MDS 501

Introduction

All Chuck Norris System material is black belt material. There is no white belt material. But there are different stages of identifying, understanding, and controlling the required skills. The material in this course is foundation material which will facilitate development of black belt level core skill in beginning and intermediate students as they progress toward 1st degree black belt, and the associated test. Even with this limited scope, there is still not time to address every requirement. *MDS 501* will therefore focus on the application of eight specific components of any quality technique as they relate to basic blocks and punches. The concepts can then be applied to all upper body techniques. This course is presented to black belts, utilizing their higher level of cognitive and practical understanding of karate concepts. Our common purpose is to simultaneously:

1. Increase our own level of understanding of the Chuck Norris System
2. Enhance our individual and collective ability to effectively teach the Chuck Norris System
3. Preserve the art and attitude of the Chuck Norris System as a powerful part of Mr. Norris' legacy by accurately passing his creation on to future generations through our students, and by creating a path for them to do the same

A Note About Black Belt Testing

It is important to understand that the CNS black belt test requirements do not constitute the complete definition of the Chuck Norris System. They are only a representative sampling and measurement of important core skills. Consider this analogy: After first learning the alphabet, vocabulary, and the fundamentals of grammar and language usage, a talented author can produce literary works on an almost limitless number of subjects or themes. Similarly, standardizing and testing on a small set of Chuck Norris System core skills (UFAF's black belt testing progression) will make it easier for individuals to diversify later, using their core skills as a solid foundation and launching point, thereby continuing the innovative tradition of the Chuck Norris System.

What is the Chuck Norris System?

There is sometimes confusion regarding the identity of the Chuck Norris System - something black belt members of UFAF (CNS's governing body) should not have. At one extreme, some suppose CNS is simply Tang Soo Do under a new name. But in fact, there are myriad integrated innovations that

make the Chuck Norris System unique and different from Tang Soo Do, literally from the ground up. At the other extreme, others suppose the Chuck Norris System is an *ad hoc* collection of the best techniques from all over the martial arts world. But in fact, the innovations now included in the Chuck Norris System have been carefully selected - first by Mr. Norris, and later by students of his system - for how they fit into and enhance the system. One of the purposes of this course is to highlight the genius of the innovations originated by Mr. Norris, and how these innovations, together with a continuing openness to improvement, have served to make the Chuck Norris System what it is today.

The Learning Environment

What makes someone a *teacher*? The obvious answer, of course, is *students*. The title "teacher" or "instructor" is given to one by one's students.

New students may approach learning a martial art having to deal with various fears. Some of these include:

- the unknown
- perceived lack of ability
- shyness in public settings
- parental expectations
- lack of identity (Do I have value to the instructor - other than my money)?
- many other fears

There are, of course, many other fears that students may carry. Some may be beyond the scope of a martial arts instructor's ability or qualification to deal with directly. But those mentioned here are a few examples of fears an instructor *can* address, or at least have a positive impact on. It starts with creating a relationship of trust between instructor and student. This can be facilitated by countering the aforementioned fears with specific actions to put students at ease, and communicating to students that you are committed to assisting them in reaching their goals.

Styles of Learning

Not every student learns in the same way. There are many different methods of categorizing learning styles, and the personality traits that affect them. One simple and useful method is to differentiate between visual, aural, and tactile learners. Using this method we see that some students learn by *seeing* something done (*visual*), others by *hearing* it explained (*aural*), and still others by *doing* or performing an action directly (*tactile*).

Instructors are also students, of course, and each has his/her preferred learning style(s). Some instructors may fail to realize that not everyone learns in the same way they do, and may unwittingly teach with a bias toward their

own personal learning styles. The best instructors know they can't rely solely on teaching to the learning style they are most comfortable with. Master instructors become adept at teaching to learning styles that are outside their own comfortable experience. For example, an instructor who is primarily a visual learner must become adept at teaching to aural and tactile learners, as well. Ideally, an instructor will constantly switch between teaching to all three learning styles. If you want a high retention rate among your students, then you must address all three learning styles effectively in your teaching.

Sometimes instructors intentionally utilize a teaching approach called the "discovery method," which basically translates to, "I will show you 'this much,' and you will figure out the rest." Obviously, this approach will not suffice for most students in today's market.

