

# The Crescent Kick, Part 2: Versatility and Effectiveness

by Master Penny Mitchell

The crescent kick is one of the martial arts' most versatile and effective kicks. It is easily learned by a beginner because of its simplicity in delivery and execution and a challenge for the most advanced black belt due to its deceptiveness during sparring and its versatility in its many off shoots.

In part one\*, proper foot position and proper execution of the kick was covered. In this, part two of the crescent kick, a more advanced look at the crescent kick will be taken. Specifically, some of the variations that are available to a student to develop and add to his/her kicking repertoire.

First, however, is a quick review of proper foot position and execution. The crescent kick can be delivered in two ways: by lifting the kicking leg diagonally across in front of your body and delivering the kick across the width of your body to the outside (commonly called an inside to outside crescent kick) or, from the other direction, by lifting the knee to the outer edge of your body and sweeping the foot across the width of your body to the inside (outside to inside crescent kick). Secondly, both of these kicks can be utilized as a strike or block. The emphasis of power can be either across or downward.

The contact area of the foot will vary depending on how you are striking. This is important so as not to injure yourself, and to execute the kick properly.

When striking or blocking with the "across" version of either kick, make sure

\* Part one appeared in our Fall 1995 issue of *Traditional Tang Soo Do Illustrated*.

you emphasize the lower outer or inner part of your heel, whichever side is leading, angling the foot slightly so the toes are going away from the target. This will ensure that you do not hit with your ankle bone, either inner or outer and, when striking downward, make sure you emphasize striking with the back of the heel. In all three versions of this kick, make sure your ankle is flexed and your toes are pulled back.

Now, with the basics out of the way, part two of the crescent kick will cover the variation from which those basic crescent kicks can be derived. Once you are comfortable with your basics and under the direction of your instructor, you can start to experiment with variations of these basics. Due to space limitations, only four variations will be covered. Many of you may be familiar with more, or your instructor will be able to guide you through such additional advanced kicks such as jump spinning crescent and jump turning outside to inside crescent to name a few.

## **Spinning Crescent Kick:**

This version of the kick can only be performed by using the inside to outside crescent kick.

Basically put, you will spin your body around and put an inside to outside crescent kick in the middle of the spin. Secondly, this can be performed in two ways, executing the kick and landing back in the spot you started in (where the emphasis on the kick would most effectively but not exclusively be across, photos 1-6) or striking downward, landing with the kicking leg in front where the emphasis would be downward (photos 7-10). Deciding on



which version to use in sparring will depend primarily on the distance of your opponent, if he/she is moving forward or back. Timing is critical in utilizing this kick effectively as it is a blind technique (mo-

mentary loss of sight of your opponent). A student should work on it in a controlled situation with a partner before throwing it out in an all out sparring bout. (See photos)



