

LIFE TIME ACHEIVEMENT AWARD 2012 KUNG FU WUSHU ACT

DAVID CROOK



David (left) receives his award from KWA President Walt Missingham

David Crook has been involved in the Martial Arts industry for over 45 years and is the Chief Instructor of the Bac Fu Do Kung Fu Society, which he founded in 1969. The Bac Fu Do Kung Fu Society is Canberra's longest established Chinese Martial Arts school.

David is the current Senior Vice President of Kung Fu Wushu Australia. David was ACT Chairman for the Kung Fu Wushu ACT from its formation in 1983 until 2006, when he handed over the reins to Sifu Neal Hardy, to enable him to concentrate on nationally-focussed matters. As Senior Vice President of KWA David has direct responsibility for liaison with Federal Government agencies, oversight of KWA administrative procedure and practice, Chair of the KWA Appeals and Ethics Committee and KWA corporate planning.

In addition to these positions, David has been very active in several international Martial Arts organisations and maintains strong networks with senior instructors in numerous

other countries – including UK, Europe, Africa and South America. He has always had a strong emphasis on freely sharing information within the wider Martial Arts community and on building bridges between the various Martial Arts styles and organisations represented in Australia.

David pioneered Officer Survival training in the Australian Federal Police Force in the mid-1970s and has taught Defensive Tactics at police colleges here and overseas. He has also consulted to the Australian Army on the development of standardised Close Quarter Combat Skills training.

David holds the rank of Si Jo in Kung Fu, as well as holding rank up to San Dan (3rd degree black belt) in the Japanese systems of Karate, Jujutsu and Atemijutsu.

David has featured in many articles in prominent Australian and international Martial Arts publications – and was referred to in Blitz Magazine as “The Canberra Legend”.

ARTICLES ON BAC FU DO KUNG FU

Title of article	Publication
The Claw	Interactive Martial Arts Magazine
The Art of Combinations	Australasian Fighting Arts **Note**
Fist Sets, Kata, Forms – Are They Part of Your Training?	Australasian Fighting Arts
So, Ya Wanna Be An Instructor, Eh?	Australasian Fighting Arts
Physical Conditioning for Martial Artists	Australasian Fighting Arts
Kum Na - Groundfighting	Australasian Fighting Arts
Chin Na – Kung Fu’s Art of Seizing	Australasian Fighting Arts
How To Survive Against Multiple Opponents - Part1	Australasian Fighting Arts
How To Survive Against Multiple Opponents – Part2	Australasian Fighting Arts
How To Go About Bag Training	Australasian Fighting Arts
Just An Old Head Banger From Way Back	Australasian Fighting Arts
The Claw – Kung Fu’s Secret Weapon	Australasian Fighting Arts
The Elbow	Australasian Fighting Arts
Good And Bad In All Styles	Australasian Fighting Arts
Everyone Has His Master	Australasian Fighting Arts
Bac Fu Do Kung Fu	Australasian Blitz
Chinese Breathing Techniques	All Martial Arts Of Australia
Chinese Boxing	South Pacific Fighting Arts
Ch’i – The Internal Energy Of Chinese Boxing	South Pacific Fighting Arts
Police Self Defence Training	Federal Police Journal - June 1977

****Note** All AFA articles were also syndicated to Fighting Arts International Magazine (UK)**

David Crook was born in the North of England in 1948 and proudly claims to be a Warehouse Rat, as a well-rounded individual (although he is now on a strict diet).

Apart from his official KWA duties and positions held with other organisations such as the International Practical Shooting Confederation and the Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, David has found times to raise a fairly well adjusted family, work at a senior level in the federal public service, work on a pig farm, where he developed a love for pork fillets, in banking and in the stock & share industry (his fondest memories of the latter being of the Poseidon affair – not the ship).

David has been married since 1972 – and to the same woman, Sheila - which is quite remarkable nowadays. He has two children, Monique aged 32 and Gareth aged 27. Monique is a gifted professional artist (David painted many fine landscapes and sea scapes earlier in his life) and Gareth a skilled precision machinist and gifted target shooter and recreational hunter (again, following in David's footsteps).

David and Sheila have had a second home at Batemans Bay on the NSW South Coast for many years and Monique and Gareth have benefited in many ways from the ability to get away from Canberra and other people's politicians on regular basis. David and Sheila are both keen anglers and take every opportunity they can to get their boat wet and kill a few fish.

David was a Commonwealth public servant for longer than he cares to remember, specialising in the management of government real estate - although prior to his recent retirement, he was Senior Manager (Industry Partnerships) in the Australian Greenhouse Office, with responsibility for the Greenhouse Challenge program, which is Australia's largest environmental partnership program. David was also Senior Manager (Government Operations), where he was responsible for implementation of the Commonwealth Energy Policy that he helped design - a policy that generated \$160 million in financial savings during his tenure, due to improved energy management practices by Commonwealth agencies.

