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# Thoughts on Self-Defence for Grading

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**Submitted for Grading to 4th Degree Black Belt**

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## Introduction

Showing prepared routines of Self-Defence is a required part of the grading for a student to move up to the next grade and belt. It generally sits between the Step Sparring and Free Sparring sections, and can be viewed as part of a natural progression - from the formalised and clean techniques of Step-Sparring to the free-flowing and unplanned nature of Free-Sparring.

Self-Defence is the core of the Taekwon-Do martial art. Indeed, the encyclopaedia written by General Choi is titled, "Taekwon-Do (the Korean Art of Self-Defence)". Wrapped around this martial art are the Tenets and Student Oath, including a moral framework that seeks to make better people through the Art of Taekwon-Do.

This thesis is a collection of thoughts and quotes on how to prepare for and conduct the Self-Defence part of a grading. No doubt I have missed out some key concepts, and also perhaps lack true understanding of some aspects of what I have put down here. I would very much appreciate feedback to that affect, so as to gain wider understanding and correct misconceptions that I can then share with others.

I first thought of writing this thesis after successfully completing my grading for 3rd Degree Black Belt in 2014. With my partner, Hadyn Price (4th Dan Black Belt), and guidance from my instructor, Neill Livingstone (6th Degree Black Belt), we put in a great deal of thought into the routines, to reflect the patterns (Eui-Am, Choong-Jang & Juche) and philosophies of self-defence. However, by the time I had put thoughts to paper, I decided to write about the five routines for my 4th Dan grading.


This thesis is in four main sections, quotes from the Taekwon-Do Encyclopaedia (Self-Defence sections), my thoughts on the Preparation that goes into the routines for grading, the Protocol that goes on in a grading, and finally a description of the five Self-Defence Routines I have prepared and trained for as part of my grading to 4th Dan Black belt.

I would like to thank my instructor, Sabum Neill Livingstone (6th Dan Black Belt) of Taranaki Taekwon-Do for guiding my training for the last 10 years, and for being my partner in this grading. It would be fair to say that he has made me a better person in many ways from the person I was when I first started Taekwon-Do.

Thank you for reading this thesis. I hope you take something useful from it that may help you in your journey in Taekwon-Do.

Taekwon!

David Apimerika, 3rd Dan Black Belt



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# Taekwon-Do Encyclopedia, by General Choi Hong Hi

The Taekwon-Do Encyclopedia has a chapter on Self Defence. It shows a number of techniques that can be used against various types of attacks. These techniques can be used for Real Life situations, but also are useful in the Self Defence section of a grading.

Quoted below are the main paragraphs from the encyclopaedia (you are encouraged to read the full chapter):

## Self-Defence Techniques (Hosin Sul)

These techniques are not only the most interesting in Taekwon-Do but also the most advanced. They are in every sense, for a practical self-defense. Most of these techniques except for breaking motions are the logical application of various motions acquired from patterns, sparring, and fundamental movements to be used against a sudden attack by an armed or unarmed opponent.

The defender must know how to make use of his or her opponent's momentum and force, while utilising his or her dynamic and reflexive actions against momentarily undefended target.

Certainly, these self-defense techniques can only be effective if the student takes the time to constantly train with them under realistic conditions.

Types of Attacks Stated in the Self-Defence chapter:

## **HOW TO RELEASE FROM A GRAB (*Jappyosul Tae*)**

It is unlikely that a Taekwon-Do black belt will ever be grabbed by an assailant. Below is illustrated a technique, however, that can be effective.

Releasing is performed in three different ways: either by a direct attack to a vulnerable or vital spot, breaking the joint of the attacking hand or arm, or by a logical releasing motion which is usually accompanied by a counter attack.

Since this technique might be used against a physically strong opponent, the defender should not make attempt to pull but rather to push the grabbing hand or foot at the same time coordinating the body to make use of the opponent's momentum and the instinctive pulling motion of the opponent with rare exceptions.

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## **DEFENSE AGAINST A SUDDEN ATTACK (*Dae Boori Gong Gyok*)**

An unexpected attack can come at any time, any place. There are numerous accounts in the newspapers of innocent victims being attacked in broad day light on city streets and even in the privacy of their own homes.