**1. Starting position, kicking leg in back**



**2. Snap head around, turn body and start loading knee all at once**



**3. Continue spin with knee loaded high, arms in, body straight**



**4. As your body comes around to face opponent, start throwing kick. Extending leg toward target.**



**5. Complete kick by retracting leg to "load position"**

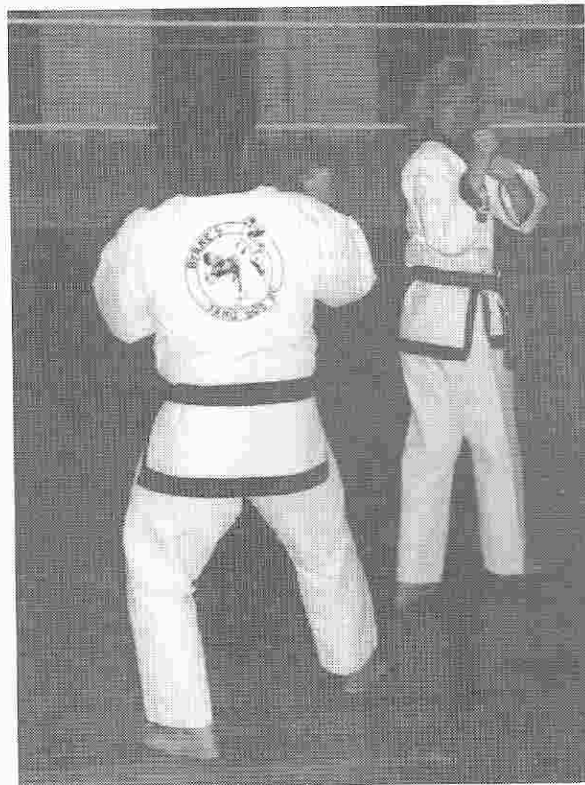


**6. Land back in fighting stance where you originally started.**





7. Starting position: fighting stance, kicking leg in back



8. Turn body, snap head around to see opponent



9. Start to load knee while pushing off, gaining momentum for spin.



10. Extend leg towards target emphasizing downward power, striking with heel. Land with kicking leg in front of you (not pictured)

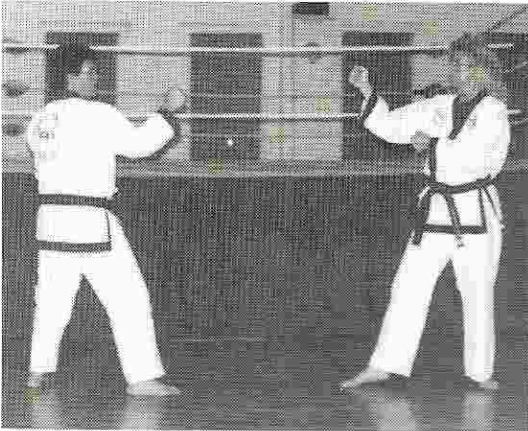


## **Jump Outside to Inside Crescent Kick & Jump Inside to Outside Crescent Kick:**

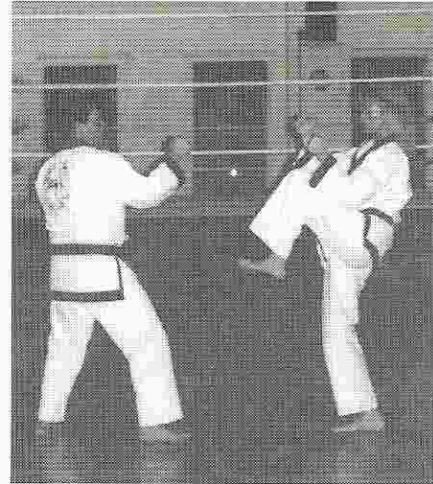
In both of these kicks we are taking the standard standing outside to inside and inside to outside crescent kick from the previous article, and are now adding a jump. These versions of the kick are extremely powerful with the added factor of being "air born." This increases your ability to bring your leg from a higher

starting point, therefore, increasing the length of travel, which will give you the ability to create more speed, thus more power. Also you increase your reach by being able to lunge toward your opponent if he/she is out of range or moving back, as well as added height for a taller, larger opponent.

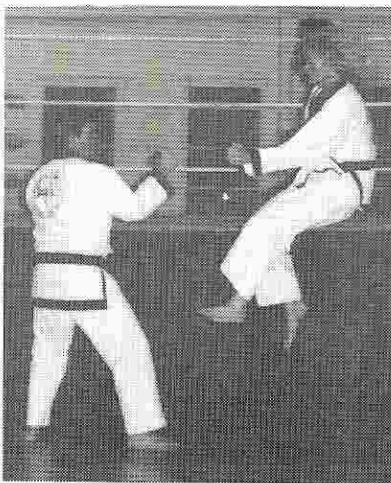
The following photos are only of jump inside to outside crescent kick. Apply the same principles to jump outside to inside.



