

Figure 2

The use of sneaky tactics is not always considered to be good practice. But in sparring or competition – and even defensive street-fighting situations – they will give you the upper hand when trying to control an altercation and resolve the situation.



Sneaky

Sparring TACTICS

F O R S P A R R I N G A N D T H E S T R E E T

SPARRING TRICKS VS STREETFIGHTING TACTICS

There are major differences between sparring, competition and street altercations. In sparring, we are quite intimidating; we hunt down and attack our opponents to win the point or achieve the knockout. However, in a street situation we are defensive and even humble, to an extent. A street altercation doesn't always start with a fight – more often there is some kind of negative exchange prior to an aggressive situation. Therefore, defence starts with the first negative contact.

FAKING AND DRAWING

In sparring, faking is used to hide where a technique is coming from and where it's going. It's also used to put an opponent on the back foot. Step-work is good for this. Basic steps are as follows:

Full hip and shoulder change – In a fighting stance with knees bent, push your back leg forward and your front leg back, with hip and shoulder following. Do

not spring up too high as this is slower and uses excessive energy. Skate across the ground, keeping 60 per cent of your weight on the back leg, changing and altering your guard. Keeping your heels off the ground gives your calf muscles a great work out. To use it for drills, change sides with one bounce in between each change, for 20 reps or more. This step can be used to hide a target area, and kicks such as back-kick or spinning kick go well with it.

Double change-step – The same as the full hip and shoulder change. Do two changes then bounce and repeat, for 20 reps or more. You can also move forward or backward. It's great for keeping your opponent on edge and it keeps your target-areas moving, making it hard for your opponent to plan an attack.

Cross-change step – Your back leg pushes forward and your front leg pulls back, but your shoulder stays in position. Drill in the same way as the other steps. When executed quickly with explosion, this step can intimidate an opponent. It goes well with most front-leg kicks such

as the front-kick, turning kick and axe-kick. But for a side-kick or hook-kick from the lead leg, it's better to cross the back leg behind the front, due to the hip positioning of the different kicks.

These are just three of the basic steps; there are many more. In combination, these steps can make it difficult for your opponents to predict when and where a kick is coming from.

