

OPERATION AT CLOSE RANGE

Combative Fitness Training

By SSG Ken and Stephanie Weichert



MID-RANGE TACTICS:

The distance between combatants where they can engage each other with punches or kicks.

My gums went completely numb after slugging back my third sugary shot of hot black tea. I was at an outdoor tea stand in Samarra, Iraq—similar to an outdoor American coffee shop—conversing with a local. The shopping center was particularly crowded on this blistering 125-degree afternoon. This was the kind of heat that gave new meaning to the phrase “boiling point.” My eyes stung from salty sweat streams pooling down in rivers from my helmet. Between the intense caffeine and sugar overdose, I had this false sense of Superman strength raging through my veins.

“Stay focused,” I thought to myself. This large Iraqi man in front of me was not my friend. Hassan was a 6-foot, 5-inch, 280-pound former Iraqi Republican Guard officer. Earlier that week, several unrelated townspeople indicated that he was acting as my friend in order to collect information about me to sell to the enemy. My intention in this meeting was to verify that this information was true.

After the usual flowery Arabic greeting, I began. “Hassan, we have been friends for several months now.”

Speaking in Arabic, he casually responded, “Yes.”

My stare narrowed and intensified as I continued, “There is a problem.”

The tone of our meeting changed. He looked bewildered. He was caught. For a brief moment, he seemed frozen in his seat. He managed to utter the words, in Arabic, “I don’t understand.” His voice was scratchy. I prayed silently that the Military Police squad leader in the alley would not miss the designated signal to come and rescue my translator and me from a potentially dangerous situation.

“The problem is that you are selling information about me to the enemy,” I declared. My finger was on the walkie-talkie resting on my lap, ready to give the cue.

As I glanced down, I noticed that Hassan’s knuckles were turning white from the force of clenching his fists. It was going to get physical, and with my martial arts training, he was going down. Under the table I tapped the walkie-talkie call button three times, cueing my cavalry to come charging out of the alley to my rescue. However, they struggled to reach us in the midst of the large crowd.

CRASH! In one move, all suspicion disappeared. The plastic tea-stand chairs went tumbling backward as Hassan lunged toward me. He wrapped his large hands around my neck and started to squeeze.

Instead of pulling his hands off of my neck, I reached my left hand up, grabbed his right hand tightly in its place and lunged backwards into a wide stance. “He is off-balance!” I thought. I immediately twisted my body counterclockwise at the hips, lifted my right arm in the air, struck downward and secured both of his arms in my right underarm. Loosening my grip on him for an instant, I stretched my right arm to my left and struck his face with my elbow. I stepped forward with my left leg, reached my right arm around the back of his neck under his chin and secured a chokehold on him by grabbing my right wrist with my left hand. Just like that, Hassan was in a chokehold at my side.

When the cavalry can’t make it in time, thank God for modern Combatives!

—SSG Ken Weichert



WARM-UP PHASE

Aerobics:

Examples: Running in place; side-straddle hops (jumping jacks); high steps/knees (5 minutes)

Stretching (5 minutes)

AEROBIC TARGET PHASE 1 UPPER BODY

Push-ups

Basic: 30 seconds

Intermediate: 60 seconds

Advanced: 90 seconds

1/2 Sit-ups, Crunches

Basic: 30 seconds

Intermediate: 60 seconds

Advanced: 90 seconds

PUNCH 1:

Front Punch, Jab

{ NOT PICTURED }

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Throw your lead fist straight at your target until the arm is fully extended. Your fist will rotate inward until the palm faces the ground. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. *Note:* This is a speed punch. Remember to keep your wrist straight and to punch with your first two knuckles. Keep your back fist guarding your face.

Warning: Do not lock your elbow.

Basic: 20 punches (each arm)

Intermediate: 50 punches (each arm)

Advanced: 100 punches (each arm)

PUNCH 2:

Straight (Back) Punch

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Throw the back fist straight at your target until the arm is fully extended, crossing the body, rotating your back hip toward the front. Your back foot will twist outward, balancing on the ball of your foot. Your fist will rotate inward until the palm faces the ground. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. *Note:* This is a power punch. Remember to keep your wrist straight and to punch with your first two knuckles. Keep your front fist guarding your face.

Basic: 10 punches (each arm)

Intermediate: 30 punches (each arm)

Advanced: 60 punches (each arm)

COMBO 1:

- Jab
- Straight Punch

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Perform a jab and straight punch combination with explosive energy, pausing for a second in between sets. Continue the jab and straight punch combination for 30 seconds, then accelerate your jab and punch combination as fast as you can for 30 seconds. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch.

PUNCH 3:

Hook Punch with back fist to the body

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Shift your body weight to the rear, pivot your rear foot and torso, drop your rear fist in line with your target and swing your rear fist horizontally toward your target. Your rear arm will arc horizontally 90 degrees at your target, palm facing the body. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. *Note:* Hook punches can be thrown by either the lead or rear fist. A hook is usually aimed at the jaw, but it can also be used for body shots. This is a power punch. Remember to keep your wrist straight and to punch with your first two knuckles. Keep your front fist guarding your face.

Basic: 10 punches (each arm)

Intermediate: 30 punches (each arm)

Advanced: 60 punches (each arm)

PUNCH 4:

Uppercut Punch with back fist to the jaw

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Shift your body weight to the rear, pivot your rear foot and torso, drop your rear arm slightly, tighten the abdominals and throw your rear fist upward toward your target, fist facing the body. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. *Note:* Uppercuts cause more damage when thrown at close range. An uppercut is usually aimed at the jaw, but it can also be used for body shots. This is a power punch. Remember to keep your wrist straight and to punch with your first two knuckles. Keep your front fist guarding your face.