Motivation

Much has been said about the Praise/Correct/Praise approach to teaching (hereafter referred to as PCP). The basic concept is to "bookend" needed corrections with praise for things well done. Before this approach can have real value, it is important to understand the two types of motivation that may be at work within each student.

Extrinsic motivation (external motivation) is based on the attainment of rewards for work well done. As such, it comes to a student from outside sources, and can change as the availability of the perceived rewards changes. *Intrinsic motivation* (internal motivation), on the other hand, comes from within the student him- or herself and is characterized by feelings of personal satisfaction or achievement. Intrinsic motivation tends to result in better, deeper, and longer-lasting learning. It also tends to remain more constant over time. While not necessarily worse than intrinsic motivation in any given circumstance, extrinsic motivation tends to be not as effective, or to have as lasting an effect on the student as its intrinsic counterpart.

It is important to understand, however, that what motivates each student is a characteristic of his/her personality, and an instructor probably can't instantly switch a student's source of motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic, or vice versa. But constant and genuine encouragement can help build a student's desire for personal satisfaction and achievement.

With this background, we can now address PCP specifically, and identify the difference between praise and encouragement. *Praise* tends to be extrinsic in its power to motivate, because it is generally given only as a reward when something is done well. Therefore, it is extremely important to make the praise genuine! Otherwise it will be seen for what it is: a fabricated cover for the correction that is sure to come next. *Encouragement* tends to be more intrinsic because it conveys an innate respect for, and belief in, a student's abilities. Encouragement in a positive direction can be given whether

something was done well or poorly.

A prerequisite to truly effective praise, encouragement, or correction is simply to *identify* aspects of a student's karate - good *and* bad. Once a feature of a student's performance is clearly identified, praise, encouragement, correction, and most importantly teaching can occur to the benefit of the student. One of the most motivational things in the world for a student is when "a light goes on" for them.

Art vs. Application

Sometimes practitioners and instructors have a tendency to separate what they call the "art" of their style (what makes it *look* cool) from its "application" (what makes it *effective* in actual practice). For example, what do we say when students ask why we do kata? Does our answer reflect knowledge of how kata and practical application are historically connected? Or do we separate the two as having little to do with each other?

Why? Why Not?

In every other aspect of your teaching, it is important to have a "Why" for everything we do. Giving students purpose in everything they are learning and practicing helps to motivate them. If a student can't answer "why" they are doing something, their first response is often to ask, "Why not [do something else]?"

Why do we have to do all these kata?

Why do we jerk the opposite hand back when we punch?

Why do we turn the forearm this way for an elbow strike?

One of the purposes of this course is to arm instructors with more information to help answer, "Why?" And perhaps more importantly, to establish that there *are* why's for everything we do. If we're not sure why we do something, we can help each other find the answer.

Technical Context (Confusion vs. Diversity)

In our martial arts study it is important to stay connected to the source, or we risk losing much of the understanding of how and why we do things. Before we can effectively improvise, we must have a solid and consistent foundation in the theory of our style. In fact, that is one of the purposes of this course: to help identify a certain core set of skills and teaching methodologies for transferring those skills, so that we can preserve the theory and foundation of the Chuck Norris System - Mr. Norris' unique creation, and our unique art. This will put us in a position to learn, apply, and develop all kinds of other martial arts skills. Without a foundation in the theory of our art, we will tend

to develop confusion, instead of a rich and grounded diversity. Our goal then is to make our core techniques real and effective, building a common foundation which students *and* instructors can utilize as a launching pad into diverse applications of the martial arts (self defense, competition, weapons, etc.).

As we help students progress from beginning to advanced, we must progress beyond mechanically folding, blocking, punching, and locking into formal stances. Otherwise, we will produce 2nd and 3rd degree black belts who look like ultra-precise intermediate students who have little or no understanding of practical application of technique. This is not meant to minimize the importance of folds and stances for beginners! Precise folds are emphasized with beginners to help them later identify corresponding lines of power, while formal stances are taught and used to help them transition later to more advanced concepts of posture and footwork. All of which can be effectively used in practical application for self-defense, competition, etc.

The Chuck Norris System's core blocks and strikes establish the pattern for learning its more exotic techniques, and their practical applications. Once the core principles of execution are identified for the basic blocks and strikes, the execution of more exotic techniques falls into place in a process similar to changing drill bits on a power drill. The operation of the drill mechanism itself remains the same, but different effects are achieved depending on the drill bit being used. Of course, with more advanced technique, more advanced features of the drill may be employed, as well. (Advanced concepts of footwork and timing, for example.)

