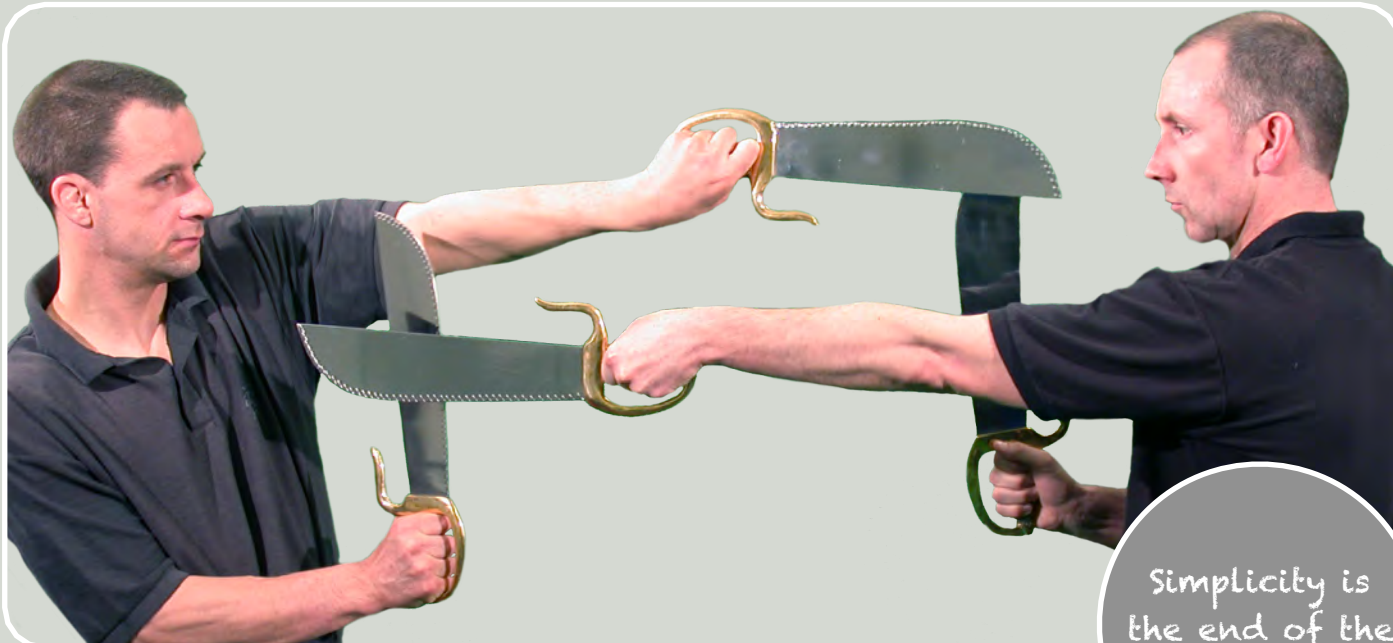


英國詠春功夫會

UK WING CHUN KUNG FU ASSOC



Simplicity is
the end of the
art....

SIMPLICITY: LAZINESS OR SKILL??

The approach to Wing Chun Kuen is to make the goal appear easy.

Here James Sinclair discusses some fundamentals to help in your training.

Wing Chun Kuen is often spoken of in terms of simplicity and effectiveness. However, it should be noted that appearances can be deceptive, and that what looks easy is usually the culmination of a lot of effort.

Wing Chun Kuen approaches the subject of combat from the standpoint of self defence and not sport. When you sit down to enjoy a boxing match the competitors approach each other to take instruction from the referee. However, the combatants often use

the moment to try to psyche each other out. They then walk back to their corner and the bout begins at the bell. At times the bout will begin with a flurry of activity, at others there will be a period of sizing up the opponent and testing the reflexes and range control.

Whilst a self defence situation can have a build up, there is no referee, no likelihood of researching your opponent beforehand, and no rules! Although you do have to size up your opponent very quickly, and be very decisive.

Gary Cooper Sifu

The body strike is a favoured skill of experienced fighters. As you can see sitting the weight on the back leg is simply not an option.



SIMPLICITY



Sifu Gary Cooper

As can be seen from these two photos Wing Chun relies on simple effective techniques. The foot stomp followed up by an inside knee strike is an example of such practical thinking.

In a self defence situation the 'bell' a victim may hear are those ringing in their ears as an assailant attacks them from behind or side swipes them....

Wing Chun Kuen is a close quarter system simply because most real self defence situations begin close and stay close. It is not unusual for a 'Glasgow Kiss' head butt to start and quickly finish the action. Many systems spend years learning the footwork to get into an opponent, when the reality of street fights is that the problem is keeping your opponent off you! Most physical confrontations that last more than a few seconds (yes that is seconds) will quickly result in clinching, wrestling whilst standing, and the use of tremendous strength.