An attacker will usually have the initial advantage of surprise. A well trained student of taekwon-Do, however, who has developed an instinctive conditioned reflex should stand of fairly good chance of blocking or at least deflecting a blow.

## **THROWING AND FALLING TECHNIQUES (*Dunjigi Wa Torojigi*)**

The emphasis in falling is naturally placed on learning to fall without getting hurt and recovering as quickly as possible.

Falling is practiced from a standing, sitting and lying down position. In both cases there are certain basic rules that must be followed:

1. Relax the body.
2. Fall to the side rather than the flat of the back. The falling should be done with a rolling motion distributing the weight on the buttocks, side and shoulder.
3. Absorb the shock by striking the ground or floor with the palm of the hand.
4. Tuck the chin into the chest to avoid the head striking the ground or floor.
5. Raise the legs.

A throwing technique in Taekwon-Do is only used when you do not wish to seriously injure an opponent, to occasionally counter an opponent's counter-attack or if an opponent is blocked in a way that it is impossible for him to utilise any of his attacking tools. As soon as a throwing technique is used, step back to avoid a counter-attack motion.

## **DEFENSE AGAINST AN ARMED OPPONENT (*Dae Moogi*)**

Defense against an armed opponent requires the ultimate in technique. At this point it is necessary to caution students that though someone who has fully developed speed, balance, power, tactics and self-confidence may possibly defend against a knife, club, bayonet or staff it requires the highest degree of expertise to defend against a gun.

If it is necessary for the defender to take more than two steps to reach his opponent, especially if he is an observant gunman, then the technique will fail.

The following points must be borne in mind when defending against an armed opponent:

1. If a dodge is employed, move away from the direction the weapon is facing, except in the case of straight stab or thrust, in order to avoid being stabbed or cut.
2. Gauge your distance precisely. Dodging too far from your opponent may make it impossible to execute a counter-attack in time. Against a bayonet or staff, lengthen your strike during the dodge opponent will find it necessary to take an extra step for a combination movement. Compensate for this increased distance by positioning yourself for an instant spring to cover the extra step in a single bound.

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3. Blocking should be executed against the attacking arm or hand, rather than the weapon itself, when defending against a knife or club.

### **Defense Against a Pistol (*Dae Gown Chong*)**

Any sparring technique can be applied directly against a pistol, however, one must be realistic. Only at a very close range, or when the opponent is pulling the pistol from concealment, or sighting the weapon can the defence techniques illustrated on the preceding pages be used.

A deception or feint can perhaps be a defender's best defence but the defender must be very quick while executing the manoeuvre.

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## Preparation

The first item of business in the preparation for the Self-Defence section of a grading is to know the requirements. These are set by the Instructor, but generally follow established precedent.

The current requirements at Taranaki Taekwon-Do are as follows:

Level	
10th Gup to 8th Gup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grab to the wrist, same side</li><li>• Grab to the wrist, opposite side</li><li>• Two hand grab to both wrists</li></ul>
7th Gup to 5th Gup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Release per Do-San</li><li>• Lapel grab, one hand</li><li>• Lapel grab, two hands</li><li>• Bear hug from behind, under arms and over arms</li><li>• Two hand wrist grab from behind</li><li>• Two hand shoulder grab from behind</li></ul>
4th Gup to 2nd Gup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Release per Joong-Gun</li><li>• Defence against the following attacks must contain knees and elbows as counter-attacks:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Twin palm push</li><li>• Straight punch</li><li>• Back-fist strike</li><li>• Hook punch</li><li>• Double hook punch</li><li>• Grab &amp; hook punch</li></ul></li><li>• Break falls: - side, front &amp; back</li><li>• Rolling Break falls- front &amp; back</li><li>• Release per Hwa-Rang</li></ul>
1st Gup	As per Black Belt Application
1st Dan	10 pre arranged self defence techniques against an attacker while kneeling, sitting and lying down.
2nd Dan	10 pre arranged self defence techniques against weapon attacks. Eg, knife and baton
3rd Dan	10 pre arranged self defence routines showing skill in throwing and falling.
4th Dan -	10 pre arranged self defence routines of your own choice.