Basic, Traditional, Core

We often refer to "basics," "traditional technique," or "core technique" in our conversations - all referring to the same thing. While all of these terms have their place and use, perhaps the term "core technique" is the most descriptive and useful. Core technique or *core skill* serves as the foundation for martial arts development. It describes the fundamental principles of generating, channeling, and releasing power which apply to virtually any martial arts application.

Core Principles

There are eight core principles or components at work in the execution of any Chuck Norris System technique. These principles have evolved out of need to give instructors a path for bringing students to, and then beyond the *mechanics* of karate to the *application* of karate. They are listed here for reference, and will be subsequently defined and described. The ordering of the components as discussed here is significant for instructional purposes, although they are fully integrated in application.

Eight Components of a Quality Technique:

1. Posture
2. Line of Power
3. Methods of Generating Power
4. Footwork
5. Timing
6. Kinetic Sequencing
7. Focus
8. Mental/Emotional Spark

It is interesting to note that some very familiar and common terms do not appear on this list of eight components of a quality technique. Terms such as folds, stances, and snap are not on the list because they often serve either as checkpoints along a learning path toward a higher principle, or they are natural consequences (byproducts) of these eight principles in action. For example, stances often serve as checkpoints for posture and footwork. Folds serve as schoolmasters to help identify lines of power. Specific hip actions (such as snapping or full hip action) are only two examples of the more generalized concept of generating power.

Eight Components of a Quality Technique - Definitions

Posture

Appropriate alignment of the body for executing martial arts technique

Line of Power

The most efficient path for directing energy to a target

Methods of Generating Power

The many ways in which power can be created

Footwork

Transports posture and anchors technique

Timing

Getting to the right place at the right time to launch or continue the kinematic sequence

Kinetic Sequencing

The order and timing with which muscle groups in the kinetic chain fire to build maximum speed and power

Focus

Releasing the energy of a technique effectively into a target

Mental/Emotional Spark

Instantaneously shocking the body into action

NOTES:

1. *Folds* may be used as training devices to help beginning and intermediate students identify lines of power.
2. *Stances* serve as footwork checkpoints for one to stabilize and release power, and to facilitate transitions and movement between techniques.

These eight components give instructors a teaching framework and toolkit to evaluate, diagnose, and assist student progress. You are only as efficient as your worst (least efficient) movement. If one or more of the eight components is not on par with the others, the technique will suffer.

Power Sources

There are many generalized methods of creating power, including:

- forward motion
- dropping weight
- circular motion
- torque

Without intent to minimize the importance of the others, most of our efforts in this course will be spent understanding torque. For our purposes *torque* is the application of force to the body to create rotation, especially explosive rotation. In our martial arts application this can be understood to mean that the muscles of the torso, stabilized by the legs, are employed in specific ways to exert forces which create explosive rotation of the hips. These hip rotations are manifested and applied in different ways to create thrust, speed, and focus in the execution of various martial arts techniques.

"Faster!" "Harder!" "Stronger!" "More intense!" As we shall see, these kinds of verbal queues from instructors often cause students to "muscle" techniques in an attempt to create more power by recruiting external power, or muscular push. In actuality, smaller, quicker, more explosive hip actions will generally produce more power than more exaggerated, "stronger" hip motions.

Snapping Hip Action

Snapping hip action means using the explosive rotation (torque) of the torso (hips and core) to generate power *without changing stances*.

Snapping hip action is a subtle, and explosive, but *minimal* movement. Instructors frequently ask for "more power," which students often equate with "more hip." But in fact, if the hip action is minimized, it can be both faster and more explosive.

An overly-exaggerated "snapping" hip action (where the hip literally pushes the technique out more deliberately) does tend to create a (false) sense of snap in the technique, but not an explosive release of power into the target. This can be demonstrated in your *MDS 501* class.

The goal for the intermediate or advanced student is to use the structure and muscles of the torso to activate a short, explosive hip action. This will serve to explosively launch the punch forward into a relaxed delivery of the technique with an explosive, full-body snap on impact to release power. More on punching later.

