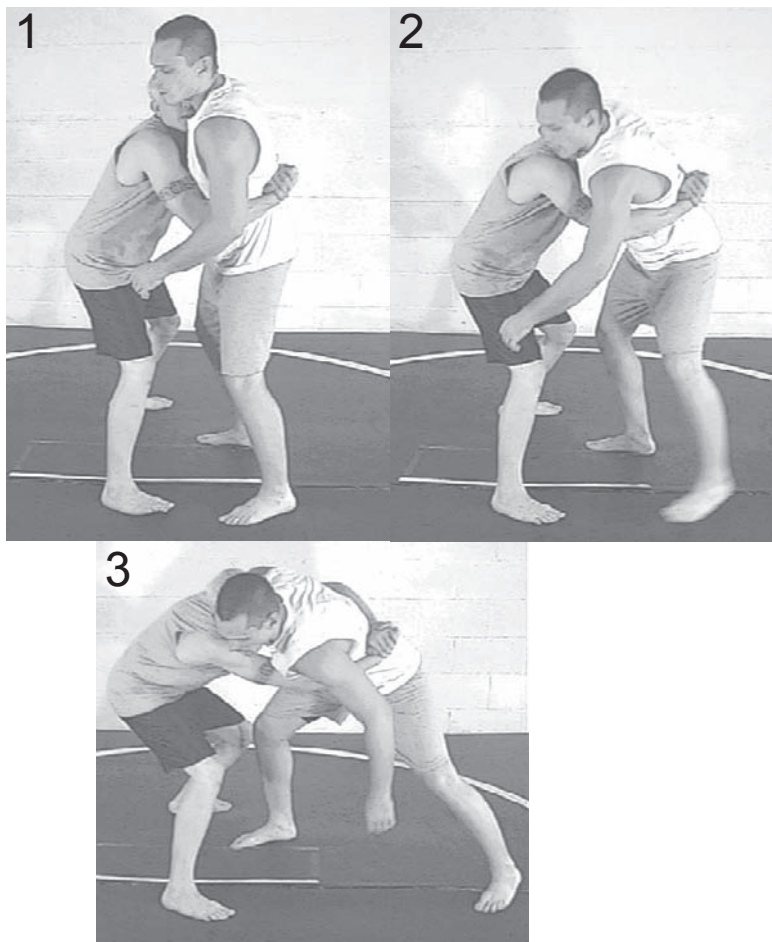


9.1 *Backcast counters*

Backcasts are countered primarily by smart pummeling and/or by blocking the shelving position. But when we need a fallback (forgive that word choice), here are strategies that will keep us from having our skulls driven into the mat.