The second item of business is to find a willing partner to work with on the grading. In some situations, it might also be wise to tap an under-study in case the partner cannot carry on to the grading. Generally it is best to select a partner of similar size or bigger.

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Patterns and floor-work on fundamentals are centred on the assumption that the invisible opponent is of the same height.

It is useful to begin to play around with ideas early on. Almost certainly, the routines that are executed at the grading will be very different from the initial ideas. The more time that is taken in this preparation phase, the more practised and authentic the routines will look at the grading. Often new ideas will present themselves when there is an existing framework to work on. Fine-tuning takes place as the routines are practised over and over. Some aspects of the routines may not flow as well as they should, insights into the techniques can be gained. Angles are adjusted, directions decided upon.

As my instructor often mentions, quoting General Choi, *“Train hard, grading easy. Train easy, grading hard”*.

### Working Out Routines

For the set of routines, many considerations should help to construct an interesting and appropriate number of techniques and sequence to demonstrate an understanding of the grade being tested. List here are some of those considerations:

**Situation** - Is the Defender aware that he/she is about to be attacked? If not, then they should be relaxed (but alert and aware of surroundings as per true Martial Artist). This means not standing in parallel stance, with arms hanging, hands clenched into fists. Neither does it mean Looking around frantically expecting an attack at any moment. If they are aware - i.e. the Attacker is in front and looking aggressive, perhaps with a weapon visible, then some form of readiness is appropriate. This could range from facing the Attacker in a ready pose of some kind (normally recommend half-facing, relaxed and hands & feet ready to move quickly) to an actual guarding block of some description.

In the encyclopaedia, a major section on Defence Technique has these Basic Principles for Defense. They are worth noting:

1. Always maintain a half-facing posture during manoeuvres towards and away from an opponent with a few exception.
2. Maintain a flexible ready posture at all times.
3. Remain constantly aware so you are able to execute a counter-attack the instant an opportunity avails itself.

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**Starting Position** - Simply whether the Attacker attacks from the right or left (as viewed by the Examiner), or some other starting position. Obviously, the main action should take place within easy viewing of the Examiner (and audience). Generally, and for the first routine especially, the Defender (grading student) should be in the senior position (so on the left as viewed by the Examiner). This is the case even if the Attacker (partner) is of higher rank. The recommended answer to this for me personally, is to look at the major techniques being demonstrated and the finishing technique, and choose the starting position that best shows these to the Examiner. For example, if the finishing technique is a take-down and fingertip-thrust to the armpit of the Attacker, but this takes place with the Defender's back to the Examiner, simply swap the starting positions so that the Examiner can see the technique clearly, with the Defender facing the Examiner.

**First Response** - With the first attack being launched (this could be a simple grab to the wrist right up to a lunging knife attack), the Defender must decide what kind of response is warranted and appropriate. There are three main approaches:

**Avoid the Attack** - moving the body away from the attack through such techniques as moving the limb out of the way (e.g. the arm from a grab), dodging, sliding, pivoting and weaving. This point is often forgotten by students, and so a very useful exercise for beginning students. The first self-defence technique taught for the wrist grab is simply to move the hand away before it's grabbed.

**Block the Attack with a Defensive Technique** - the traditional view by students of the required technique for an attack - an attack must be blocked, an offensive technique is countered by a defensive technique, very Yin-Yang. Generally, this is what the Self-Defence section of a grading will consist of, attack and block.

**Counter-Attack during the Attack** - more experienced students will realise that it is possible to defend by immediately counter-attacking. This is shown in the pattern Ge-Baek, with the middle turning kick (right foot) while stepping to the left (often practised as a dodging turning kick). The counter attacking technique can move the Defender's body out of the way of the Attacker's technique at the same time.

**Number of Techniques** - The sequence of techniques and movements should be kept as short as possible, in order to demonstrate some skill or understanding. Firstly, the idea of "One Strike for Victory", symbolised by the tying of the belt once around the waist, is inherent in Taekwon-Do. Every attacking technique (and my instructor would suggest most defensive techniques) should be strong enough to disable and incapacitate the Attacker. Secondly, a prolonged routine of multiple attacks, defensive moves and counter-attacks will tend to make the routine look like a Hollywood-choreographed fight sequence for a movie. This is not realistic, and will detract from emphasising the core technique being demonstrated. For example, if the core of a routine is a knife-hand strike to the neck after first blocking an attack, then to tack on another three or four techniques asks the question - did the knife-hand strike accomplish nothing?