Jerk & Hit: A Drill for Minimizing the Snapping Hip Action

Beginners can be taught to initiate or activate a minimal punching hip action by *jerking* the extended hand back rather than simply *pulling* it (a slower action), and by *hitting* rather than *punching*. Notice, there is no mention of initiating the punching motion with the hips themselves... yet. When standing in a relaxed posture (with abs also completely relaxed), it is the jerk-&-hit action of the hands themselves that creates a subtle twitch of the hips. After students see and feel (perhaps even over an extended period of time) how quickly and subtly their hips can move, they can begin to transition toward initiating/activating the action with their hips, instead of with their "jerking" and "hitting" hands.

As they become more advanced, students will want to move away from the "jerk-&-hit" approach. While it is a valuable training tool for the reasons described above, a close examination of the bio-mechanics involved will show that the "jerk-&-hit" approach to hip activation is actually counterproductive in the delivery of power in the punch. This can be demonstrated in your *MDS 501* class.

Full Hip Action

Full hip action is characterized by explosive rotation (torque) of the hips to generate power while *switching from one stance to another.*

There are many variations on the full hip action theme, including:

- forward stance to opposite forward stance
- back stance to forward stance
- forward stance to back stance
- side stance to forward stance
- forward stance to side stance

Additional information on torque and hip actions will appear in context throughout the remainder of this manual.

Stances

Ready Stance

In a good ready stance the outside blades of the feet are parallel to each other, and vertically aligned with the outsides of the shoulders. This lets the weight rest firmly underneath the hips, and forward, toward the balls of the feet. The upper body sits erect on top of the hips, with a natural curve in the lower

back, and shoulder blades "pinched" comfortably together and downward. This upper body posture is maintained consistently through all the other stances and transitions one might employ. These include ready, forward, back, straddle/side, cat, and fighting stances. It all starts with the ready stance.

Forward Stance

The ready stance establishes the width of the forward stance. Simply step straight forward with one foot, maintaining the shoulder width of the initial ready stance. The length of the forward stance is determined partly by the need to rest the weight of the body on - indeed, *in front of* - the forward foot, and partly by the functional strength and flexibility of the student. Poor functional strength and/or flexibility will result in an inability to keep posture or to fully commit the hip into the forward position.

The key principles governing the forward stance are:

1. Keep posture - too long a stance can make one lean forward
2. Back foot points forward with back leg locked and heel down
3. Weight *in front* of the forward foot, not just over it

The front knee is bent enough so that most of the weight is actually *in front* of the forward foot. With the weight in front of the forward foot, a forward attacking movement can be propelled by the front foot, rather than the rear foot - a much quicker action. For this reason, the term *forward stance* is preferred over *front stance*, and is UFAF's standard term for this stance.

For beginners and even intermediate students we emphasize stepping from one forward stance to another with the feet following straight lines, shoulder width apart. This prevents a host of difficulties and problems with stance widths, etc. More advanced students may step forward with a slight inward half-moon motion. The feet don't come all the way together under the body on each step, but follow a slightly curved path forward with minimal left-right swaying of the body while stepping. Stances before and after each step must have the correct width and length.

Back Stance

The width of the back stance is dictated by the width of the forward stance. (Recall from the previous section that the width of the forward stance is established by the ready stance.) From forward stance, simply pivot 90 degrees on the ball of the back foot and shift the weight of the body onto the back leg so that the back knee aligns vertically over the back foot. The balls of the feet are still shoulder width apart, just as in ready stance and forward stance. This stance is somewhat wider than the Tang Soo Do back stance from which it evolved. (Hwang Kee, the father of modern Tang Soo Do and the source from which the Chuck Norris System evolved, does not describe

a “back stance” in his Tang Soo Do, but several different “cat stances,” one of which resembles a narrow back stance.) The Chuck Norris System back stance in its present form is a consequence of the Chuck Norris System emphasis on the reverse punch, as opposed to the somewhat less prominent role of the reverse punch in Tang Soo Do. This is a defining difference between Tang Soo Do and the Chuck Norris System, and one which has pervasive effects throughout our style.

In back stance, body weight shifts naturally toward the rear leg. Ideally, the rear knee will be aligned directly over the rear foot. But it is not necessary or desirable to force the hip all the way back into alignment over the rear knee and foot. In fact, the hip moves back only as far as aligning the rear knee over the rear foot *makes* it move back, settling in with about 60% of the weight on the rear leg. This natural alignment preserves posture and keeps the hips in the power chain, which allows them to rotate freely with applied torque. Forcing the hip farther back (over the knee and foot) breaks posture and inhibits the hips’ ability to rotate freely with applied torque.

