KILL-AS-CATCH-CAN

WRESTLING SKILLS FOR STREETFIGHTING

BY NED BEAUMONT

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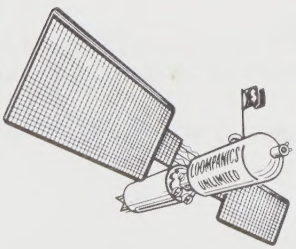

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Chapter One
WHY WRESTLING?

Sure you can punch and kick, but how well can you fight at shorter range? Can you defend yourself when the fight turns to grappling? When both you and your opponent end up on the barroom floor, rolling around and wrestling, are you confident that you can still win the fight?

If you doubt your chances in the grapple, then you're not prepared for the reality of streetfighting. For the fact is that, *in the real world,* fights frequently turn into wrestling. (If you're one of the fortunate ones to whom experience hasn't already hammered that fact into your skull, check out an excellent book by Peyton Quinn, *A Bouncer's Guide to Barroom Brawling*, [Boulder, Colorado: Paladin Press, 1990]. Rather than a book about martial arts, Quinn wrote a no-nonsense one about streetfighting. I highly recommend the book — especially for those of you with little or no fist-upside-the-head knowledge of what hand-to-hand combat is all about. Quinn's book may save you some scars.)

Streetfights often turn into wrestling by accident. In many cases the guy who throws — and usually lands — the first punch doesn't really know how to hit. Instead of the sucker-punched target dropping like a stunned steer, the target clinches like a boxer, grabs hold of the puncher's arms, and tries to prevent further blows. In another common situation, the puncher makes the mistake of hitting someone tough; thus the target "took the punch," *i.e,* absorbed the force and moved in close to try his toughness at wrestling range.

Other times a slugfest in a bar ends up "on the mat" when one brawler trips or tackles his adversary.

Just as often, though, streetfights *start* with wrestling. The combatants may have no martial arts training, so they obey caveman instincts and strangle whomever they're fighting. Maybe the fighters are so pissed-off that all science and art depart and their only thoughts are to choke the life out of someone they hate. Contrary to what you might have learned in the dojo, that's precisely the way many black belts fight when things turn ugly.

Effective and realistic training for fighting, then, *must* include wrestling. Punching and kicking are not enough. No matter how fast your left jab or how savage your straight right, no matter how deadly your *mawashi geri* or *coup de savate,* your ability to win a real-world streetfight is reduced. Until, of course, you know how to wrestle.

Nevertheless, few people nowadays consider wrestling as a basis for hand-to-hand combat. Why?

In large part, I suspect that lack of respect for wrestling has to do with modern America's dissociation from reality. Unless he grew up in a ghetto (where violence is more likely a matter of guns than of hands), a modern American is unlikely to have first-hand experience of violence more extreme than pushing on the playground. Most people's view of unarmed combat has more to do with video games, bad movies, and worse television than with reality. Jackie Chan, Jean-Claude Van Damme, and Steven Seagal are popular models of "dangerous" fighters. If the average American thinks at all about wrestling, he thinks of the exhibition of pro wrestling he sees on TV (more about that later), not the sport of freestyle wrestling.

The closer one comes to reality, however, the more one understands the value of wrestling. Modern boxing, for example, limits grappling to the clinch; and everyone knows that a fighter who clinches a lot is one who can't box well. But boxing with gloves — for all its appreciable value in teaching skills useful for a streetfight — is still an athletic contest. Bareknuckle bouts under

the old London Prize Ring rules were closer to streetfights; and so, those fights included wrestling as well as punching. Asian martial arts (the ones that work, at least) also invariably add grappling to kicks, punches, and chops, because those "arts" were developed for hand-to-hand combat without rules. The success of wrestlers in the Ultimate Fighting Championships and "extreme fighting" may have reawakened interest in wrestling as a practical means of unarmed fighting.

WRESTLING WORKS: THE MILITARY AND POLICE EXPERIENCE

For closer contact with the reality of hand-to-hand combat, let's look at cops and soldiers. Their experiences emphasize the usefulness of wrestling.

As we'll see in greater detail later in this chapter, from most ancient times warriors have used wrestling on the battlefield. In modern times, soldiers and police still often base their "styles" on wrestling, despite the glamour of karate and other Asian fighting systems. Because their lives may depend on their hand-to-hand combat skills, cops and soldiers must learn skills that work. Martial arts may be fashionable for police, and a crescent kick may look pretty in the dojo; but a wrestler's takedown and hold will more effectively subdue a crackhead on the street.

A soldier in a foxhole has an even greater interest in using unarmed combat techniques that work. That's why wrestling has been a basis for fighting systems in the US Armed Forces. Few would dispute that America faced its most dangerous enemies during the Second World War. It's no accident, then, that wrestling formed the basis for most of the barehanded fighting taught to soldiers, sailors, pilots, and Marines during WWII.

The Coast Guard provides a good example. During the war, the Coast Guard placed a special emphasis on hand-to-hand fighting and restraining techniques because its responsibility for protecting ports from sabotage made those skills necessary; in effect, the

Coast Guard needed the skills of policemen. Thus, the Guard turned for advice to someone who certainly knew how to fight man-to-man, former heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey. But Dempsey knew that boxing was not enough. He had battled his way through mining camps and saloons when the West was still wild, so Dempsey knew that real life-or-death fights outside the ring were more often decided by grappling than by punching. And so, Dempsey sought out Bernard J. Cosneck, a former Big Ten wrestling champ. Dempsey held the higher rank and whipped Coastguardsmen into fighting shape; but Cosneck ended up as the chief instructor in hand-to-hand combat.

The Navy worked in much the same way during WWII. The physical fitness elite at the time (similar to Navy SEALS nowadays) were the Naval aviators. Flying repeated missions in those old-fashioned fighters put a tremendous physical stress on the pilots, and their success in combat depended, to a great extent, on stamina and strength. One may get an idea of the level of fitness for which the pilots aimed by looking at the records they set in training: 325 consecutive push-ups; 84 push-ups on one arm; 84 push-ups on fingertips; 25 push-ups in the difficult "extension" position *(i.e.,* arms stretched overhead, weight on fingertips and toes). Because pilots shot down behind enemy lines had to be prepared to fight without a gun in order to avoid capture, hand-to-hand fighting skills were just as important as fitness. Therefore, another collegiate wrestling champ, Wesley Brown, trained those pilots in unarmed combat. Brown based his system on freestyle wrestling, and wrote one of the best manuals on the subject ever produced (as you'll see in Chapter Eleven).

After winning the Second World War, the US Armed Forces turned more and more to Asian martial arts as the basis of their unarmed combat training. That was especially the case among Green Berets and other special forces: the Korean system of *hwarang-do,* for example, became standard among Vietnam-era Navy SEALS and Army Rangers through the influence of Mike Echanis. Unfortunately, as with so much of the history of Asian

martial arts in the United States, military hand-to-hand training tended to degenerate until the "art" became more important than the "martial." I think it's fair to say that the WWII system, based on wrestling, was more useful in a real fight.

America's enemies have adhered more closely to wrestling. Both Iran and Syria have ancient traditions of wrestling, and the armies of those countries continue to train their troops for grappling in combat. Soviet Spetsnaz commandos also placed a heavy emphasis on wrestling. The Spetsnaz hand-to-hand system was based on *sambo,* a Russian style of wrestling that combined traditional Slavic grappling techniques with judo and Mongolian wrestling. *Sambo* is practiced as a sport, but Spetsnaz made it deadly for combat; the Communist commandos trained for war, not for martial arts tournaments.

Police officers need fighting skills that work in real fights, but more for *restraining* adversaries, not killing them. That's why wrestling continues to make up a large part of the unarmed combat training that police receive. When police were at their best, wrestling was what they learned. The old FBI, for example, battled bank robbers and Red spies, instead of computer hackers and members of unpopular religions. The old-time FBI hand-to-hand instructor was a wrestler, "Big George" Zeiss, a dangerous character who stood 6'7" and weighed 245 lbs. (something to note well if you think that size and strength don't mean much in a fight).

WRESTLING AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

Although police may learn wrestling holds in order to restrain suspects without hurting them badly, never doubt that wrestling moves can kill and maim as effectively as the kicks and punches of a karate black belt. In fact, wrestling may serve you better than martial arts in a streetfight. Why? Because the wrestling moves can be practiced against another human.

Do not trust any technique — no matter how "deadly" it may seem — until you've used it against your training partner. Hitting air is not the same as hitting a human body, and years of kata and hand conditioning in the dojo will not necessarily make you dangerous in a fight.

Practice, *taken as realistically as possible,* makes a huge difference when you suddenly find yourself fighting for your life. Asian martial arts, when they were used for combat not display, incorporated that fact into their training regimens: medieval Chinese and Japanese "masters" (better translation: "feudal gangsters") tried out their barehanded killing techniques on unarmed peasants. Spetsnaz commandos are alleged to have continued that tradition by killing prisoners from the gulags.

Obviously, you and I aren't going to carry our training to that extreme. If we were that ruthless, it would be hard to find sparring partners after the first round.

Nevertheless, it is important to practice against a real human body. Boxers know that fact: the experience of hitting and getting hit, even when wearing sixteen-ounce gloves and headgear, makes the average boxer more effective than the average karateka when a fight takes place outside of the gym or dojo. No matter how much the martial artist fancies himself Musashi and tries to cultivate "the warrior mind," striking air cannot substitute for the experience of striking flesh.

A wrestler, however, knows what it's like to battle another person. He has grappled with a strong and fit competitor, trying to pin someone who was simultaneously trying to pin him. The wrestler has the same advantage as the boxer: full-contact practice.

Full contact is the key to preparing for a streetfight. Beware of "killing" techniques in the martial arts that you cannot practice on your sparring partner. That *shuto* to the windpipe you learned about in the dojo may well work as advertised, yet it's unlikely that you'll ever find out. After all, you can't try it out in any way approaching reality; you can't kill your sparring partner. So, are

you going to trust that *shuto* (or any other allegedly deadly technique) under the less-than-ideal circumstances of a streetfight?

The handful of wrestling moves that can kill, however, may be practiced realistically. Before you think I've gone insane and are recommending that you strangle your sparring partner to death, note that I emphasize safety in the gym. Still, you may try out chokes, strangles, knee drops, and other deadly moves against another wrestler — *if* you practice them lightly, carefully, and after warning your partner. That practice will give you confidence and useful skill should you need to use those moves with full force in a streetfight.

In other words, you can count on your wrestling skills because you will have practiced them; you'll know just how good you are in a fight.

WRESTLING AND RESTRAINT

Few of us will ever use killing techniques. As sensible people keep a revolver in the nightstand drawer or a shotgun in the closet, so should you know (and *practice!)* the moves designed to kill, just in case. But such cases are rare.

Despite the supposedly practical self-defense courses that instruct you to always use "maximum force," you'll probably never know the experience of maiming or killing an adversary in a real-world streetfight. And that's all for the good: as much as we may want to finish off every loudmouth in our fantasies, reality demands restraint.

For those of you who are trained in the martial arts and expect "wisdom" dispensed in the style of Kwai-Chang Caine from *Kung Fu*, let me give you a down home proverb: *Don't swat flies with a shovel.* In other words, you shouldn't snap the neck of a drunk who pushes you in a bar. Reply to violence with an appropriate level of violence, or you'll run into trouble in litigious modern America. Those old martial-arts "masters" could kill the peasants who insulted them, but you cannot fight so viciously. Do you *really*

want to worry about cops, courts, civil suits, and maybe some hard time — all because you learned an "art" that taught you to crush every adversary's windpipe, all because you couldn't control yourself?

Wrestling encourages control. The skill, strength, and confidence you'll build by wrestling will allow you to measure your response to the threat. Just as likely, the muscle you'll build as a necessary part of your wrestling training will allow you to avoid the fight in the first place.

Should you find yourself in a fight, however, grappling is not only effective, but also often smarter than striking. Therein lies a great advantage of wrestling over many other systems of unarmed combat. Relying exclusively on striking (as in boxing, savate, and most styles of karate) forces you to reply to any physical confrontation with punches and kicks. The trouble with punches and kicks, at least when delivered by someone who knows what he's doing, is that they'll break bones — or worse. It's hard for a trained fighter to hold back, and the combinations just naturally pop out, breaking the nose, ribs, and jaw of some loudmouth in a bar. That's why a prizefighter's (or a black belt's) fists are treated as weapons in court.

Wrestling provides a more measured response. In a barroom dust-up — just the sort of thing you're likely to meet with in the *real* world — the wrestler may apply a restraining hold to control his adversary. Should the fight then turn deadly, the wrestler has the option of using strangles and other killing techniques. But he doesn't have to use maximum force. In short, wrestling can keep you in control — control of your adversary, control of the situation, and control of yourself. Control, in turn, will help to keep you out of the courts.

After all that talk about control, let me emphasize, however, that you shouldn't let control get you killed. Learn the killing techniques in Chapter Seven, and use them if the situation warrants. Fights to the death do indeed take place; if you find yourself in one, use all your wrestling skills and physical power to win. Wrestling gives

you options: restraining holds, killing techniques, and everything in between.

WRESTLING WORKS: AROUND THE WORLD AND THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Another indication of the usefulness of wrestling is its ubiquity. Wrestling has been practiced in all lands and all ages. Why? Because wrestling works. It works as a sport, of course, but also as a method of hand-to-hand combat. Even when a nation's style of wrestling has evolved into a ritualized game (*e.g.*, Japanese sumo or American freestyle), wrestling invariably has roots on the battlefield. Before there were karate schools at the malls, warriors relied on wrestling in unarmed combat.

Wrestling predates history. Since grappling is the instinctive way to fight, it was doubtlessly the way the first humans settled their disputes. Left jabs and side kicks are the skills of civilized men; Neanderthal Man probably relied on wrestling in the struggle for survival. Nowadays, the maniac who slams his victim to the ground and chokes the life out of him keeps that tradition alive.

It's more efficient to wrestle scientifically, however. Modern wrestling is a highly developed system, and most of the moves taught in ***Kill-As-Catch-Can*** qualify as scientific wrestling. A high level of wrestling skill developed surprisingly early in man's rise out of the caves. In the Bible, Jacob wrestled an angel to a standstill — until the angel dislocated the patriarch's hip (a good move if you can get away with it). Four-thousand-year-old paintings on the walls of the Egyptian tomb at Beni Hasan illustrate wrestling holds that are still popular.

The most noteworthy wrestlers in antiquity, however, were the Greeks. Every Greek city had its *palaistra* where young men learned how to wrestle as a regular part of their education. Champions were crowned at the Olympic games and other international athletic festivals. But the Greeks fought hand-to-hand,

and wrestling also proved useful in combat: Darius I, a Persian king who invaded Greece, matched three of his soldiers from the elite troop of Immortals (sort of ancient Green Berets) in an unarmed fight to the death against the Greek wrestling champ, Polydamus. Polydamus promptly killed all three Persians — although perhaps as much because of his strength and size (6' 8", 300 lbs.) as because of his wrestling skill. The most famous Greek wrestler, however, was Milo of Crotona, who wrestled undefeated for 24 years and also possessed colossal strength. Milo was the man who discovered progressive resistance training; but instead of a barbell, Milo lifted a bull. As the bull grew heavier, so did Milo's strength, until at the peak of his powers the wrestler could lift and carry the bull balanced on his shoulders.

The Romans wrestled, but preferred bloodier, armed sports, such as gladiatorial games. Nevertheless, wrestling remained important on the battlefield throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages. Why? Because of armor. After dropping his battle-ax, a medieval warrior couldn't hurt an opponent covered in chain mail by punching or kicking him; the way to drop an armored man is to grapple with him. That kind of battlefield wrestling may not have looked much like modern freestyle, however. In his *History of Civilization,* Will Durant mentions two knights who fought a judicial duel in 1127. After their swords broke, the knights fell to wrestling — and the winner triumphed by using bare hands to castrate his opponent. Something to think about when wrestling in a serious streetfight nowadays.

Gunpowder made wrestling less useful on the battlefield, but it remained a popular sport. At markets, fairs, and anywhere else the common folk congregated, there was sure to be a wrestling competition. Wrestling also persisted among the nobility. When the English king, Henry VIII, met the French king, Francis I, on "The Field of Cloth and Gold" in 1520, they held a wrestling match. Although outweighed and not given much of a chance, Francis won by diving at Henry's syphilitic leg for a takedown. Henry should have been prepared, since the English school of wrestling was

"nought-barred" — or "anything goes," in the modern American idiom.

English wrestling led directly to the American style, so that "nought-barred" became "catch-as-catch-can." Holds above and below the waist — and just about anything else — were permitted in American wrestling. It was similar to a streetfight. The sport was especially popular on the frontier, and there it was often brutal: gouging out eyes and biting off ears were standard moves. In the settled parts of the Colonies, wrestling was cleaned up and made suitable for gentlemen. George Washington, for example, was a noted athlete who held the championship of his county in the "collar-and-elbow'' (the position of the opening tie-up) style practiced in Virginia. Even at the age of 47, when he was commanding the Continental Army, Washington was such a strong wrestler that he defeated seven soldiers, one after another, in friendly competition.

Other US presidents also excelled at wrestling. Abe Lincoln, with his wiry strength and backwoodsman toughness, was probably the best of them, and he won another county championship. Theodore Roosevelt is better known for his skills at boxing (the members of his Secret Service detail were TR's sparring partners), but he was also a good wrestler. Roosevelt's vice-president, William Howard Taft, later became the heaviest man (at 320 lbs.) to become president; but he wasn't all fat, possessed great physical strength, and was a collegiate wrestling champ when a student at Yale. Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, and U.S. Grant did their wrestling while in the army.

We've already seen that English "nought-barred" wrestling influenced American freestyle; but England also had other, more formal wrestling styles. In northern England, the traditional way of wrestling was Cumberland and Westmoreland, practiced by famous strongmen, such as Donald Dinnie. In this style, the competitors stood chest to chest, arms locked around the opponent's body; the trick, then, was to throw one's opponent without breaking the hold. Cumberland and Westmoreland wrestling emphasized two useful

takedowns, the cross-buttock and the back heel, both of which were popular among old-time bareknuckle boxers.

Cornish and Devonshire was the style practiced in western England. It was similar in some ways to judo or *sambo:* the wrestlers wore long-sleeved jackets (like a *gi),* and each competitor took hold of the jacket at its bottom and at the opponent's right wrist. Kicking and foot throws were the preferred takedowns in Cornish and Devonshire. Miners around Lancashire fought by means of "all-in" wrestling, another kind of "anything goes" in which wrestlers might blind or castrate their opponents *(All-In Fighting,* by the way, was the British title of W.E. Fairbairn's classic manual of hand-to-hand combat, *Get Tough!).*

In Iceland, the national style of wrestling is *glima,* which translates as "lightning," an indication of the savage speed of the sport. *Glima* is another example of wrestling as hand-to-hand combat: it is the survival of the style of unarmed fighting used by Viking warriors.

I've already said a little about *sambo* as a kind of wrestling used for combat by Soviet special forces. Others styles of Russian wrestling, however, also have a history in war. Slavic "hillside wrestling," for example, developed as a method of unarmed combat useful for fighting outdoors on rough terrain. The growth of nationalism following the collapse of the Soviet Union has led to a revival in Russia of traditional Slavic styles in place of Asian martial arts.

Turkey is famous for its wrestling tradition. Every village has its champion. During the "Golden Age" of wrestling around 1900, Turkish wrestlers regularly competed against the best from Western Europe, earning the reputation of "Terrible Turks." In the Turkish style, competitors oil their bodies, making it difficult for their opponents to lock up a hold.

At the same time that Turkish wrestlers were first beating Western Europeans, wrestlers from India also battled the European champions of the "Golden Age." Perhaps the best of those Indians was The Great Gama, who stood only 5'7", but weighed 250 lbs.

and had a chest 50" in circumference. Such size is common among the Indians because of their strenuous training. Indian wrestlers routinely perform 1,500 *dunds* (similar to push ups) and 3,000 *baitaks* (free squats) every day, in addition to hours of wrestling. As a result, they build tremendous levels of muscular size and endurance.

Iran has an ancient, honorable wrestling tradition. The Persians who invaded Greece *ca.* 490-480 B.C. were skilled wrestlers, as well as archers. Over the centuries, Iranian wrestling has developed into a true "martial art," a complex system of fighting and physical training called *Zur-khaneh.* The system places great emphasis on building enormous strength through lifting heavy "Indian clubs," stones, and other weights. The *Zur-khaneh* has produced men who excelled in sports outside of the tradition, such as the Olympic weight lifter (and all-around athlete), Mahmoud Namdjou. At a weight of only 120 lbs. Namdjou pressed — not *bench* pressed, but pressed *overhead* — 220 lbs. Even under the ayatollahs, the *Zur-khaneh* remains strong. Allegedly, the elite forces in the Iranian army base their hand-to-hand fighting on wrestling, instead of on something mysteriously Oriental.

China is the source for many of the martial arts popular in America. Kung-fu, in its many systems, emphasizes striking, but wrestling is also widespread in China. *Chin-na,* for example, is a Chinese martial art that uses only grappling (see Chapter Eleven for more about *chin-na).*

Like China, Japan is most noted among American students of unarmed combat for its martial arts that use punches and kicks, such as karate. Grappling systems, however, also are traditional among the Japanese. Sumo wrestling, of course, is a sport rich in ritual; but its roots are planted in the battlefields of ancient Japan. Judo, for some reason, has fallen into disfavor among Americans looking for a practical means of grappling for a streetfight. Nevertheless, I'd bet on the judo player in a fight against a karate black belt. Because judo is practiced as a full-contact sport (like boxing or wrestling), judo students tend to be tough and fit, and to

know what it feels like to get hit; they also develop good balance and a feel for how a warm body responds to judo techniques. Jiu-jitsu has many of the same advantages — but since there are plenty of good books and videos (see Chapter Eleven for some of those) about judo and jiu-jitsu, I'll leave those forms of Japanese wrestling for others.

The mention of Japanese jiu-jitsu brings us to the other side of the globe, and the end of our brief tour of the history and geography of wrestling: Brazilian jiu-jitsu. The effectiveness of the style, as practiced by Royce Gracie and others, in "extreme fighting" competitions has done a lot of late to reawaken Americans to the importance of grappling in unarmed combat.

Good old American freestyle wrestling, however, has just as much as Brazilian jiu-jitsu — or any other style of wrestling — to add to the arsenal of a streetfighter.

PRO WRESTLING: HOW FAKE IS FAKE?

Too many Americans know next to nothing about freestyle wrestling. Hence, they think of tae-kwon-do or kung-fu when they think of unarmed combat. Too many Americans don't respect wrestling because their only knowledge of wrestling comes from the professional matches they see on television. Such people refuse to think of wrestling as a serious sport, much less a practical means of hand-to-hand combat, because they've only seen wrestling as promoted by the WCW, WWF, and other pro leagues. Well, then, maybe their skepticism is deserved.

Or is it?

The usual charge against pro wrestling is that it is "fake." What's meant by "fake," however, isn't always clear. And, in a sense, wrestling is no more "fake" than any other pro sport.

WHAT? Do I mean that one 300-lb. muscleman *can* slam another's head onto a concrete floor — and not send him to the hospital or morgue?

Of course not.

I do mean, however, that pro wrestling has rules just like any other sport. Like any other pro sport, most of those rules are unwritten, and designed to make the sport both entertaining for the spectators and survivable for the participants. It's a mistake for anyone on the outside of the ring to underestimate a pro wrestler: those guys are big, athletic, and tough.

How big are they? Big beyond belief. If you've only seen wrestlers on a TV screen from the comfort of your recliner, then you cannot appreciate how huge even a "small" wrestler is. If you've seen wrestlers up close, it's sometimes hard to believe that they're of the same species as the man on the street; it's similar to the difference between mastiffs and Chihuahuas. Of course the wrestlers are muscular; but the most striking aspect of their size is more a matter of bones than muscles. Not all wrestlers are tall, but they are all thick: wrists like lamp posts and chests as big around as refrigerators. The biggest wrestler of all, Andre the Giant, had a wrist that was 12½" around — bigger than the wrist of an adult male lowland gorilla!

Watch a wrestler leap off the top turnbuckle, land on his opponent, and *not* kill him — and you'll begin to appreciate that those huge men have the kind of athletic ability that would make an acrobat jealous. Most pro wrestlers have experience with amateur wrestling, and many were high school or college champs. Some, such as Ken Patera, were Olympic weight lifters. More than a few, including Steve "Mongo" McMichael, played in the NFL. Boxing champions (Joe Louis, Edward Charles, and Primo Carnera) have sometimes turned to wrestling when they needed the money. Pro wrestlers also come out of other sports: Randy "Macho Man" Savage, for example, played baseball.

Wrestlers need to be tough as well as athletic. When wrestlers bleed, they really bleed. Look at the forehead of a veteran, and you'll see a mass of scar tissue — because pros add to the excitement of their matches by slitting the skin on their foreheads with small razor blades hidden in wrist wraps and drawing blood ("juice" in the parlance of the ring). Pros work hard, wrestling night

after night in different cities, constantly traveling, wrestling, and bleeding.

Certainly wrestling is "fake" in the sense that it's an exhibition, less a sport than "sports entertainment." That's because wrestling *has* to be "fake": if wrestlers applied holds in earnest, they would kill someone every night. Wrestlers "work" with each other, "selling the moves" by writhing in agony when, say, a drop kick doesn't quite connect.

But many of those same moves will cripple when used for real by a wrestler — big, strong, and athletic — against anyone else.

Reporters and talk-show hosts sometimes find out that pro wrestling is fake only among wrestlers. Richard Belzer made fun of Hulk Hogan, then made the mistake of challenging the wrestler to apply a hold. (Why not? It's "fake.") Hogan grabbed Belzer in a chin lock, and flexed his 24" biceps just a little; then the scrawny comedian dropped, out cold. John Stossel, reporter for ABC's *20-20*, asked wrestler David "Doctor D" Schultz if wrestling was fake — so Doctor D gave Stossel a taste of fakery. Schultz's slap to the head would have been ignored by another wrestler, but it flattened Stossel and left him with a cauliflower ear.

The average man stands no more chance in a fight against a "fake" pro wrestler than he would against a grizzly bear.

"Tag Team *vs.* Police"

If you retain any doubts about how dangerous pro wrestlers can be, let me tell you a true story about what happened when wrestling was used for real in a streetfight.

In 1984 in Waukesha, Wisconsin, a tag team of two "heels" (in wrestling jargon, the good guys are "babyfaces," and the bad guys are "heels") fought the police. The fight started when Ken Patera, Olympic super-heavyweight weight lifting medalist turned WWF star, went to McDonald's for a post-match snack. The restaurant had just closed, however, and the employee inside refused to serve

the wrestler. So Patera threw a 30-pound rock through the window. McDonald's called the cops.

By the time the police, a man and a woman, arrived, Patera had returned to his hotel. The police followed. When they tried to arrest Patera, both he and his tag team partner, Masanori Saito ("Mr. Saito") beat the hell out of the cops. Mace had no effect on the wrestlers. The woman officer received a knee drop on her neck; she survived, but with blurred vision and broken teeth. Her partner suffered a broken leg before he managed to draw his pistol and hold off Patera while reinforcements clubbed Saito into submission. The tag team went to prison for that match.

Remember what two wrestlers did to armed police when you consider how "fake" is pro wrestling — or when you think about how useful wrestling skills can be in a streetfight.

Chapter Two
LESSONS FROM THE MAT

This chapter concerns principles, not techniques. Before you learn the holds of wrestling, you need to understand how they work. The lessons you will learn from wrestling are universally applicable to unarmed combat, including streetfights.

LESSON #1:
SUPERIOR CONDITIONING

Wrestling is the most strenuous sport. I've competed in most major American sports and many of the minor ones, and nothing whipped me like wrestling. Even boxing (or other sports, such as full-contact karate, in which you get hit) is not necessarily as stressful as wrestling; a smart boxer knows how to sneak rest during the round, but stalling during a wrestling match will get you disqualified.

Every physical quality imaginable comes into play during a wrestling match. From muscles, wrestling requires strength, power, isometric (*i.e.,* "holding") strength, and endurance. In addition, wrestling uses muscles that other sports do not. The saying, "My muscles ache in places where I never knew I had muscles," must have been coined by a wrestler. Every winter athletes who thought they were in top shape during football season find out what real conditioning is all about when they try out for the wrestling team.

Champion wrestlers also show great aerobic endurance, flexibility, speed, coordination, and above all, skill. Amateur matches last only (*only?* they seem to last forever when you're the one on the mat!) six minutes because they cannot last much longer. The wrestlers would collapse from exhaustion if matches continued. Pro wrestlers "fake it" for the same reason. In short, wrestling is an all-around physical challenge.

In that respect, wrestling closely resembles hand-to-hand combat. Real fights are fast and demand a variety of physical strengths.

A wrestling match and a serious fight, of course, differ because wrestlers never battle to the death. And it's unlikely that you'll find yourself in a streetfight to the death. But if a fight should turn deadly, being in shape to wrestle is about the best preparation you can have.

"Real Life Ain't Like The Movies"

In my previous book about streetfighting, *Championship Streetfighting: Boxing as a Martial Art,* (Paladin Press, 1997), I showed that too many martial artists know too little about the reality of fighting because they believe what they see on TV and in the movies. With wrestling in mind, let's look at the same problem again.

One of the common bits of nonsense people take away from movies is that size and strength don't matter much in a fight.

That's pure bullshit! In real life strength and size usually win.

Movies, of course, are fantasy, not reality. Thus Mr. Moto could toss around bad guys twice his size. My favorite example of such a fantasy in a more recent movie comes from *Roadhouse*. In that movie, Patrick Swayze, built like the dancer that he is, easily defeats "Terrible" Terry Funk, former NWA and WWF wrestling star. It doesn't make any difference that Funk outweighs Our Hero by a hundred pounds. In a real fight it would. Still, there are people who think *Roadhouse* closely approximates reality.

On the street the bigger and stronger guy will almost always whip the hell out of the little guy. And he'll do it with ease. That's especially the case when the fight ends up in grappling — as most streetfights do.

Size — and the greater strength that often results from it — make huge differences in real hand-to-hand combat. That's why sports that closely resemble combat (*e.g.,* wrestling and boxing) have strict weight classes. Moving up a weight class is difficult even for the best wrestlers. Boxers have an adage: "A heavyweight's jabs feel like a light-heavyweight's knockout punches." There are exceptions, of course, but a sound guideline is that heavyweights don't lose to middleweights — much less to lightweights. That guideline applies just as much to the street as it does in the ring or on the mat.

If you want to get ready for a streetfight, forget about everything you've seen on the screen. Head for the gym and train like a wrestler.

Wrestling workouts will build muscular size and strength (see Chapter Ten). But those are only two parts of the superior conditioning you'll derive from training like a wrestler. Endurance, for example, will give you an edge in a streetfight: as your out-of-shape opponent tires by the second, you'll keep fighting at full force. After full-contact "sparring" against a tough opponent, overall fitness is the best preparation for fighting. And the best way to build that overall physical fitness is to train like a wrestler. Get into shape for six minutes on the mat (or its rough equivalent) and you'll also be in shape for hand-to-hand combat in the real world.

LESSON #2: AGGRESSIVENESS

Nobody ever won a streetfight by running away.

There are times when it's smart to avoid a fight. Staying out of a fight when the lives or safety of you and yours is *not* threatened is usually better than dealing with cops, courts, and lawyers after

you've transformed some loudmouth into a stain on the asphalt. Wrestling gives you the skills and fitness to hurt people. But I hope wrestling practice also gives you the wiles to stay out of fights when possible.

If the threat is real and immediate, however, *never hesitate.* Don't wait for the other guy to hit first, because the first punch usually wins a streetfight. Be aggressive! Don't give the other guy enough time to pull a knife or gun. The surest way to win a streetfight is to *ATTACK.*

Train like a wrestler, and you'll be ready to attack. Wrestling teaches aggressiveness. In amateur matches, each competitor *must* make his first move a forward move. Wrestlers can, in fact, be disqualified for taking an initial step back — or for failing to fight to win at any time during a match. Moreover, wrestlers learn that the only way to get a pin is to attack, go for the takedown and chain together a pinning combination.

Aggressiveness is just as important for surviving a streetfight as it is for winning a wrestling match.

Out-of-control aggression is a mistake, though. The prize-fighter's adage, "Never lose your temper," applies equally to the wrestler and the streetfighter. A cool wrestler will always pin the "wild man" who stops thinking. The wrestler who controls his temper will "fade" into a takedown, use his opponent's momentum to throw him off-balance and put him on the mat.

Students of certain Asian martial arts know the dangers of uncontrolled aggression just as much as do wrestlers. Japanese grappling styles (*e.g.,* judo and aikido) are based on the concept of using an adversary's aggression against him.

From what I've seen, however, *all* forms of wrestling teach ways of taking advantage of an opponent's uncontrolled aggression. Western freestyle and Greco-Roman use the concept almost as much as does judo. Even sumo, which at first may look like a couple of fat guys pushing each other, employs the concept; there are really a lot of skill and subtle tactics involved when Japanese giants collide.

Don't fool yourself into fighting defensively, however; and don't make the mistake of thinking that you can "use a man's own strength against him" all the time. Weight, strength, and power more often decide the fight than does advanced skill. Remember that the midget may beat the giant in the movies, but not in real life. When's the last time you saw a 120 lb. judo black-belt beat a 400 lb. sumo star? Judo, like wrestling, has weight classes for competition.

The only way to bring your superior strength into play is to *be aggressive.* The man who fights aggressively — but also with control — wins on the mat and on the street.

LESSON #3: MULTIPLE MOVES

Let's look at the difference between movies and reality again.

In the movies, the hero drops the bad guy with one move. That move may be a single shot from his .44, a punch, a kick, a throw, or anything else the stuntmen can dream up and the director thinks he can sell. Whatever that single move, it works — drops the bad guy, knocks him cold and kills him, and ends the fight.

Real life doesn't work that way. Fool yourself into believing that it does and you're liable to get stomped into the sewers by the crackhead who hasn't seen enough movies to know that your single expert move is supposed to make him lay down and die. The Myth of the One-Move Victory (called "The Myth of the One-Punch Knockout" in *Championship Streetfighting)* is the most dangerous myth about fighting. Unfortunately, it's also widespread.

Martial artists seem especially vulnerable to The Myth of the One-Move Victory. Since they punch lots of air and swallow the nonsense sold to them by would-be Bruce Lees, many martial artists believe that their "deadly" kicks and punches will invariably drop a determined streetfighter. Why not? After all, the karate blow can break a board.

I hope you know better. Even Bruce Lee movies should have taught you the "boards don't hit back." Besides, human bone and muscle are much tougher than pieces of pine. The human body can be surprisingly tough; every day people walk away from car crashes, shootings, and stabbings. The minds and wills that drive those human bodies can be even tougher.

Mind and will, however, is exactly where the martial artist thinks he has a huge advantage over the streetfighter. Maybe, maybe not.

The martial artist thinks he has (and may, in fact, have) the focus, breath control, and "chi" to pack a lot of power into his single move. The brawler whom the martial artist fights may have none of that — but he's liable to be full of chemicals, legal or illegal, that numb him enough to absorb punishment from the martial artist — who is shocked, *shocked,* to find he's been fooled.

Go cry to your "master." Better yet, build yourself up, learn to wrestle, and beat the brawler with a combination of moves.

And don't be confident just because the brawler is sober. People can become so enraged that their bodies get flooded with a natural chemical cocktail that makes them impervious to anything short of an anti-tank rocket. Such people never seem to notice that they're hurt until after they've pounded Kaptain Karate into a black-belted bag of bruises. One move never works against such hotheads, and such antagonists are more common than you'd like to think.

To be fair, it *is* possible to win a streetfight (or a wrestling match) with a single, well-timed move. Similarly, it *is* true that there are one-punch knockouts in the prize ring. But when did you last see one?

