

HOW TO HANDLE

MULTIPLE ATTACKS

One of the worst scenarios in a self-defense situation is to be attacked by more than one assailant. Most self-defense practice is geared toward a one-on-one scene, with little regard for the possibility of two or three attackers coming at you from a dark alley.

Ho Sik Pak, tang soo do sixth dan, includes multiple attack defense in all of his student's training regimens. "It's called da soo in deh ryun in Korean and means multiple sparring," says Pak, of Woodland Hills, California. "The benefits gained from these multiple sparring techniques are many, and go beyond the original self-defense purposes."

Those benefits include better balance and coordination along with improved concentration and quicker reflexes. However, self-defense is still the governing factor behind multiple attack training. Since tang soo do is primarily a self-defense art, it has an advanced philosophy about fighting. That philosophy is that defensive actions

are also good offensive movements. In other words, you can injure your attacker while defending against their onslaught.

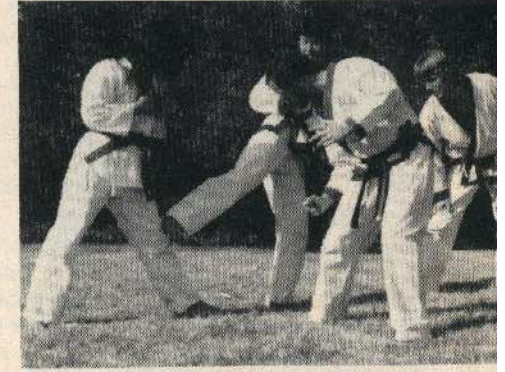
Pak teaches multiple attack defense along with the theory that if you can handle three attackers, two will be no problem. So all his students practice multiple attack defensive techniques against three assailants instead of two.

"Whenever three people attack you, your first concern should be for your balance. If you lose your balance, they'll swarm over you. Therefore, your defensive techniques must be almost unconscious reactions, with one reaction following another in a smooth, flowing manner that doesn't upset your balance and mobility," says Pak. Of course, you do have to practice enough to have instant reaction to any motion, but first you must have good techniques that allow you to use one assailant against another attacker.

The question always comes up about which assailant to defend against first when three people attack you. Pak says that's an easy question. Always go after the strongest one first because it intimidates the others and it removes your most powerful contender.

Along the same lines, if someone has a knife, get him first. If all three have knives, take one out, using him as a shield against the others. Using him as a cover is more important than trying to take his knife away.

One of the most important things to be

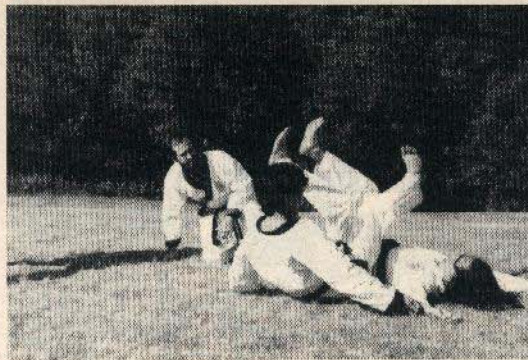
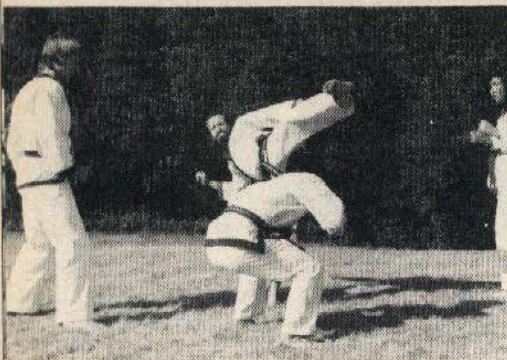


**Text and Photos by
Jane Hallander**

- 1 LEFT: 1) Pak stops the strongest attacker's punch, 2)
- 2 grabs him and puts him between Pak and the other two assailants. 3) As another
- 3 assailant attacks Pak with a
- 4 kick, Pak shoves the captured
- 5 attacker into his partner's kick. 4) Pak turns to the third attacker and dispatches her with a
- side kick, 5) and immediately turns and executes a high side kick to the last attacker's head.