Some would argue that if the hip isn’t pushed back over the rear knee and foot, then the ability to shift weight into forward stance is impaired. This is true! Shifting the hips farther back *does* create the potential for a more pronounced weight shift in a full hip action (reverse punch, for example). But it should be understood that weight shift is only a *secondary* power source in a full hip action. The *primary* power source is the rotation of the hips, which can be impaired by forcing them back too far and disconnecting them from the rotational power chain. Studies have been conducted in other athletic disciplines which indicate that about 80% of the “muzzle velocity” of the hand can be generated without any weight shift at all - utilizing only torque and arm speed for the movement. The remaining 20% comes from linear momentum, or weight shift. This 80/20 torque-to-weight-shift “power ratio” makes a compelling case for NOT pushing the hips back over the rear knee and foot in back stance.

Another reason to avoid exaggerating the backward shift of the hips in back stance is that when shifting weight forward, there is a tendency for the mind and body to try to “time-match” the torque of the hips (a very quick motion) to the weight shift (a comparatively slow motion). The result of this time matching is a slower torque action, since the shifting of the weight imposes a timing “drag” on an otherwise quick and explosive hip action.

In fact, for maximum power in a full hip action, torque would be applied near the completion of weight shift, to give the torque “a running head start.” This is true whether executed in place, or following some other footwork, such as a lunge, step, or slide-up. In bio-mechanics coaching lingo this is called *delayed torso rotation*. However, this approach is not always optimal in martial arts applications because an initial, visible weight shift will tend to

"telegraph" the movement to an opponent. On the other hand, a skilled practitioner can often disguise the weight shift with various forms of footwork.

Timing - Whose Job Is It?

When teaching beginners, the instructor takes control of timing. There are too many details for beginners to track to also give them responsibility for timing. For example, a beginner can get into back stance by following this "called" sequence:

- start in ready stance
- put your hands on your hips
- step into forward stance
- pivot the back foot
- align your rear knee over your rear foot
- put your hands in the guard

As the beginner becomes more comfortable with this process, s/he can put hands in the guard while stepping out and pivoting/shifting into the back stance all at once.

Punches

As we begin a discussion of punching, it is useful to examine the whole-body mechanics that are involved. The entire body, from feet to fist (or from ground to target), is involved in the delivery of a good punch. The concepts presented here apply to all torque-driven, upper-body techniques (blocks, punches, other hand techniques, chops, elbows, etc.), but are presented here in the context of punching.

Power Source

The primary source of power for a punch may be either a snapping or a full hip action, depending on the application. Both the snapping and full hip actions originate in the core, and are anchored to the ground by the legs. Power is initially generated in the core with the snap or explosive rotation of the hips against stable legs. Energy is transferred up through the body from body segment to body segment, across each joint in its path, with each muscle group in the sequence loading and releasing energy - *rotationally* (hips, spine, shoulders) or *linearly* (upper arm, elbow, wrist) - adding to the total power of the punch. The legs function as mobile anchors, either with the feet remaining where they are (snapping), or with one or both feet being drawn into a new position as the hips rotate (full).

This entire sequence happens in a split second. But it is clearly a chained, rapid-fire *sequence* of explosive releases of energy. As each muscle group in the sequence releases its energy, it stops abruptly and transfers the energy across a joint to the next muscle group in the system which, in turn, loads and

releases, etc. This process is called the *kinematic sequence*, and it is key to the delivery of many karate techniques, and certainly to every upper-body karate technique that derives its power primarily from torque.

It can be surprising for some to learn that a karate punch is not a synchronized movement where all body parts start and stop in unison, but rather the timed, rapid-fire *sequence* of explosive power releases described above.

Line of Power

When the energy traveling sequentially up the system reaches the arm, the line a punch then follows depends on the specific application and target. But the general concept for linear techniques is to find the shortest distance from launch to target, and to align the elbow behind the fist, because the elbow guides power to the hand. When the hips are rotated, energy is thrown outward in all directions from the center of the rotation (centrifugal force - think of a washing machine spin cycle). That energy is focused at the point on the body that is farthest from center. If an elbow is poking out, that is where the energy is concentrated. Proper alignment of the elbow behind the fist is therefore vital to the conservation of power in the technique, no matter where the punch originates, or where it is headed. This is the reason, for example, that solar plexus punches are normally delivered palm up, until the punching elbow clears the torso and the forearm/fist can be pronated (rotated inward) without causing the elbow to poke out to the side. Other specific examples will be discussed in the *MDS 501* class.