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**Finishing Response** - The reality of a grading situation is that there will be two main types of finishing scenarios; the first where a counter-attack “finishes” the Attacker - an offensive technique is used to break or damage some part of the Attacker’s body such that they are incapacitated and cannot continue the assault. The other is where the Defender puts the Attacker into a submissive position through the use of wrist locks or other technique that causes the Attacker pain if they continue to struggle or resist, and also make it difficult for the Attacker to re-attack.

In the former approach, an energetic display of technique is used - e.g. an assertive and clear “kihap” at the moment of impact for a hand technique. Ending with a foot/knee technique does not require a “kihap” and is discouraged. However, the Defender can optionally step back - well out of reach of the Attacker - and assume a guarding block, with “kihap” if it seems appropriate.

The latter approach requires techniques not strictly part of Taekwon-Do (there is no chapter on them in the encyclopaedia, but references are made in the Self Defence section, surrounded by other techniques breaking limbs). This approach therefore borrows from other Martial Arts. When a submission response is applied in a grading routine, the technique is applied until the Attacker “taps out” by tapping the floor or leg two or three times. This would not normally occur in real-life situations.

The final response type is to avoid the attack altogether. A weave, move of the hand/foot/body, duck or dodge could be used. However, as appropriate this response may be, it normally would not lead to a cessation of the attack (in real life), and is probably too unexciting for a grading. However, in real life - although I cannot say for sure - simply being too fast and avoiding a blow may well impress the Attacker enough to cause a stop to the attack.

The threat-level of the attack can determine the appropriate response-level. For example, a grab to the arm may require simply a releasing technique and step back. A knife slash to an arm may justify the initial disarming and breaking of the knife-holding hand of the Attacker. Also to be considered (in real life) is the need to explain in front of a court-of-law judge, the appropriateness of a response to a common assault, the judge knowing that you are a Martial Artist with knowledge and experience in Self-Defence.

**Realism** - It is accepted that the demonstration of routines in a grading are not real-life. For one, doing the actual techniques on a partner would lead to injury. Secondly, each person knows what is coming - obviously, because they have trained and rehearsed for this moment. Therefore, a degree of acting is required. Techniques must look like they would be effective, if only the block or strike had been closer by another few millimetres or centimetres. So they should be applied with full power - and full control, stopping just short of the partner’s body.

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The other end of the scale is for a self-defence routine to look like a poorly acted step-sparring routine. For the two partners to stand facing each other, and one to then casually reach up and grab the other's hand in a gentle fashion does not look good. Kihaps should be loud and clear, movements should be definitive and have a rationale, focus is all important.

It is mentioned again, however, that the routines should not be protracted out into a Hollywood spectacle, with lots of leaping and rolling about in a totally non-realistic fashion.

**Weapons and Props** - Weapons are used for grading to 3rd Degree Black Belt. Therefore students should not be incorporating them into their Self-Defence routines, especially Gup level students. There are two main reasons for this requirement:

1. Students do not have enough experience with the techniques of Self-Defence to know how they may be adapted and applied in the event of a self-defence against a weapon wielding opponent. Further, students are not given a large amount of training in the use of self-defence against weapons to justify incorporating them into their grading routines - they should be selecting techniques and situations from their patterns and grading requirements.
2. As mentioned in the encyclopedia, defending against an armed opponent requires the utmost of skill, experience and also luck. It would seem appropriate that all three can only be possible after a number of years of training.

The choice of weapons is open. The traditional ones are a baton, knife and staff. these can simulate other weapons such as baseball bats, spades, forks, broken glass/bottles, etc. also mentioned in the encyclopaedia is the use of guns as part of self-defence. The student should be under no illusion that attempting to retaliate against a gun wielding opponent is nothing but highly dangerous. Therefore, using a gun as part of a self-defence routine should be discouraged.

