

# The Crescent Kick - Part I

by Penny Mitchell

The crescent kick is probably the martial art's easiest to learn, most versatile, most effective and most under-used. It is quickly learned by a beginner, as it does not take a lot of flexibility, something that many new students lack, and does not involve a lot of intricate body movement. It also has many variations and, when developed properly, can be extremely deceptive, which makes it a challenging technique for even the most advanced Black Belt to work on. In Part One of "The Crescent Kick", I will be covering the basics of the crescent kick, how it is performed, the striking areas of the foot, and how it can best be utilized in a sparring situation.

First, let's look at how it is performed. The crescent kick can be brought from two different directions. In Tang Soo Do (karate), to indicate which direction the kick is going to travel, we refer to the kick as an inside to outside crescent kick or an outside to inside crescent kick. When determining which is which, use your own body as a gauge, not that of your opponent.

For the outside to inside crescent kick, stand in a ready or 'choon bee' stance. Using the right leg as the kicking leg, lift the knee as if preparing to perform a front kick, but bringing the knee **slightly** to the outside of your body, or the **right** outside edge. As you extend your leg in the kick, hook your foot across creating a semi-circle or 'crescent' with your foot as you whip it across towards the left side of your body. And then return it to your knee, in the same position you started in. By bending the knee after the completion of the kick, it allows you to step in any direction with balance.

For the inside to outside crescent kick, just reverse the motion, starting the kick by lifting the right knee across, towards the left side of your body, so your knee is at a diagonal in front of your body. As you extend the kick, circle the foot in a whipping motion to the right outside of your body, returning it then to your knee.

The width of both kicks should be approximately as wide as your own body. I'd also like to note here that you do not have to return the foot to the knee when completing the kick. It depends on where you want the emphasis of the kick to be: across or down. In the downward version of the kick, the foot will go directly to the floor, making it an 'axe' type of motion. Many styles of karate refer to that kick as an axe kick. Whether to bend the knee or not as you deliver the kick tends to be up to the discretion of the person performing the kick or that person's instructor. By bending the knee during delivery, the kick can be better camouflaged, leading your opponent to think that a front kick or side kick is on the way. You may also find that more speed and accuracy can be attained by bending the knee during delivery as well.

## Outside to Inside Crescent Kick



*Fighting position (kicking leg in rear)*



*Load knee as high as possible to start kick slightly to the outside of the body.*





*Extend leg in kick, striking with inside lower edge of foot.*



*And follow through.*

Secondly, let's look at the parts of the foot you should be striking with.

In the inside to outside crescent kick, in which the emphasis is across, you want to focus your striking

point at the lower outside edge of the foot. Be sure to angle your toes slightly away from the striking area. This assures that you won't strike with the ankle bone. The same applies to the outside to inside kick, but this time, you'll be striking with the inside lower edge of the foot. Again, be sure that you angle your foot slightly away from the target so that you do not injure the ankle bone. The ankle bone is extremely sensitive and if you injure it during the practice of this kick, it may hinder you from further developing it.


In striking downward in the crescent kick, you will be striking with the back heel of the foot. Two common factors in performing all three of these variations is that the ankle should always be flexed and the toes pulled up. Keeping this in mind will make it much easier and safer for you to attain the proper position of the foot.

Lastly, it's best used during sparring. Generally it is most deceptive and you'll score most effectively if you throw the technique over your opponent's shoulder from their back to their front. It is less likely to be seen and, therefore, less likely to be blocked. That is not to say that you cannot throw it to the front of the body, but if you do, make every effort to make contact with your opponent with the proper part of your foot.

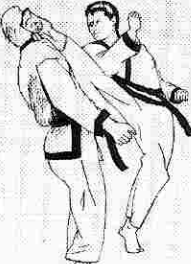
The uses for your crescent kick are limitless. Combine the kick with some of the techniques you already use in your sparring and practice them often. You'll find the crescent kick to be a valuable technique in your fighting arsenal.