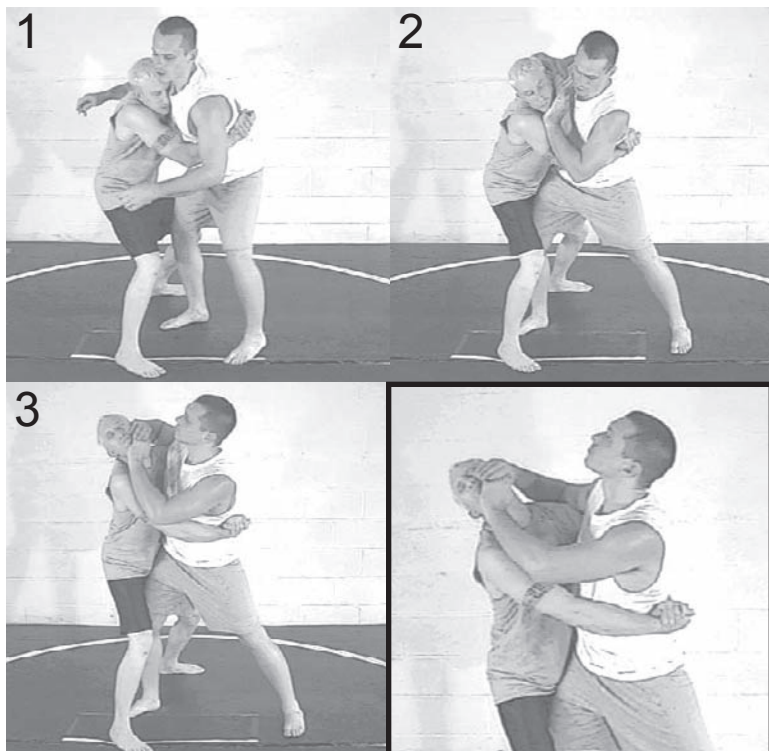


Hip sag



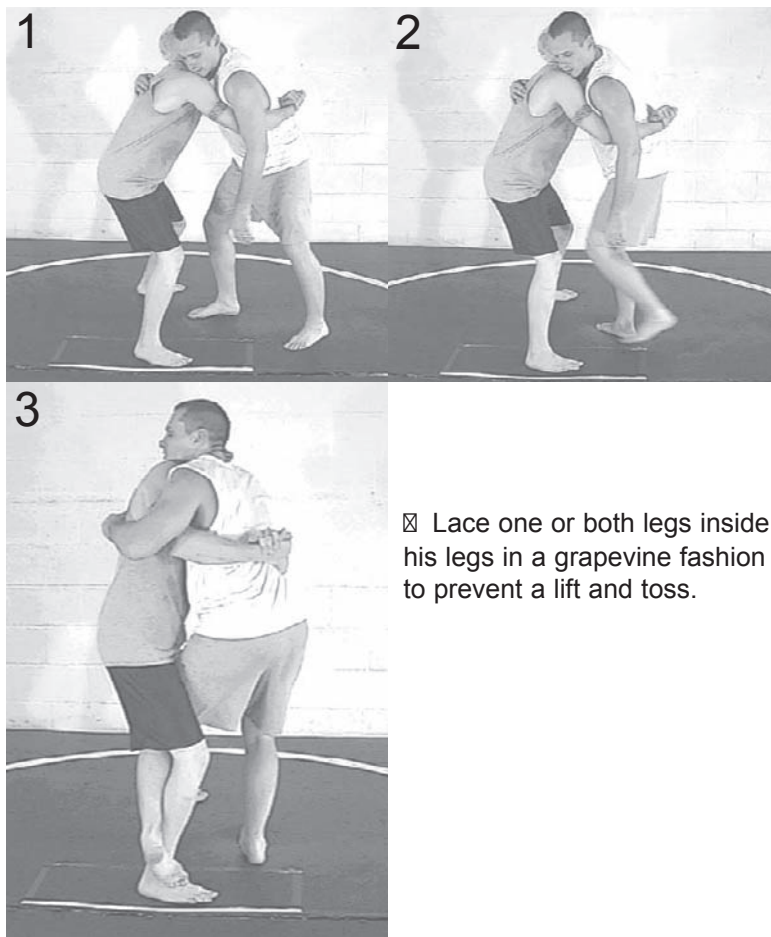
☒ Drop your hips away from his to thwart his shelf.

Head shove

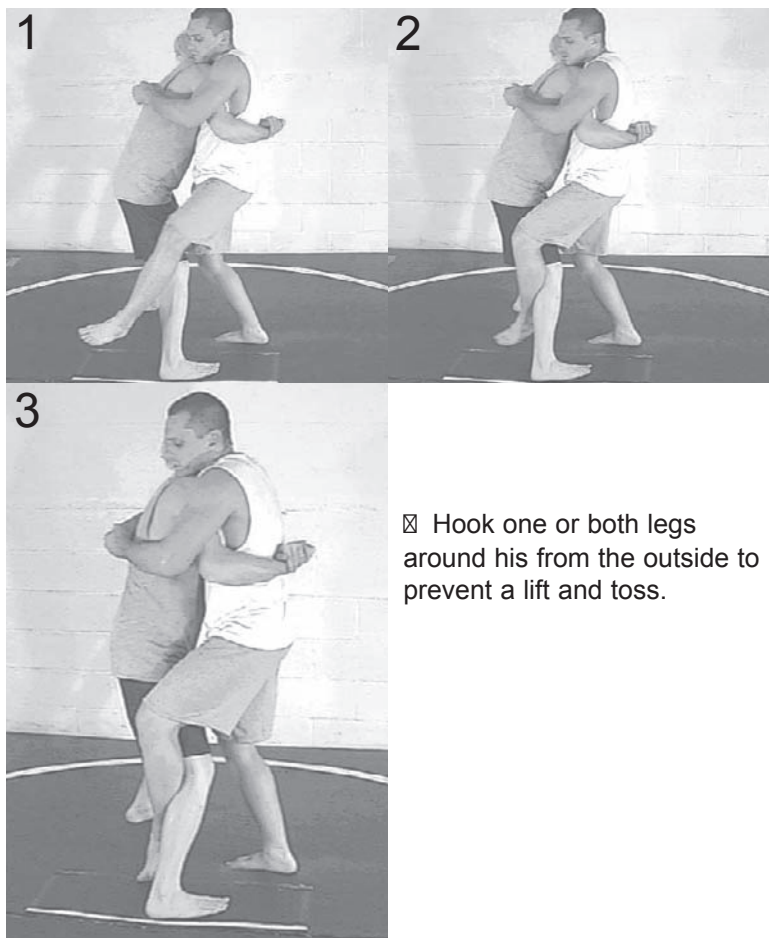


- ☒ Immediately use one or both of your palms to drive into his face (the chin is optimal).
- ☒ Don't merely shove straight back, drive 45 degrees and up.
- ☒ Once you have head separation, strive to get your hips away from him to beat his shelf.