On the rare occasions when a one-move victory happens, it happens because somebody *gave up.* A determined adversary will not collapse after one kick, one punch, or one takedown. Even down and hurt, he'll continue to fight — and you can take a lot of punishment before your adversary realizes he's beaten.

That's where a previous "Lesson From the Mat" becomes important again: *be aggressive!* When you fight, fight to win, and don't stop fighting until your adversary is unable to fight back.

As a rule, *never* count on one move to win on the street. Training as a wrestler will teach you not to rely on a single strike. For winning, wrestlers use multiple moves.

The best examples of multiple moves in wrestling are PINNING COMBINATIONS. Just as a boxer hits in *combinations* of two, three, or more punches, so does a wrestler use moves in sequence to pin his opponent. In the same way that a boxer's right follows naturally from his jab, so does a wrestler's takedown flow into a hold.

So easily does one move flow into another during standard pinning combinations that knowledgeable spectators at a match can tell just how a wrestler is going to pin his opponent once they see the first move. Pinning combinations come automatically to experienced wrestlers. It's just like watching a prizefighter set up the knockout hook: you *know* what's coming.

Bear in mind, however, a significant difference between boxing combinations and wrestling ones: standard punch combos may be used in a streetfight without modifying them, but you must adapt many wrestling combinations for use on the street. Half-nelson pinning combinations, for example, aren't much use in barrooms. Nevertheless, the *principle* of multiple moves applies both on the mat and on the street.

A wrestling match is like a game of chess — the winner thinks several moves ahead. A skilled wrestler plans that his takedown will lead into a hold, then another, and so on to the pin. The ability to plan ahead and wrestle by means of multiple moves must be built carefully. First, learn the moves and analyze how one move flows readily into another. Second, practice the moves on the mat against a "sparring partner" so that you can get a feel for how the moves will work against someone who fights back.

Practice is just as important for the streetfighter. He should master individual techniques, decide which ones will work *for him* on the street, then try combinations. Finally, he'll need to try out those combinations in practice made as realistic as possible (and safe).

Realistic practice is important due to a corollary to Lesson #3: *every move has a countermove*. Wrestlers come to know that fact through practice — especially when they first face a more skillful opponent who turns their favorite pinning combinations against them. Applying the appropriate counter to an opponent's attack often leads a wrestler into his own pinning combination that wins the match.

Specific countermoves flow as naturally from certain attacks as do the series of moves in a good pinning combination. For example, the wrestler's "natural" counter to a single leg takedown is a crossface. Due to the way it's built, a human body invariably moves in certain ways. Wrestling moves, developed over millennia of practical experience, take advantage of the body's ways of moving. Therefore, wrestling moves rarely feel as awkward as many of the maneuvers taught in certain martial arts.

The give-and-take of wrestling also allows you to develop a "feel" for countering. In that, wrestling is like boxing, and offers a great advantage over most martial arts as they are practiced in modern America. That advantage is *contact.*

In preparing for a real fight there's no substitute for contact. Besides teaching you how to cope with pain, contact builds your kinesthetic sense — or the "feel" for how a human body is going to respond to your moves. Contact on the mat will leave you with an ingrained tactile sense that operates subconsciously. Thus, your attacks and counters will be fast because they'll be automatic.

Wrestling is not the *only* "style" that teaches that kinesthetic sense. Any form of training that forces you to fight with contact can give you the same benefits. Boxers spar, and so receive the benefits of full-contact experience; serious karateists who spar learn in the same way. The "sticking hands" exercise of wing-chun probably also would help you get a "feel" for how an opponent will move. Judo (a kind of wrestling, remember), of course, puts you into close contact and competition.

But my sense is that wrestling develops the kinesthetic sense far better than do most martial arts. Why? Because unlike a lot of dojo

practice, there's no punching air for the wrestler. Wrestlers *wrestle* — and they work out hard. That's it, but that's enough. And it's far better than the dancing practice you'll get by training with too many Chuck Norris wannabes.

The senses you acquire from wrestling are useful in streetfights because real-world trouble often starts unexpectedly. The typical sucker-puncher will attack without warning and try to take you out quickly. Through wrestling practice, however, you'll have developed instincts that allow you to respond to the sucker-puncher with instantaneous countermoves. Pay special attention to mastering the counters to common streetfighting attacks, as taught in Chapter Eight, and you'll be prepared for the real world.

LESSON #4: BALANCE

All the muscle and toughness of a rhinoceros won't do much good in a fight if you don't have good balance. Lose your balance and you'll end up on your ass — if not in a coffin. Wrestling teaches you how to keep your balance.

On the mat, good balance keeps a wrestler on his feet, off his back, and safe from getting pinned. On the street, balance will also keep you on your feet, and safe from the more serious danger of getting stomped.

Full-contact practice and your kinesthetic sense are both aids to balance. Wrestling teaches good balance so well because grappling with a real opponent who tries to place you off-balance *forces* you to develop a subconscious ability to stay on your feet. You can count on balance developed through wrestling to work in a life-and-death struggle. Again, there's no substitute for contact — and wrestling gives you plenty of that.

As part of building your sense of balance, wrestling also teaches the importance of controlling the center of gravity (COG). Any physical contest between two people — wrestling, street-fighting, boxing, football, etc. — may be decided by which competitor

controls the centers of gravity. Maintain your COG, destroy your opponent's, and invariably you'll win the battle.

Keep your own COG as low as is practical; thereby, you'll gain strength and stability. Unlike many artificial martial arts stances (which were developed centuries ago for tiny Asian bodies with proportions very different from Americans raised on Wheaties and hamburgers), a naturally balanced wrestling stance will keep you upright and fast.

Practicing "on the mat" shows you the best ways to upset your opponent's COG (chiefly *head control* and *waist control*) and put him on the ground. Groundwork teaches you to keep your COG on top of your opponent, controlling his movement and tiring him with very little of your own exertion. Smart wrestlers let their weight do the work as much as their muscles. Since so many streetfights turn into grappling on the ground, a wrestler's ability to control the COG and his experience of groundwork are invaluable for survival and victory in the real world.

"Head Up!"

A rule of kinesiology states: *as the head goes, so goes the body.* Therefore, HEAD CONTROL is a basic principle of wrestling. Control the movement of your opponent's head, and you necessarily control the movement of the rest of him; to put an opponent's shoulders on the mat, it helps to put his head there first. And because no man's neck is as strong as your arms, hips, and legs working together, by controlling an opponent's head you may defeat a man who is heavier and stronger than yourself.

How important is head control in a wrestling match? Go to any meet and you will find out: the gym will echo with shouts of "Head up!" If you wrestled in high school, you can't help but remember your coach shouting that phrase at you. Controlling your opponent's head is important; so is controlling your own head movement. Head control keeps you from getting pinned: since your

shoulders naturally follow your head, keeping your head up also keeps your shoulders off the canvas.

Keep your head up on the mat and on the street. The streetfighter who thinks "head up!" will tend to stay on his feet. But if the fight should end up on the ground, he'll continue to stay on top if he keeps his head up. Wrestling will teach him to do that automatically.

LESSON #5: STRONG BEATS WEAK

Think it's *too* obvious that strong beats weak? After Lesson #1, even Chain-Link Fence, Master of the Mystical Martial Arts, ought to know that a 98 lb. weakling is not likely to win a fight against an NFL linebacker.

But with this "Lesson From the Mat" we're dealing less with muscle than with the ways to match that muscle against an adversary's weak spots. The linebacker's little finger can't be as strong as the weakling's entire arm; if the weakling can figure out a way to pit his arm against the football player's finger, then the little guy will win every time.

At least, that's the *principle* of strong versus weak. The trick is turning principle into practice. Wrestling has the best ways of doing that: think of head control, as mentioned already.

To some extent, of course, all combat sports, martial arts, and systems of unarmed combat teach ways of applying that principle. However, wrestling, I think, is the most *practical* school of the principle of strong versus weak. Almost every wrestling hold relies for its success on that principle. Get used to matching your strengths against your opponent's weaknesses in practice, and you will automatically apply the principle in streetfights. And so, you will win.

"The Push Counter"

We're at the last of our five "Lessons From the Mat," so we may begin to move from principles to techniques. The technique that follows illustrates the principle of strong versus weak in action — and also shows how to apply the lessons learned from wrestling to streetfighting.

A trick taught by various "self-defense" (I hate that phrase, by the way: don't defend, *ATTACK!)* systems is the Push Counter. You may already know it!

When an adversary tries a one-hand push into your chest (either a minor attack or a prelude to further violence), you clap both of your palms over his hand and pin it to your chest. Then bend forward at the waist and put great pressure on his wrist. Pain resulting from that pressure can bring your adversary to his knees.

The Push Counter is a useful trick. It deals with something you're likely to meet in the real world (not like the ways of disarming attackers wielding samurai swords, as taught in too many martial arts). Also, the Push Counter uses Lesson #5, employing the strength of your two hands and midsection against the weakness of your adversary's wrist.

In the real world, however, the Push Counter also presents real problems — problems of the sort that can get you killed on the street.

Certainly the move will work against someone who's not intent on hurting you. A determined fighter, however, will hurt you if you use the Push Counter. The technique ties up both of your hands away from your face, making you vulnerable to a punch in the nose (or an eye gouge, *et al.*); as a rule, never leave an adversary's hand free to strike. Also, even when it works as planned, the Push Counter can give you a false sense of security, and cause you to forget Lesson #2. That one move may bring your adversary to his knees, even break his wrist — but a tough guy can still hurt you severely in that condition and from that position.

Let's re-examine the Push Counter. Since it's a useful move, we need not throw it out entirely. Instead, we'll apply all five "Lessons From the Mat" to make the Push Counter more useful for a streetfight.

First, respond to a right-hand push (more common than a left because most people are right-handed) by raising your right arm high enough to defend your face. No more free punches!

Second, take a half step back *with* the force of your adversary's push. Apply **Lesson #4**, and use his own momentum to place your adversary *off-balance.*

Third, *be aggressive* (**Lesson #3**). Slam the edge of your left hand against the back of the pushing hand, pinning it to your chest.

Fourth, use your vise-like grip, part of your *superior conditioning* (**Lesson #1**), to seize your adversary's pinky and ring fingers. Thus, you pit the strength of your entire arm against the weakness of your adversary's two fingers (**Lesson #5**).

Fifth, *break* those fingers. In other words, continue to be aggressive! (Remember that in the real world you cannot emphasize **Lesson #3** too much.)

Finally, use **Lesson #2** to apply *multiple moves.* Bring your adversary down, put him out, and end the fight on your terms. The specifics aren't fixed. Use whatever works. Your wrestling training and the "Lessons From the Mat" will prepare you for whatever fits the situation. They'll also prepare you to win the fight.

Chapter Three
PRELIMINARIES

Now that you have learned some "Lessons From the Mat," you're ready to apply principles to the standard moves of wrestling. Western freestyle uses an enormous number of moves and countermoves, far more than even the greatest champion can master. Just as a boxer relies on his best punch and a few favorite combinations, so does a wrestler usually rely on a dozen or so of the hundreds of holds he may know. There are exceptions, of course: when some pro calls himself "The Man of a Thousand Holds," he's not necessarily exaggerating. There are at least a thousand holds in the repertoire — and most of them have applications for a streetfight.

This chapter, however, deals with basic skills, such as stance and movement. All other techniques follow from such basics. Having mastered the preliminary skills of this chapter, you'll have a foundation that allows you to best use the dangerous material in the following chapters.

THE SEVEN BASIC SKILLS AND THEIR USES ON THE STREET

Wrestling, in all its variations, has been around for millennia. Within the last two decades, however, the United States Amateur Wrestling Association has made a coach's job easier by defining

the Seven Basic Skills. Those skills are prerequisites for all the other moves and holds. Master the Seven Basic Skills, and you're on your way to winning wrestling.

The Seven Basic Skills can be just as important for the streetfighter. All of the skills have some bearing on the grappling you'll do in hand-to-hand combat, and most of them are at least practical guidelines for body control that can enhance your fighting ability, no matter what your "style."

Here are the Seven Basic Skills: posture; motion; changing levels; penetration; lifting; back-stepping; back-arching.

Let's look at the skills in order. We'll see how they can be used on the mat, and also in more serious combat on the street.

POSTURE: When Mommy told you that poor posture would ruin your health, she wasn't kidding. In a fight, bad posture turns your attacks weak, makes your movement slow, and leaves you vulnerable to moves that put you on the ground and in stomping range. On the mat or in an alley, the winning fighter is usually the one who keeps his body in a posture that is both mobile and powerful.

A strong fighting posture starts at the top. So — here it is again! — head-control is vital. Standard advice for a strong wrestling posture is: keep your head up, rolled back, and directly on top of your shoulders. Even in the referee's position a wrestler tries to keep his head up; thereby, the bottom wrestler can explode upwards and gain the top position (a reversal worth two points in freestyle scoring).

The streetfighter has to consider how much he wants to keep his head up. One difference between a streetfight and a wrestling match is that an adversary may strike in the fight. With your head up like a wrestler, you may "lead with your face" — and so get punched in the face. That's the reason boxers learn to keep their heads down, chin tucked behind left shoulder.

Despite the potential problems of a head-up posture, I recommend that you keep your head up in a streetfight if you plan to fight like a wrestler. If your face is more exposed in a wrestling

stance than in a boxing (or martial arts) stance, you can prevent "leading with your face" simply by keeping your hands high enough to block punches. It also helps to practice slipping and ducking blows to the head.

Head-up posture is important for the streetfighter who wrestles because it leads to correct *alignment*. Alignment, in turn, is the key to proper posture. When a wrestler's alignment breaks down, his posture also necessarily collapses, and he becomes vulnerable to attack. The wrestler without sound alignment cannot move swiftly, and his balance is poor, so that he may be easily snapped down to the ground.

Other points of alignment fall into place when you keep your head up. Your back is straight and directly over your hips. Hips (where your COG is located) stay low, flexed, and straight over your feet, which are the bases of your stance. Knees are also flexed, ready to explode, and on a plane with your chest. Follow these guidelines, and you'll maintain alignment and enjoy a strong posture for grappling.

MOTION means *footwork* in a fight. We'll look at the details of footwork when we build your stance; but already you should begin to think about motion for wrestling. The stiff stances taught in many dojos are poison in the real world.

The fundamental point about motion is simple — *do it!* Keep moving when you fight. And don't move only in straight lines back and forth: move side-to-side, and in circles, attacking from all angles and evading attacks. You might think that the importance of motion is self-evident. Nevertheless, I'm frequently amazed to find "trained fighters" who stand as if their feet were nailed to the floor. Wrestling emphasizes motion, and if you train as a wrestler you will move well when you fight.

CHANGING LEVELS: The level you change is the level of your hips, where your COG is situated. A wrestler changes levels in order to get past his opponent's defenses; *e.g.,* lowering his hips moves a wrestler under his opponent's COG, enabling him to upset the opponent's balance and put him on the canvas. The rule about

changing levels is: the lower your level, the stronger and more stable your stance. Successful level changes require timing. You must practice diligently and gain experience with changing levels in order to develop timing and use the skill in combat.

PENETRATION is the key to attacking. In a streetfight, penetration is the means by which you move inside an adversary's reach and use your wrestling skills to put him on the ground. Most of all, *keep your head up* (again!) so as to maintain alignment and protect yourself from being tackled. Also, do not over-penetrate, or reach too far forward with your arms and throw yourself off-balance. Finally, avoid dropping to your knees when you penetrate. Not only does that destroy your mobility, but also your knees landing on asphalt or broken glass will take you out of a streetfight.

LIFTING is another aggressive skill, fundamental to putting an adversary down and out. Lift your adversary off the ground, and you've put him under your control: in the air he has no base from which to fight. Good posture with stable alignment is necessary for strong lifting; thus, we have an example of two of the Seven Basic Skills working together.

BACK-STEPPING and BACK-ARCHING are skills that have to do with wrestling throws. We'll look at the last two skills when we learn takedowns in Chapter Four.

STANCE

Freestyle wrestling is just that — *free.* Unlike many Asian martial arts, Western wrestling does not teach formal, rigid stances. Each wrestler has his own stance. Thus, like most of the other advice in ***Kill-As-Catch-Can***, the things I have to say about stance are guidelines, not rules. If there is one rule about stance, it's the same one that applies to all hand-to-hand combat: *use what works!*

With that thought in mind, I'll give you some guidelines for a stance for use when grappling on the street. First, strive for STABILITY. A stable stance keeps you on your feet, the best position for both offense and defense. The road to a stable stance is

paved with good posture. Remember the first of the Seven Basic Skills: keep your head up, back straight, hips and knees flexed. Also, maintain alignment, with your chest in a line directly above your knees.

As you build a stable stance, you'll also build a balanced one. Balance, of course, is another key to staying on your feet. The best way to develop a balanced stance is to keep your COG as low as is *practically* possible. Of course, the lowest and most stable COG puts you flat on the ground, and while there are times to "hug the mat" in a wrestling match, you should try to stay off the ground in a streetfight. Thus, a *practical* low COG for your fighting stance means that your hips (the approximate point of a man's COG) are low and your knees bent, somewhere between a half and quarter squat.

"Pushing and Cog"

As much as a deep stance provides stability, it also gives you explosive power for many wrestling techniques. Wrestlers often "work up" from a low COG, attacking upwards and upsetting an opponent's balance from below (*cf.* changing levels). Among the best uses of that explosive power for a streetfight involves pushing — but pushing in a smart way.

Pushing is something you're likely to use in a streetfight, but all too often your push does nothing because it's done inefficiently. A push is frequently used as a prelude to a more serious attack. However, a push, *performed correctly,* can flatten your adversary.

The smart way to push is push upwards from a low COG. Do not push straight at an adversary because the push will do little — especially if you're fighting someone heavier than yourself. Exploding out of your low COG, however, launches an attack from below your adversary's COG, thereby throwing him off-balance. A push *upwards* and *at an angle* (45 degrees, or so) gets the full force of your thighs, hips, and back into your attack.

Study NFL offensive linemen (many of whom know how to wrestle, by the way), and notice that when they block, they push in just the way I've suggested: exploding out of a deep stance, pushing up and at an angle. A lineman can flatten the defender on the other team with such a push. In the same way, you can flatten your adversary in a streetfight.

So much for the value of a stable stance. Now, let's look at the second guideline about stance, MOBILITY.

A mobile stance starts with where you place your feet. Widely-placed feet make your stance stable but slow; a narrow stance is quicker but easily toppled. The compromise recommended by most wrestling coaches is to keep your feet at about your shoulders' width apart. Your feet may be even or, better for streetfighting, staggered (*i.e.,* one foot ahead of the other); the choice is up to you.

Test your foot position for mobility by moving side-to-side, back-and-forth, and circling clockwise and counter-clockwise. If you can *slide* swiftly in all directions without slipping off-balance, then you have your feet in the right position. Make adjustments until you feel comfortable in your stance.

Why should your feet slide? Because every time you take a step, lifting your feet from the ground, you destroy your balance. For a split-second, all your weight is on a single foot, and you're vulnerable to being knocked down. Also, every time you lift your foot, you give your opponent an opening for an ankle pick-up that will knock you to the ground. Stay mobile, but move *without* picking up your feet.

Whether even or staggered, the stance suited to freestyle wrestling is not necessarily good for streetfighting. Remember that there's no referee on the street — so your adversary will punch, kick, and otherwise try to hurt you in ways that would get him disqualified on the mat. There are two problems with a regular wrestling stance in a streetfight: first, it's "wide-open," vulnerable to blows; second, wrestlers too often "lead with their faces," rushing into the grapple without adequate defense against punches.

Look at the illustration for a wrestling stance modified for streetfighting. First, note that the stance is narrower than one fit for the mat; sacrifice a little strength for the ability to move fast and get out of the way of blows. Second, keep hands *high* on either side of your head, so that your hands and forearms can block punches. Third, angle the stance slightly, so that your shoulders do not face directly at your adversary. An angled stance makes you a smaller target for your adversary's strikes, and, most importantly, guards against a direct kick to the crotch (Rule of Streetfighting: *always* watch out for the crotch shot!).

A. This stance is fine for a wrestling match but too wide-open for a streetfight.

B. A better stance for the street: angled, hands high, staggered feet.

The best defense is *movement.* A well balanced but narrower stance should make you light on your feet, able to move *side-to-side* and out of the way of blows. By far the best kind of movement, however, is aggressive movement. *ATTACK* — because you won't win a fight by defending. In a no-rules fight, the wrestler *must* be aggressive, scout for openings, and be prepared to "take one to give one" in order to move inside. At grappling range the wrestler has a

great advantage over the puncher and kicker. His stance should work to get him at that range.

THE TIE-UP

Wrestling matches begin with tie-ups. Both wrestlers move in, head-to-head, and hook an arm around their opponent's neck. The other hand is thus free to reach for a shoulder, arm, or leg and try for a takedown. Wrestlers want to move into a tie-up because it gives them a position from which to apply holds.

Tie-ups are rarely so easy on the street. Most streetfighters try to stay out of their adversary's range. Even drunks don't want to get hit. The less skillful the streetfighter, the more he'll try to stay away from you. That's why two untutored bums swinging away in a bar look like kangaroos: fists out in front, flailing ineffectively, and heads pulled back, trying desperately to stay out of range. If you look strong, your adversary will try even harder to stay out of wrestling range.

Nevertheless, the tie-up position is so useful for any wrestler that you can and will use it on the street. The trick, of course, is learning how to close with an unwilling adversary and destroy him with your wrestling skills. Like most of the rest of wrestling, the only solution is *practice.* Get your "sparring partner," get on the mat, and have him act like various types of streetfighters whom you try to bring into a tie-up.

When he tries to avoid you by backing away, you must "cut off the ring": move side-to-side cutting off escape routes and maneuvering him into tighter and tighter spaces until he has no choice but to grapple. "Cutting off the ring" won't be easy at first, but keep practicing until you're good at it. When a real fight takes place, you'll be able to back your adversary into a corner or against the back of the bar and slap on your holds.

Next to the runner, the next most common kind of streetfighter will be the puncher. Wrestling him is tougher, especially if he knows how to get weight into his punches. Many good punchers

(*e.g.*, boxers), though, become distinctly uncomfortable at wrestling range: there's no referee to break up the clinches, and punchers may stop fighting if you can achieve a tie-up. To prepare for punchers, have your sparring partner put on training gloves, "pillows" with lots of padding, and try to hit you as you move in for the tie-up. At first you'll take a lot of leather — but that's only practice, and nothing makes learning so fast as does a little blood and pain. Eventually, you'll learn to slip or duck punches, then shoot inside for wrestling. If you expect to fight martial artists, spar with someone who throws arm punches from his hips (and those, by the way, will be easier to avoid).

Few streetfighters know how to kick hard or fast (stomping is another matter). A lot of people have seen too many Jackie Chan movies, however, and will try to kick. A wrestler's best tactic against a kicker is to move in as the kicker lifts his leg, trap the kicking leg, and turn it into a takedown. On the ground, Kaptain Karate isn't going to be able to fight effectively. (In a later chapter I'll provide more detailed advice for wrestling punchers and kickers.)

There's a final advantage to the tie-up in a streetfight: it makes "fouls" easy. Someone uncomfortable with grappling (*i.e.*, most martial artists and streetfighters) tends to freeze at head-to-head range. Head butts, biting, and other close-in dirty tricks will drain the fight right out of him.

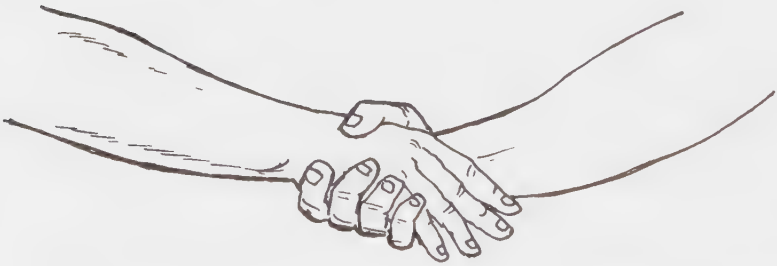
GRIPS

Wrestling means coming to grips. A strong grip can be your best tool for fighting. Therefore, it pays to master the skill of getting a good grip. And there's more to it than you may have imagined.

There are two schools of gripping among wrestlers. The smaller school says that just about any hold can be applied *without* using your hands to grasp an opponent. I had a coach who preached gripless holds: he would hook with his wrists, etc.; but I could never get the hang of applying holds without hand clasps. And so, I

subscribe to the larger and more common school that says a powerful, crushing grip is an aid to strong holds.

A. A hold on the fingers is weak: your adversary can easily pull free.



B. But a grip on the "meat" of the hand is much more secure.

A vise-like grip is more important in a streetfight than it is in a wrestling match. Seizing your opponent's hand and crushing the bones like old wood will get you disqualified on the mat, but on the street it will end the fight fast. Because there are no rules on the street, you should use your hands like claws there. Gouge, pinch, crush, and otherwise use your powerful grip to cause your adversary pain and injury. The human body is covered by pain points vulnerable to a strong grip: eyes, ears, nose, lip, hinge of the jaw, neck, armpits (pinch the pectoral muscle where it attaches to the shoulder), inside of the elbow, groin, back of the knee, *et al.*

Exercises for building grip strength may be found in Chapter Ten.

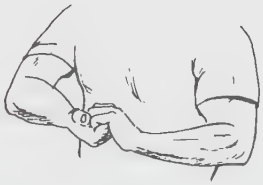
"Get A Grip!"

Knowing the right ways to get a grip on yourself are as important for the wrestler as knowing how to grasp your opponent. Many wrestling holds require a "lock-up," in which you clasp together your own hands to finish the move.

Grips

A. Interlaced fingers are for praying, not wrestling. Lock up a hold in this way and you're liable to dislocate fingers.

B. Better to hook your fingers, or



C. grab hold of your own wrist.

Gripping in the wrong way is dangerous. Not only does it produce weak holds, but also, it can cause injury to yourself. The rule for "locking-up" your holds is*: NEVER USE INTERLOCKED FINGERS* — that can lead to dislocated joints! Lace your fingers together, and you'll find it hard to unlace them. Safer are the *hook grip* and the *wrist grab* (see the illustrations.) Either of those grips provide strong lock-ups.

DISTRACTION

Even when you're able to close the distance and move into wrestling range, getting a grip on your adversary may be difficult. Unless you employ the *principle of distraction.*

For example, let's say you're aiming for an ankle pick-up takedown. Therefore, you want to get hold of your adversary's left ankle with your right hand. Reach down without any distraction, and you'll probably get kicked in the face. First tap your adversary on the head with your left, however, and you'll distract his attention from his ankle, allowing you to grasp it easily. And so, down goes your enemy.

Distraction serves the wrestler well in a fight because of his full-contact practice. Too many people prepare for fights by punching air; they don't know what it's like to be hit or grabbed, and so are especially vulnerable to *tactile* distractions. Wrestling practice teaches you how to recognize which contact is a serious attack and which is distraction; from work on the mat, you'll be able to shut out the small stuff. It's similar to the way in which inexperienced boxers are suckers for feints.

SLAPPING AND CATCHING is one useful way to use distraction when wrestling. To get a grip on an adversary's left wrist, for example, *slap* his hand with your own left, then *catch* the wrist with your right as it pulls away from the slap. The slap doesn't have to be hard — it's purely for *distraction.* Your adversary's reflex will cause him to draw his hand away in the opposite direction of the slap, and right into your grip.

POPS are another way to use the principle of distraction. Pops are taps to the head (thereby bringing up — again! — the importance of *head-control)* which set up attacks on your adversary's limbs or body. For example, a pop to your adversary's forehead interferes with his vision and draws his attention upwards — so that you can attack low at his unprotected legs. In that way, pops are similar to the jabs a boxer uses to set up his knockout punch.

Pops are used by freestyle wrestlers all over the world, but they're sometimes called "Oklahoma Pops" because their use was popularized by wrestlers from the University of Oklahoma. Along with Oklahoma State, Iowa State, and the University of Iowa, Oklahoma is one of the wrestling powerhouses in the United States.

On the mat, wrestlers have to keep their pops as taps; strikes are against freestyle rules. Streetfighters need no such restraint. As much as distractions, pops can be attacks in a streetfight — after all, nothing is so distracting as a stunning blow to the head. A solid pop with the palm or the heel of the hand will work well to set up any wrestling hold. You might compare such stunning pops to a defensive lineman's head slap, or to the Chin Jab taught by W.E. Fairbairn and the systems of "combatives" descended from his Combato. Many martial arts, of course, teach palm strikes, and those might adapt readily to wrestling.

We all know that a soft foundation will inevitably bring down a building, no matter how strong the rest of the construction. Likewise, unless your preliminary skills are strong, your wrestling will never be as reliable as it should be. Therefore, make sure you master the preliminary skills as you build your wrestling skills in the following chapters. Use distraction to set up holds and tie-ups. Always get a grip in the right way, not in a way that will weaken your hold or cause injury to your own body. Fight from a stable, mobile stance, and develop balanced footwork. Finally, think about the Seven Basic Skills as you add more complex moves to your wrestling repertoire for streetfighting.

Chapter Four
TAKE-DOWNS

It's time for the real nuts and bolts of grappling on the mat or on the street. And the most important things in your streetfighting toolbox are take-downs. Why are take-downs so important? Because *putting your adversary down on the ground should be every streetfighter's Number One Goal.*

Take-downs will work in real fights. Most brawlers are sucker-punchers — and when you take one to the ground he simply cannot fight effectively because he cannot punch effectively. The same goes for skilled fighters, such as boxers and karate black belts; they may be able to punch or kick when they're on their feet, but on the ground they can't compete with a wrestler.

The ability to reliably put an adversary on the ground is the best way to fit the rest of your attack to the level of threat. With your opponent down, you have two options: you can *run* (and that ends the fight as far as you're concerned); or, you can *fight*. And when you decide to keep fighting, you don't necessarily have to kill your adversary. In a typical dust-up, you might merely *control* your adversary, going to the ground with him and applying a pinning combination or restraining hold. In a life-or-death battle, you can *finish* a downed adversary with kicks, knee drops, strangles or chokes. Some take-downs can even end a fight all by themselves, slamming your adversary to the ground with concussive force and producing a knockout — just like a boxer's punch.

THE SIMPLEST TAKE-DOWN

The good ol' BODY SLAM that Hulk Hogan and the Macho Man use to entertain in the professional wrestling ring is a move that I've seen in bar fights. Well... sort of. Pro wrestlers, because they're regularly lifting three-hundred pounds or more of unbalanced flesh and because they want to avoid injury, work with each other to make the body slams easier. Ever notice that the man being slammed often places one hand on his opponent's hip to help him lift?

But the fact remains that in the real world — especially during fights between unskilled opponents — a common move is for the stronger fighter to simply pick up the smaller and weaker opponent and slam him to the ground. I've seen body slams used all the time by big bouncers, who will pick up a little guy and toss him out the door. I used a body slam once myself when I was charged by a guy about my size (but not nearly as strong). I used his momentum to help me lift him off the ground, raise him horizontally to about the level of my chest, and dump him hard enough on a curb to knock him cold. By far the best body slam I've seen outside of *Championship Wrestling*, however, involved a little woman cop (maybe 5′4″ and 120 lbs.) trying to break up a fight in a biker bar. A big guy in colors took a break from pounding his adversary's head into a table and simply picked up the cop, raised her over his head, and tossed her through the barroom door onto the sidewalk outside.

Keep in mind the real-world rule that if you're much bigger and stronger than your opponent, you'll almost always win a typical streetfight (dust-up or deadly) — and win it easily. And if you're strong enough to body slam your adversary you won't necessarily need wrestling skills. But let's move on to *real wrestling*.

LEG TAKE-DOWNS

It frequently pays to aim low in a fight. Smart boxers, for example, know enough to body punch. Even the troglodytic freaks with heads like bricks who are impervious to punches to the jaw can sometimes be knocked out by blows to the solar-plexus; as the prizefighter's adage says, "Kill the body and the head must fall." Wrestlers operate in much the same way. But because wrestlers grapple instead of punching, they aim their most effective attacks below the belt — well below the belt. They go for the legs.

Remember the way I emphasized balance (along with the related qualities of stance and footwork) in "Lessons From the Mat"? If not, go back and reread that section, so that you will understand that the quickest way to put an adversary on the ground is to take away his legs. If you don't leave a man a leg to stand on, then rest assured he won't stand very long.

SHOOTING

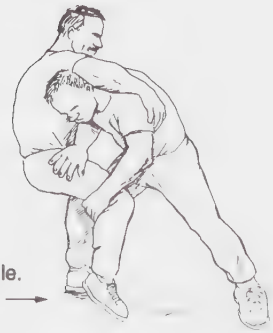
Since taking out the legs is the best way to bring a man to the mat, leg attacks are every freestyle wrestler's typical take-down. Greco-Roman rules forbid leg take-downs (we'll look at what we can learn in regard to upper body take-downs from the Greco-Roman Style later in this chapter), but the freestyle competitor is bound by no such rules. And, of course, the man in a streetfight is bound by no rules at all.

Leg take-downs can be referred to under the general term of SHOOTING. I can't think of a single match in which I've participated or one I've watched and haven't heard the gym echo with coaches and spectators shouting "Shoot!" They know that a wrestler has to put his opponent on the canvas to win. The successful streetfighter should operate in the same way.

You can shoot in different ways. Spend time around wrestlers and coaches long enough and you'll hear leg take-downs called by different names: DIVES, TACKLES, SNATCHES. But all those

names describe related moves that require the same skills and work on the same principles. I like to refer to *all* such leg take-downs as "shooting," however, because thinking about your take-downs as shots from a gun puts you in the correct state of mind for a streetfight. It makes you aggressive. So when faced with an adversary on the street, pull the trigger and go for a leg take-down. Make your take-downs as explosive and as hard-hitting as slugs from a .45.

A. Beginning a double-leg shot. →



B. Finishing the takedown.

C. A high single. →

There are two basic ways to shoot: aim for one leg (either one) or both, *i.e,*. a SINGLE or a DOUBLE. In either case it's best to *set up* your take downs. Otherwise, your adversary is liable to sidestep (people only stand still during movie fights) and let your own momentum send you flying, or nail you with a punch or kick as you're moving forward. Try feinting high (at shoulders or head), then step inside *fast* for the take-down. Another useful set-up involves footwork: circle right to make your adversary move (and, you hope, also place him off-balance), then suddenly shift left and shoot inside. You *must* achieve *FAST* penetration in order to get

underneath your adversary's defenses. Try to time your shots so that your target is backing away and rising from his stance. That can allow your momentum to carry into him and make the lifting part of your take-downs much stronger.

Above all in a streetfight avoid the wrestler's tendency to "lead with your face." Remember that there are no rules to prevent your adversary from breaking your nose or poking out your eye; if you give a man an opening he'll often take it. Timing, again, is important: strive to time your shot well enough and make it fast enough to get inside your adversary's hands before he can strike. Just like a wrestler in a match, you must keep your head up and hips forward to make the take-down work. Simultaneously, though, in a real fight you must keep your hands and forearms high and inside to block any blows to your head.

Okay — now you're safely inside and it's time to put your adversary on the ground. Let's start with doubles.

For the DOUBLE-LEG SHOT, grab your adversary's legs at the knees or just above them, and pull his legs in towards your chest. Drive *UP* and *THROUGH*. He'll go down. You can dump him while you remain standing, or go to the ground with him for a pinning combination (restraint) or a finishing move (death).

SINGLES are more common than doubles because it's usually easier to capture one leg than both. If you're outside, shoot for a HIGH CROTCH SINGLE, in which you grab an adversary's hips rather than his leg. The illustration shows what's probably most wrestlers' favorite shot, and the one I think works best in a real fight: the HIGH SINGLE. All you have to do to set up the shot is clear one of your adversary's arms to the side (grab it, knock it out of the way, etc.). Then use one of the Seven Basic Skills, and *penetrate* fast and move inside. Seize one leg *at the KNEE*, lift, and dump your adversary on his back. As you lift the knee you can push on your adversary's hip with your other hand (as in the illustration) or drive your shoulder into his midsection; either technique will add power to your shot.