**11. Starting position, kicking leg in front**



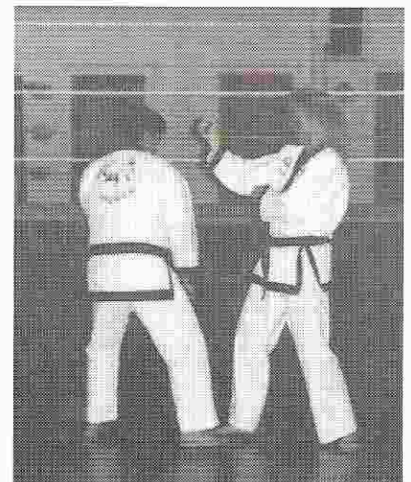
**12. Begin kick by loading back leg first. Bring knee as high as possible as this will increase your ability to get off the ground.**



**13. As the first knee reaches it's peak boost off the ground with front foot, making you completely air born and begin executing the kick**



**14. At peak of jump, extend kicking leg out towards target.**



**15. Land in fighting stance with kicking leg in front.**



## Jump back outside to inside crescent kick:

This version of the crescent kick is taking the kick to it's most advanced level. This not only involves a jump, but a turn

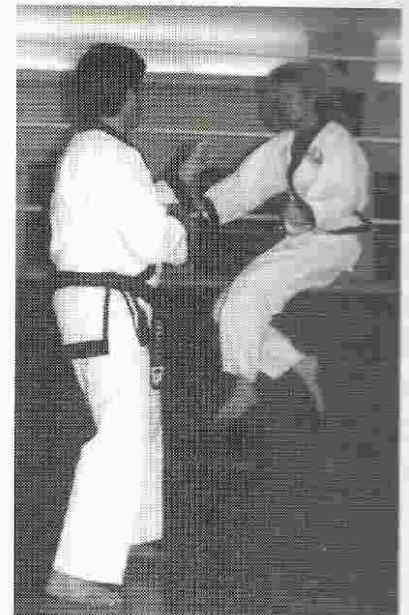
as well. Again timing is critical when performing this kick as well as agility and jumping ability that is required in the execution of this kick.



16. In starting position, kicking leg is in front



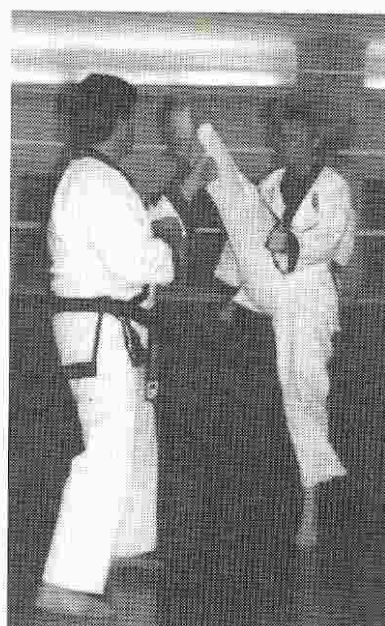
17. Turn body, snap head around, load back knee up first - begin jump



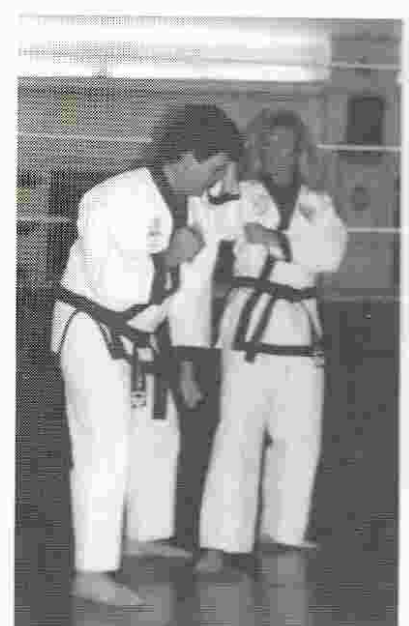
18. Both knees begin to tuck - at the same time turn body in air toward opponent



19. Leg comes up to execute kick at target



20. Extend leg up to kick



21. Land with kicking leg in front



As I mentioned, these are just a few of the advanced versions of the crescent kick available for a martial artist to use. I know from personal experience the crescent kick was one of the kicks I successfully scored with the most in tournament competition - after many long hours of practice!

In being tall, I felt the length of my legs was an asset in keeping my opponent away from me and the crescent kick allowed me to maximize that asset. Keep in mind that is not a prerequisite for success in a crescent kick but diligence and hard work is.

Good luck!

*About the author: Master Penny Mitchell is a 5th Dan who teaches at 3 locations (North Reading, Tyngsboro and Andover). She has won more trophies in tournament competition than anyone in the American Tang Soo Do Association.*

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