

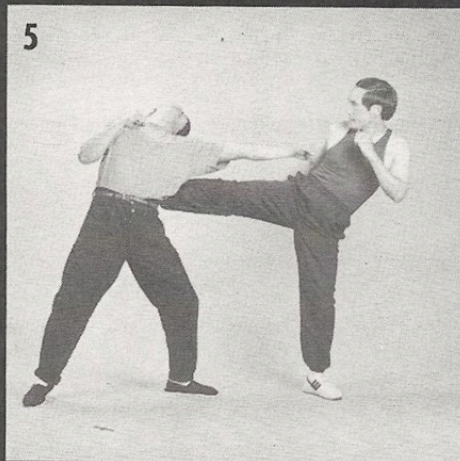
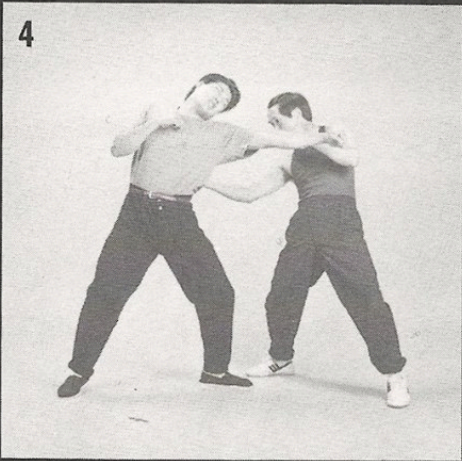
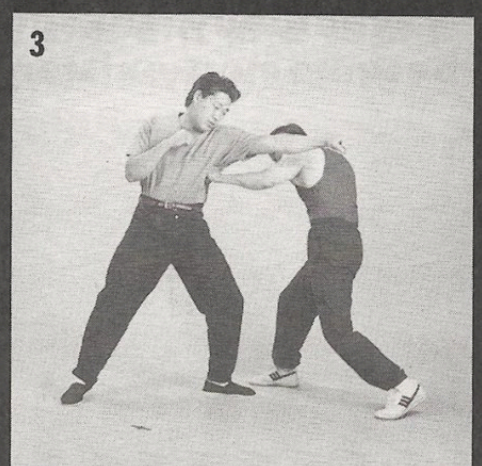
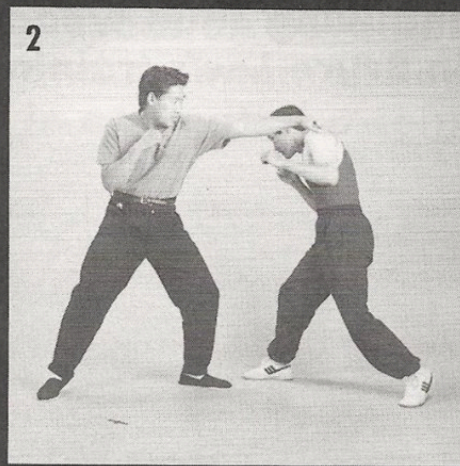
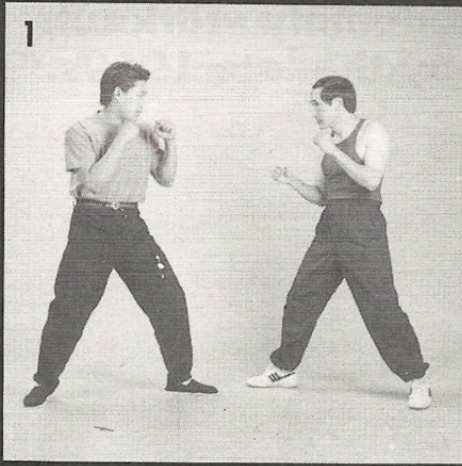
Jeet kune do is much more than merely an outgrowth of wing chun; it is the end product of Bruce Lee's martial arts evolution, including a drastic change in approach and attitude to the fighting arts.