CENTER OF GRAVITY TAKE-DOWNS

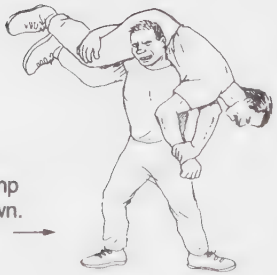
He who rules the center-of-gravity (COG) rules the fight — whether on the mat or in the street. Remember the *principle* of controlling an adversary by controlling his COG, and you'll realize that there's another way to put your adversary on the ground. If his COG goes down, so will the rest of him.

Fireman's Carry

A. The wrestler on the right sets up the takedown by pushing high.

B. Then he reaches low, between his adversary's legs and pulls him across his back.

C. Lift and dump for the takedown.



Depending on how a man is built, his COG lies somewhere between his navel and his hips — in other words, just around his belt line. Therefore, THE BELT GRAB is perhaps the most practical way to control a man's COG in a fight. Of course, wrestlers wear singlets in a match, so they don't have the opportunity to use the belt grab (although there is a style of traditional Swiss wrestling in which the competitors wear belts and

the holds depend on that). But most men will wear belts on the street, so go ahead and use the move. In my boxing book I suggested combining the belt grab with a punch. For the take-down in the grapple, however, the way to use a belt grab is to grab the belt with one hand, pull your adversary's COG towards you with that grip, and simultaneously push his chest back with your other hand. Do it fast enough and you'll destroy all of your adversary's balance and he'll go down. Speed and timing are the keys as much as strength; make your belt grab fast and be certain to push *at the same time* as you pull, and you can topple a man who outweighs you considerably.

Suppose you're fighting someone who is not wearing a belt. Can you still use the belt grab? Well... sort of. If he's wearing trousers made of reasonably strong material (*e.g.,* blue jeans), you can seize the waist of the pants and use the grip just like a belt grab (just don't try that with sweat pants or anything with an elastic waist, or your grip will be too loose).

But a better way to control an adversary's COG is by means of the CROTCH GRAB. No, I don't mean grabbing his balls, squeezing, and lifting — although that is a very useful move in a streetfight. Rather, I mean reaching low, *between the adversary's legs and under his crotch.* With your hand in that position, grab hold of the back of his pants (or reach around his waist with your other arm and hold your wrist), lift, and dump. The arm through the crotch serves as a kind of "seat" for your adversary's COG, making it surprisingly easy to lift him. In a serious fight it also helps that the crotch grab puts pressure on a very sensitive portion of your adversary's anatomy as you take him down.

UPPER-BODY TAKE-DOWNS

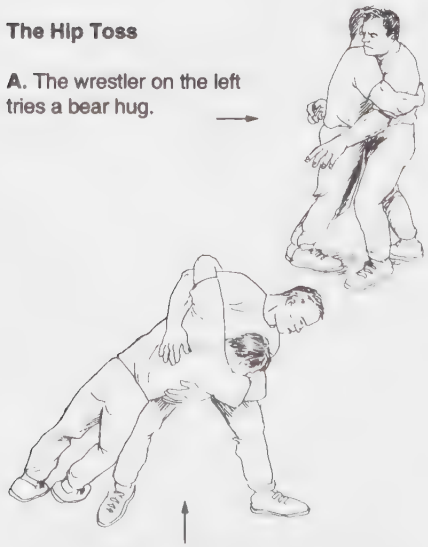
How do you chop down a tree? By swinging the axe near the base, right? In a similar vein, I think that attacking low — especially the legs — is the best way to put your adversary on the ground in a streetfight. That is, when you can get to his legs. In the

real world you often have to make do with the secondary target — the upper body. Fortunately, there are a number of upper-body take-downs that work reliably on the street as well as on the mat.

The FIREMAN'S CARRY is probably the wrestler's upper-body take-down most applicable to a streetfight. Feint high (*e.g.*, with a push to his chest), then penetrate by stepping forward with one foot as you reach forward between your adversary's legs with your lead arm. Grab one leg high and pull your adversary over your shoulders. Lift, stand up, and pitch him over your shoulders onto the ground. You might think it's hard to lift up an adversary's entire weight, but speed and timing aid the strength of your legs and back to make it pretty easy to carry even someone who outweighs you. After you practice the move a few times with your sparring partner, you'll get the hang of it.

THROWS

The Hip Toss



A. The wrestler on the left tries a bear hug.

B. But the right wrestler steps through and, using his hip as a fulcrum...

C. ...puts the first wrestler on the ground.

Throws are take-downs that can make use of *concussive force*. They do not merely put an adversary on the ground, but also render

him stunned or unconscious. In that way, throws serve as the knockout punches of a wrestler.

Judo, jiu-jitsu, aikido and other Asian styles of grappling make use of many effective throws. If you've studied any of those martial arts you'll already have a number of throws in your arsenal. But freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling may be able to add a few more throws that will work on the street.

Especially practical for close, body-to-body grappling are the HIP TOSS and HEAD LOCK throws. They're pretty much the same move, and both throws employ one of the Seven Basic Skills that I've purposely neglected until now, *back-stepping*. Back-stepping involves using a specific form of footwork that will allow you to throw your adversary *backwards* to the ground. The ideal way to back step in a wrestling match is shown in Diagram 1. But on the street your steps aren't likely to be as smooth or as narrow — something more like the footwork shown in Diagram 2 and in the illustration of a hip toss.

Back Stepping
(The diagrams represent the footwork of backstepping.
The shaded portions are where the feet are in contact with the ground.)

Diagram #1

Diagram #2

After you've practiced back-stepping by yourself, you're ready to find a sparring partner and apply the skill to actual throws.

Whether you back-step into a hip toss or a head-lock throw depends on what sort of grip you can get on your adversary. If you have him by the shoulders or lapels, then use a hip toss; if you have him around the neck, then use a head lock. In either case, begin your throw by back-stepping. When your adversary's balance is broken and his weight is moving backwards along with you, pull him over your hip, *using your hip as the fulcrum of a lever*, and throw him down. The use of the hip as the fulcrum of a lever in those wrestling throws makes them similar to certain judo moves (as I've pointed out, judo is just a Japanese kind of wrestling).

Ideally, your adversary will be thrown clear off his feet and fly head over heels before he hits the ground hard. Of course, it's not always going to work that well in a real fight. You may lose your balance and go to the ground with him (if so, try to twist and land on top — let your weight fall and hurt your adversary). Speed and timing are the qualities that make throws succeed, and they're also qualities that you'll develop only through practice.

Another problem that can spoil a throw is losing your grip on an adversary. But you can often avoid the problem by means of a hold on an adversary's *clothes*. Certain types of clothing (*e.g.*, leather jackets, M-65 field jackets) provide the wrestler with convenient grips for executing throws. In that respect, wrestling throws are again similar to certain judo throws that depend on the *gi*. Don't count on grips on flimsy clothing, such as T-shirts, in a streetfight, however. And sometimes getting a grip on an adversary's clothing can present real dangers to the wrestler.

"The Tourniquet: The Potential Dangers Of Clothing Throws"

Throws that make use of an adversary's clothing can be useful in a streetfight — but beware that the clothing doesn't become a trap. Smart streetfighters may know how to use their clothes to destroy the hold of the man who thinks he has them under control. It's all a

matter of gripping, as "The Tourniquet" demonstrates. If an adversary, for example, has taken hold of your collar, it's possible to duck and twist so that the cloth wraps around the fingers of the holder — and clamps them like a tourniquet. Broken and skinned fingers are the result. Jack London describes the maneuver in his saga of rail-riding hobo life, *The Road.*

By the way, those turn-of-the-century hobos — because they *had* to fight to survive — can sometimes be a sound source of practical streetfighting tips. Jack Dempsey was a dangerous man in fights outside the ring as well as between the ropes precisely because of his apprenticeship of battling in hobo jungles, mining camps, and barrooms.

The Hip Lever

Supplex

A. A supplex for the street starts as a bear hug, lifting an adversary off his feet.

B. Back arch and twist to slam your adversary to the mat in a combination supplex/body-slam.

The SUPPLEX is a throw that's sometimes called the "home run of wrestling." It makes use of the other one of the Seven Basic Skills that I've neglected, *back-arching*. Back-arching is just what

it sounds like: you arch your back in order to lift your adversary off the ground, then turn and dump him for the take-down. On the mat back-arching can take an extreme form, with the wrestler doing the throwing sometimes even landing in the bridge position (feet and the top of his head on the mat) as his opponent sails over him and crashes to the mat. Now that sort of thing isn't likely to work in a streetfight, but the supplex does have real, if limited, applications in the real world. For example, I once watched a wrestler of my acquaintance win the rarest of things, a one-move victory, by supplexing a man onto the pavement of a parking lot. The guy who got thrown spent three weeks in the hospital.

I think the best way to supplex on the street is a BODY-TO-BODY SUPPLEX (sometimes called a "body-lock throw"). Seize your adversary in a low bear hug so that you're holding him to your chest. Arch back to lift him and turn right or left to spin and throw him down behind you. It may help to think of this admittedly crude streetfighting supplex as a combination of throw and body slam. On the mat, the throwing man usually goes to the mat with his opponent and sets up a pin, but I suggest that in a streetfight you let go of your adversary while he's in the air, and then use a finishing move from standing position. If you perform the supplex fast enough, you may not need the finishing move: hitting pavement with all your weight takes the fight out of most people.

TAKE-DOWNS FROM THE REAR

It's not unusual to find yourself — whether by accident or design — *behind* your adversary. Getting behind someone gives you a decided advantage in a fight — SO USE IT!

The question, of course, is: how to get behind your man? The ARM DRAG offers one wrestling solution. Grab one of your adversary's wrists and seize hold of the upper arm or elbow with your other hand. Pull the captured arm sharply so that your adversary goes off-balance and is dragged forward by his momentum. As you pull, step outside of the captured arm and move

behind. That very simple "go-by" maneuver can work very well with practice, so make sure you master the arm drag if you're going to wrestle in a streetfight. Punchers who hit without snap (no one competent does that, but lots of wannabes do) can be especially susceptible to arm drags.

What to do once you're behind? A number of take-downs can put your man on the ground. Let's start with ones you know already. A belt grab or crotch grab is easier to obtain from the rear, and both will allow you to tip over an adversary. A REAR SUPPLEX is another sound option: simply lock up your bear hug from behind, then slam your man to the ground using the same steps as those for the body-to-body supplex.

The Belt Grab

The Arm Drag
A. Seize one arm and pull.

B. Drag your adversary past you as you step around and get behind.

If you ever find yourself in a dangerous position of being down behind your opponent, you can still take him to the ground from your knees by means of the HIP LEVER. All you have to do is encircle your adversary *around the hips* (not around the waist), then use your right forearm as a lever against the ball of his hip joint to make him fold. It will take a little practice with a sparring

partner in order to learn the exact placement for your forearm lever, but once you get the hang of the move you'll be able to lock it up automatically. The hip lever almost always comes as a great surprise to the uninitiated, who don't think arm pressure can collapse the strongest joint in their bodies. But the hip lever works and works well.

"Push And Pull"

Let's get back to principles as we end this chapter about take-downs.

Another shout you'll hear from coaches and knowledgeable spectators at wrestling meets is "Push and pull!" What they're offering is advice to help a wrestler get a take-down (and often the crucial two points he needs to win a match).

The idea is to *PUSH* high in order to distract an opponent and upset his balance (*n.b.* — thereby making use of *two* of the principles from "Lessons From the Mat"), then *PULL* low with one of the take-downs. "Push and pull" is also good advice for the streetfighter. Plan on ways you can combine moves in order to push and pull and more easily bring an adversary to the ground. For example, combine a belt grab (push) to a fireman's carry (pull) or a shot (pull). The combinations are practically endless, so plan new ones, try them in your wrestling "sparring" to find which ones work for you, then use them in real fights.

In this chapter I have by no means exhausted the methods of taking down a man. Freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling have plenty of others, but I've tried to emphasize the simpler ones that will work best under rough conditions. Pay attention to the other ways to bring a man to the ground which are covered in chapters ahead — ways such as arm locks, and leg levers.

And whenever you grapple in a serious fight, remember that take-downs in any form are the first step towards winning.

Chapter 5
HOLDS AND LOCKS

Holds and locks are the nuts and bolts of the wrestler's tool kit. think of wrestling and you think of holds. Even an experienced martial artist has something to learn from wrestling when he looks at the holds and locks of the sport. Skills that are second nature "on the mat" (*e.g.*, chicken wings, grapevines) will be new to the karateka or boxer — and, by the way, very useful in a streetfight.

We'll learn a variety of wrestling holds — but always ones that can be used in serious combat. Our emphasis in this chapter is on *standing* holds (Chapter Six deals with ground work).

All parts of an adversary's body — arms, legs, head, neck, back — are vulnerable to holds and locks that allow the wrestler to cause an adversary great pain, or merely restrain him.

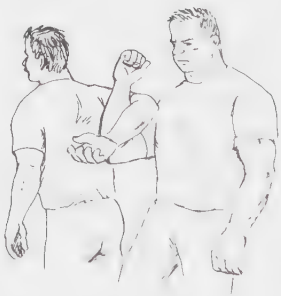
ARM LOCKS

Arm locks come first because an adversary's arms are usually the first targets on which a wrestler can apply a hold. Most streetfighters attack by means of a push, a grab, or a punch without snap, and those are all ideal opportunities for you to slap on an arm lock — and *snap* that arm.

The CHICKEN WING is the freestyle wrestler's fundamental arm lock. It's similar to the well-known hammer lock, but whereas a hammer lock is easy to escape because it's a hold based on a

simple wrist grab, the chicken wing wraps your entire arm tightly around your adversary's, locking in leverage (*and* pain).

To apply the chicken wing, slip your right arm deep into the crook of your adversary's right. There are various ways you might make that move, depending on the way you face him. For example, if you're face-to-face, you can sidestep to your left, shoot your right between your adversary's right arm and his side, then step around and in back of him as you lock up the chicken wing. Practice moving into the hold from different facings, and you'll be able to use the chicken wing no matter how a fight begins on the street.



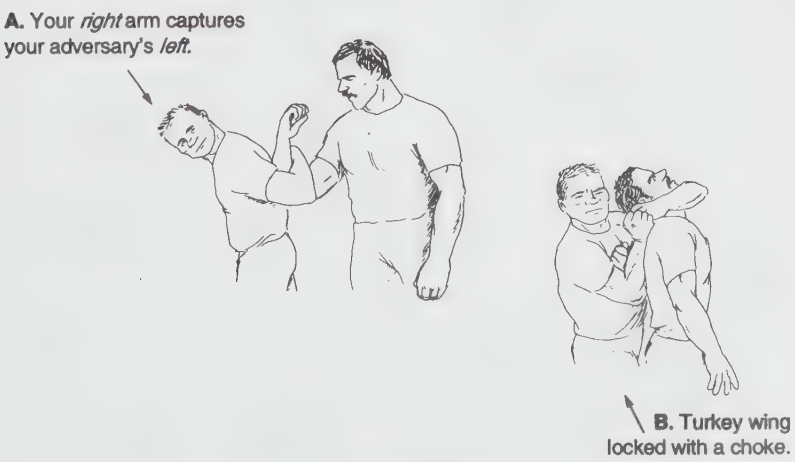
Chicken Wing
A. Hook your elbow into the crook of an adversary's arm; **B.** Step around and lift his arm up behing his back; **C.** You may lock up the chicken wing with a choke or other combination hold.

No matter the way in which you seize an adversary's arm, you must move *behind* him (unless, of course, you begin the hold from the rear). Now, lift up your arm, cranking his elbow up and behind his back. Your right wrist will be on the inside of your adversary's biceps, and your own biceps will clamp onto his wrist and push it

forward. Lean forward into the hold and put some real pressure on your adversary's arm. The pain in his right shoulder and elbow will be excruciating. If you're strong, it's pretty easy to dislocate a man's shoulder as easily as if it were... well, a *chicken wing.*

One great advantage of the chicken wing is that the hold places you behind your adversary — even if you start the hold from the front or side. Then, with your free left arm you can do all sorts of nasty things to hurt him. Try grabbing hold of your adversary's shoulder or hair with your right hand at the top of the chicken wing (locking up the hold), and use your left to pound his kidneys. Or slip your left arm around his body and lock your hands, thereby increasing leverage on his captured right arm. Put that left around his face and you can combine the chicken wing with a face lock, crushing his nose while you break his arm. Put the left around his neck and you'll have a choke hold in addition to the chicken wing. You may also lock your left arm around his chest, perhaps pinning his left arm to his body so that he cannot strike backwards at you. Experiment and see which variations work best for you.

Turkey Wing



The TURKEY WING is a variation on the chicken wing. Instead of locking your right arm around your adversary's right, lock it around his *left* arm. Otherwise, the turkey wing works in the same way as the chicken wing: slide your arm into the crook of his, step around and in back, pin his wrist between your biceps and forearm, and lift up. It's easier for an adversary to slip free from a turkey wing, but the hold is still useful and painful — painful for him, and useful for you.

You may apply both turkey wings and chicken wings with either of your arms on either of your adversary's, of course. In fact, as part of your practice "on the mat" you should learn to lock up the holds from both right or left automatically. Just remember that a chicken wing locks your adversary's arm with your arm on the *same* side (right to right); whereas a turkey wing locks with the *opposite* arm (right to left). Of course, your adversary won't much care whether it's a turkey wing or a chicken wing that's ripping his shoulder out of its socket. But you may want to pay attention to such details.

Side Arm Bar Note the pressure on the back of the elbow.

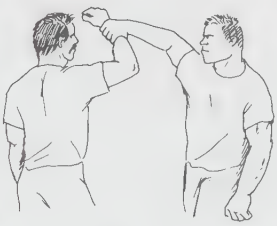
Front Arm Bar Again, the seized arm is rotataed so that force is exerted against the back of the elbow joint.

ARM BARS are also practical on the street. The *principle* behind arm bars is *elbow pressure.* The elbow is a hinge joint and will only bend in one direction. Apply pressure in the direction the elbow was not designed to bend, and you'll produce tremendous pain for anyone stupid enough to fight you.

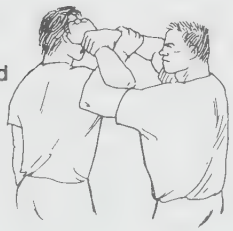
The elbow is most vulnerable to such pressure when the arm is stretched straight. As a rule, then, stretch an adversary's arm by grabbing his wrist and pulling the elbow straight before you lock up an arm bar.

Apply the basic arm bar from the side. Seize your adversary's right wrist with your right hand. If you're not a lot stronger than him it will be easy to pull the arm straight and twist it into an arm bar. But let's make things easier for ourselves with *misdirection:* swing the arm up; then, when he tries to resist your movement, twist your adversary's arm in the opposite direction — clockwise and down. Use your left arm or forearm to apply pressure to *the back* of his elbow. It's simple, then, to lever him to the ground — or to break his arm.

Figure-Four Arm Lock
A. Seize an arm bent at the elbow.



B. Slip your other arm behind his elbow to form a "4."



C. Step through as you apply pressure and it's easy to turn an arm lock into a takedown.

Another way to apply an arm bar keeps your adversary standing. Seize his right wrist (or hand) with your own right. Push down and back (*misdirection* again), and, when he reacts, pull the arm straight and up to the level of his shoulder or a little higher. Twist his arm counterclockwise, so that the palm faces up; simultaneously slide your left arm underneath his right and grab onto his shoulder or clothing. Lever his elbow against your extended left — and you have the arm bar. Again, you've gained *control* because of your wrestling skill. Apply just enough pressure on the elbow to restrain your adversary, or snap down on that elbow and break it.

Experiment with arm bars from different angles. Keep in mind the *principle* of elbow pressure, and you'll find that you can make arm bars work from all sorts of directions.

The FIGURE-FOUR ARM LOCK may be the most useful arm hold for use on the street. It's simple, powerful, and adaptable to any level of threat. Use it to restrain someone you don't want to hurt badly; or turn it into a bone-jarring take-down that dislocates an adversary's arm. I've used the figure-four many times and can attest to its value.

It's easiest to apply the figure-four when your adversary's hand is high and reaching, poking, or punching (always remember to *snap* your own blows, so that you don't get caught in a figure-four). Dodge outside of his arm and snatch his right wrist with your right hand. Your grip should be thumb-down with your palm facing your adversary. Now, step forward and bend his arm at the elbow. If he won't cooperate, *make* him do so by chopping hard at the crook of his elbow (it's a hinge, remember, so I guarantee that the joint will bend). Snake your left hand in back of your adversary's arm, between his forearm and biceps. Reach under your own right hand and grab hold of your right wrist with your left hand. Your arms form a shape similar to the numeral "4," whence the hold derives its name.

There you have it — the most effective arm hold, all locked up. Pull down on your right wrist and lean forward a little, and you

exert great force on your adversary's arm and shoulder. Apply pressure slowly and you have an outstanding means of restraint and control. Snap the arm down quickly, and your adversary will go down with it — even if you don't necessarily kick his right leg out from under him.

A warning about the figure-four: using two arms to tie-up one of your adversary's leaves him with an arm free to strike you. Be advised and watch out for a punch — or worse. If you even *think* he can draw a weapon with his free hand, then don't count on the figure-four; you're liable to end up with a knife in your ribs. Pain from the hold might distract a softie enough so that he can't use his free hand. But would you bet your life on that?

HEAD LOCKS

If there's one point I try to hammer home in ***Kill-As-Catch-Can***, it's that successful wrestlers use *HEAD CONTROL.* Head locks, like so many other effective wrestling moves, use head control.

Amateur wrestling rules require that all head locks keep an opponent's arm inside the hold. Head locks — as you'll see — exert tremendous force on the blood vessels, bones, and nerves of the head. And so, head locks are dangerous. The idea behind the amateur rule is that an arm inside the hold takes some pressure off the head and makes the lock safer.

There are no rules on the street, however. So you're not bound to lock up an arm along with your adversary's head. Nevertheless, keeping one of your adversary's arms inside a head lock is often a sound tactic in combat: there's one less arm with which an adversary can strike you.

Head locks with an arm inside are sometimes called "Russian head locks" or simply "Russians." To apply the Russian, make as if to use an ordinary front head lock — but reach over your adversary's right shoulder and back, and slip your left arm through his armpit. Lock up the hold with your left arm encircling your adversary's right arm. With the arm inside, he'll have more

leverage with which to break the hold; but the Russian is worth that risk if it keeps his arm from striking or drawing a blade.

Head locks — ordinary or Russian — may be applied from the front, back, or either side. Any angle from which you can attack may provide an opportunity for a head lock.

To make your head lock more effective, aim for *pain* spots on your adversary's head. *Any* pressure to the head can hurt, but grind the bones of your arm against, say, your adversary's *temple*, and you'll have him howling in pain. Likewise, it hurts like hell to squeeze your arm against an adversary's *eye socket* (or the eye itself).

Crushing the *ears* is probably the most common way to wound a man with a head lock. It's for that very reason that amateur wrestlers wear headgear. Cauliflower ears are an occupational hazard for a wrestler; but sending away some tough guy wannabe from a fight not merely in a lot of pain but also with a deformed ear is a good way to keep him from picking a fight with you a second time.

It's almost as easy to break a man's nose with a head lock. Head locks gone awry result in broken noses all the time in amateur competition (twenty years after the event, I still have a deviated septum from a head lock that smashed my nose). Think about how easily freestyle wrestlers break their opponents' noses by accident, and you'll realize how easily you can use a head lock to grind an adversary's nose into a bloody pulp when you *want* to hurt him on the street.

Head locks that hit the pain spots around the chin and jaw are more properly called CHIN LOCKS and FACE LOCKS. Some of those pain spots are: the hinge of the jaw on either side; the point where the nose meets the lip; the hollow between the lower lip and chin; and the point of the chin. Even if you can't put pressure on any of those points, chin locks exert great pressure on the neck — enough to snap it if you're strong and angry and pull the hold hard. Be forewarned.

As a practical matter, a wrestling purist's fine distinctions among head locks, chin locks, face locks, chokes and strangles rarely hold up in the confusion of combat. The major difference between locks and chokes/strangles is that the former do not cut off the flow of blood or air moving through a man's neck, but rather rely on pain and bone-breaking leverage to take out an enemy. Use whatever works to put your adversary down and out. If your chin lock slips into a choke, it doesn't necessarily make much difference to your survival on the street.

NELSONS

I don't know who Nelson was, but I do know that he came up with a damned good hold.

Half-Nelson
A. With his left arm between shoulder and neck, the right wrestler pushes his adversary on to his back with the top of his head.

Really, I suppose, there are two nelson holds, half and full. The half nelson is a basic pinning hold in freestyle wrestling; we'll look at it in the next chapter. The full nelson, however, is outlawed in amateur wrestling. And with good reason: the full nelson is a neck-breaker. Despite that (or perhaps *because* of it), the full nelson is a

hold you'll see on the street. Even those who don't know more about wrestling than what they've seen in pro matches on TV will use the full nelson.

As a wrestling-trained fighter, though, you should use the full nelson with a little more sophistication. Remember *not* to lock up the hold by interlacing your fingers: grab your wrist or hook your fingers instead. The full nelson is another hold that illustrates the *control* you gain from wrestling knowledge. Use just a little force and the full nelson is a fine restraining hold (especially if you're considerably stronger than your adversary — *work hard on the weights!).* You can even talk to someone you have in a full nelson, saying something like, "Give up or I'll break your neck," to convince him that he's in a losing battle. If the fight is more serious, you may use the full nelson to paralyze or kill just by bending forward at the waist as you pull down with the powerful muscles of the chest. It's not too difficult to break a man's neck that way. Lift an adversary off the ground when he's in a full nelson (easy to do if you're stronger and taller than he) and let his own weight strain his neck; even someone stupid enough to start a fight with you will usually give up in such a hold.

It's easiest to apply a full nelson from behind your adversary. The trick, however, is getting there. An arm drag is one way to move from front to back, and it has the advantage of giving you control of one of his arms as you set up the nelson. Sidestepping may also put you in position for a nelson: simply seize your adversary's wrist and use a strong, fast pull to jerk him off-balance as you move behind and into a full nelson.

But it's just as effective to use a REVERSE NELSON from the front — especially against a dimwit who lowers his head and charges you. Lean forward and catch that fool underneath the arms, locking your hands behind his back. His neck will bend at an awkward angle as the back of his head presses against your midsection. You can gain great leverage — of the neck-breaking variety — on an adversary's neck by locking up the hold and leaning down. *Snap* down to the ground and you'll probably snap

your adversary's neck. Another trick is to lean *back* and lift his feet off the ground, letting his own weight do the damage. To finish a fight from the reverse nelson, pick him up and *slam* his butt into the wall. That makes for a true neck-breaking nelson.

BEAR HUGS

Although they certainly aren't part of "scientific" wrestling, bear hugs remain the most common — and among the most practical — holds in a streetfight. The bear hug is one of those "natural" holds that anyone can use. The fighter with wrestling knowledge, however, can use bear hugs to end a fight, the kind of bear hugs that would make a grizzly jealous.

Overarm Bear Hug
Notice that the left wrestler's arms are pinned at his elbows.

Size and strength make bear hugs work better. You may have seen bear hugs used in bars when bouncers break up fights between drunks. Since bouncers are usually much bigger and stronger than the combatants in a bar fight, all they have to do is grab the drunks, pin their arms so that they can't keep swinging, lift them off the ground so they can't run, and "escort" them out the door. End of

fight. If you're big enough and strong enough, you might use just that sort of bouncer's bear hug as a restraining hold.

Bear hugs can be efficient restraining holds. Bear hug someone and lean your weight on him (a trick smart boxers use in the clinches) and you'll soon exhaust him: he has to support both his own weight and yours — and few brawlers are in condition for that. The trick is to drag your feet, almost letting your legs go limp but maintaining enough control so that you don't fall.

In any bear hug used for restraint it's best to use an OVERARM BEAR HUG. In other words, your arms reach over those of your adversary and pin them to his body so that he can't hit you (but watch out for head butts and biting!). You can pin from the front, but it's better to do so from behind. Pinning the arms is another area in which size and strength are vital. If you're much smaller than your adversary, you won't be able to encircle both his chest and his arms: "man mountains" are the types who use bear hugs, not the ones who get caught in them. Even if you're big enough to reach around your adversary, he can break free from the hold by flexing his upper arms and swelling his chest. Unless you're *strong.*

Here's a little war story to remind you of the importance of strength in real world fights: Because I am strong I was able to use the crude — but effective — technique described above to break out of a bear hug a bouncer had thrown on me. He was bigger than me — but not nearly as strong. He grabbed me from behind as I was pounding on a loudmouth in a bar, but I immediately snapped the bear hug, turned, and flattened the surprised bouncer with a right.

If that bouncer had been smart he could have made his bear hug better by using a wrestler's trick — *the elbow pin.* When *you* use a bear hug to restrain a man, pin his arms to his body *exactly* at his elbows. Hit the joints with your own biceps and squeeze tightly. That way even strong men have a hard time getting the leverage to break out of a bear hug.

So much for overarm bear hugs. Are bear hugs below the arms a waste of time, then? Not necessarily.

Bear hugs that leave an adversary's arms free can be very useful in a streetfight for two reasons. First, it's easy to turn an *under*arm bear hug into a bone-jarring takedown: *e.g.,* a front bear hug becomes a body-to-body supplex, or a rear bear hug becomes a gut wrench. Second, there's that all-important aspect of real fights that's all too often ignored by wannabes — *PAIN.* Add pain to your bear hugs by squeezing *hard.*

Underarm Bear Hug
Note the chin should dig into the adversary's chest for pain.

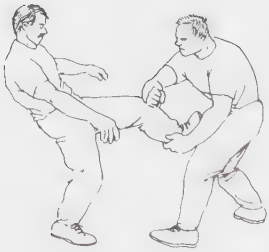
To make a front bear hug especially painful, clamp the hold around an adversary's lower back, squeezing with great pressure on the lumbar region (a weak spot even among most who train with weights, because they lift for looks, not for power). Dig into your adversary's chest with the point of your chin, or push up with the top of your head against the underside of his jaw. Crush a man hard and fast with that kind of bear hug and he'll probably be in too much pain to even think about using his free hands to strike you.

From behind, rib crushing and cutting off a man's breath are the ways to produce pain. Think of a constrictor: try to time your holds so that you seize your adversary as he lets out a breath — then clamp on the bear hug, and *don't let him take another.* If you reach high enough with your bear hug (aim for an area between the mid-

point of the chest and the arm pits), your own biceps and shoulders should block any backwards elbow strikes from your adversary, especially if you lean back and lift him off the ground.

LEG HOLDS

Leg Lever



One mark of a champion wrestler is that he knows how to attack with his legs, not just stand on them. Too many wrestlers forget to use their legs, and even more streetfighters wouldn't know what to do with their legs beyond kicking clumsily in ways copied from kung-fu movies. Don't make that mistake.

Your legs are so much stronger than your arms that it would be foolish *not* to use their power to destroy an adversary. In the next chapter, we'll look at holds that take advantage of the tremendous *crushing* power of the legs (*e.g.,* scissor locks) when fighting on the ground. But let's learn a few *standing* leg holds now.

LEG LEVERS are simple and direct. Drop to one knee, grasp your adversary's ankle firmly with one hand, pull, and apply pressure to the outside of that leg's knee with your other forearm (see illustration). Your opponent will topple in the direction you are pulling.

Inside Grapevine

Outside Grapevine

GRAPEVINES are easy and effective. Wrap a leg (either one) around your adversary's facing leg and you throw him off-balance. Drive forward on that leg, and you've turned your grapevine into a takedown. Maintain the grapevine "on the mat" to stretch your adversary's leg, putting pressure and plenty of pain on his knee and hip joints.

The FIGURE-FOUR LEG LOCK is a hold with which it's easy to break an adversary's leg — or at least have him howling in pain from knee pressure. First, put your adversary on his back (*via* a push or any other take-down that keeps you on your feet). Then, plant your left foot between his legs (it wouldn't hurt to kick him in the groin in order to make him more cooperative). Use your right hand to pull his left leg straight; use your left hand to bend his right leg at the knee and fold it so that the ankle goes over his right knee (in the "figure-four" position). Wrap the back of your own right knee over his left ankle, and lift *up* on his straight leg. Fall back and your adversary will feel excruciating pain as you use leverage against his left knee. You can hold a man fast in that position by

controlling the pressure on his knee — or you can snap that knee like a dry branch.

Figure-Four Leg Lock

A. The left leg bent over the right knee forms the "4."

B. Pain comes from pressure on the front of the knee.

Chapter Six
TAKING IT TO THE MAT

You need to know ground work.

How's that? Isn't it a *fundamental lesson* of streetfighting, of this book, and especially, of this chapter to stay on your feet in a fight? Yes. Of course. In fact, it's so important to strive to stay on your feet in a real-world fight that I'd say that keeping your feet under you and the rest of you off the ground is vital enough to survival that it is a *rule* — in an activity where there are no rules.

But there's another rule of streetfighting — and this one is *UNBREAKABLE:* things will go wrong. As much as you *want* to stay on your feet, and as much as you *try* to stay on your feet, you're still liable to find yourself fighting on your back or your belly. In the down-and-dirty real world, fights all too often end up on the floor.

And so, knowing how to win a fight on the ground is necessary for survival. And wrestling provides those necessary skills better than any other "art," "style," or system of combat.

THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF "MATWORK" IN STREETFIGHTS

Wrestlers know all about the importance of ground work in their sport. After all, you can't pin a man for the win unless you're down on the mat. No matter how strong a wrestler's standing skills (take-

downs, especially), he'll lose the match if he can't wrestle "on the mat." Matwork makes for winning wrestling.

"So what?" you say? "Streetfights take place on the street: there's no nice soft mat for fancy matwork. 'On the ground' in a streetfight means just that — fighting on the ground, or on the pavement, or on the hard, slippery floor of a barroom!"

True. But just because the surface isn't a wrestling mat doesn't mean you can't use a wrestler's matwork on the ground in a streetfight.

And I'll say it again (until you're absolutely convinced that I'm telling you the truth): you're going to end up "on the mat" in a free-for-all. In fact, most streetfights end up in grappling on the ground.

Doubt it? Believe in what you see in the movies — flashy kicks and roundhouse punches, two guys on their feet and swinging away over and over? Well, as always, forget about film: it doesn't look good to any director when a fight moves onto the ground where it's hard to see the action. Instead, ask a cop. Or, better yet, a bouncer. If you don't know one, read Peyton Quinn's excellent book, *A Bouncer's Guide To Barroom Brawling*. Besides providing an entertaining look at the reality of streetfighting, Quinn also, I think, expertly captures how many fights end up in "the classic 'two guys rolling around on the floor trying to punch each other out.'"

But it's almost impossible to punch with power while on the ground. Wrestling is what works "on the mat." A wrestler's know-how enables him to *control* that "rolling around." The fact makes matwork second only to take-downs as practical wrestling skills for a streetfight.

Skill can be your unbeatable weapon in a floor fight. In a fight between two *unskilled* adversaries, weight, raw upper-body strength, and endurance will invariably decide the outcome. Matwork, however, might give you the edge against a larger and stronger adversary — just the kind of edge that may save your life.

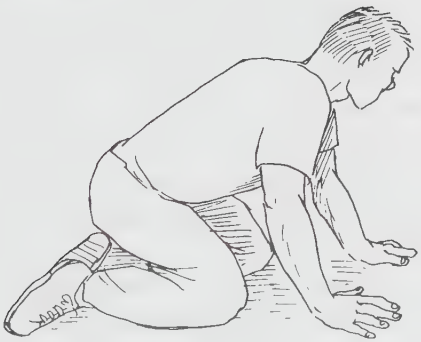
Wrestling skill "on the mat" allows you the luxury of flexible response in a streetfight. You don't have to give up on the ground, nor do you need to destroy an adversary who doesn't warrant such

severe treatment. When you are confident of your ability to control an on-the-floor fight, you'll have several options: you can *restrain* your opponent in a dust-up; or, you can *finish* your adversary (*e.g.*, with a choke/strangle) in a life-or-death struggle.