Punches - Summary

This discussion of punching technique is not meant to be comprehensive, but is intended to address some of the more difficult concepts of the whole-body mechanics involved. Your *MDS 501* class will feature an interactive session where additional principles of punching will be discussed and experienced in more detail.

For your reference, the following strikes and hip actions correspond:*

Stepping center punch	Snapping hip action
Stepping reverse punch	Snapping hip action
Reverse punch from a back stance	Full hip action
Stepping jab	Full hip action
Stepping side punch	Full hip action
Spinning bottom fist	Full hip action

* In addition to those listed, any punch executed from a stationary position, without changing stances, utilizes snapping hip action.

The Balance of Power (and Technique)

There is a delicate balance that must be maintained between power and technique. *Technique controls power*. If one has more power than technique to control it, mechanics and execution break down. If one concentrates too much on technique without feeding power to it, then techniques become ineffective. For a beginner, it is important to establish the lines for techniques before confusing the issue with how to generate power. Once lines are established, then we can add power to the equation. A cyclical approach of 'a little of one, and then a little of the other' will gradually produce awesome technique with awesome power.

Blocks

*NOTE: This section on CNS basic blocks is presented with a focus on **execution** (performance of the movement, incorporating the 8 components) rather than **application** (the many purposes for which blocking movements can be used). For this reason, one, very narrow application of blocking techniques (the one where they are actually used to block incoming strikes) is used in this manual as the vehicle for instruction. Other applications may be referenced in your MDS 501 class.*

In general terms, there are many ways to defend against an incoming strike:

1. Attack it
2. Jam it
3. Deflect it
4. Redirect it
5. Extend it
6. Absorb it
7. Avoid it

Historically, martial arts systems, including the Chuck Norris System, have relied on a two-handed approach to defending target areas in a confrontation. This enables one hand to always be in a guard position while the other prepares for, or executes, a technique. As the technique is executed, the hands trade positions, and roles. In any given blocking scenario, the extended hand protects the center line of the body to allow the blocking hand to prepare for, and execute, defensive techniques. If the blocking hand folds low (as for an outside or high block), then the extended hand protects from center upward. If the blocking hand folds high (as for a knife hand, low, or inside block), then the extended hand protects from center downward.

Lines of Power
Picture in your mind the imaginary rectangle that connects the shoulders of two people standing facing each other at arm's length. Three of the basic blocks (knife hand, outside, and inside) cut various paths through this imaginary rectangle:

- The knife hand block follows the diagonal line from one's own shoulder to the opposite corner of the imaginary rectangle.

- The outside block slices across the middle of the rectangle from inside to outside.

- The inside block also slices across the middle of the rectangle, but in the opposite direction as the outside block, and is characterized by leading with the elbow.

The other two blocks (low and high), while at first glance appearing very different, are actually very closely related. The low block follows a downward arc, while the high block follows a similar, but upward arc.

The Genius of Five
The five basic blocks in the Chuck Norris System (low, knife hand, high, outside, and inside) afford protection against strikes from any direction and from any position one may need to defend from.

For example, any attack below the elbow would be defended with a low block. Any attack to the upper body would be defended with a knife hand, inside, or outside block: knife hand block if hands are initially positioned high and close to the body; inside block if hands are high and positioned outside, away from the body; outside block if hands are low. Any attack coming down over the head would be defended with a high block.

In this way, all the blocks complement each other in a functional sense. This is easily seen when the blocks are drilled in combination against repeated random attacks. No matter which block was just executed, and no matter where the hands end up as a result, there is always a blocking option available against the next attack.

When an instructor calls out basic blocks randomly in class, students can learn to stay in the present, and to develop the ability to execute the techniques with "empty mind" awareness. It also helps develop an intuition about how to practically apply these traditional skills to defend against various attacks, utilizing that same "empty mind" awareness.