EVOLUTION OF TRAINING IN JKD

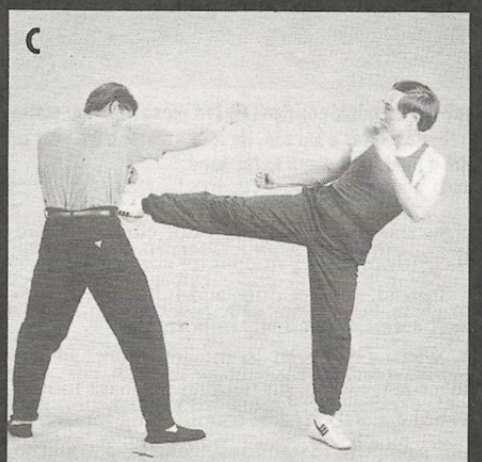
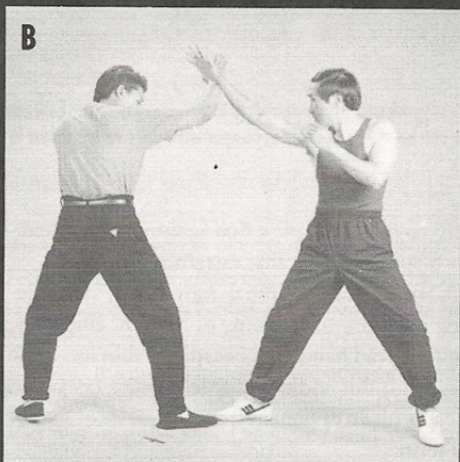
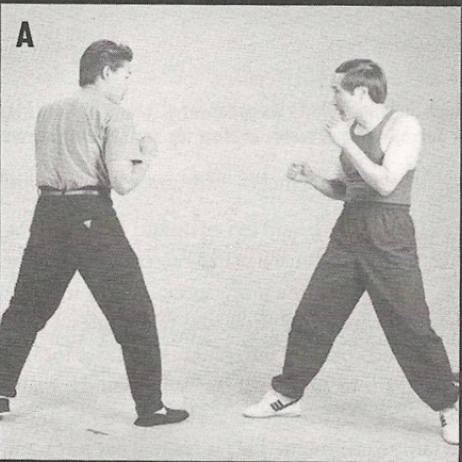
BY TED WONG AND TOMMY BONG

One major misconception that many martial artists believe is that jeet kune do is nothing more than a modified wing chun system with the addition of some long-range kicks from the northern gung-fu (kung-fu) styles. But JKD involves much more than this simple generalization; it is the end product of Bruce Lee's martial arts evolution, including a whole change in approach and attitude to the fighting arts.

One would notice that Lee's training closely followed his evolution in the martial arts. By observing the evolution of his training regimen, one would discover Bruce Lee's transition from



From the on-guard position (1), the defender slips (2) a left front punch. The defender then executes a rear cross (3) to the body and a shovel hook to the midsection (4). He follows with a hook kick to the attacker's back (5).



Below: From the on-guard position (A), Ted Wong (right) executes a high fingerjab at his assistant, Bruce Wong (B). His assistant attempts to block. Ted then executes a front hook kick to the midsection (C).

wing chun to jeet kune do, thereby understanding where Lee came from, where he went, and where he might have gone had he lived.

WING CHUN PROWESS

When Bruce Lee came to the United States, he continued to diligently practice the wing chun techniques he learned in Hong Kong. Through his perseverance, he attained a high level in wing chun and became an exceptional practitioner of the art. At the time, Lee stayed true to the traditional training in wing chun by performing the wing chun forms many times, by practicing chi sao and many trapping drills with partners, and by working on the wing chun wooden dummy.

He also spent time on developing the strength in his upper body required to trap effectively.

Increasing the strength in his arms and shoulders would help Lee perform chi sao more effectively. This included weight training to increase his forearm size and wrist strength utilized in the wing chun short-range punch as well as doing fingertip push-ups for the wing chun fingerjab technique. Through his understanding that chi sao was used to cultivate a constant energy flow, Bruce Lee also performed some isometric exercises that would develop this flow.

It should be mentioned that although he professed that the strong side of the body should always be in front during a confrontation because of the advanced positions of the limbs, Bruce Lee taught that both the left and right sides would both be cultivated for combat.