In a confrontation every opponent is strong. It is highly unlikely that you are so strong that you can deal with

your opponent with ease. This is why skill training is so important. You should ensure that if you wish to be good at Wing Chun Kuen then you should train in Wing Chun Kuen and not rely simply on conditioning, as age and circumstances will dictate that this approach has a short lifespan.

Moving on to Wing Chun Kuen as an approach, it is easy for student to think that Wing Chun Kuen is like Karate with different shapes. This is so wrong it is worrying.

Firstly one must consider that throughout history people have had 'fights' and they have probably changed very little. When a fight ensues you do not see opponents trying to block with great clarity, they will simply cover, hold on or attack back, often with both sides 'milling' in an attempt to overwhelm the other.



In
the street
Unfair is not
UNCOMMON

Wing Chun Kuen has shapes like Bong and Taan which are nothing more than shapes all humans can make with regard to the ball and socket joint of the shoulder and the hinge joint of the elbow. We use these shapes, not blocks, (although it easier in everyday vernacular to use the word blocks) to cover, jam and shield us. Good Wing Chun Kuen practitioners do not spend an inordinate amount of time and effort to learn a complicated shape placement to defend against a simple straight punch.

Some styles look easy as they have very clear blocks and counters to attacks. The problem lies in application in real world situations. Wing Chun Kuen, Western Boxing and Thai Boxing do not have such clarity to the casual observer, however, they have proven themselves effective time and time again.

There are two fundamental ideas that should be discussed. They are close range, in your face, and mobile in and out fighters. In close range you simply should not even consider thinking defensively. That is, you should not be thinking of blocking. Instead you must take the fight to your opponent. This is why the UKWCKFA syllabus' first test is so strike based. If you can do nothing more than strike effectively whilst not leaving yourself too vulnerable, you have a greater chance of success.

When dealing with a mobile, skilled opponent the use of Pak Sau, slipping and footwork are the priorities. Bong Sau is used if the opponent passes the hand and then the elbow attempts to compensate.

When the head of the Dragon is grabbed, the tail will whip.

When the tail is grabbed, the head will bite!



BE CAREFUL!



Dangers Of Under-Estimation

Sifu Mark Phillips

Here Sifu Gary Cooper appears to have the upper hand. However, Sifu Mark Phillips quickly seizes the opportunity to throw Gary to the floor. Close quarter fighting is fraught with such dangers.

ASHLEY PHILLIPS



Ashley Phillips Sifu.

Ashley Demonstrates two ideas. You can combine two kicks, or just take the two lower photos and see it as a feint to low kick.

Ashley is one of the most senior students at the National Hq.

MORE ON LEG SKILLS

As mentioned in our last newsletter Wing Chun Kuen is not famed as a kicking style. And yet the Wooden Dummy form alone has Eight Methods of Kicking, the kicks in the Cham Kiu form are very practical and efficient and the training on the wallbag ensures great balance and the ability to drive power through the support leg.

We do not kick above the waist, although Ip Man was famous for his high kicking skills. We are, therefore, not as eye catching as some of the other approaches. The aim for simplicity ensures that we target efficiency and effectiveness above all else. In MMA (Mixed Martial Art) there is an abundance of kicking, however, most of it is low. Thai fighters can kick high with devastating power, but usually prefer to take the opponents legs away and conserve their own energy.

In MMA matches the competitors heavily favoured low round kicks. This is changing as more research and experience is gained. Great strides have been made in catching kicks for takedown or to counter sweep. Round kicks were increasingly captured and

used against the kicker. Low round kicks also tended to be 'ridden' a lot better and some opponents would chance walking through them to punch the kicker.

In recent times it has become more common for Wing Chun Kuen style lift kicks and stop kicks to be employed. These have been used effectively to stop the opponent moving in and potentially cause some damage.

So, it would appear that Wing Chun Kuen does indeed have techniques in it's arsenal that prove to be effective in a competitive arena. The problem is to find a Wing Chun Kuen practitioner who is willing to train as hard as the MMA practitioners and get the experience required to master ring craft, and the ability to face very different opponents with very different core skills.

Simply relying on Wing Chun Kuen's Chi Sau training will give no experience with anyone other than another Wing Chun Kuen student, it is also not even close to preparing for a fight in most schools.



SELF DEFENCE IS YOUR RIGHT DEFEND IT VIGOROUSLY

Wing Chun Kuen is not a sport and was never intended for the modern competitive spirit that encompasses the Western way of life. Wing Chun Kuen has no singular grading method, each school grades in a manner they see fit and aims to give the student clear goals and the ability to see their own achievements. Whilst there are bound to be similarities there is not the consistency that has developed in the systems of Karate, Judo and Taekwondo.