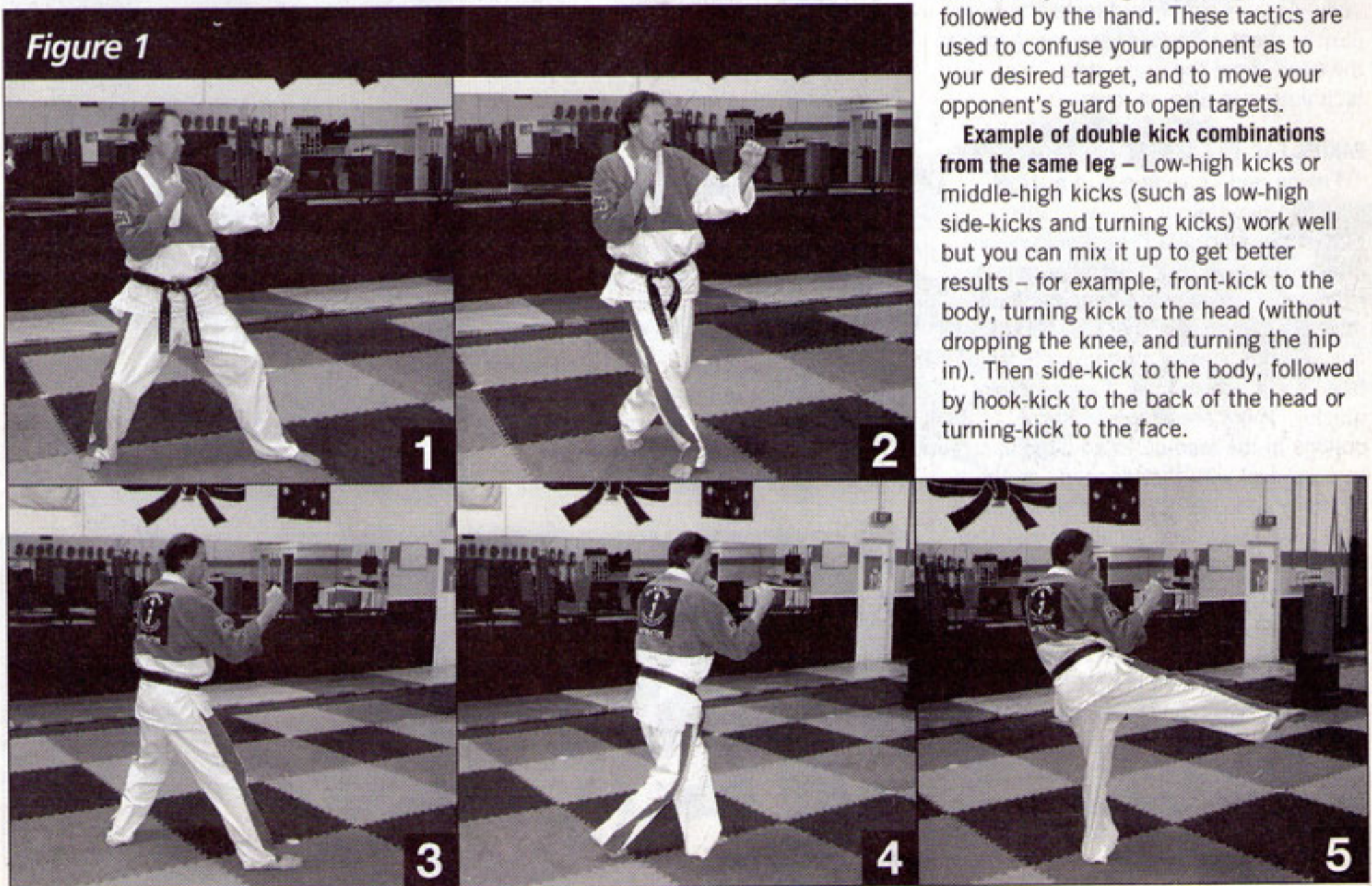
Combination Example – Right-side cross-step with full hip and shoulder change, then left-side cross-step, finish with a double jumping-turning kick, lead leg left (to the body), right leg finish (to the head). Step combinations must flow quite quickly to have the right effect.

Stepping forward and back can help draw your opponent out. For example, lift your back leg forward and execute a fake push-kick. As the leg touches down, pull all the way back. Your opponent sees it as a retreat, so when they run in, execute a front leg side-kick (See Figure 1).

Other tricks and tactics for sparring include double kicks from the same leg, and combinations where the hand is followed by the leg, or the leg is followed by the hand. These tactics are used to confuse your opponent as to your desired target, and to move your opponent's guard to open targets.

Example of double kick combinations from the same leg – Low-high kicks or middle-high kicks (such as low-high side-kicks and turning kicks) work well but you can mix it up to get better results – for example, front-kick to the body, turning kick to the head (without dropping the knee, and turning the hip in). Then side-kick to the body, followed by hook-kick to the back of the head or turning-kick to the face.

Figure 1



Sneaky Sparring Tactics

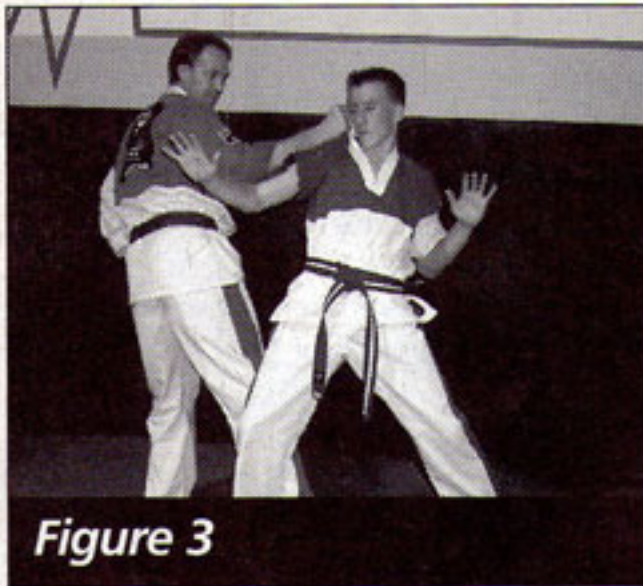


Figure 3

My favourite and most successful hand-leg combinations, are:

A) Cross-step, with the back leg crossing behind the lead leg, and at the same time execute a lead-hand back-fist to the head. As your opponent raises their guard to defend, shoot a lead-leg side-kick to the body, from the cross step. The one-two timing needs to be close, and the back-fist needs to be threatening to move their guard. This can be used in reverse as another variation (See figure 2).