CNS Blocks are Executed as Strikes

Different martial arts styles have different blocking philosophies. The Chuck Norris System's predominant blocking philosophy (in execution, not necessarily application) is that all five basic blocks are executed as *strikes*! More than mere deflections, their primary objective is to *attack with power*. Learning to execute blocks in this way has many benefits. It prepares us to use blocking techniques in a variety of other applications for practical self-defense. A detailed discussion of these applications is beyond the scope of this course.

The power source for all Chuck Norris System basic blocks is torque. This means that the *kinematic sequencing* principle, described in the section on **Punching** also applies to blocking. We often see CNS students executing blocks as mere deflections, rather than as strikes. This is because they are either not using torque to supply power, OR they are actually applying *backward* torque (i.e., hip action in the opposite direction of the path of the block). This is an extremely common practice among CNS students - immediately apparent on 1st degree tests in the blocking sequences of *Giecho Hyung Yi Bu Sang Gup*, for example - that our MDS-certified instructors can help to correct and improve throughout UFAF. (See the section entitled **How the CNS Kata Can Reinforce Blocking Concepts** later in this manual.)

Blocking Applications

Following is a brief outline of execution fundamentals for a few common blocking applications. Additional applications and detail will be explored in class, as time allows. You will be able to do further exploration on your own by combining and applying the fundamental CNS blocking philosophy (that blocks are strikes) and the eight components of a quality technique. Our sample block training scenarios include:

Stationary blocks (described for the lead hand, where applicable)

- Ready stance
- Straddle-leg stance
- Forward stance
- Back stance

  The block finds its proper line before torque is applied. Blocks are executed with snapping hip action in the direction of the block path.

- Back stance to forward stance (low, knife hand, outside, high)

  The block finds its proper line before torque is applied. Blocks are executed with full hip action in the direction of the block path. The rear foot is drawn from its initial sideways back stance position into forward stance position, pivoting on the ball of the foot. This applies to all the basic blocks except inside block, and is the same hip action that would be used for a reverse punch.

  (The inside block is executed differently, requiring a shift into forward stance *before* torque is then applied using a snapping hip action in the direction of the block path.)

- Forward stance to back stance (inside block)

  The block finds its proper line before torque is applied. The block is executed with full hip action in the direction of the block path. The rear heel is drawn from its initial forward stance position into back stance position, pivoting on the ball of the foot. This applies to the inside block, and is the same hip action that would be used for a lead-hand jab.

  (All other blocks besides the inside block are executed differently, requiring a shift into back stance *before* torque is then applied using a snapping hip action in the direction of the block path.)

Stepping blocks (described for the lead hand)

- Into back stance (low, knife hand, outside, and high blocks)

  Low, knife hand, outside, and high blocks are executed with snapping hip action, as follows: The lead foot turns 90 degrees to the outside as the rear foot steps through and forward, landing with toes facing forward. (The feet are now in back stance position.) At the moment the stepping foot touches down, the block is executed with torque applied from a snapping hip action in the direction of the block path. (*See sidebar for additional information.*)

- Into back stance (inside block)

  The inside block is executed with a full hip action, as follows: The block finds its proper line as the step is taken. As the step is taken, the hips and both feet remain facing forward. At the moment the stepping foot touches down, torque is applied in the direction of the block path, the rear foot being drawn into back stance position. This is the same hip action that would be used for a stepping jab.

- Into forward stance

  The block finds its proper line as the step is taken. The stepping foot lands in forward stance position, and the block is executed with snapping hip action in the direction of the block path. (*See sidebar for additional information.*)

- Reversed

  The reverse-hand block finds its proper line as the step is taken. The stepping foot lands in forward stance position, and the block is executed with snapping hip action in the direction of the block path.

Stepping Blocks (Balancing Power and Speed of Execution)

The method of execution for the stepping blocks outlined in the text is one chosen as a compromise between maximal power and speed of execution. There is an even more powerful way to execute low, knife hand, outside, and high blocks, but it tends to be too slow for any sort of practical skill building. However, it can be a good instructional tool for beginners. It can also be useful in those situations where one has "all the time in the world" to execute a blocking strike against a stationary object, or stunned opponent. It's good to know the complete range of available options from maximum power/slowest execution at one extreme, to minimum power/fastest execution at the other, and everything in between. The maximum power/slowest execution stepping block goes like this:

- Stepping block into forward stance (low, knife hand, outside, high blocks)

  The block finds its proper line as the step is taken. The supporting foot turns 90 degrees to the outside as the rear foot steps through and forward, landing with the foot turned inward up to 90 degrees. At the moment of touchdown, both feet are facing the same sideways direction, and the hips are turned 90 degrees away from forward. The instant the stepping foot touches down, torque is applied with a full hip action in the direction of the block path, with BOTH feet being drawn into forward stance position. The hip action launches the block.