**Pattern Application** - Some grades have a requirement to show the releasing movement/s from a pattern. This is a great way to bridge the patterns to self-defence and show relevancy and context. It is also highly encouraged to pick techniques and short combinations from patterns (especially from the grade being tested) and incorporate them into the routines. This demonstrates that the student has a deeper understanding of their patterns, and is able to apply the techniques contained therein to a new situation. This also promotes some diversity of routines to freshen up a grading. For example, a 2nd Degree Black Belt could use a Crescent Punch (from Eui-Am) as part of their defence where a more junior student may simply employ a straightforward High or Middle Punch.

**Mix it Up** - It is more enjoyable to watch a set of routines that mixes up all the elements described here. Use of knees, elbows, dodging, stepping in, blocking, finishing with hand techniques, finishing with foot techniques, take downs, submission holds, etc, make for exciting viewing, and more importantly, allow the Examiner to see that the student has a wide understanding and can show skill in all aspects of Taekown-Do.

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## Protocol in Grading

This is the protocol for Self-Defence during a grading, as practised by Taranaki Taekwon-Do. The Self-Defence section of a grading generally occurs after the Step-Sparring presentation and before the Free-Sparring section. Grading students show their prepared Self-Defence routines, starting with the junior belt students and moving up to the senior belt students. Often, due to numbers and time constraints, several grading students will present their Self-Defence at the same time. However, more senior grading students, and especially at Black Belt level or those testing to Black Belt, the floor is given to each grading student in turn.

Upon being called up by the Examiner, the grading student (and partner) will respond with a "Yes Sir" or "Ma'am", and immediately with urgency, bow into the grading area and take their place. The grading student will stand in the senior position, with their partner in the junior position. All students face the Examiner, in parallel stance, with their hands clasped behind their back.

When ready, the marshalling Black Belt student will command, "Face the Examiner, Charyot (attention), Kyong Ye (bow)". The students bow and say "Taekwon" in a clear voice. Then the user commands, "Face your partner, Kyong Ye". The students bow and also say "Taekwon" to their partner.

The Examiner will state the required demonstration, for example, "Five routines of Self Defence", then "Sijak (begin)". From here, the students perform their routines.

When completed, the students then remain facing each other until the marshal is satisfied the demonstration is finished. He/she will then command, "Face your partner, Charyot, Kyong Ye", the students bow, saying "Taekwon". Partners can then shake hands, using the correct formal method - shaking with the right, the left hand flat under the right elbow, or in a double handed shake.

The marshal then commands, "Face the Examiner, Charyot, Kyong Ye". The students then bow saying, "Taekwon" to the Examiner/s. The marshal will then command the students to move backwards and exit the grading area. Everyone can then clap in support of the students.

## Five Routines for 4th Degree Dan Grading

#	Attack	Response
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J: Walk in with grab to front of Dobok with both hands, then throwing punch with Left Fist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step into grab with W-Shape Block (Left Forearm), “stamp” on foot</li> <li>• Side Piercing Kick with Left Foot while holding Right Hand</li> <li>• Take down with wrist lock</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J: Bear hug from behind</li> <li>• Step back to avoid Angle Punch</li> <li>• Downward Kick with Right Foot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise arms and break hold, Left Foot out to form Sitting Stance</li> <li>• Angle Punch with Left Fist to rear</li> <li>• Pivot on Right Foot and trap leg</li> <li>• U-shape Punch to solar plexus and groin</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S: Walk up from behind and push shoulder</li> <li>• Walk towards in threatening manner</li> <li>• Punch with Left Fist</li> <li>• Punch with Right Fist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stumble, walk back and turn into Guarding Block.</li> <li>• High Block with Right Outer Forearm</li> <li>• High Block with Right Inward Forearm</li> <li>• Knee to Solar Plexus, Take Down with Low Hooking Kick to back of leg</li> <li>• Flat Fingertip Thrust to Armpit</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S: Swing baton with Left Hand, twice</li> <li>• On third swing...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weave and step backwards to avoid swing</li> <li>• Knife-hand block with Right Hand to arm</li> <li>• Elbow Strike with Left Elbow to head</li> <li>• Middle Knuckle Punch to Throat with Left Fist, Slip to Rear Foot Stance</li> <li>• Open Palm to Chin, walk forwards (two steps), stop and take baton in a twisting motion</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S: Knife swing upwards with Right Hand</li> <li>• Knife swing downwards with Left Hand</li> <li>• Drop to knees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pressing Block with X-fist - <i>knife drops</i></li> <li>• Rising Block with X-Knife-hand, grab wrist</li> <li>• Angle Punch with Right Fist to Elbow - <i>knife drops</i></li> <li>• Sweeping Kick to back of knee with Right Foot</li> <li>• Choking Hold with Right Arm, pulling Left Arm until submission</li> <li>• Push away, retrieve knives</li> </ul>