Many people over the years will have asked our senior students, "are you a black belt?" A question to which they can only answer in the negative. However, it would be hard

to argue against UKWCKFA, students who have passed the third level grading would easily being comparable in ability to a good standard Black Belt of another approach.

Many of our senior students can deal with many different approaches, after all a 'punch is just a punch' but a lot depends upon who throws it!

In July 2013 Sifu Mark Phillips sparred with the current English Heavyweight Boxing Champion, John McDermott. Look out for the forthcoming DVD which will feature this footage and help take your Wing Chun Kuen skill on a meteoric rise.



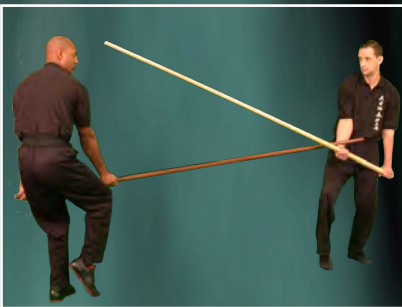
NOT SPORT



Eyes, Groin, Joints and Throat

As there are no striking areas off limits, Wing Chun Kuen is very adept at attacking these critical regions. However, we teach all students to have restraint and note they have to make a decision based on the circumstances at the time.

POLE SKILLS



POLE SKILLS TRAINING

Pole training develops the wrists and forearms. Simple loss of 'stick' on the pole could be fatal or lead to a broken skull, forearm or shin in seconds.

SIMPLE DIRECT EFFICIENT

Training with weapons within martial arts in China is a very old tradition. Many of the systems of 'Kung Fu' are referred to as battlefield arts.

Wing Chun Kuen specialises in two weapons for different ranges. The most revered and 'secret' are the Baat Cham Do' or Eight Cutting Knives'. These are primarily mid range weapons used as extensions to the arm and using many identical techniques found in the empty hand training.

The long range is covered with the use of the Luk Dim Book Kwan or 61/2 Point Pole. The pole is used to defend against opponents with weapons. The skills can to be transposed to a broom handle if required. The usual length of the pole is approx. 8ft. The pole is tapered to allow for better delivery of power to the tip and to reduce weight allowing for greater speed of application. The pole form is, by far, the shortest and most

simple form within the Wing Chun Kuen syllabus. The pole training is said to have been introduced into the system at a later date, which is yet further proof that Wing Chun was always evolving, even many generations back. Because the pole is straight and only flexes under pressure. it easier to master the potential of the training. Many students flourish in pole training even when struggling with hand and leg skills.

Master Sinclair was told that Grandmaster Ip Man had tried to reduce the pole form to 3 1/2 techniques, but went back to the longer form. He did, however, dramatically change a great part of the Wing Chun Kuen system and was happy for his students to continue the evolution. A prime example was his senior student Wong Shun Leung who is credited with bringing Wing Chun Kuen into the 20th century.





Each Journey Starts With A Single Step: By Jeff Cure

I started Wing Chun in the 1980's and had to travel into London, twice a week (to an old small church with the kwoon up in the rafters). The classes were huge, this was because at that time the few Sifu's who were teaching Wing Chun were able to capitalise on the growing interest in this style. But the whole attitude to teaching and being taught was very different then.

From day one we had to sign a legal contract which signed you into payment for the year, regardless of circumstance, and were herded into the class like sheep. It wasn't cheap either at £30 a month for 2 x 1hr lessons a week

I can only compare the lessons to being taught by rote. We always did the same warm up, and then spent a good few weeks just punching in a basic stance or arrow walking with double punches up and down (even until one student passed out). Learning Bong Sau was the first real shape we were taught and spent months repeating it. The Sifu was almost unapproachable (often rude), he frequently laughed at students if they asked a question and didn't bother answering it. Sometimes he just tutted and rolled his eyes, it wasn't an environment of free thought!

Your Sifu told you what to do and you tried to do it, without question. He demanded total loyalty and got it. This may seem strange to people today but that's how it was in the early 1980's.

The modern day martial artist is fortunate now to have far more access to information with DVD's YouTube, Websites, Phone Apps and books to help with their training. In the 1980's there were some paperback books. However, this led to a much more hands on attitude. I can only remember one dedicated Wing Chun video at that time by Master Wong Shun Leung "The science of in fighting" but even this was more of an overview, but remains a good point of reference.