THE REFEREE'S POSITION

In freestyle wrestling, the Referee's Position is the standard way in which matches proceed after the opening face-off. After the wrestlers begin standing, the second and third periods start with both wrestlers down on the mat in the Referee's Position (another reason why strong matwork makes for winning wrestling). The "down" wrestler crouches on all fours, while the "up" man crouches next to his opponent with one hand on the "down" man's elbow and the other gripping him around the abdomen.

Referee's Position (Down)



If you don't have much experience of amateur wrestling, you might automatically decide that all wrestlers prefer to be "up." That's not always the case, however. A wrestler who knows that he is good at escapes will take the "down" position so that he can break away from his opponent and rise to his feet, thereby gaining two points. Sometimes wrestlers who are very strong at take-downs

will let the "down" man get up, and then immediately take the opponent to the mat, again, for points.

But a streetfighter plays by different rules. Whenever he is "up" in a fight, he should try to stay that way, and keep his adversary on the ground. Whenever he is "down" in a fight, he must try to get back to his feet as soon as he can.

Of course, few fighters on the street are going to find themselves in *exactly* the Referee's Position, either "up" or "down." Real fights are sloppier than wrestling matches. Nevertheless, fighting on all fours, scrambling to get on your feet or to keep down an adversary you've put on the floor, are very common occurrences in battles without rules. In other words, wrestling from the Referee's Position closely approximates a real-life situation.

And so, once again, it pays to learn from wrestling. The following are some tips to help you when fighting on all fours.

Should you find yourself "down," you'll need a stable stance from which to resist your adversary's attacks, or to scramble away, or to stand up. First, establish stability: think of a low, four-legged table that's hard to knock over — that's you as the "down" man. To make your stance strong, follow three guidelines:

- Keep your *head up* — this will keep your spine straight, your back strong, and your head ready to lead the way when you see an opportunity to explode back to your feet. Remember the importance of head control, which applies as much on all fours as it does standing.
- Keep your *elbows bent.* If you lock your arms, you'll be unable to scramble quickly away from an adversary who tries to kick you or pin you to the ground. A little bend in your elbows will also enable you to push with explosive power when you have a chance to stand up.
- Keep your *ankles flat.* Wrestlers sometimes call such foot placement "hidden feet" — and you'll want to hide your feet so that an adversary cannot seize your ankle and smash you face-first to the ground. Don't worry about losing speed or power

for standing: the surge comes from your upper body and waist, not from your toes.

Knowing how to make your stance strong in the "down" Referee's Position is the best way to prepare yourself for something more important in a street fight — getting back on your feet.

GETTING OFF THE MAT

The most important point about fighting from the floor is to get off it. A wrestler, competing in a sport with rules and a referee to enforce them, can afford to stay on the mat and pick up points or set up a pin. But streetfights are more dangerous. And so, when you find yourself on the ground, the floor or the pavement in a free-for-all, your *first thought* should always be *GET UP!*

Why do you want to get "off the mat" on the street? NO RULES, that's why! The wrestler only has to fight one man at a time, but that's not necessarily the case on the street: your adversary may have confederates who will pile on or stomp you into the ground. The wrestler competes against someone his own size, but there are no weight classes in a brawl: your adversary may have an advantage in weight and strength that comes into play in an especially deadly way on the ground.

Fortunately, there's a simple and effective wrestling move that can get you off the ground in most streetfights. It's the stand-up. Go to any wrestling meet and you'll hear people shouting, "Stand up!" at the wrestler on the canvas. They want him to get off the canvas and gain an escape for two points towards winning the match. A streetfighter may have more important reasons for using a stand-up — such as survival.

Standing up in a fight, however, involves a little more than, say, getting out of bed in the morning. In a fight, an adversary is going to be doing his damnedest to keep you down. Therefore, the key to a successful stand-up is an UPWARD SURGE. You can't just stand lazily and get away with it. You must *explode* out of the "down" position and immediately rise to one knee.

Stand Up
Note the powerful *upward surge* that starts the move.

Let's use a rough kind of streetfighting referee's position to illustrate a stand-up with an upward surge. You're the down man in a stable stance. Your adversary has seized your left arm with his left, has his other arm around your middle, and is trying to push you flat — whence he can pound you without mercy. Without any preliminary movement, you must *surge up and to your right.* The whole left side of your body should twist right in a powerful explosion; your right arm should shoot up like a boxer's uppercut or a weight lifter's jerk, breaking free from your adversary's grip; your left foot should come around to the right and plant itself flat.

Continue exploding out of the one-knee position until you are on both feet. Your back will be to your adversary, so immediately take a strong step forward, in order to prevent him from pulling you back to the ground. Now, you can either run (if the situation warrants) or, better yet, wheel around to face your adversary and *attack.* If he doesn't know much about wrestling, he probably will have stayed on the ground — putting him in the way for a kick to the face as he tries to get up. If he got to his feet, drop into your

stance and go for a take-down — so that *you* will be ready to win from the top and finish the fight.

The trick to an effective stand-up lies in a powerful upward surge that explodes without warning. At first, it may feel awkward, but practice will improve your coordination. Start by practicing the stand-up in "shadowboxing" style — just you exploding out of an all-fours stand. Then, have your "sparring partner" take "top" while you stand up against some resistance. Finally, practice the move in free sparring, anytime you end up "down." After a while, the move will be almost instinctive, and you'll explode to your feet without thinking and without hesitation. And that's exactly what will save you in the real world. The stand-up is the simplest and best way to escape when you're "down" on the street: rely on it as your automatic method of getting back on your feet.

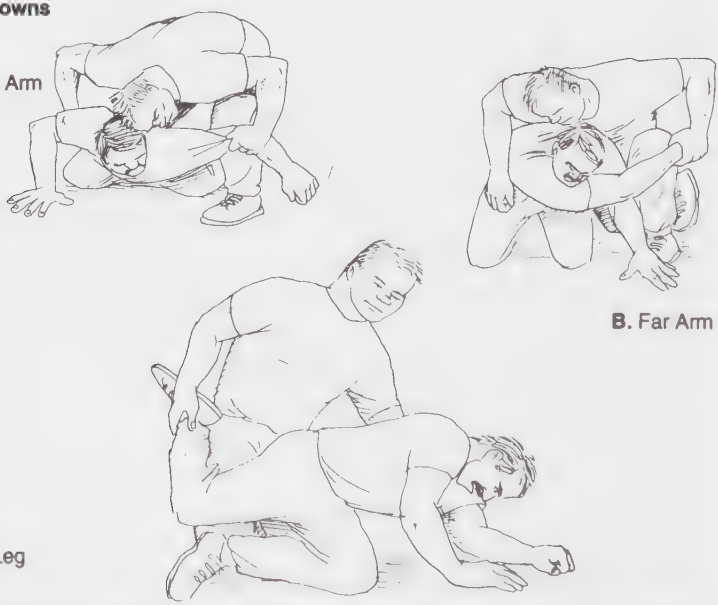
Those readers who come to this book with amateur wrestling experience may be asking, "What about the sit-out?" Well, the sit-out is a fundamental way of escaping the "down" position in the *sport* of wrestling, and it works well for many wrestlers on the mat. But I do not recommend the sit-out as a practical move for a streetfight, where there are no referees to protect you when your adversary "cheats." A successful sit-out puts you on your butt with your back and neck (and, therefore, kidneys, spine, and other vulnerable targets) exposed to someone who is trying to hurt you, not just pin you. Furthermore, the kind of rolling moves that flow from a sit-out are not liable to work well on such surfaces as asphalt or concrete covered by broken glass. I'm not going to teach the sit-out as a move for streetfighters new to wrestling, and I do not suggest that experienced wrestlers try it under serious circumstances. The sit-out *may* work, but don't count on it when you have a better weapon in your arsenal: the stand-up.

MOVES FROM THE TOP POSITION

If you are the "top" in the Referee's Position (or anything like it), your primary interest should be to keep your adversary down. And

the best way to do that is to use a breakdown. In other words, you want to take your adversary from his all-fours "down" position to flat on his face. It's easier to hold him like that, or to turn him over on his back if you want to restrain him with a pin. It's also easier to take out an adversary with a strangle or other finishing move when he's flat down. Finally, an adversary who is so low will find it extremely difficult to gain the leverage and power to hurt *you* when he's face-to-the-floor. In an average dust-up, breaking a man down will make him feel helpless and convince him that you're the better man. Say "Give!" and often he will.

Breakdowns



A. Near Arm

B. Far Arm

C. Far Leg

I think the best way to understand breakdowns is by means of the table analogy. Recall that I said a stable "down" position is like a four-legged table. But if you knock out one of those legs, the table comes tumbling down. The four legs of your adversary's table are the four points of his anatomy that touch the ground — two hands and two knees. Take out any one of those points and you have a breakdown.

ARM LEVERS are one way to take away a point of the stance. An arm lever is just what it sounds like — you use one of your adversary's arms to lever him from all-fours to the ground.

The easiest arm lever attacks the near arm, *i.e.,* take out an adversary's left arm with your own left, having gripped his left at the elbow in the Referee's Position (or its rough equivalent). Don't just pull at the arm, because it won't budge if your adversary has decent strength and some substantial body weight to keep his hand pinned to the floor; instead, *chop* at the inside of his elbow — and even a thick, strong arm will bend and break the four-point stance. Then, seize the forearm or wrist and lift the lever. You can aid your breakdown by digging your shoulder or the top of your head into your adversary's back as you lift his arm, thereby dropping your weight onto his collapsing stance and "bulldogging" him face-first into the floor.

Another useful arm lever goes after the opposite arm. Reach across his torso, either in front (as in the illustration) or behind the near arm and across his chest (harder to do most of the time). Grab his right arm low, as close to the wrist as you can get so that you'll have the leverage to break the stance. Violently yank the far arm towards your own body and out from under your adversary. His all-fours stance will collapse, and he'll roll onto his side or back. It's easy then to go with the momentum and keep your opponent moving onto his back, where you can slip into a half nelson or other pinning combination.

ANKLE PICK-UPS attack the back legs — quite literally — of the table that is his all-fours stance. Someone without wrestling training isn't likely to know the importance of "hidden" feet, so you can often grab an ankle without much difficulty. Once you have his leg, lift up fast and hard: just as with the arm levers, your adversary's stance will collapse all at once — usually headfirst into the ground. You can make the ankle pick-up more effective by combining it with an arm lever, *e.g.,* grab a far ankle and a near arm, and take away *two* legs of the table at once. A classic move in

competition is to take out a far arm and a far ankle at the same time, dumping an opponent on his back for a pin.

PINNING COMBINATIONS

Every good wrestler has one or two pinning combinations he can count on to get him a sudden win when other skills have put an opponent at a disadvantage. The best wrestlers have a dozen or more ways they can go from move to move and pin an opponent. As always, we'll keep things simple with our pinning combinations for use on the street. Many of the combos that work well on the mat are too complicated to rely on in a life-or-death fight.

What? Aren't *all* pinning combinations purely for sport? After all, the goal of a streetfight isn't a pin, it's survival (*not* destroying your adversary — killing him may be the only way to survive under certain circumstances, but survival is still the goal).

True. Nevertheless, the pinning combinations in a wrestler's arsenal can be very useful when ground fighting. And so they can also be a means of survival. In life-or-death fights, pinning your adversary ensures that you *control* the battle. If it's really time for a finishing move, it's much easier to kill a man after you have him pinned.

But let's look at the real world. Outside the action movies, most fights aren't a matter of life and death. You don't need to kill a man in a dust-up. In those less serious fights, pinning your adversary also grants you *control*. You can end the fight without seriously hurting him, and *without* ever seeing a cop or a lawyer. Face facts: in most fights adversaries will *give up* once pinned and that can save you a great deal of trouble, both legal and moral.

The half nelson probably produces more pins every year than any other hold. Anytime you have an adversary prone and you want to put him on his back, the half will usually be your first choice for a way to do that. The hold is so easy that even a man without much experience can use it reliably. Let's say you've put your adversary on his face with a near arm lever (on the left side), and now you

want to use a half to put him on his back for a more secure hold. Simply slip your left arm under your adversary's left shoulder, reaching up and around that shoulder until you can place your palm on the back of his neck. Pull and roll his head under as you push forward on his side (with your right hand, chest, or the top of your head). Your adversary will roll right onto his back. From there, you can use your weight to press him to "the mat," or you can easily move into a number of finishing moves: lock up the half and turn it into a choke and your right hand is in perfect range to nail an adversary in his exposed crotch.

CRADLES are a little more difficult to use in a rough-and-tumble fight — but when you can lock up a cradle, you control things entirely. Cradles put an adversary in such an awkward position that most people readily give up when they're in the hold. To gain the hold, put one arm around the back of an adversary's neck, and reach your other arm around the back of either knee. Lock up the hold by hooking your hands together, and roll your adversary onto his shoulders. Even though your adversary has a leg inside the hold, it's hard for him to get the leverage to break the hold. In fact, once you've locked a cradle, you'll have your adversary as helpless as... well, as a baby.

Cradle

Any kind of *head control* — HEAD LOCKS, FACE LOCKS, CHOKES AND STRANGLES, *et al.*, — can effect a pin. Keep a man's head "on the mat" and his shoulders are sure to follow.

Another way to keep a man down is by putting your weight on him. Amateur wrestling rules used to give points for "riding time" — *i.e.*, staying on top of an opponent without a pin. The trick was to keep your weight over the downed man's center of gravity. That usually involved keeping your hips at the small of his back, and shifting to maintain the position as your opponent tried to struggle free. A great advantage of riding time was that it allowed the top wrestler to rest and tire his opponent while exerting very little energy himself: the man on the mat had to, in effect, make every movement with double his bodyweight. I knew a wrestler so adept at the trick that he could beat opponents who were heavier and stronger just by means of his perfect balance. Anytime you can get in a position to force your adversary in a ground fight to support both your weight and his, try to maintain that hold as he struggles, and let him wear himself out until he gives up or offers you an opening for a finishing move. Grappling on the ground in that way is similar to the way in which a "stab-and-grab" boxer will exhaust his harder-punching opponent by clinching over and over.

A final trick of "matwork," THE LUMBERJACK PIN, comes straight from the street and would never be allowed in freestyle wrestling. The name of the pin comes from what we used to call "lumberjack fights" when I was a kid — fights that weren't straight fistfights nor just wrestling, but anything-goes battles. To make the pin, get your adversary on his back (*e.g.*, by following him to the ground after shooting a take-down), then straddle him at the chest and use your knees to pin his shoulders or upper arms to the ground. Then your fists are free to punch his unprotected face. Why bother with the usual clumsy "rolling around?"

The lumberjack pin is *not* for use in fights for your life or when there's any danger of your adversary's friends coming to his aid. Rather, use the lumberjack pin in dust-ups in which you want to put some marks on someone's face without pounding his skull into

mush. Because my first training was in boxing and I automatically put weight into my punches, I know that if I hit someone while standing up, I'm going to break his nose, fracture his skull, or cave in his ribs. And so, if I want to pound someone, maybe bruise and cut up his face a little so that he won't pick a fight with me again, I use a take-down to put him down, and then employ the lumberjack pin to hold him for a few arm punches.

PAIN AND TIME HOLDS

Restraining an adversary on the ground is something you're likely to need to know how to do in the real world. Whether you want him to give up or plan to hold on to him until the bouncers or cops arrive to break things up, you may need to keep him under control for an extended period. Pain and time will both play roles, and often work together, in restraint. *Pain* is always a useful way for you to control an adversary, and pain holds can make even the most determined opponents give up (at least when sober). *Time* holds allow you to control an adversary without exhausting yourself — but while simultaneously exhausting your adversary (and, usually, keeping him in significant pain).

SURF BOARDS put enormous strain on the arms, chest, and shoulders — and so produce great pain. At the same time, a surf board weakens the primary punching/grappling/attacking muscles in an adversary's upper body. Thus, it's an ideal way to take the fight out of anyone. I've seen men held in surf boards who were literally reduced to tears from the pain.

Apply a surf board by putting a knee or foot in the back of a prone adversary. Then lift up and back on both his arms. Human arms move backwards at the shoulders only a little, so by bending them back in an unnatural position you generate the pain. If you're strong and your adversary is not, it's not too difficult to dislocate his arm with a surf board. The hold shown in the illustration is a "pure" surf board that could be hard (but not impossible) to lock up against an active adversary. But any time you can get both of an

adversary's arms twisted behind his back (holding them, say, at the elbows), then you have a surf board.

Surf Board

ARM HOLDS work on the ground as well as when standing. In fact, if you use an arm hold (*e.g.,* a figure 4) as a take-down, you can usually maintain the hold as you go to the ground with your adversary, and then use the lock as a painful restraint. Use arm holds from any direction that you can — *e.g.,* the side with an arm bar, the top with a figure 4, behind with a chicken wing or hammer lock. Twisting a man's arm on the ground not only hurts, but will also exhaust the muscles in the arm and shoulder and prevent him from hitting you effectively (at least with that one arm) when you let him up. Of course, *breaking* the arm will work all the better.

The CAMEL CLUTCH can serve either as a restraining hold, both painful and easy to maintain for time, or as a neck-snapping finisher. Apply the clutch by getting astride a prone adversary, then locking your hands under his chin. Rear up and use the strength of your legs and back to exert leverage against the weak spot of your adversary's neck. The illustration shows a "classic" camel clutch with the downed man's arms pulled back over the top wrestler's knees. But any way you can keep your adversary's arms from

breaking or pushing to lessen your leverage will work — *e.g.*, stepping on one or both of his hands, or pinning his arms in the bend of your knees. And even if you can't get his arms out of the way, cranking back with your hands under a man's chin can hurt him: do it fast and hard enough and you can break his neck. As always, in a real fight use what works.

Camel Clutch

SCISSOR LOCKS may be the most devastating holds available for matwork. Most men without wrestling training will forget to use their legs when a fight goes to the ground, so a scissor lock will usually come as a painful surprise if you use it on the street. Scissors work so well because they employ a "Lesson From the Mat" — *STRONG VERSUS WEAK*. When you get a scissor lock on an adversary, you pit very strong leg muscles against much weaker parts of an opponent's body.

But there's also a danger to anyone who uses scissors: wrapping your legs around an adversary may leave you wide open for a shot to the crotch. For that reason, I suggest using the hold only when behind your adversary. Even if his arms are free (restrain them when you can), a man will have a hard time striking backwards at

your groin. Likewise, I do not recommend using a scissor lock as a headlock or strangle, as some suggest. In a serious fight, an adversary who feels his wind or blood being cut off by such a scissors will most likely sink his teeth into your thigh — or something else. Either way, it's going to hurt. The practical place to apply a scissor lock lies around your adversary's middle. Use the strength of your legs to crush his ribs or abdomen and cut off his wind.

"The Ultimate Scissor Lock"

Scissors are something of an American specialty. Scissor locks were very popular among American catch-as-catch-can wrestlers, both amateur and professional, during the early part of the twentieth century. Americans often won international matches because of their scissor locks, which European wrestlers rarely used (and eventually outlawed from international rules).

The foremost master of the scissor lock was Joe Stecher, professional champ in the 20s, before pro wrestling became an exhibition. Stecher had a unique way to practice his scissor lock: he would squeeze sacks of grain between his thighs. Eventually his legs became so strong that he could *burst* the sacks just by squeezing. Imagine what that kind of crushing power could do to an opponent's ribs!

Chapter Seven
FINISHING MOVES

Everything taught in this chapter is illegal in a wrestling match. Why? Because all of it is potentially *deadly.*

All the more reason for the streetfighter to master these moves. These are the *finishing moves* — the sort of things that will end life-or-death fights in your favor. Note that I wrote: "life-or-death fights." Finishing moves are not for dust-ups, for use on troublesome drunks, or to teach someone a lesson. Use them only in genuine combat.

You may never find yourself in a fight that extreme, never have the need to use the finishing moves you are about to learn (and I sincerely hope you never do need them). But in the unlikely situation where you find yourself fighting for your life, won't you be glad that you've learned them?

Because this is a book about wrestling in real fights, I won't teach any strikes in this chapter. Of course, for most skilled fighters strikes — whether punches, chops, palm blows, elbows, or kicks — are the primary means of finishing off an adversary. By all means, then, if you possess training in boxing or karate (or any other "style" that emphasizes striking), use your skills in coordination with wrestling. But, for many men, wrestling can be enough: any of the moves in this chapter can kill as quickly and effectively as karate kicks or a boxer's punches.

DROPS

Drops are just what they sound like — you drop your weight on a downed adversary to kill or injure him. You also make the move deadlier by concentrating your weight on some small, hard part of your anatomy, such as a knee, fist, or elbow.

Drops *work.* If you have your doubts, consider the ways in which drops have been proven effective in *serious* fights (not the fancy dancing and no-contact "art" of too many All-American dojos) for hundreds of years. Under the old 18th- and 19th-century London Prize Ring Rules, for example, bareknuckle boxers could use wrestling moves and boxing was a true blood sport. The old-time prizefighters often couldn't punch with full power for many rounds because their fists were unprotected. And so, to finish an opponent the bareknucklers would sometimes throw an opponent — then cave in his ribs by dropping their full bodyweight, focused on one knee, on the downed man.

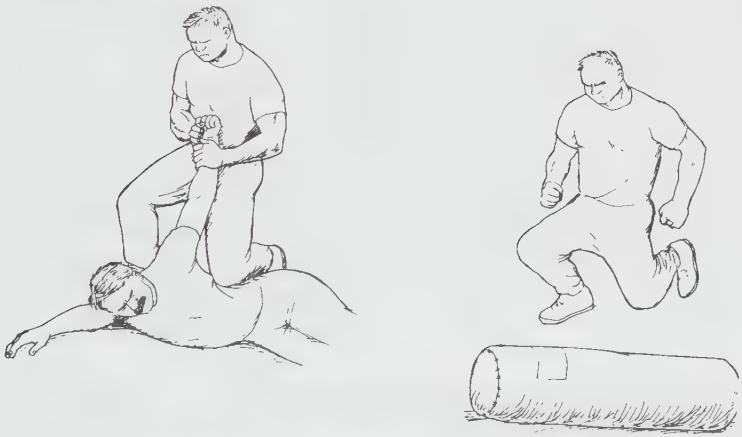
As vicious as the bareknuckle ring could be, boxing was still a sport, and therefore not exactly the equivalent of life-or-death combat. But drops have also been used in real combat on the battlefields of this century's most deadly wars. For example, one of the pioneers of modern military barehanded combat, John Styers, recommended knee drops in his excellent book, *Cold Steel.* Likewise, Wesley Brown, the wrestler turned Navy HTH instructor, suggested knee drops as the ideal method to kill a downed enemy.

Why do drops work so well? Because you necessarily get a lot of weight into the move — indeed, your full bodyweight, if you perform the drop perfectly. In other words, if you weigh, say, 200 lbs., you automatically hit with 200 lbs. of mass in motion. With that much mass, even a short drop hits harder than the average punch or kick.

There are three keys to effective drops. First, use them against an *already downed* adversary (preferably one sufficiently weakened by holds or throws that he won't roll out of the way). Remember,

drops are *finishing moves*, not the sort of thing that initiate combat. Second, apply as much of your bodyweight (preferably all of it for knee drops) as is *practically controllable* against your adversary. Sometimes, full-force drops will be too hard to control in the confusion of a real fight, but hit with even three-quarters of your bodyweight and you'll hit with exceptional power. If the first drop merely stuns an adversary you can always finish him with the second. Third, when you drop, use the *hard parts* of your body (*i.e.,* knees or elbows) against the *soft parts* of your opponent (*e.g.,* ribs, kidneys, neck/throat). Do *not* use drops against vulnerable but hard parts of your adversary's anatomy, *e.g.*, his head: you may kill him, but you're liable to cripple yourself in the process.

Knee Drop
Practice on a boxer's heavy bag.



The KNEE DROP is among the streetwrestler's most deadly moves. And it's easy, too. When you have your adversary down, simply drop one of your bent knees onto his body. Try to get *all* your bodyweight behind that knee, which will concentrate the force in a small area. At the very least you'll stun a man with a knee drop; more likely you'll break his bones. If necessary, the knee drop

will kill. Good targets for knee drops include the neck, ribs, stomach, spine and kidneys.

Let me offer a couple bits of advice to prevent you from receiving an injury when you use the knee drop. First, maintaining a grip on an arm of your downed adversary (as in the illustration) will keep him from rolling out of the way and spoiling your finishing move as your knee crashes down on concrete and cracks. Also, try not to land directly on your knee cap even when you hit a soft spot; instead use the point of bone where your shin meets your knee as the striking surface. A little practice landing on a target such as a boxer's heavy bag will teach you where to land.

ELBOW DROPS and FIST DROPS are more difficult to use and have limited applications in real fights, but still can work. No, I don't mean that you're going to climb up on some high surface and come leaping off to land on a downed adversary like the Macho Man. Rather, use an elbow drop when you go to the ground with an adversary behind you. If you can get the point of your elbow between your body and his, he's going to feel some pain when you both hit the mat. A fist drop can be used when you take down an adversary. Simply (or not so simply — it can be a real trick to get your arm in the correct position) interject your fist between your body and that of your opponent, and let your fist bear the impact of your bodyweight when you hit. Be careful with fist drops, though: it's easy to break a wrist when you collide with the force of full bodyweight.

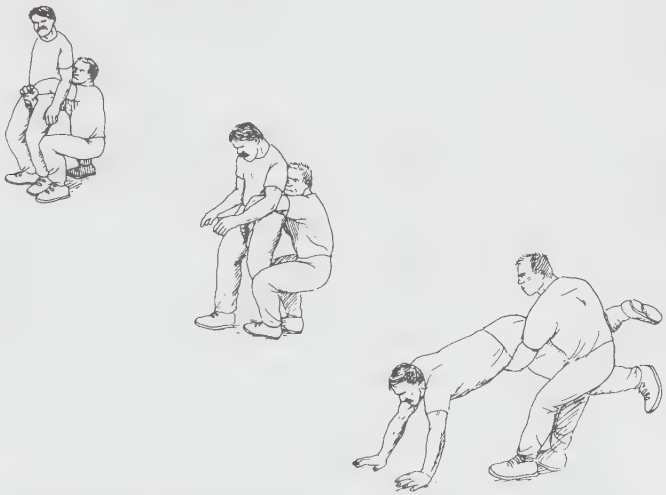
PILE DRIVERS

Pile drivers again use the idea of bodyweight in motion to finish a man. Instead of using your own weight, however, pile drivers use an adversary's weight to knock him cold or crush his neck vertebrae.

Now, let's make it clear that the kind of pile driver you use in a streetfight is *not* like the kind pro wrestlers use. Anyone who shoves an adversary's head into his crotch and tries to hold it there

is asking for trouble — unless he already has the opponent so stunned or outclassed that the pile driver isn't really necessary to finish the man. In the latter case, a pro wrestler's pile driver can do real damage. For example, when, about twenty years ago, Jerry "The King" Lawler wrestled the comedian Andy Kaufman, Kaufman thought it would be just another joke. But Lawler did the moves in earnest, and nearly crippled Kaufman with a pile driver that left the comedian flopping around like a landed trout — a lesson for anyone who thinks "pro wrestling is fake."

Pile Driver



So unless you're fighting a comedian whom you outweigh and outmuscle by an order of magnitude, don't use the pro wrestler's pile driver. Use a streetfighter's pile driver. Start with a crotch grab: encircle your adversary's waist with one arm, then reach between his legs and lock up a grip on your wrist. Your hand through his crotch will form a kind of seat or saddle, making it easy for you to lift your adversary. So do it — lift *up* sharply and simultaneously pull *back,* so that you tilt your adversary over and dump him on his head. Let him land on his head with his full

bodyweight dropping behind it, and a knockout, fractured skull, or broken neck will be the likely result.

CHOKES AND STRANGLES

What's the difference between a choke and a strangle? A *choke* is a hold that cuts off the air flow through an adversary's neck. A *strangle* is a hold that cuts off the blood flow (usually through the carotid arteries) to an adversary's brain. In the real world of a streetfight, however, when battling against a struggling adversary who is thrashing around, the fine distinction between chokes and strangles is frequently blurred. In other words, a choke is liable to turn into a strangle, and vice versa.

More importantly, always remember that both *CHOKES AND STRANGLES CAN KILL — AND HAVE DONE SO.* Therefore, NEVER USE A CHOKE OR STRANGLE HOLD UNLESS YOU ARE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF *KILLING* YOUR ADVERSARY!!

If you have the slightest doubt about the potential deadliness of chokes and strangles, do a little research. Read the homicide reports in your local paper. Or ask an experienced detective. Chokes can — *and do* — kill. They can *crush* the windpipe as surely as a well-placed karate chop.

Therefore, the notion of a "safe" choke is *another myth.* And a decidedly dangerous one for you to swallow if you use a finishing strangle on the street. That choke that you apply only to "restrict" an adversary's air flow and "bring on unconsciousness" can easily (and probably *will* in a world of streetfighting governed by Murphy's Law) close his trachea, crush his hyoid bone, snap his spinal cord, etc. Likewise, the strangle that you want to cut off blood flow long enough to knock out your adversary can easily turn into a hold that cuts off blood long enough to cause brain damage or *death.*

In other words, that move you don't plan to use to kill may well kill anyway. But your intentions won't make much difference after

you've killed someone. He's still dead. So let me remind you to use chokes and strangles only in the most desperate circumstances, and never believe the bullshit dropped by "self-defense experts" who tell you chokes and strangles are "safe."

With those caveats in mind, let's look at the techniques for effective chokes and strangles...

Bar Arm Choke

The crudest choke, THE BAR ARM CHOKE or MUGGER'S CHOKE, is one of the most effective. Simply slip one arm around your adversary's throat, lock up the hold with your other hand reaching over your adversary's shoulder, and use the radius bone of your first arm as a lever against his windpipe.

The REAR ARM STRANGLE (a.k.a. JAPANESE STRANGLE) is a little more sophisticated. It's also, perhaps, the most effective finishing hold in a streetfight. Apply the strangle in four deliberate steps. First, place your left arm around your adversary's throat (ideally with your elbow directly at his Adam's apple, so that your arm splits equally on either side of his neck —

but that may be hard to do in the real world). Second, raise your right arm, bent at the elbow, so that it's at your adversary's right shoulder and perpendicular to your left. Third, put your left palm on your right biceps. Fourth, lock up the hold by moving your right forearm *behind* your adversary's neck (put that palm on your left shoulder if you can, or push it against the back of your adversary's head). Your two forearms form a vise — crushing your adversary's neck within its jaws.

Rear Arm Strangle

There are a number of ARTIFICIAL AIDS that can make chokes and strangles stronger in a streetfight. Make use of clothing, for example, to render the holds more effective (judo players will be familiar with *gi* chokes). A man's collar offers a convenient hold for strangles, especially if your adversary wears a garment with some substance, such as the M-65 field jacket shown in the illustration. Many sources suggest using a *cross-collar choke*, but I have never found that hold to be practical (that may well be mere personal prejudice, however). Instead I recommend an INSIDE-

COLLAR STRANGLE. Use the hold on a downed adversary by seizing his collar well back (approximately in the middle of his neck on either side) with your fingers. Then, lever your stiffened thumbs into his neck. You can exert tremendous force in this manner.

Inside Collar Strangle

Ropes (or garrote, bootlace, etc.) and sticks will make chokes and strangles both hard for an adversary to break and much more powerful. Sticks in particular add great leverage to a choke. It's easy to use a stick, for example, in place of your lever arm in an arm bar choke. But another way to use a stick is THE TRIANGLE OF DEATH (made famous by John Styers in *Cold Steel).* Start the triangle by holding a stick like a dagger, and slip it behind your adversary's neck. Reach under the stick arm with your free arm and grab hold of the free end of the stick to lock up the hold. Again, your forearms, which form two sides of the triangle, act like a vise.

Triangle of Death

Chapter Eight
DEFENSES

Every move has a countermove: that's a fact of wrestling. That fact applies as much on the street as it does on the mat. Even if you cultivate *awareness* (as you must), streetfights too often begin as ambushes — with *YOU* the one getting ambushed. And so, it behooves you to practice and master the counters to the kinds of attacks, grappling and other moves that you're likely to face when attacked in a bar, alley, or other unfriendly place.

That's what this chapter is all about.

You need to know, first of all, the means by which to defend against the skilled wrestling attacks already covered, such as arm locks, nelsons, and scissors. But you also need to know ways to defeat the *un*skilled attacks of the common streetfighter. And, not least of all, you must think about the *tactical* concerns of a streetfight and the ways to apply your wrestling skills against adversaries who not merely grapple, but also punch, kick, or charge with a knife.

BREAKING GRIPS

The ability to break an adversary's grip on you is the single most important *defensive* skill a wrestler can possess. As you've seen, most holds begin with getting a grip on an opponent, so if a wrestler can break the grip in time he can usually prevent the hold in the first place. And if an opponent can't use his hold because he

can't maintain his grip, then there's no chance that he can gain a pin.

But, vital as the ability to break a grip on the mat is, it may be even more important on the street. Why? Two reasons: one having to do with survival, the other having to do with reality.

First, let's look at survival on the street. If you find yourself in a *true* life-or-death streetfight, then chances are you'll have to break an adversary's grip in order to stay alive. For example, an adversary in a killing rage could lock his hands in a death grip around your throat — and if you aren't prepared to instantly break that hold, then you *are* dead. The ability to break a grip can be a genuine life-saver.

Now for reality. Although it *is* important to prepare for the kind of street combat that kills, in the real world it's unlikely that you're going to encounter such a fight (unless you're James Bond). More likely, you'll find yourself in a shoving match, face-down, or dust-up in a barroom or parking lot. In the real world, you don't have to reach down an adversary's throat and pull out his heart — you just need to use enough physical force to convince him that he's not a match for you. Breaking his grip — and doing it *easily* — is often enough to do that. In other words, "merely" breaking an adversary's grip can make you the winner in a streetfight.

So it pays to master the art of breaking grips if you plan to use your wrestling skills in hand-to-hand fights at any level of danger. And it's an easy art to master — *if you know how.*

The THUMB BREAK: Start with a "Lesson from the Mat:" *STRONG BEATS WEAK.* Use your strength against an adversary's weakness, and you'll win every combat. Fortunately, even a man with a grip that would make a gorilla jealous has a weak spot on his grip — *the thumb.* Think about it for a moment: there are four fingers to keep a grip closed, but only one thumb. So doesn't it make sense to attack the one instead of the four?

As a rule, then, the most effective way to break an adversary's grip is to ***always twist towards the thumb.*** Nine times out of ten, that's all there is to breaking a grip. Twist hard and fast towards

that weak spot, the thumb, and the grip collapses. Practice the maneuver until it becomes automatic: as soon as someone slaps a grip on your wrist, twist towards the thumb and break the hold. Similarly, if an adversary grabs hold of your clothes, your hair, or anything else, you can usually break the grip just by twisting towards the thumb.

Okay, so you find yourself fighting one of those gorillas with a monster grip — and you're just a monkey. Your strength is still weaker than his weakness, and twisting against his thumb is not enough to break the grip. Does that mean you must abandon the technique and the principle that lies behind it?

By no means. Just add some more strength to your twist: instead of twisting with only one hand, seize your own wrist with your free hand and use both arms together to break his thumb hold. No matter how strong a man may be, it's practically impossible for one thumb to beat two arms: strong beats weak. Perhaps the great old-time strongmen and wrestlers who were monsters of grip strength, such as Arthur Saxon or Hermann Goerner, had thumbs that could hold out against the move, but I doubt it. And the typical brawler whom you're liable to meet on the street is no strongman.