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Note: **J** refers to Junior side, **S** to Senior side.

The five routines take techniques and sequences from the three patterns of the 3rd Degree Black Belt - Sam-Il, Yoo-Sin & Choi-Yong, and apply them to Self Defence situations. My thanks (again) go to my Instructor, Sabum Neill Livingstone, who gave many key insights and suggestions during the assembly of the five routines.

A mixture of approaches are used to demonstrate the various ideas presented in this thesis. These are described in more details here:

1/ The Defender is minding his own business, looking away at an angle to the Attacker. In this situation, the Defender does not realise or is aware of the attack until his clothing is grabbed in an aggressive manner. This goes against the principle of a Black Belt being aware of his/her surroundings, and should stand out to keen observers. However, the intention here is to show a basic White Belt level "attack" with a more advanced defensive technique - a W-Shaped Block. This technique is first shown in the pattern, Toi-Gye (six in a row!), and is perhaps the strangest technique so far the student will have encountered. It even includes the introduction of the Stamping Motion. Many students will probably wonder if it would ever be used in real life - and probably never consider it for inclusion in a Self Defence routine. In this routine, it is used to turn the Attacker's arm/shoulder while simultaneously stamping on their foot, allowing the hand to be grabbed in preparation of the Side Piercing Kick.

In the pattern Sam-Il, the W-Shaped Block is followed by a Side Piercing Kick, with the arms in a Guarding Block. This allows the securing of the Attacker's arm (the one grabbing the Defender's clothing), prevents the Attacker from moving away from the kick (or using their arm to block the kick), aids in balance, and increases the impact of the kick. The kick is delivered to the exposed floating ribs.

The Attacker is then brought to the ground by placing a wrist-lock on the held arm. This is a non-lethal resolution to the attack, given it started with a grab. While aggressive, this does not warrant - on the face of it - the complete "destruction" of the Attacker. Whilst not found in any patterns (it would seem, for obvious reasons), there is a chapter in the Taekwon-Do Encyclopedia that details techniques for Self-Defence using manipulations of the Attacker's body into submissive positions.

To conclude the routine, two steps are taken away from the Attacker, and finishes in a Guarding Block and Kihap. This demonstrates the need to put some distance between Attacker and Defender and also a show of assertiveness and preparedness for further self-defence if necessary.

2/ The Defender is standing casually and again minding his own business (perhaps at a bus stop, or waiting for a friend). The Attacker approaches from the rear and grabs the Defender in a bear-hug (over-arm version). While this may seem a plausible attack against a smaller person (or a large male against a woman), it at first strikes as implausible for one man against another of a similar size. However, this form of attack may simply be a

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precursor to further aggression - perhaps by an associate of the Attacker, while the Defender is seemingly subjugated.

The first response is a quick glance to see who it is - perhaps it is a friend or family member sneaking up from behind for a friendly scare. It would be somewhat embarrassing to say the least to deliver a Taekwon-Do Self-Defence response to a loved one.

The classic release (as most Green Belt students learn) is to raise the arms to a horizontal level, while dropping into a sitting stance in one direction. This technique is first included in the pattern Yoo-Sin, and in fact is the first movement. The intention of the technique is to simultaneously use body mass to drop down while raising the arms to lift the Attacker's arms up and over the Defender's head, thus breaking the hold. Moving to one side while forming a sitting stance moves the Defender a little away from the torso of the Attacker (source of stability & core strength) and also presents an opportunity to counter-attack (typically with an elbow-strike).