Basic: 10 punches (each arm)

Intermediate: 30 punches (each arm)

Advanced: 60 punches (each arm)

Instructor's Note: Operation at Close Range is not intended as a self-defense training program. The purpose of this workout is to use mid- and close-range martial arts training techniques to help you reach target heart rate during your workout. We have posted some GX Fit Tips at the end of the program that will help you with equipment concerns and other important information. We advise you to exercise with extreme caution and work within your level of expertise. Enjoy your workout!

PUNCH 2: STRAIGHT (BACK) PUNCH



PUNCH 3: HOOK PUNCH WITH BACK FIST TO THE BODY



PUNCH 4: UPPERCUT PUNCH WITH BACK FIST TO THE JAW



KICK 1: KNEE KICK WITH BACK LEG TO THE BODY



KICK 2: SNAP KICK WITH FRONT LEG TO THE JAW



KICK 3: ROUNDHOUSE KICK WITH BACK LEG TO THE BODY OR JAW



KICK 4: FRONT KICK WITH BACK LEG TO THE BODY



COMBO 2:

- Jab, Jab
- Straight Punch
- Lead First Hook Punch
- Rear First Uppercut Punch
- Lead First Hook Punch
- Straight Punch

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Perform the punch combination with explosive energy, pausing for a second in between sets. Continue Combo 2 for 60 seconds, then sprint with jabs and straight punches for 30 seconds. Switch arm and body positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch.



AEROBIC TARGET PHASE 2 LOWER BODY

KICK 1:

Knee Kick with back leg to the body

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Grab your opponent's rear neck or shoulders. Tighten your abdominals and thrust your back knee upward toward your target. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you kick. *Note:* This is a power kick.

Basic: 10 kicks (each leg)

Intermediate: 30 kicks (each leg)

Advanced: 60 kicks (each leg)

KICK 2:

Snap Kick with front leg to the jaw

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Tighten your abdominals and bring your forward knee up into the "chamber"; the ankle should be flexed downward. Snap your forward leg toward your target, kicking with your instep. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you kick. *Note:* This is a speed kick.

Basic: 10 kicks (each leg)

Intermediate: 30 kicks (each leg)

Advanced: 60 kicks (each leg)

KICK 3:

Roundhouse Kick with back leg to the body or jaw

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Tighten your abdominals and bring your rear knee up into the "chamber"; the ankle should be flexed downward. Pivot your forward foot by

balancing on the ball of the foot and swing your rear leg in a semicircular motion, striking with the instep and shin. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you kick. *Note:* This is a power kick.

Basic: 10 kicks (each leg)

Intermediate: 30 kicks (each leg)

Advanced: 60 kicks (each leg)

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Perform the punch combination with explosive energy, pausing for a second in between sets. Continue Combo 3 for 60 seconds, then sprint with jabs and punches for 30 seconds. Switch arm and body positions, and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you punch. *Note:* The objective of this combination is to temporarily block the opponent’s vision with the straight punch while delivering the roundhouse kick.

GX

FIT TIPS



“Obstacles are those frightful things you can see when you take your eyes off your goal.”

—Henry Ford

KICK 4:

Front Kick with back leg to the body

START: Assume a guard position or boxing stance.

ACTION: Tighten your abdominals and bring your rear knee up into the “chamber”; the ankle should be flexed downward. Pivot your forward foot by balancing on the ball of the foot and thrust your rear leg forward at your target, striking with the ball of the foot. Return to the guard position and continue until your goal is reached. Switch leg positions and continue until your goal is reached. Exhale when you kick. *Note:* This is a power kick.

Warning: Remember to curl your toes back with your kicking foot so that you will not hurt your toes.

Basic: 10 kicks (each leg)

Intermediate: 30 kicks (each leg)

Advanced: 60 kicks (each leg)

COMBO 3:

- Jab
- Straight Punch
- Roundhouse Kick, Back Leg

COOLDOWN PHASE

Stretching (5 minutes)

STAMINA STOPWATCH

1 full set = approximately 60 minutes

Equipment Needed:

- Boxing gloves
- Focus mitts
- Kicking shield

Choosing the right boxing gloves

The best advice for choosing boxing gloves is to try them on while wearing hand wraps.

Putting on hand wraps

Due to space restrictions, we could not fit hand wrap instructions in Operation at Close Range. There are many Web sites, like www.ringside.com, that explain step-by-step techniques for putting on hand wraps. We suggest that you use hand wraps for wrist and knuckle protection.

Safety concerns

Be certain to hold kicking shields while in a wide stance, with the shield against your body. *Warning:* Do not place either of your hands in front of your face.

Boxing glove care

I like to take four clean socks that I do not use anymore, pour some baby powder in two of them, roll them up, stick them into the third and fourth socks and tie the outer socks off at the ends. I wind up with two powder-filled sock snakes. After my kickboxing workouts, I stuff the sock snakes into each glove to keep them dry while stored in my gym bag. When I get home, I pull the sock snakes out and air the gloves out completely.

Get tons of tips about getting—and staying—fit at www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com/fitness.

Warning: Always seek the advice and guidance of a qualified health provider with any questions or concerns you may have prior to commencing a fitness program. This article should not be relied on or substituted for professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The exercises presented are for suggestion only. Participate at your own risk. Stop if you feel faint or shortness of breath.



SSG KEN AND STEPHANIE WEICHERT

A six-time Soldier of the year and Veteran of both Operation Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm, SSG Ken Weichert and his wife, Stephanie, a certified personal trainer, founded the START Fitness® program, a San Francisco-based group exercise and hiking business that delivers military-inspired, boot-camp style workouts to Soldiers and civilians. The program now trains and certifies basic, senior and master instructors.

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