The PINKY BREAK: Another way to apply the principle of strong against weak to go after the little finger. When an adversary has any kind of grip on you, it's usually possible to unwrap a pinky, use your whole hand to lock up a good grip on that digit — and thereby obtain control of the situation. Once you have an adversary's little finger in your hand, you can use leverage (and pain) to break the grip; or, *break* that little finger like a twig. Unless you're fighting a madman or someone *really* tough, your adversary will be in so much pain from something as "minor" as one broken finger that you can finish him off or run. By using a "Lesson from the Mat," you'll have that option.

THUMB KNOCK: Our last trick for breaking a grip was taught to me by a wrestling coach I once had. The move is limited, but can still be genuinely useful in real-life situations.

If an adversary seizes both of your wrists simultaneously (a common minor attack — or a prelude to a more serious attack), all you have to do to break the grip is to swing your wrists together so that his thumb joints knock against each other. A reflex will cause your adversary's hands to open — or at least loosen the grip enough to make twisting out of the hold that much easier.

Cross Face

BLOCKING TAKEDOWNS

Every wrestler learns that the best way to block an opponent who shoots for his legs is to use a CROSS FACE. Simply use the inside of your forearm (*i.e.,* the radius bone) as a hard lever against an adversary's face to keep him from gaining the hold, or to keep him from locking up a leg fully if he's gotten the hold. The hard bone of your forearm makes the Cross Face *hurt;* you can add to your adversary's pain by pressing the radius against his nose or eye socket.

In amateur wrestling competition it's against the rules to turn a Cross Face into a smashing blow with the forearm. Of course, you face no such restrictions in streetfighting. Go ahead and *break* your adversary's nose with your Cross Face, and you'll ensure the

failure of his takedown. In a serious fight, that kind of Cross Face can be a devastating move — even a finishing move if it's aimed at a knockout spot and delivered with maximum force.

When you want to use the Cross Face as a controlling move under less trying circumstances, press the inside of your wrist (where there's a hard point of bone) against either the hollow between an adversary's lower lip and chin or the spot where his upper lip meets his nose. Both are pain points, but ones that will cause the adversary some momentary pain without really hurting him.

The SNAPDOWN is another of every wrestler's basic defenses against leg takedown; in fact, it's a way of obtaining a takedown when defending against one. And it's simple. When an adversary dives for your legs, just re-direct his head (remember *head control!)* towards the ground by snapping his shoulders down. The rest of him will probably follow. It's said that wrestlers score more points with snapdowns than with any other takedown, and the move should work just as well on the street.

Perhaps the simplest move to block an ankle pick-up, leg dive, tackle or any such takedown is the KNEE TO THE FACE. On the mat, a knee to the face is usually accidental (a former teammate had his nose broken that way, but at least he won the match on a disqualification) — but, again, you're free on the street to use it on purpose. A knee to the face is often a knockout blow because the power of your leg meets the momentum of a charging adversary head-on.

Throws are the other kind of common takedowns, so it's also vital to know how to block them. Such throws aren't difficult to block if you act immediately and apply a simple principle: it's impossible for a man to lift himself "by his own bootstraps." As soon as an adversary gets hold of your arm or twists his hips into you for a throw, *relax* and let him support all your weight; simultaneously, grab onto him — his belt, his pants, or any other secure hold — so that if he tries to throw you, your adversary has to also throw himself. And that's impossible. He may collapse to the ground with you, but chances are you'll end up on top where

you may use strength, body mass, and skill with matwork to an advantage.

BREAKING OUT OF BEAR HUGS

The typical unskilled bar bully likes to use bear hugs; therefore, pay particular attention to ways to defend against the hold. In the real world you're liable to need that knowledge.

The simplest way to break a bear hug is by means of sheer strength. If you've done hard work in the gym and your adversary has not, swelling your chest and flexing your upper arms may be enough to pop his grip.

Another way to break a bear hug is to strike instead of grapple. Any way you can hit an adversary is fair game in a streetfight, after all. An adversary stupid enough to use an underarm bear hug, and thereby leave your arms free, deserves to get hit. If you have the leverage for a decent punch, throw it; but a slap to an adversary's ears will stun him just as well (if not better) and break the hold. In a less serious streetfight, you can break an underarm bear hug from the front by pressing a thumb into a facial pain spot, or simply by pushing against your adversary's forehead; unless you're fighting Lex Luger, your arm is going to be stronger than his neck. When an adversary locks up the hold from behind but your arms are loose, elbow strikes are probably the best way to beat the hold.

Should you find yourself trapped in an overarm bear hug, head butts (delivered forwards and backwards) can stun an adversary, break his nose, or even knock him cold — all guaranteed ways to break the hold. Stomping on an adversary's feet (from front or back), kicking his shins, or, in a front bear hug, smashing a knee into his groin will also defeat a bear hug. No matter which method you use, make sure to strike as soon as you can. Hit hard and fast before an adversary can bring the crushing power of his bear hug to the fore, keep hitting until he's badly hurt, and it isn't too hard to break the hold even of someone who's considerably stronger than you.

With that said, there *are* ways to defeat bear hugs using wrestling skills alone — and even turn an adversary's hold into your own takedown. For example, immediately counter a front bear hug with a body-to-body supplex. Before your adversary can lift you from the ground and squeeze the breath out of you, plant yourself, grab him around the middle, back step, and slam him to the pavement. When seized under your arms from behind, violently bend forward, slamming your hips into your adversary in order to loosen his bear hug. Then reach between your own legs and grab one of his legs with both your hands. Stand up fast, pulling up on his leg — and drop him to "the mat."

BREAKING NELSONS

Some of the same techniques used to break bear hugs can also work against the full nelson. If you've built up the strength in your arms and chest, it's easy to power out of most nelsons. Stomping on an adversary's foot may not break the hold; but it *is* liable to break his instep — and thereby make it a helluva lot easier to snap the nelson.

An immediate concern for anyone caught in a serious full nelson is to lessen the pressure on his neck; otherwise, a strong man can snap your spine before you can apply your masterly counter-moves. The best way to relieve the pressure is to place both palms against your own forehead and use the strength of your arms to assist your neck muscles in pushing back against the nelson.

One you've loosened the hold, one method of escape will produce a takedown. Step to your right and slip your own left foot behind your adversary's right. Bend down and grab him behind the knee. Stand up and dump him on his back.

Escaping from a standing half nelson can be easier because one arm is free. Rear elbows, hand strikes, etc., will do the trick against a half as they did against a bear hug.

On the mat, the Look Away is a wrestler's chief way to escape from a half. Should you find yourself down on the ground in a

streetfight, caught in a half nelson or similar hold, the Look Away may work for you. Simply turn your head *away* from his arm. Then slip your neck free from the hold.

BREAKING ARM LOCKS

Let's begin by destroying a myth, one all too common among self-proclaimed experts of "self-defense" (Goddam! How I *hate* that term!). That is The Myth of the Unbreakable Come-Along.

Face facts: no hold is "unbreakable." Given a man who is strong enough, tough enough, and, perhaps, willing to withstand pain to the point of broken bones, *any* hold can be broken. Or maybe we're simply dealing with someone too drunk or too drugged or too wild to know that it's impossible for him to bust out of your "unbreakable" come-along and stomp your surprised ass into a bloody stain. In *real* streetfights, people sometimes can and do absorb plenty of punishment before they win the fight. Contrary to what Kapitan Karate may have taught in the dojo next to Toys-R-Us, people can absorb a lot of punishment — punishment such as fractures and pints of blood pouring out their veins — and nevertheless continue to fight. Is "pain compliance" going to suffice against someone like that?

Okay, it's true that such people are rare — but maybe not as rare as you've been led to believe. I have personally witnessed a man break the chain on a pair of steel handcuffs, then turn on the cops who put on the restraints. I have personally seen tough guys pretend to play along with a bouncer's "unbreakable" come-along, then slip out like Jello and attack. And that's not even mentioning the guy who was so big that an average-sized cop couldn't put a come-along on him, nor could handcuffs fit around the big guy's wrists (ankle restraints finally did the trick). Think about the story of the police who tried to arrest Ken Patera and Mr. Saito. Would "unbreakable" come-alongs hold them? How about Andre the Giant?

There are two morals to this story. First, do not trust any come-along (or, for that matter, any hold at all) to remain unbreakable. Restraining holds will work — *most* of the time against *most* people. But don't count on them to work against real hard cases. Fortunately, you can spot the kind of guys against whom the holds won't work; usually you'll occupy a very small spot in the huge shadows they cast. And even if you're fighting someone who is extremely tough but not too big, I guarantee you'll find out *quickly* that he's not the sort for come-alongs.

Still, certain "experts," police academies, *et. al.,* continue to teach restraint holds, "pain compliance" holds, and come-alongs that are supposed to be unbreakable. That's pure nonsense!

So how do you break the "unbreakable" hold? Well, it helps to be born to the right parents. If your genetic heritage has given you a Neanderthal's bone structure, then you're going to be more able to resist come-alongs. But even if you were born with a slighter build, it's possible to build strength so much greater than that of the average modern man as to make you seem like a genetic anomaly. Understand that the typical American male has such poor muscular development (especially in his upper body) that if you train intelligently, hard, and consistently, then you will be strong like Superman (well... at least Batman) in comparison. That's especially the case when you deal with the sort most likely to use a come-along, a cop bloated to bursting on a diet of doughnuts. Breaking out of some softie's come-along, then, won't be much of a problem.

Of course, no matter how strong you may be, it won't hurt to make escape easier by employing a *principle* with which you should be familiar — distraction. For the most effective distraction, you'll have to be an actor as much as a wrestler. As soon as an adversary locks up the hold, wince and howl and whine to make it seem as if you're in greater pain than you are in fact. Resist *against* the hold, and when your adversary applies greater pressure, move *with* it to break or twist out of the hold in the direction he least expects.

Another way to use distraction against a come-along is to attack any opening on your adversary; then, when the pain hits him and he loosens his grip involuntarily, break the hold. Most come-alongs leave one of your hands free for striking, while tying up both of your adversary's arms, so that he can't defend himself. Come-alongs and similar holds supposedly rely on pain to keep you from fighting back — but if you're man enough to resist the pain you're free to hit and hurt and maim. Aim for a serious shot to a vulnerable area: *e.g.,* break your adversary's nose, poke out his eye, or tear off his ear. Attacking any spot away from the arms holding the come-along can work. In his little gem of a hand-to-hand combat manual, *Get Tough!,* for example, W.E. Fairbairn recommended jabbing the outside of your leg against the adversary's knee closest to you, in order to force the knee inwards in an unnatural position and break it. Just as easily, you might stomp on his instep or use a grapevine against the leg.

So I trust you understand that no come-along — and, for that matter, no hold of any kind — is truly unbreakable. A wrestler who is strong, tough, and (maybe most importantly) smart will learn ways to break "unbreakable" come-alongs — and, in the process, injure the fool who trusted in the hold.

Escapes from hammer locks, chicken wings, turkey wings, and all other similar holds that rely on elbow and shoulder pressure depend on the same principles as escapes from come-alongs. First, there's no substitute for strength: if you have enough muscular power, then you can simply power out of the lock. Second, employ distraction to get your adversary to lessen the pressure. Third, use your free limbs to hurt him: backwards elbow strikes, stomps to the instep, and low backwards kicks to the shins all work well. When you feel the pressure diminish, turn your whole body in the *same direction as your captured arm,* and twist out of the hold.

BREAKING STRANGLES AND HEAD LOCKS

Whenever you're caught in any hold on your neck or head, don't forget to use your head. Remember that you'll almost always have at least one hand free (even in Russians) — so use it to ATTACK!

The typical unskilled head lock, for example, leaves an adversary wide-open for a shot to the groin. If you don't want to really hurt him, but just want to cause him enough pain to break the hold, then make a one-knuckle fist and grind it into the meat of his thigh or his spine. An easy wrestling maneuver to break a head lock involves grabbing your adversary around the back of his knee and standing up. Take his legs out from under him in that way, and he'll often let go of his hold and allow you to dump him on his back.

Beat strangles in the same ways. But remember that your immediate reaction when caught in any hold around your neck is to lessen the pressure; otherwise, you can black out from loss of air or loss of blood to the brain before you can break the hold. Fortunately, gaining a breather while in a choke or strangle isn't too hard. All you have to do is turn your face into the crook of his elbow (similar to the look-away used against a half nelson): the small space there is usually enough to buy you a split second in which to launch a counterattack.

Use that head turn *immediately,* and, just as soon, strike for distraction, and you can beat most chokes and strangles before they can do you any real damage. As always, though, it's also a great help to have muscle mass and great strength. Pencil-necked geeks are especially vulnerable to chokes and strangles because they have no muscles to act like armor and take pressure off their windpipes and carotid arteries. But if you train like a wrestler, you must necessarily develop great neck muscles. Among all athletes, wrestlers are noted for exceptional neck development, and even football players and prizefighters rarely build bull necks equal to those of the best wrestlers. The legendary light-heavyweight professional wrestler, Martin "Farmer" Burns, could hang from a

noose, actually taking the drop, and live to tell about it — all because his neck was so strong. (But, *DON'T* TRY THAT AT HOME!) Learn to flex the muscles of your neck when caught in a choke hold, and you'll be better able to resist the pressure.

Finger strangles are very easy to break. As soon as you swell the muscles in your neck to relieve the pressure a bit, reach up and grab each of your adversary's little fingers. And break them. That will be the end of that attack.

Above all, don't hesitate to counterattack viciously when caught in a choke or strangle. I've warned you about just how deadly those holds can be — even when you don't plan for them to kill. You should know by now that there is no such thing as a "safe" strangle or a "controlled" choke hold. Intentionally or not, anyone who seizes you around the neck is trying to *kill* you: so you ***must take him out***. Go ahead and break his little fingers if he has you in a finger strangle — then keep attacking until he's down and no longer any threat to you. Go ahead and use finishing moves and "heel tricks." Go ahead and attack his eyes, ears, throat, and groin. Break the hold, use an arm drag to get behind him, and use your own (more effective) choke to take him out. In short, don't play games when someone tries to take your life — even if he doesn't "mean" it.

Every year, cops and security guards use the supposedly safe strangles some idiot taught them at the training academies, and every year those same cops and security guards end up killing people whose survivors get oh-so-heartfelt apologies from politicians and plutocrats. So what? The people are still dead. Should *you* be one of those citizens whom no one "means" to kill when he has you in a strangle, don't hesitate — fight back intelligently and with all your power. The old gunfighter's adage — "It's better to be judged by twelve than carried by six" — applies equally to any wrestler/streetfighter who is attacked with a choke or strangle.

BREAKING SCISSOR HOLDS

If you believe in fighting fire with fire, then why not beat a scissor hold with another scissor? To do so, use the OVER SCISSOR. When an adversary locks his legs around your body from behind, cross your own legs over his at the ankles, and lock your legs in a scissor hold. Rear back with your body, and you'll exert great force on his ankles (breaking them if you're strong enough) and force him to open his leg lock.

Over Scissors
Pressure is on the rear man's ankles.

Unless you're battling someone smart enough to lock an arm with his leg hold, most scissor holds will leave you with both arms free to strike — and thereby escape. And even a smart wrestler isn't likely to tie up both your arms. So punch, chop, or otherwise strike your way out of scissor hold. Aim for the groin, which is exposed by many scissor holds; or, if you're feeling generous, hit him anywhere on the inside of his thigh, a sensitive zone even in guys built like the Hulk above the waist.

WRESTLING A PUNCHER

Let's bury one load of bullshit right now. As I said in my book, *Championship Streetfighting: Boxing as a Martial Art*, the "self-defense expert" who thinks he's going to throw an arm lock on any *competent* puncher is fooling himself. And if you're fighting an incompetent, there's really no worry anyway — you can fight in any "style" and still destroy him.

Any decent boxer — or karateka, or anyone else who knows how to punch — will *snap* his punches. Perhaps you can catch his arm for a hold — *if* you're three times as fast as your adversary (in which case, again, he's a pushover, no matter how you fight). Far more likely, however, Mr. Self-Defense will reach for the boxer's left, but the left won't be there: it snaps back as fast as it was thrown. Meanwhile, the boxer spots Mr. Self-Defense's unprotected ribs, and slams home a hard right to the body. Mr. Self-Defense's broken ribs hurt too much for him to consider why his "unbeatable" defense didn't work.

Don't count on catching the arms of a puncher when he's hitting. To fight effectively against a puncher, the wrestler has to close the distance and fight at extremely close range where the puncher will have difficulty finding the room to hit hard. Consider the way in which some boxers are reduced to thorough ineffectiveness when their opponents clinch, and you'll begin to understand the kind of damage a skilled wrestler can do to someone who knows only how to punch, if he fights at "rasslin'" range. The trouble, of course, is getting that close.

To close the distance, cultivate two qualities: first, evasiveness, so that you can avoid punches; second, the ability to take a punch — for it's inevitable that some punches will get through your defenses, no matter how good they are. And so, your training *must* include full-contact practice. Get boxing gloves (the soft 16-oz. "pillows" used for training), headgear, and a mouthpiece. Have your "sparring partner" throw punches as you try to move in to wrestling range. Learn to slip and duck punches, as well as the art

of taking them on your forearms, shoulders, and the other, less-vulnerable areas of your anatomy (my *Championship Streetfighting* will provide in-depth instruction in the ways to stay away from punches). It's going to hurt at first — but that's exactly what you want. Catching a few hard punches in early practice will give you the incentive to stay away from them later on, and eliminate a wrestler's common failing in hand-to-hand combat — *i.e.,* "leading with your face." And only the experience of getting hit in the gym will desensitize you enough to use your wrestling skills against a puncher on the street.

I cannot emphasize too much the importance of full-contact training. The chief problem with most martial arts (at least as they are commonly practiced in the United States) is that the students rarely — if ever — take a punch in practice. Then, under the less-than-ideal conditions of a real-world streetfight, they catch a sucker punch and freeze or fall.

Captain Karate, with his black belt from Colonel Karate's Self-Esteem Academy at the local mall, thinks that his "deadly skills" and "ancient art" will protect him against someone who's really tough and seriously wants to hurt him. Three hundred-pound Bruno the Brawler, with scars all over the thick knuckles that he probably should be dragging on the ground, never learned that lesson. And that's why Bruno shrugs off our Captain's *shuto* (he's harder than the air Captain Karate is used to striking during his *kata,* after all) and pounds him into a smudge on the barroom floor.

Boxers, who know what it's like to see stars, tend to do far better and can continue to fight even after they've taken a serious sucker punch. In other words, boxers have "hard heads." And if you plan to survive on the street, you must develop that "hard head," too. Fortunately, the ability to take a punch *can* be built-up — but only by means of full-contact practice.

"Boxer versus Wrestler — Revisited"

Let's consider a question I began to examine in *Championship Streetfighting: Boxing as a Martial Art:* If a boxer fights a wrestler, who will win? In other words, in free-for-all fighting, is it better to rely on grappling or striking?

Well... I've done a lot more research, and all of it has done nothing more than confirm my conviction that the smartest street-fighter relies on *neither* boxing (or any other "martial art" that emphasizes striking with the hands and/or feet — *e.g.,* karate, savate, muay-thai, *et al.)* nor wrestling (or any grappling "style.," such as judo or jiu-jitsu). No, the most effective fighter uses *BOTH.*

In fact, I'll go so far as do something I rarely do — state a rule: boxing and wrestling and any other "style," "system," or "art" that excludes grappling, striking, or any other part of fighting is *NECESSARILY INCOMPLETE for use in the real world.*

How's that? The Gospel According to Beaumont certainly doesn't jibe with the opinions of most "experts." The usual line on fighting holds that the wrestler may take a few punches, but will then defeat the boxer when the fight gets into the clinches or "on the mat" — both places where the boxer couldn't land a knockout punch. With the exception of the proverbial lucky punch (funny how the punch becomes "lucky" — not fast, hard, and accurate — to the guy who gets KOed), the "experts" will tell you that the wrestler almost always wins — and always has.

But, as I showed in *Championship Streetfighting*, most of the "experts" who should have known better didn't know what they were talking about. And sometimes they simply got their facts wrong.

For the fact is that boxer versus wrestler bouts have a record of decidedly mixed results. I'm not going to repeat stories about the fights I covered in my earlier book, but let's consider some strong medicine for the "superior style" poison.

First, forget about gross physical mismatches. Boxers know that "a heavyweight's jabs feel like a light-heavyweight's knockout

punches." Size, strength, and, most of all, weight do make big differences in real fights. That's why wrestling, boxing, and all other combat sports have weight classes. Another prizefighter's adage: "A good big man will always beat a good little man."

And that's true on the street. USUALLY. Big man or little man, he has to be good. Thomas Inch, for example, was one of the strongest and most muscular (210 lbs. with a 50″ chest and 19″ biceps; able to lift 350 lbs. overhead) men in the world around 1910. Like a lot of the strongmen of that era, Inch was also a skilled fighter; he had wrestled Cumberland-style and sparred with professional heavyweight boxers. But — much to his surprise — Inch met his match when he battled a 140 lb. Japanese jiu-jitsu expert. Does that make jiu-jitsu The Ultimate Martial Art? Why then did Japanese jiu-jitsu experts of about the same size and skill lose to big, strong Scottish wrestlers? The fact is that any man can lose a fight on an off day.

In "fair" matches, when the opponents were about the same size, there are plenty of bouts in which the wrestler beat the boxer. In 1910, for example, one of the greatest American wrestlers of all time, Martin "Farmer" Burns, fought Billy Papke, the former middleweight boxing champion, at Reno, Nevada. Burns weighed about 165-170 lbs., and Papke must have been about the same. The boxer was not in training for a fight, and, I suspect, was not in top shape (fighters tend to let themselves go between bouts; wrestlers are more likely to stay in condition constantly). Burns was in great shape — as always: he was a promoter of "physical culture" and was in town to train Jim Jefferies for his heavyweight championship comeback against Jack Johnson. However, Burns was also fifty years old (he'd held the wrestling championship in 1895), and Papke was in his prime. So it was about as "fair" a contest as possible.

The boxer-wrestler bout came off like this: Papke visited Jeffries and promptly began to poke fun at Burns — and then at wrestlers in general. Such behavior was characteristic for Papke, "The Illinois Thunderbolt," a fighter with a pronounced mean streak: he

took the middleweight championship from the great Stanley Ketchel in 1908 by punching Ketchel in the throat just before the bell rang to begin the opening round. Ketchel never quite caught his breath, and Papke pounded him mercilessly until the referee (Jim Jeffries, in temporary retirement) stopped the bout. (But Ketchel paid back Papke with an even more savage beating to regain the title two months later, and Papke was never quite the same fighter again.)

When Papke started making fun of wrestlers in general, Burns bet the boxer $1,000 he couldn't beat him in a free-for-all fight. The two stepped into the sparring ring. And Burns pinned Papke in just eighteen seconds.

"Farmer" Burns was undoubtedly the better man in the fight on that day in 1910. But... did wrestling beat boxing in that fight? Or did an individual wrestler beat an individual boxer?

I've read about plenty of other examples of wrestlers beating boxers — *e.g.,* Ray Steele defeating the heavyweight contender, Kingfish Levinsky (1935), and "Nature Boy" Buddy Rogers pinning Jersey Joe Walcott (1956). But I'm more than a little suspicious about these fights because they took place after wrestling had become "sports entertainment." And, from recent boxer-wrestler bouts that I have seen, I'm pretty sure that the boxers in those contests were in on the "fake" part of the entertainment. Anyone who saw Muhammed Ali "lose" to the wrestler Gorilla Monsoon (a great name!) knows what I'm talking about. No doubt those wrestlers were tough, strong athletes — and they may have been able to beat the boxers in a free-for-all fight — but there's no way to tell for certain from contests staged for show.

Maybe you think the Ultimate Fighting Championship and similar "extreme fighting" contests have demonstrated the superiority of grappling over boxing. To my knowledge, one competitor or another employing the "style" of Brazilian jiu-jitsu has won just about every time. But until the best boxers face the best grapplers, I don't think "extreme fighting" has much to say about the alleged superiority of any "style." When Evander Holyfield or Mike Tyson loses in the Ultimate Fighting Championship, I'll reconsider.

But when we get right down to it, I don't think there's much point to arguing about whether wrestling is "better" than boxing — or that any "style" is inherently better than any other. A good boxer can indeed lose a fight to a good wrestler — or to a bigger, tougher, and more determined brawler without much training. Skill is invaluable in a fight, of course. But I am convinced that it's *the MAN in the fight,* more than the "style" that determines the winner on the street.

Likewise, I'm firm in my belief that the best way to prepare for a real world fight is to develop both boxing and wrestling skills. From streetfights I've fought and witnessed — and from the opinions of the handful of "self-defense experts" whom I respect (*e.g.,* Rex Applegate, Bradley Steiner) — I believe that striking is the better way for most people (women especially) to fight, if they can. But even those who strike by preference *must* learn at least some grappling for those times when things don't go as planned. And others, because of build, temper, or previous training, are better off using grappling as their primary way of fighting.

Let me leave this discussion of wrestling versus boxing with a true story about one of my favorite boxing champions, Tommy Burns. Burns is best remembered for losing the title to Jack Johnson, and taking an atrocious beating in the process. But Johnson was undoubtedly one of the greatest heavyweights to ever lace up gloves, if not *the* greatest. I'm impressed that Burns, just 5′7″ and 175 lbs., was able to stay in the ring with — and, often, knock out — full-sized heavyweights. When he was 40 and well past his prime, Burns dropped a decision to just such a full-sized heavy. But when the two boxers got into a brawl in a bar after the bout, Burns, old and undersized, beat the hell out of his erstwhile conqueror. Why? Because Burns was a good wrestler. In a fight without rules and a referee, Tommy Burns was able to take down his adversary and put him out with a choke hold. You see, Burns had started his boxing career traveling with a circus that also featured "all-in" wrestling. The wrestlers had taught Burns some of

their tricks, and the *combination of wrestling and boxing* made Burns a more effective streetfighter than he was a boxer.

Be smart and follow the example of Tommy Burns.

Wrestling A Kicker

Kicking is usually a waste of time in a real fight. When Jackie Chan flattens a bad guy with a flying side kick, remember that you're watching fantasy, not a serious fight.

I'd suggest saving your kicks for finishing off an adversary you've already put on the ground. And that's especially easy to do if Kapitan Karate places himself off-balance by standing on one leg in preparation for his Chuck Norris imitation.

Just as when wrestling a puncher, be prepared to take a few when wrestling a kicker. But chances are that you won't have to: most people kick slowly and without snap, and it's pretty easy to sidestep and shoot an adversary's free leg for an easy takedown. In that respect, you're usually better off fighting someone who kicks than you are wrestling a puncher.

Even when you cannot avoid a kick altogether, you can take the sting out of it by JAMMING. Timing is vital to a good jam. As soon as an adversary cocks his leg for a kick, move in *fast.* The kick may land, but your adversary won't have enough leverage to kick hard. Once you're inside, lock up either the kicking leg or the standing leg, and you have your takedown.

The CROSS-ARM BLOCK is a last-level defense against a kick. It's always best to get out of the way, and a strong kick may break through your crossed arms — but that's still better than, say, catching a foot in your groin. Make fists and cross one forearm over the other about two inches above your wrists. Clench those fists hard and press your arms together strongly so that you'll break the force of the kick even if the kick breaks through the block. Try to take the kick directly at the point where your forearms cross, on both ulna bones on the outside of your forearms (*do not* take it on your wrists or hands: small bones are fragile).

Both the cross-arm block and jamming have the advantage of putting your hands in place to trap the kicking leg. No matter how many black belts he may have, a smart streetfighter never kicks higher than his adversary's groin, and prefers to keep his kicks at knee-level or lower. That's because he knows anyone who traps an adversary's kicking leg high has that adversary off-balance and pretty much at his mercy. With your wrestling knowledge, you'll find yourself in an even stronger position. Just think of all the fun things you can turn a trapped leg into: high single, dump, figure-4, etc.

The LEG LEVER is a useful trick against a kicker, should you find yourself on the ground, especially on all fours or on your knees as you're trying to stand up — which is just when a brawler will try to punt you like a football. First, try to get as close to the kicking leg as you can when your adversary winds up; you'll take the sting out of the kick even if it lands, employing the same principle used when jamming. Place the outside of one forearm against the knee of the kicking leg, and grab his ankle with the other hand. Pull up on the ankle and press back with your forearm, using your adversary's own leg to bring him to the ground.

WRESTLING AGAINST A KNIFE

Fighting unarmed against a knife is always risky. Wrestling a man with a knife is often suicidal.

If I have to face someone with a knife, I'd prefer to face him with the following: a shotgun, a submachine gun, a rifle, a pistol, a sword, a spear, a staff, a nightstick, a barstool, a chair, a knife longer than my adversary's knife, my feet, my fists, my wrestling abilities. I've listed those choices in descending order. So, note well which comes last — I'd rather wrestle against a knife than stand there and get carved like a turkey, but wrestling would always be my desperation defense.

And a turkey is just what you are to a knife. Do you walk around in your byrnie of chain mail? No? Well, then, you're vulnerable to

any knife. No matter how tough you think you are, no matter how much iron you've pumped and how much muscle you've packed onto your bones, you're still not made out of steel, you're still just skin and blood and flesh — all substances that a knife will slice. All your extra muscle may act as armor against fists and clubs, but it's just more meat to a blade.

Never forget that fact. Or this one: if you wrestle against a knife, you're probably going to get cut. You may, in fact, win the fight in the end — but you're liable to bleed to death afterwards, or to bear disfiguring scars to remind you of the time you were stupid enough to wrestle against a man with a blade.

Why doesn't wrestling work well against the blades? Because your rule when wrestling is to close the distance with your adversary.

And that is a direct contradiction of the guideline for defending against a knife, *i.e., KEEP YOUR DISTANCE.* A knife is a short-range weapon, so whenever you place yourself withing wrestling range, you also put yourself in danger. If you were a Boy Scout, you may remember the "Circle of Safety" — the area outside of the combined length of a knife-wielder's arm and his blade. *Stay as far away as you can from a blade!*

How come so many "self-defense experts" and "martial-arts masters" suggest grappling as the *first and best way* to "take away" (it always looks so easy in the books!) a knife from an adversary? Because, as usual, they don't know what the hell they're talking about! Their fighting experience comes from dojos and tournaments, not from the streets. A crackhead with a butcher knife probably never learned that he's supposed to give up when you grab his knife hand as the first step in your "unbeatable" technique. Instead, he'll just follow his own savage instincts and slice your arm to ribbons as he tries to twist out of the grip — and that's before he sinks the knife into your gut.

With all that said, I have to admit that there are a couple of situations in which you may want to wrestle against a blade. The first is pure desperation: you find yourself at close range when the

fight starts and can't get distance, or your other means of defense (kicking, a chair, etc.) didn't work and your adversary forces himself into close range. The second is a "domestic situation" in which you face a small woman (or someone else whom you physically outmatch) *threatening* you with a knife. Not attacking, but threatening. Anyone dumb enough to flash a blade is either downright incompetent or not really interested in cutting you. Be aggressive and you can take a knife away from someone like that (it's still risky, though).

And so, if you do end up wrestling against a knife-wielding adversary, keep things simple, and end the fight as quickly as possible. Try to immobilize the knife hand, and keep the blade away from your body and face. Break the knife arm if you can. The Figure-4 may work against an overhand stab (*a la* Norman Bates in *Psycho).* Against an underhand stab and slash, you might try sidestepping *outside* of the knife hand and applying an arm bar hard and fast (*before* your adversary can "twirl" his wrist out of your grip).

Take your chances if you must — but don't blame me when you get cut. Remember, *I DO NOT recommend wrestling against a knife!*

WRESTLING MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

Just like wrestling against a blade, wrestling — or fighting in any way, for that matter — against more than one adversary is risky. It looks easy in the movies, but real fights against gangs are always dangerous deals. Fighting more than one man at once, you are necessarily out-armed: it's like fighting some Hindu deity. You have only two eyes to spot their attacks, two legs to get away from their kicks, and two arms to block their punches, so it's a fair bet that you'll get hit from angles you never anticipated.

Striking and kicking — and *running* — may be your best bet in a gang fight. Wrestling, however, can be used effectively against multiple foes — if you wrestle smart. Keep a couple of tactics in

mind. First and most importantly, do *not* take the fight "to the mat" against a gang. You want to stay on your feet and use standing holds; otherwise, it's too easy for the rest of the gang to surround and stomp you when you're mauling their buddy on the ground. Second, you might try to secure a hold on one adversary and use him as a shield against the rest. If you're facing typical woofers, who lack the will to fight as individuals, you can usually convince them to give up when their buddy howls because of the shoulder you've dislocated with your chicken wing.

SIZING UP AN ADVERSARY

There's not necessarily a lot of strategy in a streetfight. Nevertheless, certain takedowns, holds, and other moves work best against adversaries of certain builds. It also helps if you can judge how tough a man is before you fight; if you can spot the genuine hard cases, you may try harder to talk your way out of a fight you can't win (or maybe you'll just run more quickly!).

The ability to correctly size up an adversary is impossible to teach, either in a book or by personal coaching. That ability comes only from experience. Once you've "been and done" for a few years, you can probably be confident about your judgments. But if you're like most American males whom I've met, and you get your notions of real fighting from TV, Schwarzenegger movies, and video games, then you don't know a damn thing about reality.

So don't fool yourself into thinking you've become another "self defense expert" because you've read what I have to say about sizing up an adversary. I consider myself a good judge of toughness — but no "expert." With the mileage I carry nowadays (not just weight and years) I can fairly say that I've gained at least a little wisdom about sizing up a man; at least I know that the judgments I made, say, 15 years ago, when I was fitter and faster, were mostly mistaken in comparison. But I still make mistakes. Take my tips for what they're worth, then — some advice that may save you some of the lumps I've taken.

Tip Number One is: don't confuse size with toughness. I know... I know... size is important. But just because a guy is big doesn't mean he can fight. A lot of big guys go through life intimidating people with their size; they scare smaller men into giving up without a fight, so Mr. Big never really learns how to fight or what it's like to face a determined attack. That's especially the case with men who are big but soft, big with bone and suet instead of muscle.

Tip Number Two: muscles don't necessarily equal the ability to fight. Bodybuilders are the classic examples. Fifty years ago or more, wrestlers (*e.g.,* George Hackenschmidt, Otto Arco), who developed not just good-looking muscles but useful ones, were the models of the "perfect physique." But steroids and standards that value looks over utility have made "pumped," "buff," and "sculpted" the prime attributes for most weight-trainers. Such muscle boys may impress the girls (or the other boys), but they leave fighting to the men.

So how do you tell if Mr. Muscle is the real deal?

Well, try to get a sense of whether those muscles have high quality. Even with "definition" and "mass," lots of bodybuilder development looks as if it's been pumped up with air or water. Wrestling muscle should look solid.

Look at his neck. Is it thick and solid? Guys who lift for looks rarely want the "ugly" bull-neck of a wrestler. Maybe a big neck makes their peaked biceps look small. In the World of Make-Believe (where too many "experts" got their hand-to-hand combat experience), after all, looks are what really count.

Look at his hands. Are they hard and thick? A man with giant "farmer's hands" probably has a strong grip — and you know how important that can be in the grapple. But even a man with smaller bones can have a vise-like grip if his hands are thick with muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

Look at his wrists. Are they thick and ropy? Again, bone is not enough; some men with naturally heavy bone structures have little real strength. Even on a man of comparatively slight build, you can

bet that he'll be strong in a fight if his wrist bones look as if they're surrounded by a sheath of steel wires.

Forearms are also good indicators of wrestling strength. Strong forearm muscles make for a strong grip. Look for a thick swell of muscle that starts a couple of inches above the wrist — and just keeps getting thicker. Forearms that "look like turkey legs" (as someone once described them to me) probably belong to a man with a crushing grip.

Look at his other joints, especially the elbows. Are they thick and full of ligaments? Strong ligaments ("sinew strength" to the old-time strongmen and wrestlers) indicate real power. Plenty of muscle boys pump big biceps but neglect the important ligaments that transfer muscle power into usable strength in the grapple.