In the pattern Yoo-Sin, the first movement is followed by an Angle Punch to the rear (diagonal) by twisting the torso and sliding in the same direction (back towards the spot initially held). In this routine, the Attacker steps back to avoid the punch - either anticipating the counter-attack or preparing for the following kick. Therefore, the angle punch misses its target. This demonstrates that even though Taekwon-Do is based on the premise of "One Blow for Victory", the Defender should be prepared for the Attacker to anticipate a counter-attack and take measures to either avoid the strike, or counter-counter attack. However, of course, the Examiner does not want to see a full Hollywood-style action sequence lasting for some time. So this counter-counter approach must be used sparingly and be justified in showing some aspect of Taekwon-Do.

The Attacker then attempts to overpower the Defender (and use his superior height and leg-length) by the use of a downward kick with the right leg. As a response, it might show more common-sense to avoid the kick by stepping away from the attacker. In this routine the opposite is employed, by stepping into (or under) the kick, closing the distance between Attacker and Defender, and rendering the kick impotent. This demonstrates an awareness of the zone of most lethal impact, which is at the distance from the Attacker where the heel of the downward kick would strike. Although potentially risky in consequence, moving into close proximity to the Attacker at least negates the devastating affect of being on the receiving end of a well executed downward kick to the clavicle. Moving in towards the Attacker also requires a quick pivot on the right foot, from a sitting stance in one direction into an L-stance in the opposite. At the same time, the attacking leg is trapped onto the chest/shoulder using the left arm. This leave the Attacker in a very vulnerable position!

The logical finishing technique is therefore a U-shaped punch, the upper to the solar-plexus, and the lower to the groin, shifting to more of a fixed stance. As the Attacker falls away incapacitated, the Defender remains in this position with a slight pause. In this case, it is purely to emphasise the technique employed. It reminds of a mould being broken away from a finished object after being cast in a furnace. It is such a powerful and fantastic technique, first shown in the pattern Yoo-Sin, that I had to include it in my Self

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Defence routine. However, it is also a very unusual technique, and the process to find an appropriate way to include it was a great challenge.

3/ The Defender is once again minding his own business. The Attacker comes up from behind and pushes the Defender aggressively. The Defender initially stumbles, then walk a couple of steps before quickly pivoting and presenting a guarding block. This movement is a re-enactment of the movements in the pattern Choi-Yong, where the student walks towards direction 'C' before pivoting and sliding back (still towards 'C') and executing a guarding block. In this routine, it allows the creation of some distance between Defender and Attacker, but also lets the Attacker know that the Defender is not intimidated, and in fact, is ready to defend against any potential further attack. In the pattern, this sequence however, make me think about the man, General Choi-Yong, who was betrayed and executed by his subordinate commanders. He must have felt that his enemies were attacking him from all sides, hence the pattern contains many sudden changes in direction for defence and attack.

The Defender barely has time to execute the pivot and guarding block, when the Attacker has already moved forward and is about to throw two punches in quick succession, first a left then a right. As in Yoo-Sin, the right forearm is used to block both punches, first with a high outward block with the outer forearm, then a high front block with the same outer forearm.

This sets up for the counter-attack, and a surprising discovery during the late stages of training for this routine. With the Attacker in such close proximity, the best counter-attack is often the use of elbows and knees. As the right forearm blocks the incoming right punch, the left hand slides up between the right forearm and the Attacker's arm - in freeze frame, this looks like a classic crossing of wrists in preparation for the execution of a technique. Beginning students are often puzzled about the need and relevance for crossing as they learn Saju-Jirugi, Saju-Magki and Chon-Ji. The point is that through a little practical application (e.g. in Self Defence), the lesson for the need can be made that makes sense.

The crossing allows the left hand to grab the Attacker's arm, while the right hand slides up and grabs the Attacker by the back of the neck, and then executing an upward kick with the right knee to the solar-plexus.

The right leg is then used to execute a hooking kick to the back of the Attacker's knee, twisting the torso so as to take the Attacker to the ground. A flat fingertip thrust (as in Sam-II) is executed to the right armpit to complete the incapacitation of the Attacker. As is good practise, the Defender then steps an appropriate distance away from the fallen Attacker and executes a guarding block (with kihap) to demonstrate caution and determination.