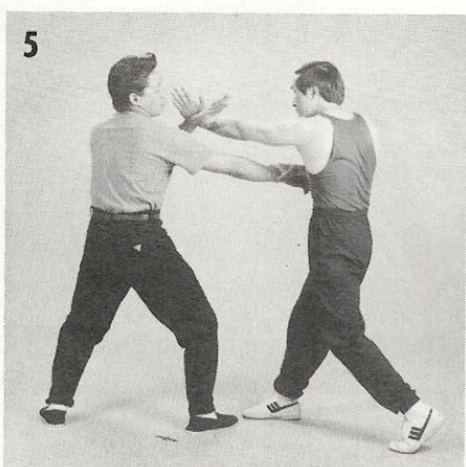
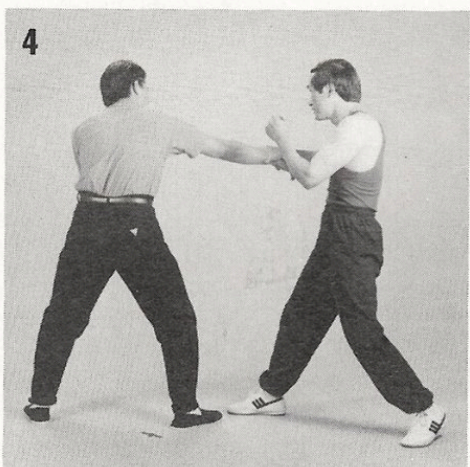
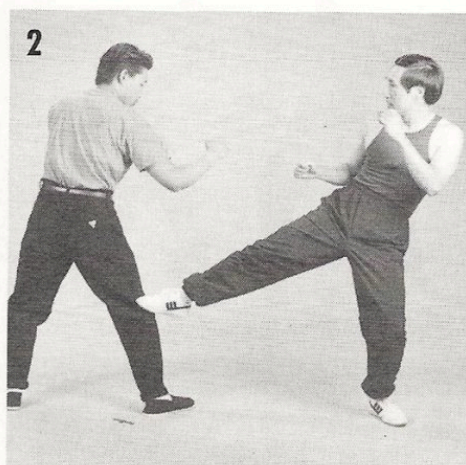
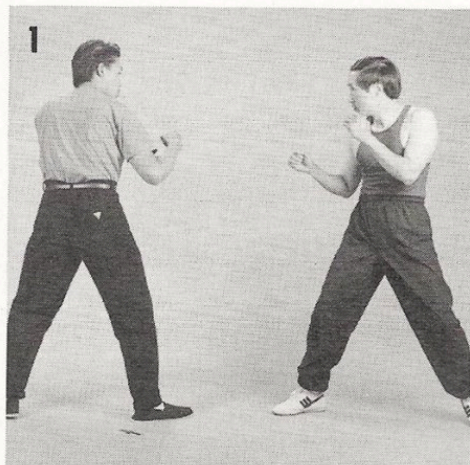
This was because an unexpected fight may

occur while the practitioner is in any position. In addition, jeet kune do endorses the coordination of the whole body, including the arms and shoulders, to move as one unit so maximum power can be achieved relative to one's body size and weight.

DIFFERENT WORKOUTS

After his famous altercation in Oakland during the mid-1960s, Bruce Lee found himself unusually winded, thus he increased his endurance workout by running more, using the stationary bicycle, jumping rope, and shadowboxing. At the same time, Lee began to change his approach to the martial arts, and this reflected in his training. One example is that with his new emphasis on adaptability, realism, and functionality, Bruce Lee de-emphasized the practice of pre-arranged

"Eventually, chi sao and wing chun wooden dummy workouts became non-existent in Bruce Lee's training by the late 1960s."



From the on-guard position (1), Ted Wong (right) executes a low stop kick to the opponent's knee (2). He then follows with a high fingerjab (3). As his opponent attempts to block (4), he then executes a lop sao. He follows with a left rear punch to the head (5). As the opponent attempts to block the left rear punch, Wong executes another lop sao (6) and follows with a right front punch to the head.

forms training, since it did not effectively and efficiently prepare a student for combat.

Instead, contact drills and full-contact sparring became increasingly important.

When Lee began to integrate some of the longer-range kicks, his training emphasis moved toward general physical conditioning for overall body strength and stamina since kicking would be more taxing on the cardiovascular system. As kicking was to be used more often, leg strength became particularly important, so kicking the shield, doing leg raises and squats with weights, and stretching for flexibility became regular exercises. Furthermore, as Bruce Lee became more and more *influenced* by boxing, many of the training and conditioning exercises from that sport became heavily adopted such as using the heavy bag, the top and bottom bag, and the focus pad. However, Lee would not only use these devices with hands, but also his feet.