Look at his waist. Of course, a gut that sags and hangs over a man's belt is a good sign that he's out of shape; but fashionable "abs" and a wasp waist aren't a whole lot better for a wrestler. Thick and solid is a sign of strength. The midsection is "the seat of strength" and a genuinely strong man will usually have a waistline like the trunk of a redwood.

A top-heavy build — something very common among Mr. Musclemen — is another triumph of form over substance. No matter how strong a man may be above the waist, he won't be able to use that upper body strength to full effect if he isn't comparably developed through the hips and thighs. Strong legs (along with a strong back) are the bases for strong wrestling. Top-heavy guys are usually easy to take down. Go right after their legs.

But no matter how you size up a potential adversary, *never sell yourself short.* On the mat, sheer physical ability often falls to skill and, more importantly, *a determined attitude.* Physical mismatches on the street are also won by the small — but more determined — man. Attack with courage, ferocity, and the will to win — and chances are that you *will* win. Bears and wolves are bigger and stronger than wolverines, but Mr. Wolverine is the toughest hunter in the woods. Think like a wolverine — enter every fight with the

attitude that no one can defeat you — and you will be the toughest fighter on the street.

Chapter Nine
HEEL TRICKS

In professional wrestling parlance a "heel" is a bad guy. Good guys are "baby faces."

Heels break all the rules. They strangle baby faces with ring ropes and championship belts. They pull brass knuckles out of their trunks and cold-cock the baby faces. They get their scheming managers to distract the referee, then throw salt into the eyes of a baby face. When a heel is hurt, he begs for mercy. After he loses a match a heel jumps back into the ring, sneaks up behind the baby face, and clobbers him with a folding chair. After he wins, the heel taunts the baby face and spits on the fans.

We all love to hate heels.

Sadly, the distinction between heels and baby faces has broken down. When pro wrestling grew bigger, showier, and more expensive in the 1980s, it grew harder and harder to tell the good guys from the bad guys. Nowadays even the "heroes" of wrestling fight dirty. (That says something, perhaps, about the state of the nation. But that's a subject for a different book...) Traditionally, at least, heels always got theirs in the end. Fair play triumphed, and the baby face eventually walked away from the final grudge match with the title and the belt.

Of course, professional wrestling is entertainment, not reality. In the real world the heel would win every time.

Why? Because he cheats.

And so should you.

There are no rules to break in a streetfight. Therefore, use everything available to destroy your adversary as quickly as you can. Heel tricks are *necessary* supplements to wrestling skills in hand-to-hand combat.

And so, inspired by the examples of heels from Gorgeous George to Abdullah the Butcher, let's look at some of the dirty tricks you can add to your streetfighting arsenal.

BITING

You know plenty of ways to apply holds with your arms and legs — but what about *jaw holds?*

Sink your teeth into an adversary and you usually win the fight right away. Teeth are hard and sharp and cut as well as a knife; the muscles of the jaws are strong (lots of exercise: everybody eats) and can exert tremendous pressure, too. Even a small woman can grievously wound a strong man if she bites.

Unless deep in an animal rage, however, most people are reluctant to bite in a fight. Common sense should tell you that since AIDS became widespread biting is not necessarily the best weapon. Bite and you may win the fight — but lose the battle when *you* come down with the deadly disease.

Biting is best left for the genuinely desperate fights. Tainted blood is less dangerous than imminent death at the hands of an adversary who has you down and is about to bash your head open, so go ahead and bite him. The pain of a deep bite paralyzes most adversaries for a split second, allowing you to fire another, more conventional, finishing move. Up close, biting by itself can serve as a finishing move: sink your teeth deep into your adversary's neck, clamp your jaws shut, and rip out his carotid artery with a vicious jerk of your head. Lions, leopards, and other big cats finish off their prey that way, and, even without fangs, biting deep into the neck should work for you.

GOUGES

Blind men don't fight well. Gouge out an adversary's eye (or, better yet, both) and even if he's drugged enough to withstand the pain, he won't be able to see to hit you, or to chase when you run away. Thus, your adversary's eyes should be *the primary target* in life-or-death combat.

Striking the eyes can end a fight before it reaches the wrestling stage. Ever see a boxer thumbed in the eye by an open-glove jab? He wilts faster than if he'd walked into a knockout punch. Take a tip from the boxer's "accidental" thumb, and stab a jab — with thumb extended alongside the fist. You may blind your adversary and end the fight, or set him up for any wrestling move you care to use.

Karate, kung-fu, and most other Asian martial arts teach strikes that hit the eyes as fast as a biting cobra. By all means use them if you know them. For those without black belts it might be simpler — and work about as well — to poke out an adversary's eyes in Three Stooges style. Spread and stiffen your fingers and pops (or chin jabs) will blind as well as batter.

It's not always easy to hit the eyes from a distance. They're small targets and mobile: anyone who knows anything about fighting knows enough to keep his head moving, bobbing and weaving to make it an elusive target. Also, most men protect their eyes on the same level of automatic instinct by which they guard their groins.

Wrestlers, however, work up close, so range shouldn't prevent you from blinding an adversary. At close range then, try to gouge your adversary's eyes whenever your hands go near his face.

The best way to gouge is to make your thumb into a hook next to your fist, then stab along the bridge of your adversary's nose: the curve of his skull will guide your thumb into the eye socket. Push up and in — then rip as you sweep your arm outwards. At the very least, such a blow stings and causes the eye to water; at most, your thumb will pop the eye out of its socket. Frontier "nought-barred"

wrestling matches sometimes ended with such eye gouges. Nowadays, one will end a streetfight just as emphatically.

Eyes offer the most devastating targets in a fight, but they're not the only targets on the face for gouges. Stick a finger up an adversary's nostril and rip away: the pain will shock almost as much as that from an eye gouge. It's also easy to bloody (even break) a nose with your palm or the web of the hand at close range. Gouging, crushing, or biting the ears also causes great pain. Ears are attached to the head only by skin and a little cartilage: yank an ear off your adversary and he's bound to think twice about picking a fight with you again.

In general, use your hands as claws and you'll be a more dangerous fighter. Wrestling training should give you a vise-like grip and fingers like spikes, so that any time you gouge into the hollows of an adversary's body (*e.g.*, armpit, back of the knee, under the jaw) you'll hurt him. Likewise, anytime you can grab a handful of flesh (especially useful when fighting fatties), squeeze hard and the pain may shock your adversary long enough to set up a better move.

PULLING HAIR

Pulling hair may strike you as a tactic for girls. Catfights are vicious, though, and girls fight dirty as a matter of course. In fact, hair-pulling is a useful maneuver for both men and women in rough-and-tumble combat: it's the easiest way to get and maintain head control.

If you aren't already convinced of the importance of head control, then you haven't been reading my book. Make an adversary's head go where you want, and you can make the rest of him move in any direction (*e.g.*, crashing into the concrete). The hard part is getting the hold that grants such head control. Why, then, eschew the firm and easy hold you get by grabbing a handful of hair when it's available?

Heels pull hair to win in the wrestling ring all the time. But even in fights that aren't well-scripted, hair-pulling has proved decisive.

Bareknuckle boxing, for example, was as close to deadly unarmed combat as a sport can be. And so, pulling hair proved a common device in the ring — that is until prizefighters began to shave their heads. They learned from the plight of Daniel Mendoza, who lost the heavyweight title to "Gentleman" John Jackson in 1795. Jackson seized with his left a handful of Mendoza's long locks, used the resulting head control to keep the elusive champ in one place, and punched him into unconsciousness with his right. Jackson may not have been much of gentleman in that fight, but he understood the value of head control, and he didn't hesitate to use the "girl's tactic" of pulling hair.

Many amateur wrestlers maintain brush cuts throughout the season. Less hair saves a few ounces to help them make weight, and short hair stays out of their eyes. Wrestlers also cut their hair for the same reason that bareknuckle boxers shaved their scalps. No one wants to offer an opponent a hold, even an illegal one.

When you size up some punk on the street — typically underdeveloped and long-haired — know that the easiest way to gain head control is to pull hair. With a handful of hair and head control, your wrestling moves will be easier to apply, and so will the cruder tactic of pounding his face.

FOREIGN OBJECTS

Watching wrestling as a kid, my favorite part of the show occurred whenever I heard the announcer shout, "Oh no! He has a foreign object in the ring!" "Foreign object" was the code for any weapon — folding chair, chain, whip, *et al.* — that a heel used to beat a baby face. Of course, foreign objects were strictly illegal; but the heel invariably landed a few shots and bloodied the baby face before the referee disqualified the bad guy.

We can all learn a lesson from heels and their foreign objects: *NEVER FIGHT UNARMED BY CHOICE.*

(That rule applies to serious combat, kill-or-be-killed fights. If you only want to restrain some loudmouth, then it's better to rely on wrestling holds and muscle.)

No matter how great your skills in any "style" of unarmed combat, don't deceive yourself that you're a match for someone of about your size and strength who has a weapon. Your physical inferiority will probably beat you if he's armed — and he'll certainly wound you even if you win the fight. Face facts and understand that flesh is no match for steel and lead. The nonsense peddled by some martial artists that unarmed "styles" (developed by Asian peasants because they were deprived of their natural right to bear arms) work better than weapons is demonstrably false: the peasants continued to exist without their rights until they obtained superior weapons, *i.e.,* firearms. And wherever peasants did not obtain guns they *stayed* slaves.

Therefore, I suggest you carry a gun — if you can (more difficult every day in this "land of the free") and if you have the skill and will to use one. Remember that my former wrestling coach said that the best wrestler doesn't stand a chance against "Kaboom!" Should you decide to go without a firearm, though, it doesn't necessarily follow that you should therefore go unarmed. The best combat advice I ever received was: "Only a fool fights unarmed by choice." Don't be a fool — especially when there are so many handy weapons available.

"Sticks And Stones"

Wrestling may be the oldest "martial art" and the natural way for human beings to fight. Cavemen no doubt settled their scores by grappling. That is, the cavemen fought that way when they weren't carrying weapons. For the things that moved our ancestors out of the trees and caves, and made them masters of the beasts around them, were their weapons. It's hard enough to take down a mastodon with spears and stones, but it's impossible to wrestle them to death.

The first man to pick up a stone for a missile or a stick for a club should be the example for every streetfighter. Old *Homo habilis* found weapons among the stuff around him, and so can you. The truth is that you are *never* unarmed.

Look around you when a fight is brewing. As the drunk huffs and puffs before he throws a punch at you in a bar fight, weapons with which to destroy him surround you: drinks to throw in his face and blind him, beer mugs to smash in his face, bar stools to bash over his head. Why take the chance of breaking your hand by punching the drunk when you can hurt him even more by slugging him with a beer mug?

Here are two guidelines in your search for improvised weapons: first, look for something to throw; second, find a club. Remember: you're never *truly* unarmed.

BLINDING FROM A DISTANCE

Hitting an adversary anywhere on his body with something heavy (say, a garbage can) will cause injury as much as distraction. The chief use of missiles, however, is distraction: a thrown object sets up a takedown or hold. Therefore, it's best to aim for an adversary's face when you throw. You want to get something in his eyes. Heels often throw salt, something you might try if you get into a fight over the dinner table (why not just pitch the salt shaker?). Sand would also work well, but unless you're on the beach it's hard to keep handy. But there are ways around that problem: in his book *Subway Survival!: The Art of Self-Defense on American Public Transit Facilities* (Loompanics Unlimited, 1980) — which, by the way, is among the best *practical* streetfighting manuals on the market — Bradley Steiner suggests carrying a handful of sand or gravel in a jacket pocket as a tool for distraction and/or blinding. That's a tip worth considering. In bars, the beer or mixed drink in your hand is a ready missile that can blind (hot coffee works well, too, for you teetotalers).

CLUBS

Police batons and spring-loaded lead saps are ideal clubs, but it's hard to carry them unless you are a cop. Even if you can get away with packing a sap, after you use it to fracture the skull of the idiot who picked the fight, prosecutors and judges aren't likely to be lenient on someone carrying a deadly weapon with premeditation.

And so you'll have to improvise. Tire irons, lengths of lead pipe, and baseball bats are all effective clubs — but again, they stand out. If it's dark a flashlight makes an ideal club. Look for a multi-cell model with a metal barrel if you want the modern equivalent of a medieval mace. Perhaps more practical for everyday usage are the palm-sized flashlights that are scaled-down models of the big ones. Stab with the ends of the little flashlight, using it like a knife or ice pick, and you can break ribs.

In the same way, pens and pencils can serve as stabbing clubs. Stick a ballpoint into an adversary's gut, and it's as if he's been shot by an arrow. Press the blunt end of a pen into any nerve nexus, and your adversary will writhe in pain. Another way to use pens and pencils for control and restraint is the Hand Squeeze. Simply slip the pen between an adversary's middle and ring fingers, and squeeze *hard:* the pain is excruciating, and it's easy to then slip into the arm lock of your choice. A great advantage of pens and pencils is that they're inconspicuous. Can a cop hassle you for wanting to write?

Equally unobtrusive — and just as useful as improvised clubs — are newspapers and magazines. The trick is to roll them tightly, then *stab* with the ends; swatting with a newspaper is a way to kill flies or punish bad dogs, not win streetfights.

CHAIRS

As every heel who has hit a baby face with a folding chair knows, chairs make great clubs. Swinging a chair with the ferocity of a Viking is a reliable way to clear a room if you ever find

yourself outnumbered and far from the door. But chairs are also so versatile that they deserve their own section in this chapter.

Chairs are probably the best defense against knives. A small chair, folding chair, or barstool are light enough to wield with speed, but also provide enough bulk to work as shields against small blades. Unless you're packing a .45, reach for a chair when an adversary pulls a knife. W.E. Fairbairn's advice continues to be sound: using a chair against a knife isn't as spectacular as the complicated knife defenses taught in certain martial arts, but "all-in" fighting has an advantage over "Eastern wisdom" — it works.

The Chair pin

Against a knife, use a chair as a spear, not a club. Hold the chair on the back *(not* on the seat) so that your hands won't get cut. Stab with the chair, in short controlled jabs: the seat of the chair is your shield and the legs are spear points. Be aggressive and make an attack your best defense. It's impossible for your knife-wielding adversary to defend against all four legs at once. Thus, you use the old lion tamer's trick to confuse a dangerous creature. And if the

stabbing legs of the chair aren't sufficient to subdue your adversary, you can combine the chair attack with other moves: *e.g.,* stab at your adversary's upper body to distract him and tie-up the knife, then kick him in the knee or sweep out his legs to put him on the ground.

Against an adversary either armed or unarmed, a chair can serve as a restraining tool. If he's not too big (*i.e.,* the chair has to fit over his shoulders and chest) you can pin an adversary to the wall or floor with a chair. The upper legs of the chair slide on top of his shoulders, and the bottom legs go under his armpits; the seat of the chair locks over his chest, and you use your weight and upper body strength to keep your adversary pinned. The chair restraint won't work well against anyone who's big or strong or skilled at fighting, but it's a useful tactic for protecting yourself in "domestic situations" while controlling someone you don't want to hurt.

BLADES

Knife fighting is a subject for another book (there are already a few good ones — among lots of crap — on the market), and we've already looked at defenses in the section about chairs and in the previous chapter. But, in keeping with our tribute to heels, let's consider the methods of drawing blood in pro wrestling — and how we might apply them to a streetfight.

Blood is called "juice" in wrestlers' jargon. A match that draws blood is always a money-maker; thus, the wrestling adage, "Juice is green." The trick, of course, is for wrestlers to bleed impressively, but not really hurt themselves, so that they can wrestle tomorrow in another city for another big gate. How do they do it?

Look closely at the foreheads of veteran wrestlers. Invariably, the skin there is a mass of scar tissue. That's because wrestlers deliberately cut themselves on the forehead in order to produce "juice." Since there are no major blood vessels in the forehead, no one risks bleeding to death for the sake of the show; also, a little blood from the forehead mixes with sweat to produce a ghastly

appearance. It looks impressive and draws fans, but doesn't hurt the wrestlers very much.

A few wrestlers are adept at opening a little cut on an opponent's forehead just by punching him smartly with one knuckle. More often, however, wrestlers "make the juice flow" by means of little razor blades hidden in their wrist wraps. Most of the tape that wrestlers wear on their wrists and fingers isn't used to support joints but rather to stash razors and other "foreign objects."

The streetfighter may adapt that wrestler's ploy for his own uses. Razor blades (best to wrap one edge with tape), box cutters, and utility knives all make practical improvised weapons for hand-to-hand combat. Such blades are small and easy to conceal, so that you may sneak them past cops, doormen, and security guards at times when you'd otherwise have to fight unarmed. The concealability of small blades also allows you to palm them and appear to bear no weapon — then surprise your adversary with a slash that starts his "juice" flowing. Razors aren't weapons for "instant kills;" but few people are as tough as wrestlers; they can't stand the sight of their own blood. "Juice" dripping into their eyes usually makes them want to run, not fight.

Be a heel, and add "foreign objects" to wrestling skills when you get into a streetfight. You'll win.

Chapter Ten
THE SWEAT ROOM: CONDITIONING FOR THE WRESTLER

Once, when I was a wrestler in high school, my team went to work out with a team from another school. That school was a wrestling powerhouse in the area: league champion or runner-up every year. As soon as I'd put on my sweats and stepped into the overheated room in which the wrestlers worked out, I understood why the team was successful — the wrestlers were the best-conditioned I had ever met.

Their coach set an example. He was built like a medicine ball: thick, round, and heavy; but hard, tough, and solid, too. "Welcome to The Sweat Room, boys," he said with an evil grin. "Now you're on *my* time."

Then, he lead us through two torturous hours. After warming up with stretching and calisthenics, we drilled holds over and over. Everyone was soon puffing like a steam locomotive. Then it was time for paired wrestling and "King of the Hill," an exercise in which each man wrestled without rest against fresh and increasingly heavier opponents until he was pinned. Pride, of course, made each wrestler fight all out.

By the time my reign as "king" had ended, I didn't think I could do much more than collapse. But then it was time for twenty minutes of running up and down stairs, and wind sprints across the gym floor. Just when I thought things were over, they weren't. There was still weight training: not the leisurely stuff that most

muscle-boy wannabes do; but rather an intense twenty minutes of moving from station to station on a Universal, pumping the plates as fast as we could.

When I finally hit the showers, I felt like a burst balloon. Before that workout, I had thought I was in good shape. But the kind of conditioning that made for a championship wrestler was something else indeed. For the first time, I *truly* realized that wrestling is the sport that demands the highest level of all-around physical conditioning.

So what? This is, after all, a book about streetfighting — not championship freestyle wrestling. The high school or collegiate star must build tremendous strength, endurance, power, speed, and other qualities of physical fitness, because he has to wrestle six or seven minute matches (often several in one day, if he's competing in a tournament) against an equally fit opponent, week after week over the course of an entire season. Of course, the man who wrestles for *sport* needs to develop exceptional fitness.

The streetfighter is more likely to face a fat drunk. His "match" consists of a short, violent burst of activity which is over in, say, five to thirty seconds (and thirty seconds is probably pushing it in the real world).

True. Nevertheless, recall the "Lessons From the Mat" in Chapter Two. Superior conditioning is one of the important lessons that the streetfighter can learn from the wrestler. In the fast and furious world-without-rules that is the *reality* of streetfighting, you may never draw upon the reserves that a wrestler calls upon in almost every match. Sometimes, though, streetfights last longer than a few seconds, and, under the stress of combat, physical power drains away at what seems the speed of light for the man who is out of shape. And when you grow weak in a streetfight, the consequences can be injury or death, not merely getting pinned. The fit streetfighter can control the combat, fight more effectively than his out-of-shape opponent, and end a potentially deadly struggle more quickly.

In short, anyone who tells you that physical fitness is unimportant for a battle in a bar or alley is someone who has probably never been in a real knock-down-drag-out. Or maybe he's just someone who got his ass kicked by a guy with greater strength and endurance.

You may have neither the time nor the desire (nor the need) to work out at the level of a championship wrestler. If you want to be well-prepared for a real fight, however, you must sweat. Train like a wrestler, mold your body into shape, and — make no mistake about it — you *will* be ready to grapple with the loudmouth drunk. And you *will* be prepared to "kill-as-catch-can" when the need arises.

EFFICIENTLY BUILDING EFFECTIVE MUSCLE

For most people, "building muscle" means weight training. As you'll see, that's with good reason. Until twenty or thirty years ago, weight training tended to be something exotic for athletes other than Olympic lifters, body builders, and wrestlers. Nowadays, however, everybody and his brother (and sister!) seems to be lifting weights.

Almost all of them, however, are wasting their time.

Why? Simply because they train inefficiently. Most weight-trainers make meager gains at best and build little useful muscle.

If you take away nothing more from this chapter (or even from this book) take away two words that are also two essential concepts about exercise: *effective* and *efficient.* To get the most out of your training, you must train efficiently and you must build effective muscle.

Effective muscles have three qualities: mass, endurance, and strength. All athletes may not require all three qualities. Olympic weight lifters, on the one hand, concentrate on the explosive strength needed for a single lift, and have little need for endurance; distance runners, on the other hand, have little need for great strength, but must develop endurance to the highest degree.

Wrestling requires both. And hand-to-hand combat — which, we know, closely resembles the sport of wrestling — also demands all-around muscular development.

Where does muscle mass come in? Consider this fact: if you don't have mass with which to work, it's *impossible* to develop strength and endurance. You can't build a log cabin without logs, and you can't build muscular fitness without muscle tissue to train.

Those of you with wrestling experience may remember spending the day of a match spitting into a cup in order to make weight. And so, you might object that mass isn't really a concern for wrestlers, who compete in a sport of strict weight control. That's true. Amateur wrestling matches are frequently decided by forfeit, when the wrestler from one team is unable to weigh-in under the limit but his opponent makes weight.

But when's the last time you heard of someone forfeiting a streetfight?

Streetfights are often physical mismatches. In the real world of combat, no one is going to stay out of a "match" because he has a ten-pound weight advantage — or, for that matter, a hundred-pound one. Make no mistake about it: weight is a genuine advantage in a fight, whether on the mat or in an alley. That's why *all* combat sports — wrestling, boxing, judo, full-contact karate — try to match the men who face each other so that there's no more than ten or 15 pounds difference between their weights. Otherwise, competition tends to become not only unfair, but also dangerous. Hence, there is a trend in boxing towards "junior" weight classes (although in the pro ranks the extra money that comes from more "championship" bouts also plays a role); even the 13 pounds between the welterweight limit (147 lbs.) and the middleweight mark (160 lbs.) proved too great, so now there's a junior middleweight class at 156 lbs. Even in the less concussive sport of freestyle wrestling, the authorities have put a 275 lb. limit on the heavyweight class, after the likes of NCAA champs Chris Taylor (422 lbs.) and Tab Thacker (452 lbs.) in the 1970s and '80s.

"Bet The Weight"

An adage among boxers goes, "A heavyweight's jabs hit like a light-heavyweight's knockout punches." Those of us with wrestling experience know that the same thing holds true on the mat. Even the strongest wrestlers realize how much relative power they lose when moving up a single weight class, much less two.

Mass makes an even greater difference on the street. All that mass doesn't necessarily have to be muscle, either, due to the short duration of most streetfights: the slight roll around your middle that would make your coach curse and keep you out of your best weight class for wrestling is usually no problem in a streetfight. Leaning on an adversary (literally, not figuratively) will tire him very quickly, and the more weight you carry the harder you'll be to push around. Much as we like to sympathize with the underdog, and as ready as we may be to believe the happy fiction that a little guy — by means of speed, skill, and attitude — can overcome a hulking brute, it's smart to "bet the weight" in the real world of physical violence. Nine times out of ten, the bigger man wins the battle, on the mat or anywhere else.

Size is a deterrent, too. Beer-keg biceps and a chest as big around as a refrigerator make you a less inviting target for someone who thinks he's tough and spoils for a fight. That's why bars like *big* bouncers! Bouncers are supposed to prevent trouble, not pound customers into the floor, and the size of a good bouncer is usually enough to keep drunks from fighting. The middleweight boxer or the 150 lb. black belt may be more dangerous in fact than the 300 lb. bouncer, but the big guy is a lot more threatening to the troublemaker who doesn't know the smaller guys' reputations. David beat Goliath in the end, but the giant scared the hell out of the whole Israelite army before that.

And there's a final reason why mass is important in a fight: *power!* Power is strength in motion. A small man of, say, 150 lbs., can develop his muscles so that he has fantastic strength, but he will never have the *power* of a relatively untrained 250 lb. man

whose bench press and dead lift are only a few pounds greater than the lighter man's lifts. Why? Because of a law of physics that states: force = mass x velocity. The small man may be faster than the big guy (and probably is); but it will be hard for him to generate as much force because of the big man's much greater mass. That's why football coaches like big backs for short yardage: they may not have as much speed for the ten- and 20-yard runs, but they have the mass — and, therefore, the power — to blast through the line. As I explained in my boxing book, *Championship Streetfighting,* mass in motion makes for power punching. Mass in motion is just as important for powerful wrestling. And so, the more mass you have to set in motion, the more potential power you possess.

Goliath, the Bible tells us, wore a "coat of mail" that weighed "five-thousand shekels of brass" (which certainly sounds like a lot). And that brings us around to another advantage of muscle mass for the streetfighter — it acts as armor. It's hard to walk around in coats of mail nowadays and not attract the attention of cops and psychiatrists, but thick muscles can serve almost as well as protection against kicks, punches, and clubs.

Doubt it? I was once in a bar where some professional wrestlers went to unwind. One of the wrestlers had a few too many drinks — at least in the opinion of the bartender, who didn't want to serve him any more. When the wrestler threatened the bartender, the manager of the bar called the police, who then faced the unwelcome task of trying to arrest a 275 lb. muscleman who was in no mood to be arrested. The cops swung at the wrestler with their clubs, but the wrestler just covered up, took the blows on the massive muscles of his arms, shoulders, and back, and bowled through the police and out the door. The police repeatedly hammered on that wrestler — but to no effect. Huge, hard muscles were armor against nightsticks.

You and I may train all our lives and never come close to building the amount of muscle mass that a heavyweight wrestler possesses. Anyone who's not suffering from a debilitating disease, however, can increase his muscle mass.

In addition to building the bases of strength and endurance, developing a more intimidating appearance, and piling on a kind of natural armor, the man who increases his musculature concurrently increases his confidence. Projecting confidence is probably the single best defense for a street fighter, who walks with an aura of assurance that keeps him out of most conflicts. He who looks strong, feels strong, and *is* strong is the one who has the least to fear on the street.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF MUSCLE?

Before we get into the specifics of efficiently building effective muscle, let's take a moment to clarify terms. Muscle mass is self-explanatory, but "endurance" and "strength" aren't always clear. And so...

By ENDURANCE, I mean the ability of the muscles to move a moderate weight repeatedly without rest, and without tiring appreciably. Endurance comes into play when the streetfight goes on for more than two or three moves.

By STRENGTH, I mean the ability of the muscles to move a maximal weight only once or a very few times. Strength involves a short, peak effort — one push, one takedown, one hold — that finishes the job. Since such extreme efforts of short duration are the sort the streetfighter is most likely to need, a major part of your training should always focus on obtaining the greatest possible strength.

Too many people who train with weights, or work out in any other way, make fair gains in muscle mass, lesser gains in strength, and almost no gains in endurance. In a wrestling match, all three qualities are necessary. All three qualities become even more important in a life-or-death streetfight. So build *useful* muscles — big, strong, and enduring — and be ready for the reality of hand-to-hand combat.

SEQUENCING

The "secret" to efficient muscle-building is sequencing. The fact is that the three qualities of effective muscle — mass, strength, and endurance — cannot be built all at once. Nevertheless, most people blunder along blindly in the gym, working out with the intention of developing all three at once (that is, when they train with any real intention at all).

Why do they waste their time? I think it's a matter of following the conventional wisdom. Somewhere, the beginner hears the standard nonsense that he "has to" follow a schedule of "one exercise for each body part," "three sets of eight to ten repetitions," "three times a week." And so, the beginner follows that schedule, makes decent gains (in mass at least — but far lesser gains in strength, and almost no gain in endurance) for a few months because his underdeveloped muscles will respond to *any* exercise. Then he sees his development fall to near nothing and his increase of usable athletic ability stays mediocre. And then he quits.

The lesson to learn from that all-too-typical tale of failure is: *DON'T BE RULED BY THE RULES!* Be a pragmatist when working out — if the plan produces results, then stick to it until it fails to produce results. I'm going to spell out a muscle-building program (one based on scientific research and practical experience) that I *guarantee* works better than the standard stuff, but it's still not a program written in stone and handed down by God Almighty to the Moses of Weight Training on Mount Sinai. The human body varies greatly from individual to individual, and the workout that turns your neighbor into the Hulk might do nothing but turn you stale. I provide guidelines, not rules. Feel free to experiment, and if the program doesn't do the job for you, then try different programs until you find one that does work for you.

With that said, let's get back to the nuts and bolts of *sequencing.*

Since it's impossible to make maximum gains in mass, endurance, and strength at the same time, the trick is to train in sequences: three to eight weeks concentrating on mass, then a

similar period to build endurance, and finally one that focuses solely on strength. Then, if you want more mass, you can begin the whole sequence all over again; or, satisfied with your weight, you may just go through the endurance and strength sequences again; or, use whatever combination of sequences fits your needs and works *for you.*

Why do I recommend spending at least three weeks on each portion of the sequence? Simply because scientists have found in the laboratory — and I have found in the gym — that the human body requires that long to complete the chemical adjustment in the muscles to achieve each of the qualities. In my experience, the first week of workouts on any one portion of the sequence is occupied with getting the weights coordinated to the correct number of reps, the second week is a period of adjustment, and the real development (whether in mass, endurance, or strength) begins only in the third week. The eight-week outside limit is another guideline, not a hard-and-fast rule; but, again in my experience, gains tend to diminish by the sixth week and disappear by the eighth. The human body is a dynamic system, and requires variation in its exercise program if it's not to stagnate, and indefinite development is impossible.

The pattern of mass, then endurance, then strength is another guideline — but an especially sound one. Start by building mass because you need some extra tissue with which to work in developing the other two qualities. Of course, if you begin with a good amount of muscle mass (or at least an amount that satisfies your needs), you may not need to build more. Endurance comes next because the most effective muscles, and the ones that will accept strength training most rapidly, have the well-developed blood vessels that endurance training produces. Strength comes last because strength training takes advantage of the mass and endurance already developed, and is the most strenuous part of the program.

Even if you're an experienced weight-trainer, give my sequencing program a try, especially if you've stagnated on your present system. I think you'll find yourself spending less time on your

workouts, but gaining more muscle of better quality. Sequencing is the intelligent way to work out with weights, the triumph of quality over quantity.

PROGRESSIVE RESISTANCE

Remember Milo? That ancient Greek wrestler built himself into the strongest man of his time by lifting a bull every day. He started when the bull was just a calf, and as the calf grew so did Milo's strength: the bull put on a little weight every day as it grew, and so Milo's muscles grew a little bigger and a little stronger every day to meet the challenge of a heavier lift. With that early muscle-building program, Milo discovered the key to workouts that work — progressive resistance.

Despite all the modern "advances" in exercise science, we can still learn a lot from Milo. In fact, you must use the principle of progressive resistance if you want to build bulk and strength.

First, notice that Milo started small. Picking up a calf and carrying it around on your shoulders may be a feat for you or me, but it was the limit of Milo's strength when he started training. So start at a level you can handle: no matter how dissatisfied you may be with your strength at the beginning of your program, you *will* improve if you train regularly and intelligently. Who knows? Maybe you'll get strong enough to lift that bull.

Second, Milo exercised diligently. He didn't miss workouts, and neither should you. Daily weight workouts are too taxing for most of us (although an every-day schedule can sometimes produce results if you train on just one overall lift, as did Milo), but if you make excuses — "I'm tired;" "I'm too busy," etc. — and miss every third workout of your every-other-day schedule, then you won't get stronger. Planned workouts performed regularly are better than violent bursts of activity now and then.

Third, Milo made *frequent* and *small* increases in the amount of weight he lifted. That's the "secret" of progressive resistance: as your muscles grow stronger, you must give them greater challenges

— or they will not continue to grow. (Unlimited progress is impossible, of course — otherwise we'd all be as strong as Superman. But when you stop making progress in a particular exercise, then it's time to try a different one.) Milo's weight increases were also very small, probably five pounds or less (how much does a bull grow every day?). Follow Milo's example and, for the most part, add only 1¼ or 2½ lb. plates to each side of your bar during any one workout. You may not be able to boast about such slight progress, but it will help you to avoid injury; and, over the course of a year, you will have added, say, 50 pounds to your lift, whereas the man who tried to add 20 pounds a workout hurt himself and quit lifting. Steady small gains are the ones that last.

The last lesson you can learn from Milo is that you don't necessarily need a barbell to enjoy the benefits of progressive resistance. The story of Milo lifting a bull may be apocryphal (although in this century a strongman named Herman Mann trained until he could carry a young bull that weighed about 800 lbs.), and nowadays rodeo riders are probably the only athletes who work out by wrestling cattle. Nevertheless, you can apply the *principle* of progressive resistance to almost any exercise. Lift barrels, pipes, or buckets, and make the resistance progressive by adding a handful of sand every workout. Make calisthenics, running, or jumping progressive by wearing a backpack and adding bricks or other small weights. Be creative about progressive resistance, and you can work out anywhere at any time — and get stronger just as Milo did. Barbells are the *best* way to employ progressive resistance (because the resistance is easy to measure, and because they can be used for such a variety of exercises), but not the only way. By all means, find a gym, or spend $100 for your own weights (you won't be so tempted to miss workouts if the weights are right there in your garage), and use barbells to build muscle; but don't wait for weights to start working out. Wrestlers used progressive resistance long before there were iron weights, Universal Gyms, and Nautilus machines.

DETERMINING YOUR MAXIMUM

Weight-training programs (including mine) often tell you to use some portion of your maximum when working out. For example, you might be able to lift 200 lbs. once for your maximum bench press, and work out with 140 lbs. (*i.e.,* 70 percent of maximum) for reps when building mass. Therefore, it's useful to know your maximum.

Unless you're a competitive lifter, however, you probably don't know your max. Most of us lack the mental focus and highly trained nervous system that would allow us to execute a genuine peak lift. That's okay, though, because straining for that maximum lift is a sure way to get injured.

And so, it's safer — if not necessarily as accurate — to determine your maximum from the number of repetitions you use in your regular workouts. The following chart will enable you to do that (just keep in mind that it's a *rough* guideline: endurance varies with the individual, and some people who can lift 300 lbs. cannot necessarily lift 120 lbs. 30 times).

if you can do this many reps	you're using this much of your max
2-3	99-90%
4-6	89-80%
7-10	79-70%
11-15	69-60%
21-30	49-40%
31 or more	40-39%

Keep in mind that you must use at least 30% of your max to make *any* gains in strength (and only resistance of 80% of maximum or more will build up that maximum). Using less resistance will build endurance, but not strength.

REST FOR BUILDING MUSCLE MASS

Growth is the natural course for muscles. Why, then, do so many people experience such difficulty in building muscle mass?

Because they work too hard.

Weight training, or any other strenuous exercise, does *not* build muscle. Rather, it does the opposite: it breaks down muscle. Fortunately, the body naturally restores those broken-down muscles, building them back bigger and stronger. But to do that, the body needs REST.

Go by this guideline when trying to build muscle mass: *REST IS EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT AS EXERCISE.*

Train too hard (*e.g.,* by doing three sets of each exercise, and an exercise for each body part/ muscle group, three times a week) and you'll only succeed in exhausting yourself. If you work strenuously with challenging weights (as you should), you'll soon go stale, find yourself listless and logy, and in fact retard your muscular development. You'll be overtraining.

