

Prof. Steve McLaughlin bio

<https://hawaiiirl.com/blogs/nuuanu-martial-artist-shares-ales-of-sects-thugs-and-rock-n-roll.html/>



When Should I Strike, when should I throw

by Professor Steve McLaughlin, Nidan at the time of first publishing May 1984 in Kokua Echo, Sparks Judo and Jujitsu Club (Now the Bushidokan Martial Arts Temple)

This is possibly the most controversial subject between different schools of the martial arts, as well as between dojos in the DanZan Ryu system. Master Okazaki studied boxing saw that, since Americans are boxers by heritage, they were prone to using their hands to strike or fend off opponents in most situations. It's an instinctive reaction and is one of the most common and quickest responses most people have in conflict situations. To broaden the American boxing response he decided to emphasize the "grappling" aspects of his art to the beginning student. As a result of this approach there are not many specific striking arts in beginning stages of DZR Judo or Jujitsu, until after the rank of black belt. Many untrained people have a tendency to simply lash out at any situation that they are unfamiliar with and miss the more important aspects of training to go with the "flow" to better solve their problems. In the beginning students learn basic jujitsu arts against simple strikes and kicks and train with ukes in the lower ranks, who deliver their strikes as anyone who wasn't trained. Beginners learn to respond to untrained strikes, in order to become realistically conditioned to the way a majority of the common people fight and use their hands. One of the most commonly asked questions from beginning and intermediate students, concerns when to strike or kick an opponent or when to throw them. "When should I strike and when should I throw?" Here is my answer; Go with the flow. If you can't then strike to make your openings. If the strike stops the fight – good. If it doesn't – no matter – we will be using the strike along with a finishing art. With jujitsu training and massage knowledge you can strike so it isn't against the

flow of the encounter. However, most of the time your opponent will oblige you by striking first and providing the flow. Your reflexes are faster when you are on the defensive – when you are still, balanced, and alert. When you are in close and your movement is restricted, striking is not easily done, that is why we study massage and learn where to find all the nerve paths. Simply pressing on these is an excellent form of kuzushi. To finish up a determined opponent – holds, chokes and locks work best. Especially if you do not wish to harm your opponent anymore than necessary. It has been proven too many times in overall self-defense situations that punches and kicks are not totally effective. It takes years of practice to strike effectively at a moving target that is trying to avoid your strikes and is trying to attack you at the same time. Also if you merely wish to control someone, and not damage them, punches and kicks don't work well. It is hard to punch someone lightly and get them to do what you want. Neither do strikes work well in water, or at night when you can't see your target very well, or know whether or not they are heavily clothed. When unexpectedly confronted by an armed opponent at close range, punches and kicks are likely to get you shot or cut, especially on the leg or arm. A hands-on technique is more likely to prevent your opponent from shooting or knifing you. It has been seen that people are capable of sustaining horrendous bullet and knife wounds and still return fire or attack. What are the chances a punch or kick will stop an opponent as well as a firearm or knife? Remember, the goal is to “stop” their actions and avoid moves that just damage them. Now this is not to say strikes won't work. They certainly will if used at the right time and place. Personally, I see the striking arts occupying only 1/4 to 1/3 of all effective techniques you can use in combat, and even less in combative “control” situations. We still should teach good basic striking, blocking, and parrying techniques at intermediate levels after a thorough introduction to massage. At higher levels a student can see that a rear kick and uchi momo harai are the same technique; or that a front kick opens tomoe nage or tatsumaki jime. Blocks require the same motion that kuzushis uke for a throw. Uke otoshi and many other arts contain the foot and hip motions for a punch, as well as the strike itself. Truthfully there is no difference between strikes and throws. What you do is based on range. The same move when used at a distance is a strike, and when in close the same move is used to throw. Just learning to strike you aren't necessarily learning to throw, but in learning to throw you are learning to strike – and how to go with the flow.