With Lee's emphasis on longer-range fighting, distance and mobility became key issues. Countless hours were spent on developing smooth and rapid footwork to bridge and maintain distance, thus allowing Lee to quickly get in and out of a confrontation. Drills were used that developed one's chasing ability so that one could

effectively catch one's fleeing opponent. Therefore, speed also became extremely important.

Such issues as initial movement, non-telegraphic motion, economy of motion, efficiency, and the lead hand/foot became vital in jeet kune do. With this additional speed, Bruce Lee could cleanly hit an opponent from a distance of six feet or more.

ANOTHER DIRECTION

Thanks to this emphasis on other fighting ranges, Lee began to taper his wing chun training more and more. For example, since he sought to increase his skill in the other combative ranges besides the trapping range (kicking, punching, and grappling), Bruce Lee would naturally begin to practice wing chun less frequently. Eventually, chi sao and wing chun wooden dummy workouts became non-existent in Bruce Lee's training by the late sixties.

Along with working on certain techniques such as the front hand lead punch and the side-

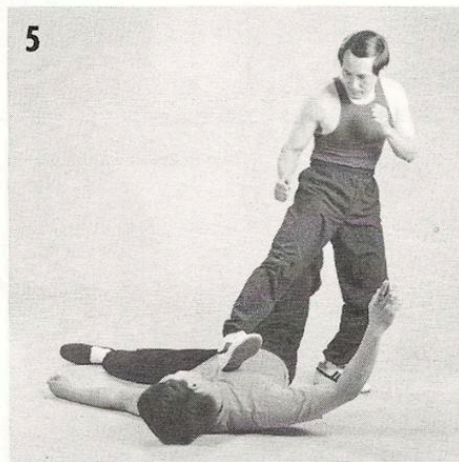
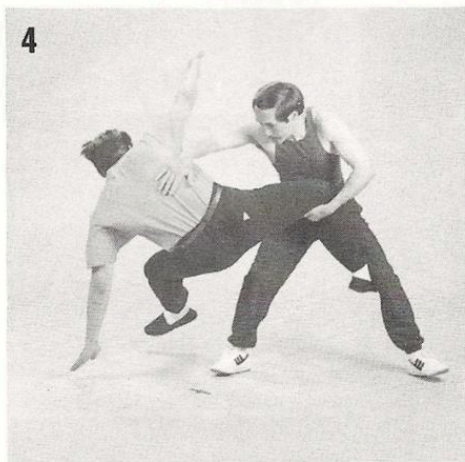
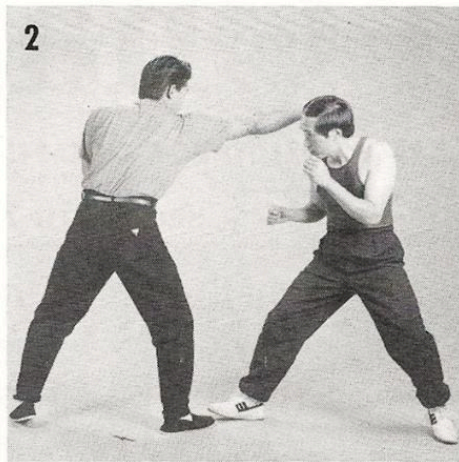
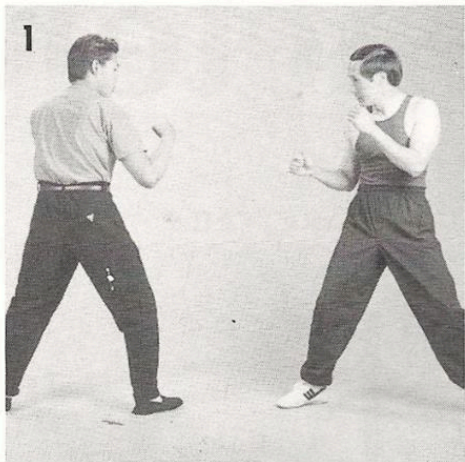
kick, Bruce Lee began to isolate and work specific muscles that were used in these techniques, so that the training became more specialized to increase the performance of particular techniques. Next, Lee would consider different possibilities for improving the techniques. Finally, he would actually change the technique to make it better or more versatile for himself. This is really what jeet kune do is all about: the self-discovery of one's self through the process of simplification.