Overtraining is especially bad if you're the sort of person whom ironheads call a "hard gainer." Some men spontaneously grow huge on bad diets and any kind of exercise — and a lot of them end up in the NFL or the WCW. Most of us have to be satisfied with more modest gains, and most of us have to train more systematically to achieve them. Once a man's achieved physical maturity in his mid-20s, he's almost always a hard gainer. Nevertheless, exercise physiologists and other scientists have demonstrated that men *can* continue to make muscular gains well into "old age." The fact is that you are *never* too old. There are body-building champions in their 50s, and such great old-time strongmen as John Y. Smith set records in their 60s. Stanislaus Zybszko, wrestled for the professional championship (before pro wrestling was an exhibition) in his 50s.

The system by which even a "hard gainer" can build muscle mass may at first seem too light. To be fair, it won't result in the kind of "ten pounds a week" nonsense that muscle mag

mountebanks try to sell (usually along with a dose of dangerous — and expensive — steroids). Nevertheless, it will build quality muscle for the long haul, and produce lasting gains.

Forget about the party line of eight to ten reps and three sets. To build muscle *mass,* you need to work the muscles more intensely and about twice that long: aim for 15-20 reps. Three sets is a waste of time except for the elite bodybuilders: most people only hold back their efforts on the first two sets, saving it up for the third. If you work *intensely,* one set is sufficient, and two is the maximum (the first a warm-up set). If you can pump out 20 reps in the first set and 20 more in the second, then you need to add more resistance, not more sets.

Weight itself shouldn't concern you too much. Competitive weightlifters need to keep poundages constantly in mind, but for wrestlers and streetfighters barbells are just a means to the end of building muscle. At least at this stage of your training, concentrate on *perceived effort* when lifting. Everyone has different abilities, and even an individual's abilities can vary from workout to workout. You know when you're working hard enough — you can just barely eke out that 15th to 20th rep. As someone once asked me, "Could you do one more rep if I put a gun to your head?"

Worrying too much about poundages also leads you into the bad habit of cheating at the lifts. Bending back to do a curl with those impressively heavy dumbbells won't do much about building mass in your biceps; nor will bouncing the barbell off your sternum at the bottom of the bench press help develop thick pecs. Use strict form, and focus on working the muscles involved in the exercise. When training for mass, it's sometimes wise not to strain for full extension when lifting, so that all of the work is done by the muscles involved, not by supporting bones and locked ligaments. For example, do *not* touch the bar to your chest at the bottom of a bench press, but stop a quarter-inch or so from contact, so that your ribs and sternum never passively support the weight; likewise, do *not* lock your elbows at the top of the lift.

Know-it-alls around the gym (a good reason to spend the few dollars it will cost to purchase your own weight set and work out at home) may say that you're "supposed to" work out with half bodyweight when doing curls, or that you "must" press your bodyweight every workout. Don't listen to them. Listen to your own body, and become aware of when your muscles are working intensely enough to do the 15-20 reps that will help you build muscle. Awareness and concentration are important, and the mental effort involved in focusing your mind on each rep — really *feeling* the muscle work — will add immeasurably to your development.

Perhaps the most certain way to cultivate that awareness is to perform all your muscle-building exercises *slowly.* Pumping the weights fast, even if you stick to strict form, tends to move the effort onto momentum, rather than on the muscles themselves. You should plan on at least a four-count going up (positive movement) and an eight-count going down (negative); since strength and mass are built mostly by the eccentric contraction (*i.e.,* negative), a guideline is to make your negatives twice as long as your positives. And a slower pace — say, a ten-count — may be even more useful for building mass. Instead of speeding up the movement as you tire near the last rep (the "natural" response of the typical weight-trainer who thinks the weight raised is the goal), slow down. Focus on tensing your muscles as you raise a barbell, and resist the weight as it drops against gravity. Exercising slowly, constantly aware of your muscles at work, makes your workout very strenuous — but it's also the best way to build mass.

Intensity is just as vital as awareness. Look around any but the most serious gyms, and you'll see people standing around. It's the old bullshit about three sets. I first noticed this fact when coaching high school athletes: I did my lifting at the same time as they did, but I was always finished in half the time. Then, one day, I just watched the kids — and saw them sitting or standing, instead of lifting, for a full three-quarters of the time they were supposed to be working out.

"What the hell are you doing?" I asked one kid.

"I'm recovering, Coach."

Go to any health club, and you'll see the same thing, and hear the same answer.

Don't waste your time in the way that most weight trainers waste theirs. Since you won't be doing the same old wasteful three sets, you won't have to spend time "recovering." If you use single intense sets, move immediately from one exercise to another, taking only the time you need to adjust the plates on the barbell. Better yet, obtain enough bars and plates (or use some combination of weights, cables, calisthenics, and isometrics) so that you don't have to make adjustments. If you use two sets, take no more than 30 seconds rest between sets. Wait any longer, and you'll lose too much of the training effect. In other words, *work* during your workout.

Working intensely through your whole workout keeps it short. From warm-up to cool-down, an efficient workout should last no more than an hour. For most of us, 30 minutes might be better and more efficient.

How often you train is another personal matter. The usual schedule is three times a week on alternate days (usually Monday, Wednesday, Friday) for the full workout. That's a good program for many people. If you find that schedule too exhausting (because, remember, you're working *intensely),* however, then feel free to adjust it.

An effective mass-building program can be built around three workouts a week, exercising only one or two muscle groups at each workout. A sample schedule might look something like this:

MONDAY (Shoulders/Upper Back): pull-ups; behind-the-neck press; bent-over rows.
WEDNESDAY (Legs/Lower Back): squats; deadlifts.
FRIDAY (Chest/Upper Arms): curls; bench press.

Tailor your weekly schedule to your level of fitness and your occupation and other activities. If your job involves a lot of

physical activity, such as construction, you're liable to be in decent shape already, and performing every exercise three days a week will tend to wear you down. If you work at a sedentary job, however, you can tolerate longer and more frequent workouts.

No matter what your schedule, make time for weights or other resistance training. Even 15- or 20-minute workouts can add a lot of muscle over the long haul, and, fortunately, intelligent and intense training does not require a great deal of time.

Whatever schedule works best for you, *never* work out with weights more often than every other day. Your body needs the rest if it's going to grow greater muscle mass. Don't forget that rest is as important as exercise if you want to build bigger muscles.

DIET AND MASS DEVELOPMENT

I learned a lot from coaching. The thing I learned that surprised me the most is how much faith many athletes place in food. Everyone wants some magic food — high-protein, low fat, complex carbohydrate, or whatever is the current fad — and thinks that eating will make up for inadequacies of training.

Sorry to ruin your illusions, but it's not so. All the protein powders, liver pills, and vitamin and mineral supplements in the world won't pack on muscle mass if you don't train efficiently and with hard effort.

"De gustibus non disputandum" ("You can't argue about tastes"), said the poet Horace two thousand years ago. He was correct. Taste, and nutrition, are things that vary greatly from person to person. Some people grow solid muscle on a menu of meatball subs, pizza, and beer; others need fish, salad, and carrot juice to approach the muscularity of the guy on the junk-food diet.

With that in mind, I'll give you the same dietary recommendations that I gave to the kids I coached (and the ones I follow — for whatever that's worth). First, listen to your body and eat the foods you enjoy; if you hate broccoli, for example, there's probably a reason. That reason may be a food allergy: loading up

on broccoli when you're allergic to it (or tuna, or liver, or whatever some "expert" says you must have) will just make you sick, and prevent muscle growth. Second, eat "real" and largely unprocessed food in preference to highly-processed food from packages. Read the ingredients on the label: if you can't pronounce all those chemicals, then stay away.

The foods you like are the foods that are good for you. Taste often has a lot to do with ancestry. I've trained Mexican kids who ate things that would have left me on the toilet for half the day, but they were tigers on it. Milk, for example, is an excellent high-protein muscle-builder for lots of people (especially those whose ancestors came from northern Europe), but plenty of others can't digest it. Develop an awareness of what works for you.

To gain muscle mass you'll have to increase the amount of food you eat. If you're working out intelligently, and eating nourishing food instead of junk, then more of that extra food should end up as muscle. Don't add a box of doughnuts to your diet, though, and expect to end up with anything other than a doughnut around your middle. Small increases of nutritious calories (say, an extra glass of milk at every meal — if you can digest it) are often enough. Most people digest four or five small meals better than one or two big ones (the old body-builder's adage, "eat six small meals a day," is that rare bit of conventional wisdom that holds true); but, again, be guided by your own schedule and tastes.

The one dietary *rule* I will lay down is, *drink plenty of water.* Americans tend to be chronically dehydrated to begin with, and exercise will dry you out even more. Once you've been thoroughly dehydrated — as I was once while hiking in the desert — you never lose a sense for how much your physical performance depends on having enough water in your system. Coffee, tea, beer, cola, and many other common drinks are diuretics, so plan on a glass of water for each one of those you drink. In addition to water before and after your workouts, it's also useful to have a full glass on hand and take small sips between exercises while working out.

BUILDING ENDURANCE

Once you've developed some extra muscle tissue with which to work, the next step is to add endurance to those muscles. Keep in mind here that we're dealing with muscular endurance, not aerobic endurance (a topic for later in this chapter). You'll get some aerobic benefit, of course, from resistance training; but muscular development is the focus of this part of the sequence.

To build endurance, you need to double the reps you did to build mass. Thirty to 40 reps is a good target. Go higher if you like, especially if working without weights or some other means of adding progressive resistance, but returns tend to diminish after the 50th rep.

Doing 40 reps — an order of magnitude larger than the typical weight trainer ever experiences — demands that you drop significantly the weights used for every exercise. From whatever weight you trained with while building mass, you'll drop by a third or half; plan on starting with about 40% of your max. That can be a real blow to the ego if you're thinking about the weight lifted, rather than the muscular development you're seeking. Remember to always be guided by perceived effort instead of poundages. When training for endurance perceived effort should be light in comparison to the effort you feel when building mass or strength.

Another difference between mass building and endurance training involves speed. In order to increase endurance, you must perform your exercises *fast.* You'll need the speed to make your blood move and force capillary development throughout your new muscle tissue. Do not, of course, sacrifice control or form, but do pump the reps. Think of moving at a speed roughly equal to the speed at which you'll shoot your takedowns and other moves in a fight.

Weekly schedules for building endurance may not differ much from those you use to build mass. Continue to work out every other day. Even with lighter resistance, muscles need about 48 hours to recover from intense exercise. Rest remains important.

BUILDING STRENGTH

Strength-building puts more stress on your body than any other part of the sequence. You must work at the very edge of your limits — and eventually go beyond them — if you want to increase your strength. In its purest form, strength is the ability to move a great weight just once. If, at maximum effort, you can just barely press a barbell of a given weight, then you can be sure that you're exercising strength.

What do I mean by "maximum effort"? Well, as a coach once told me, "If I put a gun to your head, could you do a second rep? If you could, then you're not working at maximum effort!" The trouble with training at your maximum is that it's dangerous. First, it's easy to pull a muscle or suffer another injury when straining for your single greatest lift: watch how many wounded limp away from Olympic or power-lifting competitions. Second, trying to train with your max inevitably leads to discouragement because it's *impossible* to peak every workout. But that's okay, because a wrestler (or a streetfighter) is never restricted to a single effort in the real world of hand-to-hand combat. A competitive weight-lifter needs to practice single lifts, but one-rep workouts won't do much good for you.

For strength, then, you should aim for two to five reps. Two is the minimum I suggest; not only for the reason mentioned above, but also because experience has shown me that few lifters possess the mental focus to perform maximum single reps in the gym. Most of us inevitably hold back at least a little, and that little is enough to force a second rep. Singles *do* work for many advanced lifters, but to use them effectively you must build up to singles very slowly. Think about at least a few weeks (or a few weight increases) at five reps, then add enough resistance so that you can do only four, then at least a few weeks on fours before threes, and so on until you're doing singles regularly. In other words, move up to singles over a period of months — or you're begging for injury. Five is a maximum number of reps for building strength simply because

going beyond that number tends to reduce the effort expended. If you can do more than five reps, you should add more weight to gain strength.

Strength training also requires more than a single set. Physiologically it may be ideal to do just one *absolute maximum* rep of each lift — but that's also impractical. Two sets are pretty much a mandatory minimum for the strength portion of a training sequence; again, that's mostly due to the inherent mental reservations all but the most dedicated weight-trainers will have. If you're using very low reps (doubles or singles), plan on three to five sets. Longer rests between sets (one minute to as much as five for real peak efforts) are also necessary for the strength portion of your sequence.

As always, pay attention to perceived effort, as much as poundages. If you *feel* you're putting forth near-peak effort in the first set of two reps, then, leave it at that. There's always the next workout to improve on your performance. Every-other-day workouts remain the rule when building strength, and if you're lifting as hard as you should, everyday workouts won't really be an option.

Lifts for strength can be performed in two ways. Slow lifts, with the four to ten count you used when building mass, are useful for building strength as well, and they're the safer way to train when working with near-maximum resistance. To develop *explosive* strength, however, you need to lift explosively. Think of how fast Olympic lifters snatch a barbell overhead. Be very careful when lifting peak weights fast, though, because it's easy to lose control of the weights and suffer an injury. When in doubt, aim for safety, and lift more slowly.

"Lockouts"

A variation on the usual way of lifting — and one that's good for improving strength — is the use of "lockouts" (a.k.a. partial movements). Strength is greatest when a muscle is near its tightest

contraction. As a result, you're capable of lifting the greatest weight at the "peak" of a lift: *e.g.,* when the bar is near your shoulders for a curl, and when your hands are farthest away from your chest for a bench press. Conversely, you're at your weakest when a muscle is at its greatest length, as at the bottom of a curl (which is why you're tempted to cheat by bending back when curling a too-heavy weight). Of course, you need full-range movements to fully exercise a muscle and build bulk. In real life, however, movements for wrestling or fighting rarely go through the full-range. How often, for example, does your arm travel two feet, from behind your shoulder to full extension, when you push someone? More likely, your arm will travel a few inches through the last quarter or so of its range of movement — and that's where your arm's pushing strength is at its greatest. Therefore, lockouts are a more "realistic" way to lift.

The way to train for that maximum strength with lockouts is to lift a weight greater than your limit in the full-range movement. In a bench press, for example, you might add ten pounds to your maximum, then lower the barbell only until your upper arms are parallel to the floor (instead of lowering it all the way to your chest) before pressing it. By *gradually* striving to lower the weight an inch or two lower from workout to workout, it's pretty easy to move beyond your previous peak in a full-range movement. Thereby, you build raw strength to greater levels, and overcome the "sticking points" that hold back many weight trainers.

A word of warning about partials, however: make sure you maintain control of the barbell and don't lower any weight beyond the point where you can still press it. Once you lose control of any weight, it's easy to injure yourself. Have strong racks on hand. Or, better yet, have a workout partner who can spot you when training.

ISOMETRIC STRENGTH

Isometrics were all the rage in the 1950s and '60s. They're almost forgotten nowadays. Nevertheless, isometrics remain a

useful part of any strength-building regimen, especially for wrestlers. Other athletes may not make much use of isometric (or "holding") strength, but wrestlers use it every time they struggle to maintain a hold. Wrestlers *need* isometric strength.

The problem with isometrics is that they build strength only in the position in which you perform the contraction: *e.g.,* doing an isometric curl at 90 degrees will only strengthen your biceps at that angle. And so, because they realize they cannot get the advertised "Total Body Workout In Only Sixty Seconds a Day," most people drop isometrics.

Don't be so stupid.

Throw an ounce of thought at the "problem" with isometrics, and you'll figure out that it's easy to work around it and still get all the considerable benefits from isometric exercise. All you have to do is perform each exercise with a separate contraction at *many different points through the range of motion.* With that isometric curl, you might do anywhere from five to 100 contractions (whatever your strength, willpower, and time allow), through the entire range of motion and working the muscle at many different angles.

Even such high-volume isometrics use your workout time very efficiently, because the contractions are so short. When you do isometrics, hold each contraction for about six seconds. Count out loud, so as to ensure that you breathe during the exercise *(NEVER* hold your breath during isometrics — doing so can raise your blood pressure dangerously high). Then relax the muscle completely, shake off the effort for about five seconds, and start again from a different angle. All isometric contractions should be your maximum: your muscles should shake from the exertion. After a hard isometric workout, you'll feel like a dishrag wrung out and hung to dry — but you'll be on your way to building strength you can use in the grapple.

I suggest isometrics as a supplement, rather than a substitute, for weights, cables and other forms of progressive resistance training. Of course, if you're away from the gym, it's better to do isometrics only, rather than miss an entire workout. Isometrics provide the

most benefits when done at the end of your workout, when muscles are already tired from other exertions. You may perform high-volume isometrics at any point of the muscle-building sequence; however, I think isometrics are especially useful during the endurance part of your training: they prepare your joints to accept heavy strength training by building up tendons and ligaments.

There are four ways of doing isometrics. First, and simplest, is muscle-against-muscle; such isometrics are useful for wrestlers in particular because they closely simulate the way in which your muscles strain against an adversary's in a fight. Second, you may perform isometrics against an immovable object: *e.g.,* practice a push, punch, or kick against a wall. Third, you can make isometrics part of your regular lifts by doing "36-Second Exercises:" *i.e.,*. pause at three points during both the positive and negative portions of a bench press, and hold each pause for a six-second isometric contraction. It's easy to incorporate the "36-second" idea into most lifts, as well as calisthenics, such as push ups and pull ups. Be warned, though, that a handful of "36-second" reps is as tiring as three sets of ordinary lifts (and great time-savers for that very reason).

"How to Make an Isometric Exerciser"

The fourth way of performing isometrics is the most versatile and requires an apparatus so simple and easy to make that everyone ought to have it. To make an all-around isometric exerciser you'll need two strong sticks (I used two 15″ lengths cut from an old hockey stick), about six feet of strong, thin rope (I used 3/8″ nylon), and some duct tape. Tie each end of the rope (two half-hitches work well — for those of you who remember your *Boy Scout Manual)* to the middle of a separate stick. Wrap the knots with duct tape so that they won't slide on the sticks.

That's it.

Using the sticks as handles, you can duplicate almost any lift, (*e.g.,* curls, rows), cable exercise, and — most importantly —

hand-to-hand combat move. Roll the rope around the handles, then slowly unroll it as you move through the various points of your range of movement.

Pay for all the health clubs and home gyms you want, but you'll never find a cheaper, more versatile, or more useful exercise device than that isometric exerciser. Work out hard (remember — muscles should *quiver* from isometric strain) and regularly with the isometric exerciser, and you *will* notice great increases in usable strength. The guy who taught me how to use and make the exerciser did nothing more than supplement his daily push ups with isometrics — and he became unbeatable at arm wrestling.

THE BEST LIFTS — AND OTHER EXERCISES

As with everything else about physical training, the "best" exercises are those that suit you. The lift that produces great mass and strength for one man may injure another. Experiment and find what works. What follows, then, are more guidelines — not hard-and-fast rules — for lifts. In my experience, these lifts work best for developing the strength and fitness most useful for a wrestler.

For building the all-around strength used in wrestling or streetfighting, the *DEAD LIFT is* perhaps the best exercise. One movement develops legs, hips, back, and grip. Dead lifts most nearly duplicate the action you'll use for takedowns or lifting an adversary. Wrestlers, Olympic and power lifters, football players, and other athletes in search of power make the dead lift a constant part of their weight training. The great track coach, Percy Cerutty, called it "The King of Lifts."

Why, then, do so many wannabe muscle boys of the sort you'll see in "health clubs" avoid the dead lift? Because it's damned hard work. After even moderate training, you'll be using bodyweight and more for reps in the deadlift, and hauling all that weight will train your heart and lungs as well as your back and legs. Also, the typical weight-trainer concentrates too much on his upper body, the bulging biceps and pecs that go along with his notion of "the body

beautiful." Real *usable* strength lies much more in the muscles of the lower back, hips, and waist — exactly the region developed by the dead lift.

"The Seat Of Strength"

Consider the story of Arthur Saxon. At the turn of the century, Saxon was among the best of the professional strong men (and, not coincidentally, was a champion *wrestler,* in the style known as "belt wrestling"). How strong was he? At a bodyweight of 200 lbs. — and using a specialized technique, the Bent Press — Saxon lifted a 386-lb. barbell over his head *with one hand!* Saxon himself attributed much of his amazing strength to dead lifts and other exercises that concentrated on building up his lower back, hips, and waist. He called that area of the body "the seat of a man's strength."

Besides, even if your interests lie in developing huge shoulders, arms, and chest, you'll have to build up the lumbar region of your back to support that upper body mass. It's impossible to have a Neanderthal torso on top of a puny back. Be sure to make the "seat of your strength" as strong as possible.

There's really no excuse for not doing deadlifts. Because the lift is a natural, basic movement, you can perform it even without a barbell. Find anything heavy enough to furnish resistance, and lift it: heavy pipe, a log, a tool box, a sack full of sand. Wrestlers were doing dead lifts — and getting strong — long before anyone built a barbell.

Some special notes about dead lifts: above all, lift with your *back straight* and your *head up.* One reason for the excellent overall development produced by the dead lift is that the exercise works legs, hips, and back *as a unit* — just as you'll use them on the mat or in a fight. Transfer the strain from that unit to your lower back by lifting with a bent spine, and you'll only invite injury and lose the benefits of the "King of Lifts." Also, add weight *gradually* to your dead lift (I recommend adding only the little 1¼ lb. or 2½ lb.

plates in any one workout). Because most anyone can work up to impressive poundages in the dead lift, there's the temptation to add resistance too quickly, before your muscles have the opportunity to grow and adjust to the new weight. Train for the long haul; there's always the next workout.

Next to dead lifts, *SQUATS,* are the best exercise to build up the "seat of strength." Body-builders may need full squats to give shape to their thighs, but wrestlers are better off with half (or quarter) squats. Your knees rarely bend beyond the point where your thighs are parallel to the floor in a fight. So why stress them that way in the gym? Again, makeshift weights *(anything* that can provide the needed resistance — remember: *perceived effort* is your guide, not weight lifted) can be used for squats. Free squats (no resistance other than body weight) are fine for building endurance: Indian wrestlers do them by the thousands, and their endurance is phenomenal.

When most people think of weight training, they think first of the *BENCH PRESS.* There's a good reason for that: the bench press is among the most beneficial exercises, both for body-building and for strength development. Bench presses, especially when done on the incline bench, closely duplicate the kind of pushing motion you'll use in a real-world fight.

With that said, don't over-emphasize on your bench press. Around the gyms, you'll always hear somebody asking, "What's your bench?" Then, if you can't bench 400 lbs., he'll boast of some weight that's supposed to impress you. Don't be impressed. Most people cheat when they bench press, or they make real gains in that single lift by concentrating on it and nothing else. Why not? After all, the bench press is the lazy man's lift — you need never get off your back to do it. The fact is that any wrestler can tell true stories of twisting into pretzels the muscle boy whose bench press was well beyond the limit of the fighter. By all means, make the bench press a regular part of your weight training workouts; but don't fool yourself into believing that the ability to pump a heavy barbell

while lying on your back in the gym *necessarily* grants you some special power in a streetfight.

If you're traveling, or for some other reason don't have access to a bench and barbell, you can still derive the benefits of the bench press from *PUSH UPS*. The pectorals, anterior deltoids, and triceps are worked in much the same ways when doing push ups as they are in the bench press. Push ups, however, provide a workout bonus that bench presses don't possess: push ups force your lower back and trunk muscles (*i.e.,* that ol' "seat of strength" again) to work isometrically to support your body.

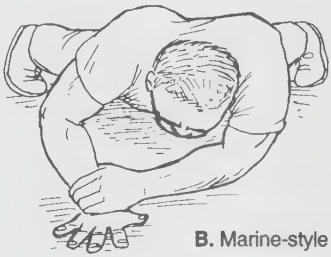
Push ups are especially useful during the endurance portion of a sequence. The "problem" with push ups, however, is that anyone in decent shape soon works up to two sets of 50. How to increase the resistance? One way is to raise your feet onto higher and higher stairs, benches, or any other apparatus, and thereby throw more and more of your body weight onto your hands. Of course, that method changes the angle at which you perform the exercise — but that's beneficial, for few movements in a real fight are performed from the angle at which most people do bench presses on a flat bench. Another way to add resistance to your push ups is to add weight without barbells: *e.g.,* by wearing a backpack filled with bricks or magazines. The old-style explosive Canadian Air Force push ups, in which one pushes hard enough to shoot off the floor and clap hands or one's chest before landing, are very strenuous, and add a polymetric effect to your strength development. If you do those, though, make sure to work out on a mat or other well-padded surface; otherwise you'll damage your joints from the shock of landing. Finally, one-handed push ups — either Rocky-style or Marine-style (grasping at the wrist with the hand not pushing) — are enough of a challenge for most people. Working each arm by itself also leads to more balanced development.

Overhead *PRESSES* (a.k.a. military, Olympic presses) are a better measure of overall strength than bench presses. If you're pressed for time and want a single overall exercise (like Milo's bull-lift), do cleans and presses: *i.e.,* clean the weight every time

you press it. A variation on that is the squat press, wherein you press the barbell from behind your neck at the top of every rep of the squat. Jerk-presses will help you to build the explosive power and upward surge that you'll use all the time when wrestling.

One-Handed Push Ups

A. Rocky-style.



B. Marine-style

The Olympic lifts, the *CLEAN AND JERK* and the *SNATCH,* are among the best exercises for building overall strength. They work the back and thighs as much as the arms and shoulders, and they get at the grip because just handling heavy barbells in fast lifts requires great strength in the hands. Because a successful clean and jerk or snatch demands great speed, they are also useful for building power — teaching you how to use your muscles and mass explosively, as you will in a fight. But before you try the Olympic lifts, make sure you find someone to teach you the correct form. Bad technique can be very dangerous in fast overhead lifts.

CURLS are the ideal exercise for building big, strong upper arms. Because of the "pump" you receive from a set of curls (and the respectable resistance it's easy to attain), they're also among

the most satisfying lifts psychologically. Some lifters deride big biceps; but any wrestler learns that curls duplicate a motion he uses frequently (*e.g.,* when locking up a leg for a takedown). Mass on the upper arms that's easy to build by means of curls is also one of the best "armor plates" you can use to get close to a puncher in a fight: take a punch on your hard arm, rather than in the face. Go ahead and do curls — and build the arms that will make you dangerous on the street.

PULL UPS are great for building biceps, but also develop all-around, practical upper body strength. One of my peculiar hobbies (just *one?)* involves finding and taking the physical fitness tests of armed forces from around the world: it's a great confidence builder to know that I can max the PT requirements of any enemy I may have to face in battle. I've noticed that those tests — without exception (West Point, the US Marines, Israelis, Russians, *et al.)* — use pull ups as a test of upper body strength. Nevertheless, lots of "muscle boys" who brag about their bench presses can't do a half-dozen pull ups. Why? Because pull ups are hard work: you must work with your full bodyweight, and there are no machines or artificial aids to help you lift it. Serious body-builders, wrestlers, and other athletes, however, invariably include pull ups in their training, and so should you. Try to work up to ten reps or more: when you can handle 20, you'll be able to max any of those PT tests (and even the Boy Scouts require 13).

Exercises for your abdomen are as necessary as dead-lifts for building up the "seat of strength." Wrestlers need strong stomachs and sides because of the twisting motions that are part of so many moves; streetfighters should pay even greater attention to strengthening their abdomens because they must be ready to take punches there. For that purpose, I suggest the boxer's training tool, the *MEDICINE BALL.* Catching 15 pounds of hard leather in your gut will help you shrug off body punches in a fight. *SIT UPS* remain the best calisthenic for developing abdominal strength, but *LEG RAISES,* especially done hanging from a pull up bar, are also good.

Another area of concentration for the wrestler is the neck. Wrestlers strengthen their necks in order to bridge out of pins, but it's unlikely you'll use that maneuver in a streetfight (bridging on broken glass in a parking lot would be painful). Nevertheless, it pays to have a thick, strong neck: muscles protect against blows to the neck, and also act as shock absorbers when you catch a punch to the head. Show me a fighter with a glass jaw, and it's probably because he has a pencil neck. *BRIDGES* remain useful exercises; just be sure to do them both face-up and face-down, and twist your head around so as to work your neck muscles from different angles. You can add progressive resistance to bridges by carrying plates or dumbbells when performing the exercise. A *HEAD HARNESS* allows you to work neck muscles progressively as well. *NECK ISOMETRICS* require no equipment, but exercising neck muscles from all directions will give you a bull neck if you do so diligently.

Of course, I've only touched upon a few of the useful lifts and calisthenics that may be part of your program. I think it's wise to begin a muscle-building program with basic lifts, then move onto specialized ones as you progress. And even advanced lifters will derive the most "wrestling strength" from basic exercises that use multiple muscle groups (*e.g.,* dead lifts, squats, cleans and presses). But, as always, use what works for *you.* Just as importantly, vary your exercises from time to time (every three weeks to every six months) — otherwise, you'll stagnate physically and grow bored with working out. Have a few basics around which to build your program (*e.g.*, squat, dead lift, press), then introduce variations for the smaller muscle groups (*e.g.,* biceps, forearms, calves) as seems productive.

If you're dying to add more than two sets of an exercise to your schedule, experiment with adding a set or two of variations of the exercise first: *e.g.,* do one set of regular squats, one set of front squats, and one set of back squats (they certainly worked for the legendary wrestler, George Hackenschmidt) instead of three sets of any one exercise; thereby you'll work your leg muscles from

different angles and presumably achieve fuller development. Variety is the spice of workouts as much as it is the rest of life.

THE FIRST STEP

The weight-training program I have outlined is a first step towards your maximum muscular development. It's a program that will work very well for a beginner, or for an experienced lifter whose progress has stalled on the same old stuff. If you're satisfied with your gains of size, strength, and fitness on a program of continuing sequences, then go ahead and keep up the good — and productive — work. Likewise, if you're a big guy who thinks his weakness is endurance, then keep lifting relatively light weights for many reps.

But if at any time you seek to achieve the super strength that will serve you better than anything else when it comes to grappling in a life-or-death struggle, then I think you must be prepared to lift *hard* and *heavy* and *for a long time.* Rare men are born with amazing strength; the rest of us have to work for it.

And I sincerely believe that the strength potential of everyone is much greater than most are willing to credit. If you're not suffering from a severe orthopedic injury or a fatal disease, then there's nothing more than attitude — and years of hard work — keeping you from building physical power that would make the average modern American shudder. I've seen it in myself and others, and I've read about it in many more. The truth is that *you CAN* be strong like Superman in comparison to what you are now and what those around you are like — if you train for that kind of strength.

The trouble, of course, is getting the right information about how to train. Most of what passes for the best weight-training advice nowadays is lies, nonsense, pseudo-science, or stuff that works only for freaks who swallow lots of steroids.

Whatever you do, stay away from the slick body-building magazines and the celebrity fitness books. Doctors may provide good advice about ways to treat and avoid injuries, but they also

tend to underestimate the physical potential of the "average" man (maybe that's a result of being around sick people most of the time). Coaches can be another source for good information (John Jesse's *Wrestling Physical Conditioning Encyclopedia,* reviewed in Chapter Eleven, is a place to start). But again, coaches may undervalue someone who is not an elite athlete.

Let me, then, suggest one excellent place to start your search for sound advice about strength training: the book, *Dinosaur Training: Lost Secrets of Strength and Development* by Brooks D. Kubik. Brooks is a bench press champion (over 400 lbs.!)and high school wrestling champion who revolutionized his own training not by seeking the latest research, but by going back to the old-time strongmen, lifters, and wrestlers — the "dinosaurs" who gave the book its title.

What kind of programs can you expect from *Dinosaur Training?* How about heavy singles, concentration on grip work, the 5x5 system, barrel lifting, power rack training, log lifting, death sets, and the farmer's walk? The book even has some worthwhile information about how to train for strength that will be useful in combat. And that's just for starters: Kubik gives lots of good advice and gives it in great detail, and it's advice that works. His work also emphasizes the importance of thinking for yourself, is written with great enthusiasm, and is very inspirational.

I cannot recommend *Dinosaur Training* too highly. You can get a copy from Kubik himself for $14.95 + $5.00 postage sent to 4101 Hycliffe Avenue, Louisville, KY 40207. Trust me — it's more than worth the money if you're serious about strength training. Kubik's not giving me any kickbacks. It's simply that I myself have gained so much strength through my own "dinosaur training" — and I believe you can, too.

WRESTLING CABLES

Everyone who begins a muscle-building program thinks to use weight-training and calisthenics. Some of the smarter ones also try

isometrics. Nowadays, however, few consider cables — and thereby neglect a cheap and versatile training device that can produce lots of mass and usable strength, especially in their arms and shoulders.

Men in search of strength didn't always neglect cables.. The old-time strongmen and wrestlers frequently made them the core of their muscle-building program. A noteworthy example of that was Eugen Sandow, who used cables in combination with weights and gymnastics to become the first famous "muscleman" of modern times in the 1890s. And Sandow's muscles weren't just for show: he regularly wrestled — and defeated — two and three men at a time as part of his show, and he once wrestled a *lion!*

Cables go by various names (*e.g.,* chest expanders, chest pull, strands) but are all pretty much the same: two handles connected by elastic cords or springs, which provide resistance. With that simple apparatus, you can duplicate many lifts, *e.g.,* curls, laterals, one-arm presses, flyes, pulldowns. Just as with the isometric exerciser, it's easy to simulate any wrestling move with cables.

Cables have several advantages over weights. First, they're portable. Even if you drive long-haul trucks or live in a studio apartment and think you don't have room for a gym, get a cable set: you can keep the cables in a bag and get a better workout than most people who own a half-ton of iron.

Second, they're cheap. There are heavy-duty cable sets on the market, but even the best of them don't cost more than 50 dollars; ones available at the sporting goods store usually run ten to 15 dollars (and those provide the handles to which you may add greater resistance). Make your own, and you can own a cable set stronger than any on the market about the same amount.

Third, cables work muscles in ways that weights do not. Some people lift and get stronger — but for nothing else than raising more weight in the gym (especially when they train only on tracked machines). Wrestle one of those guys, and you'll twist him around like a wet noodle, despite the fact that he's "stronger" than you. Cables develop usable strength because they work the muscles

"naturally": where your muscles are strongest, at greatest contraction (*e.g.,* the top of a curl), cables provide the greatest resistance; at the weakest part of a movement (*e.g,*. the bottom of a curl) cables give resistance suitable to your ability. Therefore, unlike a dumbbell curl, in which the resistance is limited to the amount you can handle at the weak part of the lift, cable curls work the biceps to the maximum throughout the entire exercise (something like the way in which Nautilus machines are supposed to work). Cable exercise is more like the muscle-against-muscle stress you meet in a fight than are weights.

Fourth, cables can train muscles that are hard to reach with barbells. Pull ups and dumbbell rows are good for the lats, but nothing gets at *all* the muscles of the upper back as well as cables. Most weight-trainers build grossly over-developed pectorals and anterior deltoids, but build comparatively little strength in the opposing muscles at the back of their shoulders and upper back: hence, they suffer injuries that better balance would prevent, and they develop a round-shouldered stoop that restricts their chest expansion and endurance. If you aim for that big bench press, use cables as a supplement for your upper back and avoid those problems.

The final advantage of cables is that they produce an exceptional "pump." Working out with cables floods your muscles with blood to a degree that's hard to achieve with iron — and wrestlers, body builders, and weight-lifters (most notably, Paul Anderson, the strongest man of modern times) all testify that the best path to muscular growth is that "pump." Pro wrestlers often do rapid cable exercises in the locker room, just before entering the ring, in order to make sure that their muscles look huge for the fans; likewise, body-builders use cables immediately before posing.

(Mind you, training for a "pump" alone will not enable you to reach your maximum potentials of muscular size and strength. You'll also need to lift *heavy* weights — or other forms of maximum resistance. But as a warm up or supplement for mass and endurance work, training for a "pump" can do you good.)