Inside hook



Outside hook



☒ Hook one or both legs around his from the outside to prevent a lift and toss.

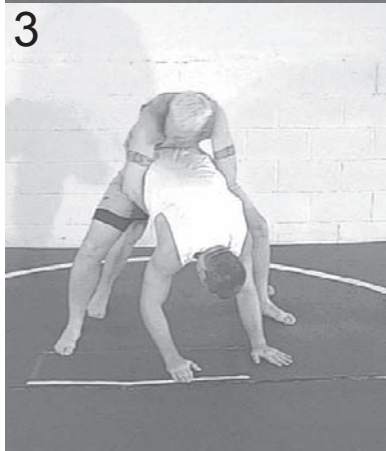


9.2

Rear backcast counters



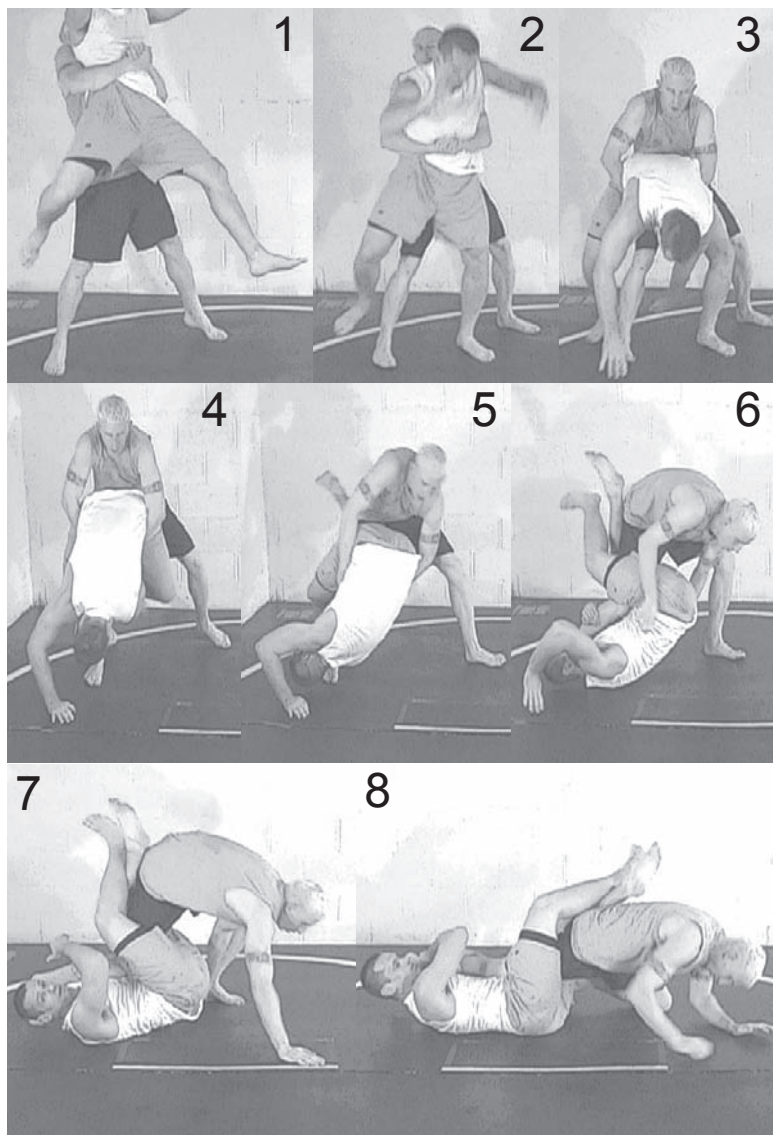
Slap and block



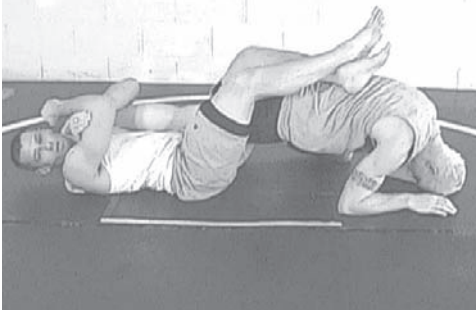
- ☒ As soon as you feel the body lock hit, bend forward at the waist forcefully.
- ☒ Strive to slap both of your palms to the mat. Think “slap the mat hard.” This gives you the idea of how hard and quickly you’ve got to reach for the mat.
- ☒ You have your hands on the mat but you’re still not safe — you can be shelved and backcast from this position. Grab one of his ankles to block his throw.
- ☒ It doesn’t matter whether you grab from between or outside your legs, just get a hold of one and stay on your feet.