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4/ The Attacker approaches menacingly with a baton in the left hand, swinging for the Defender head. The Defender moves backwards, staying out of reach of the swinging bat. On the third swing, the Defender jumps forward and blocks the swinging arm with the right forearm. This demonstrates a number of principles:

- The most dangerous place to be is in the zone of maximum danger - the edge of the swinging baton. Therefore the Defender needs to stay outside of this zone, or step inside this zone. However, once inside the zone, other risks can come into play, and the Defender must disarm the Attacker while also watching and handling other possible attacking actions.
- A Defender should not seek to block the weapon itself - it is likely to have the same affect as if the Attacker had actually struck with the weapon. Rather, the attacking arm needs to be blocked. Or a pre-emptive strike should be made that also stops further attack with the weapon.
- Like in most situations, a sudden and unexpected change (moving away then moving towards the Attacker) can throw the Attacker off, if only momentarily.

The block is immediately followed by an elbow strike to the head with the left elbow, while stepping in towards the Attacker. This brings the Defender even closer, where knees and elbows are most effective. Keeping the Attacker off balance, this is then immediately followed by a middle knuckle punch to the throat (as in Choi-Yong). The arm holding the baton is gripped by the Defender's right arm, keeping it under control (this assumes the Attacker hasn't already dropped the baton).

An open fist to the chin, pushing the Attacker's head backwards is used to force the Attacker to move backwards. This will disorient the Attacker, and after two steps, the Defender twists the baton out of the Attacker's hand and steps back into a guarding block, with the weapon secured.

This close quarter work is reminiscent of many of the movements in the pattern Choi-Yong, especially at the start of the pattern where short stance changes are used. Power must be generated using the core, rather than the large movements and momentum of stepping and pivoting found in other patterns.

This routine is the first to introduce a weapon.

5/ The Attacker has two knives. The one in the right hand is hidden (behind the wrist) and the other is visible. The Defender is half-facing (right side forward) and keeping relaxed, reading the intent of the Attacker through body language. The Attacker attempts to slice upwards with the concealed knife in the right hand. The Defender pivots away backwards and uses a pressing block with an x-fist to block the rising arm. This should force the Attacker to drop the knife. or if not, the knife is flicked away.

Immediately afterwards, the Attacker strikes down with the other knife. The Defender uses a rising block in an x-knife-hand to block this strike, and also then grabs the arm with the left hand. These two techniques are present together in the pattern Yoo-Sin, executed in a continuous motion. The rising block is not guaranteed to force the knife to be dropped.



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Holding the arm with the left hand, the Defender pivots on the left foot clockwise and executes an angle punch with the right fist to the Attacker's upper arm. This will ensure the knife is dropped. The angle punch is introduced in the pattern, Joong-Gun, albeit in slow motion, and also present in several other patterns, including Yoo-Sin (also in slow motion). It is a close quarter technique, but rarely seen in Self-Defence. I thought it would make an excellent technique to use on the upper arm to force the Attacker to drop the knife - without having to attempt to handle the knife and hand directly.

A sweeping kick is applied to the back of the knee, forcing the Attacker to drop to his knees, facing away from the Defender. While still holding the Attacker's arm with the left hand, the other arm is used to put the Attacker into a choke-hold. The arm is bent backwards across the border, forcing a submission. The Attacker is pushed to the ground (away from the knives), and the knives are retrieved and removed from the situation.

There are two main considerations when weapons are involved:

1. Taking the weapon/s away from the Attacker.
2. Keeping the weapon/s away from the Attacker (and any other person in the vicinity).

There is no point in successfully disarming an Attacker, only to have the Attacker or another person (accomplice) gain the weapon/s and re-employ them.

A note on starting positions: Routines 1 & 2 have the Defender in the Senior position (on the left as viewed by the Examiners). The remaining three routines have the Defender in the Junior position (on the right as viewed by the Examiners). This is to present the routines to the Examiners with the best viewing angles, and allows the Examiners to see the applied techniques with as little disruption to viewing as possible.

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