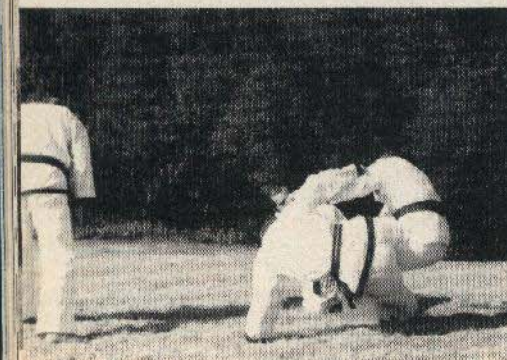
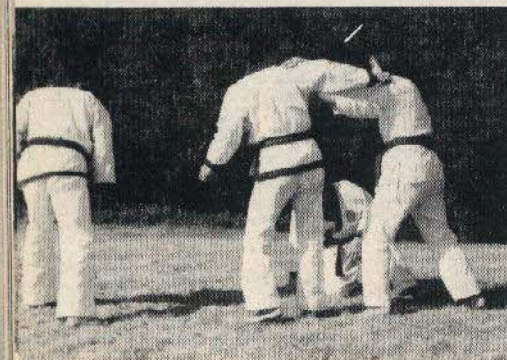
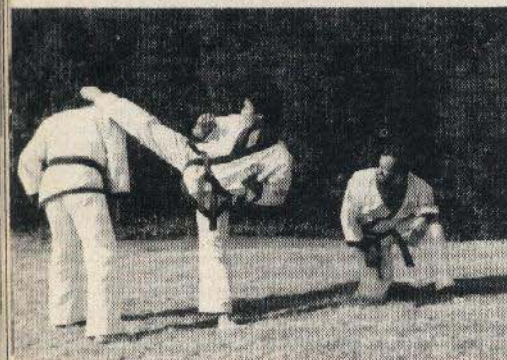
- 1 RIGHT: Top to Bottom: Ho
- 2 Sik Pak (on right) demonstrates
- 3 how to use an attacker against
- 4 other assailants. 1) He blocks
- 5 the attacker's strike and grabs
- the striking hand, turning it into an arm bar joint lock. 3) Pak spins the arm-locked opponent into the other attacker's kick, then 4) attends to another assailant with a rear kick. 5) Finally, Pak turns back to the attacker whose kick he blocked with the first attacker's body and demolishes him with a high jump roundhouse to the head.

- 1 FAR RIGHT, Top to Bottom:
- 2 Pak demonstrates the principle
- 3 of low kicks to disable, and high
- 4 kicks to finish the attackers. 1-
- 5 2) Pak kicks each assailant in the knee with side kicks. 2) He finishes the center assailant with a high side kick and 3) the other two simultaneously with a kick and a punch.



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LEFT: Top to Bottom: 1) Pak (center) ducks the first assailant's high kick and 2) counters with his own front kick to the assailant's thigh. 3) With the first attacker out of action, Pak attends to the second with a high hooking kick to the head. 4) Only after removing two of the three assailants does Pak go to the ground with the last and 5) executes a scissors kick take-down.



aware of when three people attack you is to not fall down with someone who tries grabbing you. If you do, the rest will simply jump on top and you'll lose the confrontation.

Pak also cautions against sweeping your opponent during a multiple attack. If you sweep one, there's always the chance that you might fall with him. Remember, you don't ever want to be on the ground during a multiple attack. Against two or more assailants, don't start your defense with a sweep. Do a kick or hand technique first. When you're down to just one opponent, take him down with a sweep.

Pak has several ways of using tang soo do techniques to his best advantage against multiple assailants. For instance, he likes to start with low kicks and finish with high kicks. His reasoning is simple and efficient. First, he disables his attackers with low leg and knee kicks, taking away their mobility. Then he doesn't worry about them taking advantage of any balance problems that he might encounter from his high kicks. The high kicks finish off the assailants and the battle itself.

After an initial block, Pak likes to use grabbing and joint locking techniques, twisting the joint until the assailant can no longer move. This makes it easier to handle an attacker when you want to use them as a cover against the other attackers' advances.

Pak will grab an assailant's punching hand and quickly twist his arm into a painful, disabling arm bar. Then, as another attacker advances, Pak shoves the captured assailant directly into the line of fire, keeping him between Pak and the other attackers.

Ho Sik Pak stresses the importance of eyesight when dealing with more than one assailant. You must watch everything, not just one person or one object, using your peripheral vision as much as direct focus. Called san shi, this principle means to look wide, watching everything, rather than just focusing on one place.

"After san shi, follow with quick reactions, and use good techniques," adds Pak.

Remember, your entire body is a weapon. For instance, if two people grab you at the same time pinning your hands, you can use your head or the bottom of the foot for defense—whatever will reach them.

In Pak's school, students start training for multiple attacks by learning multiple

kicking techniques such as executing three round house kicks in kick succession instead of just one. Sometimes they practice low, high, then low kicks, rather than all kicks the same height. Students may do their side kicks at different heights or alternating sides, from a right side kick to a left side kick and back again.

Additionally, Pak has his students practice combinations of different techniques, mixing hands and kicks, including simultaneous kicks and punches. Partner workouts include free sparring with more than one person at a time. Finally, Pak's students practice a type of free sparring that includes throwing and grabbing along with other techniques. At this point, Pak teaches his students how to get out of joint locks.

"Multiple attack defense relies on both external and internal training. The Korean word for external is wei gong. It designates physical strength and power along with tactical knowledge. Internal strength is called nei gong.

"Nei gong is characterized by relaxation and ki power. Shin gong is your spirit. It helps your subconscious enable you to react quickly without mentally assessing the situation. Nei gong and shin gong are equally as important for a successful multiple attack defense as is wei gong, your external strength." Stresses Pak.

Pak's students develop their nei gong and shin gong through meditation practice and special breathing exercises. Form practice also helps to develop power. When his students practice their forms, they imagine several attackers. In this manner, forms practice helps develop nei, wei and shin gong.

Nowadays it's not uncommon to encounter more than one assailant in some of our crime ridden streets. It's a good idea to be prepared. Besides, as Ho Sik Pak says, "If you can handle two or three attackers, you can easily handle one." ■