Slap and rolling leg bar



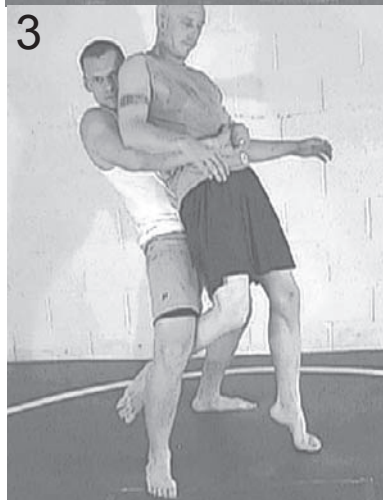
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- ☒ Strive for the mat slap as in the preceding move.
 - ☒ Here you attack a leg (his right) so you think “all left.”
- Confused? Stay with me.
- ☒ After the slap, drive your left leg high and between his legs.
 - ☒ Your left arm underhooks his right leg from between his legs.
 - ☒ Roll over your left shoulder as you look right.
 - ☒ Keeping your left leg in a high position as you roll brings him to the mat where you can squeeze your knees together.
 - ☒ Place your hips above his knee.
 - ☒ Grip his heel tightly in a tomb-stone grip and arch your hips through his leg to tap.



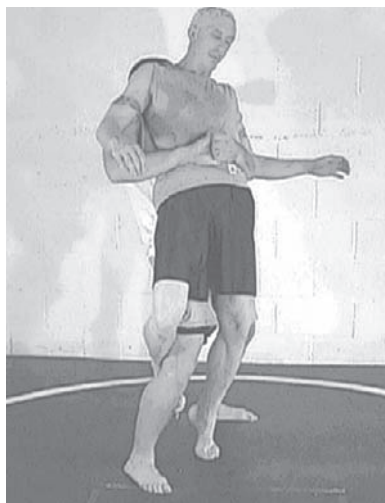
Inside hook



This is an optional move if you've been lifted from the mat.

- ☒ Hook one of your insteps behind his calves or knees from the inside of his legs.
- ☒ Use this hook block to fling your arms toward the mat in a slap and block.

Outside hook ... and using both



- ☒ This also is used against the lift.
- ☒ Hook your insteps around his legs from the outside (top).
- ☒ This is catch as catch can. You can hook one leg inside, and one out. The point is to not get tossed.

There are many other ways to beat a backcast, but these high percentage moves may be all you need. I call to your attention the many putative backcast beats that are lumped together with beating bear hugs. Bear hugs and backcasts are two entirely different attacks. A bear hug is a semi-static movement that allows a bit more time for manipulation, whereas the backcast permits only fast ballistic responses.

So please keep that difference in mind when reading backcast counter material. Run it through the empirical filter by asking yourself, “Will I actually have the time to perform the move?” If the answer is no, then you are probably looking at a bear hug counter and not a backcast counter. Play it smart and don’t get dropped on your skull.

That’s it for this guide on the clinch. If you have any questions regarding this material or material in other manuals, please feel free to contact me at our Web site

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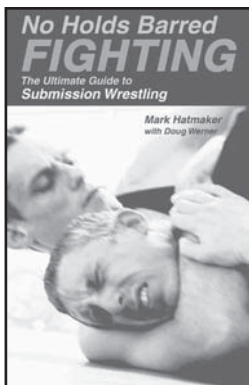
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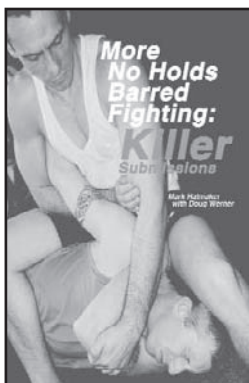


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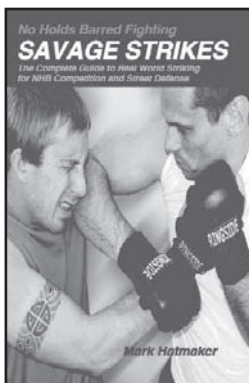


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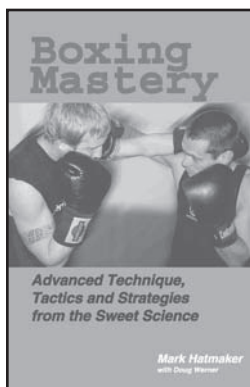
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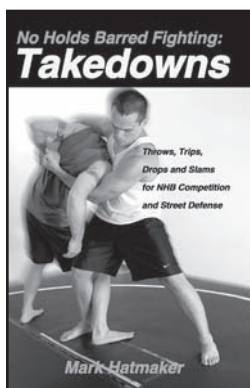


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