B) Lead-hand punch to the face, then cross-step, with the back leg crossing in front of the lead leg and at the same time execute a reverse-punch to the body. As your opponent blocks the body punch, shoot a leading leg turning kick to the head, from the cross-step. This technique can also be reversed.

FAKING FOR THE STREET

Faking and drawing-out in a street situation is different. As mentioned previously, martial artists should never attack unless left with no other option. Remember, most street conflicts for a martial artist should only last from two to five seconds, because attacking specific targets will generally stop an opponent quickly. There are always multiple options in the lead-up to an altercation – how we deal with that depends on the intensity and urgency of the situation:

A) Fake by making up an excuse. Use this to escape from a verbal confrontation or to avoid a person who may be drunk, on drugs or just very aggressive in nature. With children we have the school bullies, but the problem here is that it's on a day-to-day basis. So the excuses need to be non-abusive.

Bully – "Hey, David, come here!"

David – "Sorry, I have to go, my teacher needs me." or, "Got to catch a bus."

Don't stop as you say it, keep moving to

put urgency into your excuse. It doesn't matter what excuse you use, as long as you're polite and moving away. If your attacker forces the issue more, then their intentions are clearer.

B) Fake your emotions and hide your strength. This can be used in many situations, such as a man against a woman. In some cases, if a woman can relax and seem weak and less threatening, the man may relax, be less aggressive or lower his guard, giving the woman a chance to strike or escape. Some offenders are more likely to be violent on first contact. In this case, you need to lift your energy and aggression levels to match or exceed theirs. This can be achieved by verbal interruption, using a loud commanding voice and powerful words. Ki-Hap!! (the yell) is good for empowerment.

BREAKING BALANCE

Some competitions allow leg sweeping and some allow full-contact kicks. Both are good street-fighting tactics because an unbalanced opponent finds it hard to defend or counter. Taking down an opponent may enable you to escape or control the altercation.

The push-kick is a great kick to unbalance your opponent, letting you set up for a combination. It can be performed from the back or front leg, can be executed at close range to stop or push away an opponent and most kicks or hand techniques will go with it.

Foot sweeps are good against those that keep their weight on the front leg when sparring. However, in Taekwondo and other systems the weight is more on the back leg, giving a little more balance. For greater success in breaking an opponent's balance, sweeps can be assisted by a simultaneous upper-body movement.

Take-downs are great for street and

school-yard dramas, as you gain control and therefore the advantage. A take-down buys you time and enables an escape. Against a good kicker, or if you find yourself on the ground, a take-down levels the playing field (especially if you know some basic ground-fighting or wrestling techniques).

There are many take-down techniques. Here are three:

A) Front leg take-down – your opponent steps forward with the right leg, attacking with a right punch. Moving the left leg, form a left front-stance with a right outside-block. Execute a left punch to the opponent's lower rib cage, followed closely by a right palm-strike to the face or ear. Grabbing the right shoulder, bring your right leg behind your opponent's right leg. As you sweep the leg, push back on their shoulder to take down the opponent (See figure 3).

B) Back leg take-down – your opponent steps forward with the right leg, attacking with a right punch. Moving your right leg, form a right front-stance with a left outside-block. Execute a right punch to the body and a left punch to the neck. Step through with the left leg and sweep with your right. Make sure you sweep your opponent's left leg above the knee.

C) Ground take-down – If on the ground, the scissor-sweep is very useful. Your opponent's forward leg is the leg to attack. Place one leg in front of their leg close to the ankle. Position your other leg behind their knee joint, then scissor your legs and roll your body at the same time (See Figure 4).

The finish to these techniques is up to you and the situation. You may be able to escape, or you may be forced to subdue them, but it's nice to have a few options.



Figure 4