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

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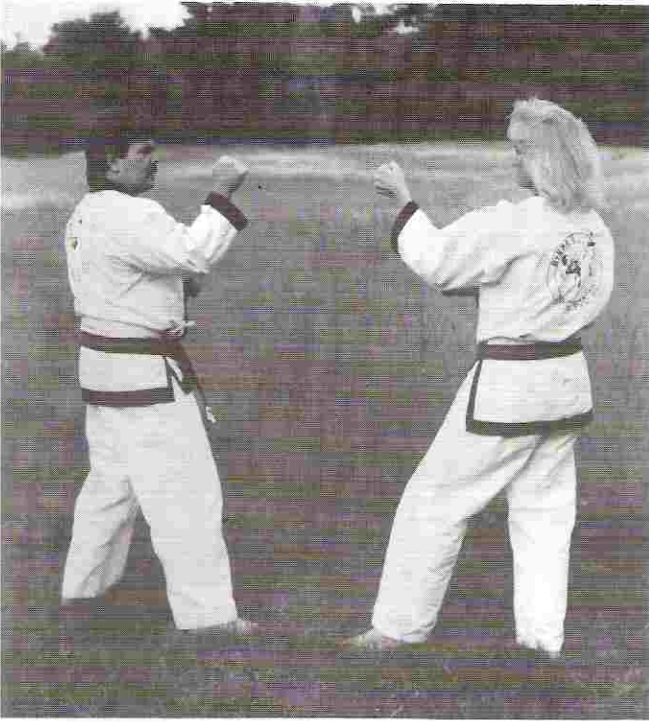
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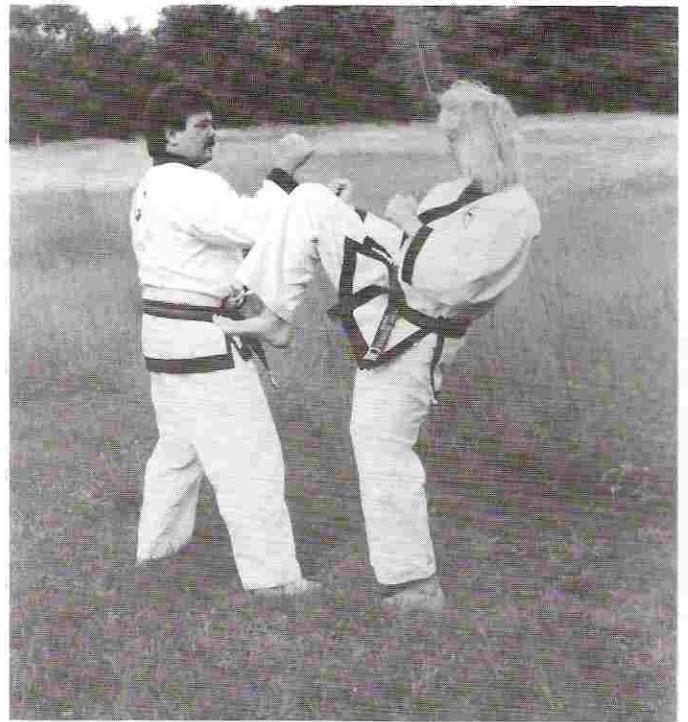
**Class Schedule:**  
 Adults: Mon 7:30 - 9:00, Tues & Thurs 6:00 - 9:00  
 Children: Mon 6:00 - 7:00 (ages 5 to 14)



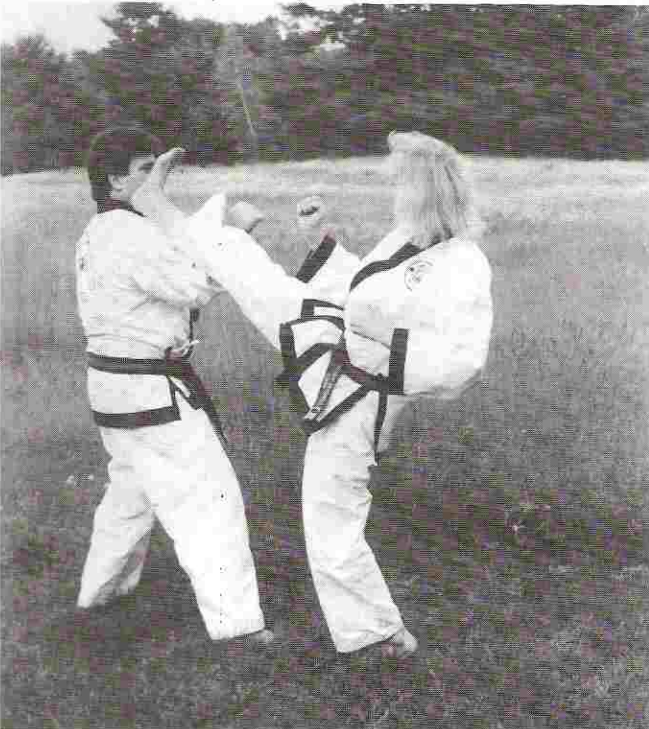
## Inside to Outside Crescent Kick



*Start in fighting stance, kicking leg in rear.*



*Load knee as high as possible at a slight angle across body.*



*Extend kick, striking with outer, lower edge of foot.*



*And follow kick through.*