This class environment did make you more self reliant because you knew the technique, logically, should work, but were left to figure out why it wasn't working for you. This resulted in spending many hours of training with a partner, or on your own, practicing shapes, testing and refining what you had been shown in the class, to get it to work.

We basically did as we were told, and I can recall working on Gaan Sau all lesson, punching Mexican body hooks hard up into the block until our forearms were numb and then, on the second lesson 2 days later, repeating the same exercise with yellow and blue bruised arms without question, (something a lot of modern students just wouldn't even consider doing now).

Sometimes Sifu wouldn't even get up out his chair to take the lesson and it was often the senior students who took the class out of compassion for



I can recall a

I can recall a

MASTERCLASS SEMINARS

SEPT
WOODEN
DUMMY

OCT
CHI SAU 1

NOV
CHI SAU 2

DEC
WOODEN DUMMY



SUN 15th
Wooden Dummy training for all levels of student. If you find the art fascinating, this is for you.

SUN 20th
Links Lok Sau, Single Chi Sau into double chi sau basics and apply the most practical skills.

SUN 17th
Building on last month, apply more of the art and go 'Beyond the Basics'.

SUN 15th
Wooden Dummy Form & Application.



the students, but in reality these were some of the best lessons we had, as the senior students were far more approachable and gave you practical advice based on their experiences and welcomed questions.

The kwoons Wooden Dummy was not allowed to be touched, by any of the students, unless they fell over it during the cramped training sessions, even then it would result in a glare from the Sifu.

Some people may say “you were just unfortunate to have a bad Sifu” but what we were being taught was valid and correct and the basics were good. However, there was very little choice in Wing Chun Instructors at that time, and many of the leading instructors teaching in the UK came from the same source!

“Enter the Dragon” had been released in the 1970’s and caused a massive interest in martial arts. Although this was a decade prior to the start of my journey, Wing Chun still remained a little known style. The only martial arts available to watch were low budget films with terrible dubbing in which Sifu’s treated students like dirt, and deference to the Sifu was total. This movie image was mirrored in our classes.

The current economic climate has had a dramatic effect on many schools and I think the modern Sifu has to be even more sympathetic

and understanding than ever before by being there for his students. He is certainly more accessible through social media, texts and emails and is probably more akin to the traditional role of *teacher/father* figure than my first Sifu ever was.

After a few years of training I realised we were not learning anything new and the classes were stagnating. This led me to question that either my Sifu only had limited knowledge or wasn’t prepared to impart any more information at that time. I stopped training and cancelled my contract I did look around the area I lived, but was unable to find anything suitable.

It was a completely different outlook when I found the UKWCKFA back in 2005. I was welcomed by Master James Sinclair and joined in a beginners class. I can still remember the sheer enjoyment I found in doing Wing Chun again after such a prolonged break, I compared it to like being a kid in a sweet shop, I took all the information given like a sponge I was, however, surprised that we were being asked “we had any questions” “if there was anything we didn’t understand. Although this was new to me, I liked it! Everyone within the organisation was so supportive and helpful and there was a great training attitude.

It was also immediately clear the incredible skill and depth of knowledge Master James had, and had gained from practical experience over the years. He was keen to impart to this to his students. We were doing techniques in intermediate and beginners classes that I wasn’t even shown previously in advanced classes. His skill was so inspiring I knew I had finally found the school I’d been looking for all those years ago.

Wing Chun has always been an evolving style and sometimes within the Wing Chun community too much emphasis is placed on lineage, purity and not competency. After all, most Wing Chun Students in the UK are IP Mans legacy. Today it is not uncommon to find 3 or 4 local classes in most towns and cities, or to find someone including Wing Chun techniques within their syllabus. Many using Grandmaster Ip Man’s name to capitalise on the films.

The world wide web has opened up a wealth of information to practitioners, with a plethora of DVD’s available and countless books. Much of

it is contradictory and very different in application structure and energy. Students are often unsure of what they have seen on YouTube or found elsewhere. This can lead to unnecessary confusion and there are, unfortunately, an awful number of purportedly Wing Chun video clips showing techniques by people who do not even teach the style!

My advice is that its better to go to the source from whom you are learning.

Anyone who has been fortunate to attend Master James’s seminars (which are tailored to specific areas in Wing Chun) will have experienced the incredible amount of knowledge and attention to detail that is imparted openly during the day. This can give you months and months worth of training, and for anyone who hasn’t yet been on these courses you are really missing out!!

Times have certainly changed and I would say for the better, students now have much more access to information and can easily discover for themselves that the UKWCKFA offers some of the best Wing Chun teaching out there.



YOUR STORY

We welcome your comments and would like to hear from you. If you would like to add your own contribution, ask a question or make a suggestion we will give due consideration.

We look forward to hearing from you.



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