Bruce Lee never adopted another martial art (technique or training method) simply because it was good, but rather if it complemented what he was already doing. In addition, if Lee adopted something from another martial art, he would have modified it so much to fit him that it would not resemble the original art at all. If Lee had lived, he would most likely have developed exercises and training methods that would help him maintain the peak physical condition that he earlier achieved.

Bruce Lee stressed simplicity in his fighting. It is not how much knowledge or how many tech-

Ted Wong was a private student of Bruce Lee's in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and is one of the highest authorities on jeet kune do. Tommy Gong is a student (and certified instructor) under Ted Wong. They are available for seminars and workshops. You can contact them at JKD, 200 North 2nd St., Patterson, California 95363.

"Countless hours were spent on developing smooth and rapid footwork to bridge and maintain distance, allowing Lee to quickly get in and out of a confrontation."



From the on-guard position (1), the defender (right) slips a right jab (2). The defender then executes an elbow strike to the midsection (3). He follows with a left leg takedown (4) and a kick (5) to the opponent's head.

niques one knows that will make him a better fighter, but rather how well one can use this knowledge and these techniques. What Bruce Lee called "hacking away the unessentials" was his way of streamlining his fighting arsenal to its bare essentials. This was to cut down on the confusion that one encounters when trying to figure out what response would be most appropriate to a given situation.

As a result, one would notice that JKD has very few techniques in its arsenal when compared to other martial arts. Jeet kune do is all about doing what is instinctual and natural. It is simply about being yourself.

EQUIPMENT TRAINING

Bruce Lee was one of the first martial artists to utilize many pieces of training equipment to hone his combative skill. In line with his convictions that realistic training and sparring were the most effective ways of cultivating fighting prowess, Bruce Lee sought training devices which would allow realistic practice and drilling.

Effective training equipment would be able to continually withstand Lee's full-power kicks and punches without breaking or falling apart, giving Lee the appropriate "feeling" when he hit it, while allowing Lee to use it with a partner so that a

human element was involved.

Bruce Lee felt that the standard heavy bag is one of the best pieces of training equipment for developing power, stamina, and conditioning. He also had an extra-large heavy bag so that he could develop even more tremendous power by throwing full-power kicks into it. Lee would often hold the kicking shield for a new acquaintance who was unaware that Lee would later want to kick the shield.

Another way that Lee conditioned the body was by receiving blows from the medicine ball. The speed bag and the top and bottom bag were used to develop rhythm, timing, and distance in Lee's punches and kicks. Another of Lee's favorite pieces of training equipment was the focus gloves because it requires the use of a partner, it is extremely versatile, and it develops great accuracy in punches and kicks. He even punched paper suspended by a string to increase his timing and accuracy. Lee also constantly conditioned his hands by punching his small straw pad, his gravel and sandbox, and his famous three-canvas bags.

The men who were principally responsible for building much of the innovative equipment were James Lee, George Lee (in Oakland), and Herb Jackson (in Los Angeles), all of whom were Lee's students. George Lee and Herb Jackson built and

modified most of the mobile equipment that Bruce Lee used, such as the protective gear, focus gloves, and various kicking shields. Bruce Lee used three kinds of kicking shields: a modified football tackle shield, a kicking board made of wood with handles attached to the back, and a thick, five-foot tall wooden shield that was held with seatbelts over the shoulder. Jackson, a construction engineer, padded the back of the latter kicking shield so that the person holding the shield would be protected from Bruce Lee's powerful kicks.

James Lee, a welder by trade, ingeniously utilized heavy automobile parts in the unique training equipment he built so that they were durable and flexible. For instance, his so-called "thousand-way fighting dummy" was supported by a strong spring from behind so that it would spring back after being kicked. His use of springs on the arms of his modified fighting dummy, on his finger jab and head target devices, and on his foot obstruction and shin-kick apparatus made it so that the targets would be flexible and bend, thereby giving a more realistic *feeling* on the equipment. With all of the additional realistic training that Lee received from the use of his equipment, it is no wonder that he obtained such unmatched fighting skill.

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