Despite the usefulness of cables, many weight-trainers lay aside cables as they progress in strength: the typical five-spring cable set simply doesn't offer enough resistance for many exercises. Also, with cables it can be difficult to make the small increases that are the key to progressive resistance training: when you can do, say, 20 reps with four springs, that fifth spring may make it too hard to do even five. But those problems are easily overcome — just make your own cable set.

The simplest way to make your cables progressive is to replace a commercial set's springs or strands with bungee cords. Any hardware store or auto parts shop will have a wide selection of bungees. In fact, anything that stretches can be used with a cable set: surgical tubing, inner tubes from bicycle tires, springs. Experiment with different combinations, different lengths and thicknesses of bungees, until you find a challenging resistance. I bought five half-inch thick bungees, and now I have a cable set that's far stronger than any I've seen for sale. As always, *perceived effort* should serve as your guide.

Safety is as important when working out with cables as it is in the weight room. If you add bungees to a commercial cable set, make sure that the handles can handle the increased load without breaking (I had to reinforce mine with steel rods). Before every workout, inspect bungees, springs, *et al.,* for wear, and use new ones if the old ones seem ready to snap. I recommend that you also wear safety goggles (the sort you'd wear when working in the wood shop), so that if a cable snaps it won't hit you in the eye. You may look goofy — but who's going to tell you that when you're doing reps with a cable set that the average "muscle boy" can't stretch once. Cables, remember, give you *wrestling strength.*

BUILDING A VISE-LIKE GRIP

Grip development deserves its own section in this chapter because few things are more useful in a real fight than a powerful

grip. Even the most aggressive adversary tends to lose his will to fight after you've crushed all the bones in his hand.

"Cyclops"

How important is a powerful grip in the grapple. Well... let's look at history. Let's look at the great old-time wrestler, Franz "Cyclops" Bienkowski.

"Cyclops" started his career as a strongman. At just 5'6" — but over 250 lbs. of muscle — he certainly looked strong. And he proved he *was* strong, not merely by means of lifting weights (he could press 242 lbs. with *one arm),* but also by means of the remarkable feat of *breaking* coins with his bare hands. A number of strongmen, weight lifters, and wrestlers have been able to *bend* coins in their hands, but "Cyclops" is the only man, to my knowledge, who could *break* them.

That kind of strength in the hands and fingers must have been truly terrifying. For when "Cyclops" turned his attention to Greco-Roman wrestling, opponents would not compete against him unless he was not allowed to use certain holds — ones in which his powerful hands could crush other wrestlers.

Maybe you'll never develop a grip to equal that of "Cyclops." But, then, you're not likely to battle champion wrestlers. On the street, a crushing grip can take the fight out of your adversaries as easily as the coin-breaking strength of "Cyclops" unmanned his opponents.

The problem with grip work is that it can take a lot of time. There are dozens of muscles in your hands and forearms, and to give each of them the attention you spend on, say, your biceps would take hours. The solution is to work the grip simultaneously with your other exercises.

The best way to do that is by means of *THICK BARS.* "Sleeve" your barbell (or dumbbells) with increasingly thick diameters of pipe, and you'll soon develop a grip that will crush steel. An ordinary bar is $1^{1}/_{16}$" thick, and even a 1½" diameter sleeve will

make a noticeable difference. Nowadays, I do all of my lifting on a thick bar: I started with a 1¾″ diameter lead pipe for a sleeve, then moved up to pipe that's just over two inches thick. With the latter, my max deadlift immediately dropped by 19% — but when I can get back to my old max, I know my grip will be much stronger. If you're prone to back strain, thick bars provide automatic protection: your grip gives out before your back does. To keep the sleeve snug against the bar, you can use PVC pipe as a buffer sleeve. Another way to thicken a bar is to wrap it with duct tape (of course then the sleeve won't revolve for fast lifts), and that's also the way to make thicker the handles of a cable set.

PUSH UPS AND PULL UPS can also be turned into grip exercises. Do push ups on your finger tips; when that becomes too easy, do them on fewer fingers for added resistance. Fist push ups will not only toughen your knuckles for streetfighting, but also strengthen your wrists. Pull ups done gripping the bar with only a few fingers will make your fingers like claws in a fight. You can apply the same principle to your lifting bar: the combination of a thick bar lifted with a few fingers makes for an unbeatable grip; but it may take years to build that kind of strength.

An exercise specifically for the grip is the *HAND GRIP.* A hand grip is anything you squeeze to strengthen your grip. There are many commercial models that use springs to provide resistance, and the best of them have enough springs to make the resistance progressive. It's easy for most men to work up to high reps even with the most resistance on those devices, though; in that case, increase your reps into the hundreds: gripping muscles benefit from lots of endurance work. Of course, you don't necessarily need to buy a handgrip: squeezing a rubber ball for isometric contraction can work just as well. There are also putties manufactured for use as handgrips, and modeling clay may also suffice. Hand grips are very beneficial, and the easiest of all grip work to incorporate into your schedule. Carry a handgrip in your car to pump during gridlock, and you'll not only get stronger, but also improve your temper.

Another very useful piece of equipment is a *WRIST ROLLER.* It's simply a bar with a rope (or chain) tied to the middle; at the other end of the rope, you tie a weight, then roll it up using wrist action alone. Even a light weight will work your forearm muscles tremendously. Again, there are wrist rollers manufactured by the exercise companies, but it's easy to make your own. A thick bar on a wrist roller will build grip strength just like a thick sleeve on a barbell.

Lifts for the grip are pretty much confined to *WRIST CURLS.* To get the most out of wrist curls, let the bar roll onto the middle joints of your fingers at the bottom of the underhand lift, and don't neglect curling the weight overhand. You can attack wrist curls from other angles by loading plates onto only one end of a dumbbell bar, holding the other end like the handle of a hammer, and levering the weight up and down. Just holding onto the bar in that exercise forces you to squeeze tightly, and thereby strengthens your grip.

You're not likely to use all of the grip exercises described in any one workout — but that's the way things should be. Because there are so many muscles in the hands and forearm, it pays to vary your grip work. Lifting a thick bar will give you a base of grip work onto which you may add a specific grip exercise or two as your time and interests indicate. For example, I like to work hard on one kind of hand grip for a few months, then move onto another for slightly different development. It's hard for me to pass up a new handgrip when I see one in a sporting goods store (fortunately, they're pretty cheap). New challenges like that help maintain my interest in grip work.

No matter which grip exercises work for you, I recommend that you save specific grip work for the end of your workout. Since grip muscles receive plenty of stress throughout the workout, they'll be "pre-exhausted" at the end, and so, you can get a maximum grip workout in less time.

HOW TO BUILD ENDURANCE

Streetfights are short. *Usually.* If the fight you're in turns into one of those unusual ones, and lasts longer than, say, 30 seconds, do you want to be the one to run out of gas before your adversary?

If you don't, then train for endurance. All the muscular bulk and explosive power for which you've trained won't prevent you from getting your ass kicked on the street if you collapse from exhaustion after ten seconds of battle. In a serious fight, exertion and excitement cause strength to drain away at an alarming rate — quite literally by *the second.* Unless, of course, you have endurance as well as strength.

Wrestlers know the value of endurance. Unless a match ends in a pin, it will last, at most, only six minutes. *Only?* It sure seems like a lot longer if you're the man on the mat. Strength disappears just as fast in a wrestling match as it does in a streetfight, and that's why wrestlers — even the hugest heavyweights — train for endurance as much as for skill and strength.

RUNNING is the supreme way to build endurance. In fact, running is the single best all-around exercise for the human body. Wrestlers, like boxers, invariably make "roadwork" a key part of their training. I know a high school coach who always starts the season by sending his wrestlers out on six-mile runs every day for two weeks: the lighter guys (especially those on the cross-country team) find it easy; but the heavyweights, coming fresh from football season, think it's torture. Nevertheless, all the wrestlers run — and later in the season they win because they ran. You may have neither the time nor the need for six-mile runs, but I'd suggest 15 minutes of continuous running three times a week as a reasonable minimum goal.

If the mass-building portion of your training sequence left you with a little more mass around the middle than you'd like, then running is the best way to trim the fat. LSD (*i.e.,* long, slow distance) will burn fat, as well as strengthen the ligaments and

tendons in your legs in preparation for heavy lifting. Aim for runs of 30 minutes or longer.

Even if you're already in good shape from weight-training or other exercise, distance running can be difficult. As with all training, work within your limits and build slowly. I suggest you run for time rather than distance; set a goal of 15 minutes instead of two miles. Time goals tend to keep you from running too fast (by the way, if you suffer a side stitch, slow down — and walk if you have to — until it goes away: you lose the training effect when you feel cramps). To keep up a reasonably fast pace, run about 30 seconds past half of your time goal, then turn around and run back, trying to finish within your goal.

Too many wrestlers, especially heavyweights, suffer injuries from running. But it's easy to avoid injuries if you train intelligently. First, slowly increase the time you run, adding no more than a minute a workout until you meet your goal. Second, don't run every day: three days a week (usually the days you don't do any resistance training) are plenty, and you can build and maintain endurance by running two days a week if you're also lifting. Third, protect your feet with high-quality running shoes (not tennis shoes, basketball shoes, or cross-trainers). Finally, as much as possible, run on soft surfaces (*e.g.,* grass, dirt, cinder or rubberized tracks) in preference to sidewalks and roads.

Other aerobic exercises, such as *SWIMMING, CYCLING* (stationary or on the road), or *STAIR MACHINES,* can also build endurance. If you want to use them, then go ahead. I don't think any exercises work as well as running — nor do they build the mental toughness that comes from going outside to run in all kinds of weather; but *any* exercise that raises your pulse for a training effect and holds it there for 15 or 20 minutes will increase endurance.

Like boxers, wrestlers know the value of *JUMPING ROPE.* Since it's difficult to jump rope slowly (a fast pace keeps the rope moving), the exercise is more strenuous than distance running and allows you to hit your target heart rate quickly, and therefore works

especially well as a warm-up for weight-training or wrestling. Keep jumping for ten minutes or longer and you'll get an endurance workout equal to roadwork. But jumping rope has an advantage that running lacks: it enhances agility. Clumsy people can't jump rope well; if at first you find it hard to jump for long without stepping on the rope, practice will soon make you light on your feet. Then it's time to challenge your coordination with tricks, such as crossing your arms back and forth, jumping on one leg at a time, and jumping back and forth and around in circles (a great exercise for improving footwork).

If you're gym-bound, due to icy roads or other dangerously bad weather, jumping rope is one way to train for endurance. Another is *BENCH STEPPING.* If you've ever taken the Harvard Step Test to measure your cardiovascular fitness, then you know how strenuous it can be to step up and down on a bench. The bottom step of a staircase offers a ready opportunity for bench stepping, but it's better to use a bench 12 to 15 inches high. When your legs are sore from the pounding of running, bench stepping is an alternative that is easier on the joints. Carrying light dumbbells (say, five to 20 pounds) to make a bench stepping workout more strenuous.

Vince Lombardi said, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." Train for endurance and you need never be afraid because you *know* that you can fight to the finish. The sweat you spend at the tedious task of building endurance will pay off on the street when your adversary huffs and puffs and feels his strength disappear — while you just keep fighting.

GOALS AND CHALLENGES

Stagnation is death for physical fitness. If you work up to a certain weight in a lift, a certain number of push ups, or a certain distance run at a certain speed — and *stay at that certain level* — you'll never get stronger, more enduring, faster. In fact, if you stay with the same workout at the same level for any length of time, you will, in fact, lose strength, endurance, and speed. Scientists have

demonstrated what coaches and athletes have known intuitively for centuries: the body adapts to a level of stress, then becomes able to handle that same level with less and less strength (or endurance, etc.), as long as the stress doesn't change.

In other words, you must constantly strive for more. You must constantly seek new challenges. You must constantly set higher goals.

Think about ways to set your sights higher. Perhaps it's easiest to find new challenges in your weight training, because the weights provide a precise way to measure your progress. Perceived effort is by far the best way to guide your lifting at first. Advanced lifters usually need more concrete indicators of how much effort they are expending.

Up to now I have deliberately avoided suggesting specific weight goals — for I didn't want to discourage any of my readers. And I don't want to discourage them now. So, *please* keep in mind that the goals I'm going to suggest are just that*: suggestions.* I haven't necessarily reached them, and you may not. Moreover, the goals I *suggest* are ones for advanced lifters, men who have years of steady training behind them. Some may achieve the goals I suggest in months; others may take ten years. But all will get stronger in the course of working towards those goals — and so, they'll be better grapplers and far more effective in any streetfight.

Okay, then... One way to set weight goals is in proportion to bodyweight. If you haven't reached it yet, your first goal for upper body strength should be bench pressing more than your own weight. Every man who trains is capable of that goal. Then, try shooting for the goal of pressing (or jerking) *overhead* your own weight. I've read that one man in 20,000 can clean and press his own weight (and that's an old statistic, from the days when Americans were stronger). That's a considerably more difficult feat, but one that I think most men can work up to eventually (and just think about how confident you'll be in a fight when you know that 20,000 others aren't as strong as you!). After you can press your weight, aim for curling it. You'll be like Hercules compared to

the average tough-guy-wannabe when you have that level of strength. Other good bodyweight goals include dead lifting and squatting with *double* your weight. Hard, again; but by no means impossible with diligent effort.

Goals in absolute poundages may also work for you. The weights I'm suggesting are certainly the sort most *heavyweights* can achieve or surpass over time. Plenty of strong but lighter men can hit them, too; but if you're under, say, 200 lbs., you may want to set your goals a little lower — at least at first. 200 lbs. lifted overhead (press or jerk) is a classic sign of genuine strength. A 300 lb. bench press is an indication of superior upper body strength (and many readers, I have no doubt, can go well beyond that). A 400 lb. squat tells you that your legs have serious strength. A dead lift of the same weight should convince you — as well as potential opponents — that you have real power in "the seat of strength."

With calisthenics you can aim for reps. As I noted earlier, 20 pull ups receives the highest grade on many military PT tests. If you can do just *one* pull up with one arm, then you possess genuinely exceptional arm strength; some of the strongest men who have ever lived have only been able to do about a half-dozen one-arm pull ups. Aim for 50 or more push ups in a minute, and 50 or 60 sit ups within the same time. You can also get goals for various calisthenics, graded by age, from the *old* Royal Canadian Air Force exercises. The highest chart of the RCAF program is made for "champion athletes," so you know that if you can achieve any of the goals on that you must be exceptionally fit. You can also get goals for running (one mile) from the Canadian Air Force program.

Whatever goals you set for yourself, don't give up once you've achieved them. As soon as you hit your target, aim for a new one, a higher one. Always seek out more challenges, and you'll maintain your highest level of physical fitness — and *always* be ready to "kill-as-catch-can."

FLEXIBILITY

Wrestling can turn you into a pretzel. And your body will snap into fragments as easily as a pretzel if you fail to stretch your muscles and keep your joints loose.

Since I don't have to fight against the conventional wisdom about flexibility — nowadays everybody knows its importance for athletes — I won't lay out a stretching program in the detail I gave for building muscle. I will offer a few tips that should make your stretching more useful.

First, realize that your muscles won't stretch very far until they're warmed-up. Therefore, the best time to increase your flexibility is at the end of your workout. A little stretching before you lift or jump into other strenuous activity is useful — but a few minutes of jogging, jumping rope, or bench stepping will increase your heart rate, warm up your muscle, and make you more flexible.

Second, the order in which you stretch muscle groups is important. If your shoulders are tight, for example, your neck cannot stretch properly; therefore, *always* stretch your shoulders before your neck. Also, stretch calf muscles before hamstrings.

Third, stretch *s-l-o-w-l-y*. Fast stretching tightens muscles — and so achieves the exact opposite of what you want. When you reach the point at which you begin to feel the stretch, don't bounce. Hold it. And hold it for a count of 30 or more. That's the time your muscles need to relax and stay more supple.

Fourth — and most importantly — stretch within your limits. When the circus comes to town this summer, look for someone who is flexible enough to scratch the top of his head with his big toe. You'll find him in the tent under the sign, "Rubber Man." That's what people with extreme flexibility are — *freaks!* Wrestlers don't need that kind of flexibility, so don't work to achieve it: you'll only waste your time or hurt yourself. There's no Eleventh Commandment that says you must, for example, be able to touch your toes without bending your knees. Your individual build and muscle development may make toe touches impossible. But do

stretch as far as your limits allow, and gradually — *i.e.,* over a period of months — let your hamstrings grow more flexible. Who knows? Eventually you may indeed touch those toes.

WRESTLING, THE MOST IMPORTANT EXERCISE

Last but not least...

Although I devote more space in this chapter to building muscle and the other aspects of physical conditioning, actual wrestling — working on the mat against another fit competitor who tries to pin you as you try to pin him — is the supreme exercise. Run for miles and lift until you're built like Mr. America, and you'll get into great shape — but for working out, not for fighting. For if fitness alone would win a streetfight, you'd be reading a book about exercise, not one about wrestling.

To win a fight in the real world, you need skill and determination as much as physical fitness. And wrestling is a way to acquire those qualities.

Skill makes up the bulk of this book. Chapters Two through Nine illustrate the wrestling skills for you to use in a streetfight. The moves are there; it's up to you to practice them: get on the mat and do so.

Determination is another thing that's up to you. Pumping out that last rep of the deadlift in the gym, of course, will develop a certain amount of determination, but that kind of determination won't necessarily carry over into a fight. To deal with the frustration of seeing your favorite takedown fail or the pain of taking a hard fall — *and nevertheless continue to fight until you win* — you must have the experience of pain and frustration in practice. Wrestling will give you that experience and teach you that you can overcome difficulties.

Do not doubt that wrestling also serves as a means of building physical fitness, though. Working muscles against weights and cables is not quite the same as working them against the muscles of

a determined opponent. There are plenty of men who can lift a lot, but aren't nearly as strong in the grapple as their weight records suggest. That's why weight-lifters don't beat wrestlers on the mat, and why the guy who can punch the heavy bag all day won't be a real boxer in the ring. Training is specific: if you want the strength to beat another man in combat, you need to exercise muscle-against-muscle strength in practice.

Think of your wrestling practice as sparring. Prizefighters and karateists (the good ones anyway) know that despite all their conditioning, shadowboxing, or kata, they're not ready for combat until they've swapped punches with other fighters. Likewise, wrestlers know that all the mental practice in the world won't allow them to apply a hold. They have to try out the real thing against a real person.

Sparring is practice fighting made as *realistic* as is *safe*. Both words, "realistic" and "safe," are important.

Don't sacrifice safety for realism. None of us want to practice our killing techniques by killing someone (as Soviet Spetsnaz commandos practiced by killing prisoners from the gulags). Boxers wear headgear and heavy training gloves so they can prepare for the fight without getting injured. To practice "cutting off the ring" against a puncher, I suggest you likewise use gloves and headgear. To practice falls, takedowns, and matwork, you'll need a padded surface. A wrestling mat is ideal, of course; but it's also expensive, bulky, and hard to obtain unless you have access to a gym. If you study Asian martial arts (especially judo), your school will no doubt have padded mats on which you may practice wrestling moves; the floor of a boxing ring is another possible substitute (although you must be careful not to get resin in cuts or your eyes). For practice at home, you'll have to improvise: several layers of carpet padding on the floor of a room *free from obstructions* might work as a substitute wrestling mat. Outdoor practice on sand (again — protect your eyes!) or soft turf is another option.

Above all, make wrestling practice safe by trying out holds *slowly* and *gently* — especially at first. You can pick up speed and

power as you gain more skill, but *NEVER* practice against a real opponent in ways that feel dangerous. Wrestling moves — even the "safe" ones — can cripple or kill, so use full-force moves only against a wrestling dummy, which is a kind of punching bag shaped like a human body (sporting goods stores can order them).

Realistic wrestling practice requires a real person to wrestle. Find a "sparring partner" with whom to practice. It's better to practice against more than one person, so that you get a feel for which moves work best against people of different weights and builds. Again, the martial artist has an advantage here: it shouldn't be hard to find other members of your school who want to learn some wrestling and improve their overall fighting skills. People interested in hand-to-hand fighting usually want to learn at least a little of any new "style."

The streetfighter may consider more exotic ways to make sure his wrestling skills will work in real world combat. For example, since you're not liable to be wearing your sweats and sneakers when a fight breaks out, it pays to get at least a little wrestling practice in your everyday clothes. A suit and tie may make you slow to launch your favorite takedown; so you'd better try moves in such clothes (if a suit and tie is everyday wear for you), and find out what works under realistic conditions. Likewise, you're not going to have a mat on which to land or use matwork in a streetfight. So, after you've mastered the moves in the gym, try them out on asphalt — and find out which moves you can count on in the real world.

Chapter Eleven
OFF THE MAT AND INTO THE LIBRARY

Practice is the only way to learn and perfect wrestling skills. Read all the books about wrestling, watch all the videos, and think all you can about your "warrior mind" — and you'll still get your ass kicked in the real world. Unless, of course, you've built the physical skills and fitness that a serious wrestler must possess.

That said, I *do* think you can learn a lot by studying books (and videos). Otherwise, I would not have written one.

This last chapter of ***Kill-as-Catch-Can,*** then, is what academics call "a survey of the literature." Since I hate academics, I'll call it eleven books (and one video) about wrestling skills that can be used in a streetfight. I've specifically chosen to avoid two kinds of books, no matter how worthwhile they may be: first, books that teach you how to wrestle for sport; second, books about judo and other easy-to-find Asian "styles." The latter are available at any bookstore, and every college with a wrestling team will have a library full of the former. No, I'm dealing with combat in bars and alleys.

I've tried to select a variety of sources, both books and videos available currently, and some first-rate stuff that has, unfortunately, fallen out of print. If I've put any particular emphasis on the works in this chapter, it's an emphasis on serious books from the World War Two-era — when men taught hand-to-hand combat, not "self-defense" and when their "art" was based on wrestling and boxing, not undigested mysticism. It may be hard to

find some of the books, but keep looking because it's worth the trouble. If you can find a university that had an "instant officer" program during the Second World War, you stand a good chance of also finding some of the more obscure books in this chapter.

Keep looking, keep reading, keep practicing — and *enjoy!*

Brown, Wesley. *Self Defense.* New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1951.

I've mentioned Brown several times already as an example of someone who taught *practical* unarmed fighting based on wrestling. And Brown certainly knew what he was writing about: captain of the Northwestern wrestling team, then coach at the same school; cop in Evanston, Illinois; lieutenant in the US Navy during the Second World War, and hand-to-hand instructor for Navy pilots. No doubt Brown's extensive experience of "the real thing" helped make his book one of the best, succinct (91 pages), and *realistic* manuals ever produced.

As a wrestler, Brown knows — and teaches — the "Lessons from the Mat." At the beginning of *Self Defense,* for example, Brown explains the importance of physical conditioning for anyone who wants to win a serious fight (a startling contrast to the usual advice in "self-defense" books). Brown also illustrates a wrestler's stance, falls, holds, and locks — and explains how to apply them in a streetfight. A sign that Brown is serious is his special emphasis on groundwork, something even most experienced fighters could add to their arsenals.

But Brown branches out from wrestling into what he calls "rough and tumble techniques." He emphasizes attacking an adversary's nerve centers with gouges, elbows, knees, and kicks (although I think he kicks too high); the knee drop is his favorite finishing move. When you find yourself fighting for survival, Brown suggests you automatically practice three "principles": first, immediately block *any* pressure to your own neck (for a choke hold will put you on the ground fast); second, use feints to make an adversary expose his vulnerable spots; third, throw that adversary

off-balance and simultaneously attack his "vital openings." That's good advice for any fighter anytime.

Brown well knows that streetfights have no rules and "unarmed combat" too often turns into one man with a weapon killing the man without one. Thus, he teaches wrestling-style techniques to take away knives and pistols from assailants. As you know, I'm *extremely* skeptical of grappling against a knife, much less a gun (but I suppose it's better than allowing yourself to get stabbed or shot): maybe Brown could get away with those techniques, but I'm not confident I could. Use such disarming moves at your own risk.

Far more practical is Brown's chapter about club *(i.e.,* baton, nightstick, billy club) skills for police. Since Brown was an officer on patrol, his advice is practical — "never become complicated." Also in the vein of police work, Brown includes a chapter on restraining holds and other ways to maintain control over an adversary. Finally, the manual has a chapter called "The Ladies' Angle," illustrating techniques which are practical for a woman to use in hand-to-hand combat.

Much as I dislike the phrase "self defense," Wesley Brown's *Self Defense* is a first-rate, accessible book about genuine streetfighting. It's well worth haunting libraries and used book stores to get a look at Brown's manual.

Cosneck, Bernard J. *American Combat Judo.* New York: Sentinel Book Publishers, Inc., 1959.

This is another manual of wrestling-based fighting that's firmly rooted in reality. Cosneck was a Big Ten collegiate wrestling champion in the 1930s, then went on to teach combat to Coastguardsmen during WWII. His commanding officer was Jack Dempsey (the two produced a good little book during the war, *How to Fight Tough),* and I think it's safe to say that between the champion boxer and the wrestler, the Coast Guard got the best *practical* streetfighting course available. The reader whose training has come primarily from Asian martial arts might like to note that Cosneck also studied jiu-jitsu, Chinese boxing (*i.e.,* kung-fu), and

French savate, so the moves he shows are particularly useful as supplements to the "style" you already know. Cosneck shows grappling (clearly illustrated with black-and-white photos) skills that work on the street: takedowns, holds, defenses, and disarming (*caveat lector:* I STILL think wrestling against knives is unwise). Although Cosneck emphasizes wrestling, he combines it with striking by means of "hacks" (edge of the hand chop) and "jabs" (middle knuckle punch) directed at nerve centers. He also has a short but first-rate section on which techniques to use against different kinds of adversaries.

Hand-to-Hand Combat. Annapolis, Maryland: US Naval Institute Press, 1943.

This may be the single best book ever produced about practical bare-handed fighting. It's one in a series of "sports" manuals put out by the team that trained Naval aviators (Wesley Brown is the unattributed author, and he demonstrates many of the moves) during the Second World War. The book is a thick hardback (228 pages, large format) with hundreds of black-and-white photos that clearly illustrate each technique. The basis of the "style," of course, is wrestling; but the book is truly encyclopedic: kicks and knee drops, hand strikes, strangles with a garrote, improvised weapons, etc. Even a veteran wrestler, boxer, or martial artist will find something new and useful in *Hand-to-Hand Combat.*

Jesse, John. *Wrestling Physical Conditioning Encyclopedia.* Pasadena, California: The Athletics Press, 1974.

This is a GREAT book for every wrestler — or for anyone who learns the first "Lesson From the Mat" and wants to get in top condition.

Jesse, a coach and genuine expert in the fields of sports medicine and physical education, wrote several first-rate books about weight-training for various sports (*e.g.,* football, track), but wrestling was his first love and brought out the best in him.

The emphasis of Jesse's manual is on weight-training, especially for developing the all-important lower back and midsection muscles that comprise the "seat of strength." A great variety of lifts for all parts of the body are well illustrated by black-and-white photos, and Jesse gives sample schedules for power, endurance, all-around development, and other specific needs. But, because this is a true encyclopedia, Jesse also deals with things most of us wouldn't consider: partner training exercises, continuous calisthenics to build endurance, lifting sandbags, interval training, gymnastic training, flexibility exercises, and diet. Jesse includes an especially valuable section about injury prevention, with exercises to strengthen ligaments in the ankles, knees, and shoulders. And all of the information is explained clearly, based on scientific research and practical coaching experience, and presented well.

But there's a special bonus in Jesse's encyclopedia — photos and brief biographies of great old-time wrestlers/strongmen, such as Arthur Saxon, George Hackenshmidt, The Great Gama, Otto Arco, and John Lemm. When you're down and don't feel like training, the examples of Lemm's *unassisted* 500 lb. squat or Gama's 1,000 push ups every day are just the things to get you going again.

LeBell, Gene. *Grappling Master: Combat for Street Defense and Competition*. Los Angeles: Pro-Action Publishing, 1992.

If you want a source for just about any hold, amateur and pro, then "Judo Gene" LeBell wrote the book for you. His isn't a hand-to-hand combat manual like the Naval Aviators' *Hand-to-Hand Combat;* it's confined strictly to wrestling. But what a lot of wrestling! There are literally *hundreds* of holds and variations in the book, all well-illustrated with black-and-white photos of LeBell himself and Mando Guerrero (a pro wrestling champ). Some of the moves are more practical for streetfighting than others; but there's plenty with which to experiment, and you'll be able to discover the moves that work for *you.*

Just like the others who put out good books about unarmed combat, Gene LeBell has experience. He was an amateur judo champion in the 1950s, and later became NWA (professional) wrestling champ. He taught wrestling skills to martial artists such as Chuck Norris and Benny Urquidez — not to mention officers of the LAPD. LeBell is by no means a youth, but as the photos in the book show, he's tough, fit, and strong, as well as knowledgeable. And those qualities in combination make for a man who knows what he's talking about when he shows you how to fight.

Lin, Willy. *Chin-na: The Grappling Art of Self-Defense.* Burbank, California: Ohara Publications, 1981.

For the person trained in tae-kwon-do, Japanese karate, Chinese kung-fu, or any other Asian martial art, *Chin-na* may provide an accessible source for grappling skills to add to your repertoire. As far as I know, it's the only book in English that deals with Chinese wrestling.

And it's a pretty good one. *Chin-na* places great emphasis on attacking pressure points and controlling an adversary by holding onto his hair or neck (head control works in every "style"!). My main criticism of Lin's book is that it stresses defense too much (hence, it shows lots of releases). Never forget that the best way to win a streetfight is to *be aggressive.* Nevertheless, I learned from the book, and so may you. Black-and-white photos illustrate clearly all techniques of "the grappling art."

MacYoung, Marc "Animal." *Floor Fighting: Stompings, Maiming and Other Things to Avoid When a Fight Goes to the Ground.* Boulder, Colorado: Paladin Press, 1993.

For a long time no one — not even the guys with scars and muscles who knew what they were writing about — wrote hand-to-hand combat books about streetfighting. There were a few good books about various martial arts (in the midst of *lots* of crap) and a few more good ones for soldiers and cops (*e.g.,* Brown's mentioned

above, Fairbairn's *Get Tough!,* Rex Applegate's *Kill or Get Killed),* but nothing for brawlers.

Until MacYoung, that is. And by now he has written a half-dozen or more books about barehanded fighting, knife fighting, improvised weapons, etc.

Although he has studied several martial arts, MacYoung has a proper attitude towards the difference between half-baked "art" and real fighting. One strong point of all his books is a heavy emphasis on awareness and advice on how to *avoid* fights.

Floor Fighting is a unique work on an important topic for the streetfighter. As I've said throughout ***Kill-As-Catch-Can,*** you must know how to keep fighting when things "go to the mat" — as they so often do on the street. He gives some good tips on falling (use tumbling falls, rather than judo ones), how to break grips, and savage floor work (gouging, maiming). The techniques are well-illustrated by a combination of line drawings and black-and-white photos.

"Animal"'s style may put some readers off; others will find it engaging — sort of like listening to a buddy telling war stories at the corner bar. However "Animal" strikes you, stick with him — and I guarantee you'll learn some worthwhile stuff about serious "matwork" on the street.

MacYoung, Marc "Animal." *A Professional's Guide to Ending Violence Quickly: How Bouncers, Bodyguards, and Other Security Professionals Handle Ugly Situations.* Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1996.

At this writing, this is "Animal"'s latest book — and it's a darn good one. The techniques in the book have special relevance to the streetwrestler because "Animal" emphasizes takedowns, restraints, controlling an adversary's center-of-gravity, and maintaining your own balance. War stories from time spent as a bouncer and providing security at concerts provides *realism* as well as entertainment. But like all of "Animal"'s books, this one tells you as much about how to avoid fights as win them. If you're a stranger

to real-world violence, the book may provide you with some invaluable advice; but even the experienced man can learn from it (I know I did).

Martin, Wayne A. *Hand to Hand Combat.* Hollywood: West Hollywood Tribune, 1944.

This little book is another of the fine WWII-era manuals that used wrestling as the basis for hand-to-hand fighting. Most were intended for servicemen on their way to combat in Europe or the Pacific, so you know they had to be accessible and had to work in the real world, not just the gym.

The author was a three-time All-American wrestler at the University of Oklahoma in the '30s. The two sidekicks, Hugh Nichols and Ralph "Wild Red" Berry, whose black-and-white photos illustrate the techniques, were both pro wrestlers.

Martin, like Brown and Cosneck, teaches grappling defenses against pistols and knives that I would not advise you to use. But he also teaches wrist locks, arm holds, and chokes that would work on the street. Best of all is Martin's answer to the question, Why wrestle? "It is the natural instinct for man or animal to wrestle." That's also why wrestling works.

Nakae, Kiyose (with Charles Yaeger). *Jiu Jitsu Complete.* Secaucus, New Jersey: The Citadel Press, 1975.

Jiu-jitsu is Japanese wrestling — but, as we learned, wrestling for combat, not sport. Dozens of books claim to teach the real "art," and most of those are bound bullshit; even the ones written by men who know the subject tend to be obscure and incomplete. *Jiu Jitsu Complete* is the exception.

Nakae was a Japanese (a warning to would-be martial artists: never study Asian martial arts from someone who's not Asian) who learned authentic jiu-jitsu in the rigorous traditional way instead of at some California strip mall simulation made safe for wannabes in Reeboks. And he was smart enough to get a good professional writer to help him with the book, so the ancient techniques are both

authentic and explained clearly. Line drawings made from photos illustrate the "tricks."

Nakae shows a great variety of jiu-jitsu moves — then has the good sense to say each reader should choose a few that work for him, and master those. I have reservations about the tricks Nakae teaches for use against knives and pistols (although Nakae himself was allegedly so fast that he could disarm a man holding a gun on him before the bad guy could pull the trigger!), but the rest of his techniques seem practical. The book is especially strong on throws, chokes, and strangles.

Any wrestler, boxer, or karateka who seeks a few jiu-jitsu tricks to add to his streetfighting arsenal can learn from Nakae's fine book.

Neff, Fred. *Lessons from the Western Warriors: Dynamic Self-Defense Techniques.* Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company, 1987.

As I've demonstrated in ***Kill-As-Catch-Can*** and *Championship Streetfighting,* Europe and America have "martial arts" disciplines fully as old — and frequently more useful in real fights — than the popular Asian styles. Although Neff originally trained in karate, kempo, and judo, he also understands the value of boxing and wrestling; as he explains in *Lessons from the Western Warriors,* no one "style" teaches every useful technique, and even "masters" can learn from wrestling and boxing.

About a third of Neff's book deals with wrestling (the rest is about boxing). The moves are fundamental, with an emphasis on takedowns and groundwork. Two strengths of *Lessons from the Western Warriors* are a chapter about combining wrestling with boxing (equally applicable to karate or kung-fu strikes) and another with tactics for fighting adversaries of different builds and "styles."

Lessons from the Western Warriors is one of a series of books about hand-to-hand fighting that Neff has written for youths ("the juvenile market," in writer's parlance), so don't expect street-

fighting savagery. Nevertheless, the book is easy to read and well-illustrated with black-and-white photos.

Starks, Nicholas. *Hardcore Submission Fighting, Volumes 1-3.* Available from Paladin Press.

I want to leave our look at the "literature" of wrestling-for-street-fighting not with a book but with a video. Many people find it easier to learn wrestling skills from videos than from books because they can see the moves in action, viewing them repeatedly and even in slow motion. If you want to learn from videos, I'd suggest starting with those of Starks — they're by far the best I've seen.

Starks is a champion of "Shootfighting" (similar to the "extreme fighting" we hear about so much nowadays), he's obviously fit, and he knows what he's doing. He demonstrates the holds and takedowns outdoors on grass (not in a gym), an action that I think gives viewers a better feel for which ones will work on the street. All the moves are shown slowly, with Starks taking care to point out any difficulties, and then at wrestling speed.

You may not want to learn all the moves Starks teaches (dozens on each tape), but I assure you that you *will* learn from his tapes. I did.

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