- Stepping block into back stance (low, knife hand, outside, and high blocks)

  Low, knife hand, outside, and high blocks are executed with what amounts to a full hip action, as follows: The block finds its proper line as the step is taken. The supporting foot turns 90 degrees to the outside as the rear foot steps through and forward, landing turned inward up to 90 degrees. At the moment of touchdown, both feet are facing the same sideways direction, and the hips are turned 90 degrees away from forward. The instant the stepping foot touches down, torque is applied with a full hip action in the direction of the block path, with the FRONT foot only being drawn into a toes-forward position (the feet now in back stance position). The hip action launches the block.

To Torque or Not To Torque, That Is the Question...

Whenever possible in traditional practice, CNS stylists should execute each basic block as a torque-driven strike, utilizing the *kinetic sequencing* principle described in the section on **Punching**. However, there are exceptions to this rule. Torque-driven blocks require a split second longer to execute than a deflection block, because of the time required to place the hips and/or feet into position to initiate the torque. If the "call" (in class) or the application is too fast to allow time for a torque-driven block, some power may be appropriately sacrificed in favor of speed. This means an otherwise full hip action block may turn into a more quickly delivered, but slightly less powerful, snapping hip action block. Or a snapping hip action block may turn into a mere deflection, with no applied hip torque at all, or even backward torque. This depends on the speed of execution required by the

situation. Instructors can give advanced students practice in all of these block delivery methods by speeding up or slowing down the call in class, or on a test.

A Note About High Block

Since it is the consistent philosophy of Chuck Norris System blocks to be executed as strikes, it follows that each block is executed in such a way as to release as much explosive energy into the target as possible - not just cover and protect. Although not a new concept, the one block where this principle is most often overlooked or forgotten is the high block. It is often incorrectly executed as a straight-up, lifting *cover*, instead of a *strike* that derives its power from the same source as every other Chuck Norris System basic block, namely, torque. The high block might be characterized as a low block turned upside down. The same circular path is employed, but in an upward direction, rather than in a downward direction. Both blocks utilize torque as their primary source of power.

How the CNS Kata Can Reinforce Blocking Concepts

The concept of blocks-as-strikes is immediately apparent in the very first kata performed by each 1st degree candidate at a CNS black belt test. The "down-the-middle" blocking sections of *Giecho Hyung Yi Bu Sang Gup* feature several blocks, providing the opportunity to demonstrate them as strikes. However, it is very commonly the case that candidates execute the high and outside blocks in these sections as deflections with backward hip action, rendering them ineffective as strikes. Part of the genius of Mr. Norris' addition of this kata to the beginning kata sequence is that students have the opportunity to internalize the concept of blocks as strikes, a fundamental stylistic feature of the Chuck Norris System. The other Giecho Hyungs can be similarly used to help build these and similar skills. Care and patience should be shown students until they master these concepts.

A Little Chuck Norris Sytem Kata History

Originally, there were only three giecho hyungs: Giecho Hyung Il Bu, Giecho Hyung Yi Bu, and Giecho Hyung Sahm Bu. These forms came to us from Korea, which received them from Japan. Mr. Norris invented *sang gup* (advanced) versions of Giecho Hyung Il Bu and Giecho Hyung Yi Bu and added them to the sequence for a total of five. He also introduced modifications to two of the three standard giecho hyungs. The only giecho hyung not "touched" by Mr. Norris is the first one, Giecho Hyung Il Bu. However, even it reflects the Chuck Norris System in the manner in which its techniques are executed.

Chuck Norris System black belt testing requirements do not include all the beginning or intermediate forms. For testing purposes, the most applicable forms have been chosen to show mastery of technique and concepts required at each level of black belt. However, this does not mean the other forms - those *not* represented in the black belt testing requirements - do not have value! The entire sequence of beginning and intermediate forms provides an invaluable teaching template and progression to lend focus and purpose to the training of beginning and intermediate students, and crossover black belts. There is considerable genius reflected in the order and manner in which new concepts are introduced in the sequence, including the modifications and additions made by Mr. Norris.