Before moving to the AGO, David worked at the policy development end of strategic portfolio management and was heavily involved in the outsourcing of the Commonwealth's property management function for commercial office properties. He has spoken at numerous public conferences on issues such as implementing strategic asset management regimes, managing risk in outsourcing, dealing with the Commonwealth as a major customer of industry, and implementing a customer service ethic in public service enterprises.

One of David's particular interests is the application of Martial Arts strategy and philosophy to business and personal management. He is a well-regarded writer on Martial Arts topics and has been published in Australia and overseas on many occasions.

David served in the Australian Army during the Vietnam War. David gained military renown as the first Australian soldier to be wounded in action by a Remington typewriter, which he subsequently “Terminated with Extreme Prejudice” – much to the dismay of his Platoon Commander who almost got hit in the head with the mangled remains, as they went into a death dive through the Platoon Office door.

David has been a Kung-Fu instructor since 1969, has had 49 years experience (as at 3 June 2012) in Martial Arts overall, and was recognised many years ago as one of Australia’s Top 20 Martial Arts instructors by Blitz Magazine – which referred to him as “The Canberra Legend”. He was also once Mr August in a nationally distributed Martial Arts calendar. David has gained acclaim not only for his innovative training methods - which have resulted in his students placing highly in both full and semi-contact competition at the national and international level – but for his efforts to share knowledge with other Martial Artists regardless of style and to bring our Arts to the attention of government – in a very positive sense.

David Crook is indeed a Renaissance Man, with achievements in Martial Arts and other combat disciplines, angling, boating, four-wheel driving, sports shooting, environmental management, art and fatherhood. As a believer in bio-diversity, David has been instrumental in helping to control several Australia’s feral species - thus helping to minimise their financial impact on the farming industry; prevent further damage to our fragile environment; and protect endangered native species – and acknowledges the assistance of the Winchester Corporation with this task (following the typewriter incident mentioned earlier, David absolutely refuses to buy Remington firearms, unlike many of his mates).

Despite his apparent fascination with orchestrated violence, David is adamant that he is a warm and sensitive person and will fight anyone who disagrees with that perspective. He quickly points out that he dabbles in oils (in fact, he is still trying to get some Castrol GTX stains out of his overalls), has an especial fondness for painting seascapes and bush scenes, is kind to his pig dogs and small children and keeps his large collection of firearms in immaculate condition (just in case).

David ‘in his own words’:

“I started training in the Martial Arts in 1963, soon after I’d been mugged by a group of guys at Glenelg in Adelaide. I didn’t cop much physical damage – but they did get 16 shillings and threepence off me – a vast fortune in those days. So, in the tradition of Chinese movies, I determined that I needed to train in something that gave me a multi-opponent capability. Then I was going to hunt them down and avenge myself – and get back my 16 shillings and threepence, plus interest (my North of England parsimony comes to the front here). So, I started off going along with my Dad – who had been a pretty handy boxer in his day (twice Bantamweight champion of the British Army many

years ago) and who was now training in Judo at the Kangaroo Judo & Karate Society in Adelaide.

The Sensei was a former British Army NCO, Moss Hollis, who had a background in unarmed combat, Judo, Ju Jutsu and Karate. Mossy (he'd have had a fit if anyone had called him 'Sensei') was pretty focused on street applications, very down to earth and, in some ways, ahead of his time. For example, if you wanted to get a black belt in Karate, you had to also go through some Judo and Ju Jutsu training before you could do so. His attitude was "If it doesn't work, we won't use it" and Mossy constantly sought out better ways of doing things – and didn't care where he pirated something from, as long as it was useful. Mossy was also pretty adamant that we should be able to defend ourselves with whatever came to hand and was adept at using everyday objects as weapons (rat-tail comes, boxes of matches, rolled up magazines, the odd bit of furniture etc).

Mossy's pragmatic outlook had a huge influence on my own development over the years. However, after training in the Japanese arts for some years, I began to realise that they weren't really for me (although they'd been pretty useful in a few street encounters).

I was lucky enough to be introduced to Kung Fu in the late 60s (about 1967, from memory) and trained with a group of university students from various styles that just wanted to get together and train. So, I was into cross-fertilisation right from the word "Go" – being exposed to Choy Lay Fut, Northern Shaolin, Monkey Boxing, Hung Gar etc. at that time, then to Wing Chun and White Crane afterwards. I know that I would never have made a Monkey boxer!

Because of my earlier years with Mossy and the fact that I'm a pretty analytical type of person, I've always tended to ask myself

- "What skills do I really need to survive violent encounters?"
- "What skills do I have now and what do I need to work further on?"
- "What's the best way of training those skills?"

Then, having identified a skills gap, I'd look around for someone who was very good in the aspects that I needed to develop. I also looked at things from the perspective of "Who am I likely to end up fighting?" – and, in those early days of Australian martial arts, that meant other styles of martial art, boxers, wrestlers and members of the general public. If I thought I was likely to face a boxer, I'd suss out what boxers could do, train with some to find out how they reacted and how I could defeat them. I was also in the habit of taking the occasional challenge in my Kwoon or at public demos and occasionally frequented less than suave establishments. A bit of time in the Australian Army also led to a few incidents (Army life not being particularly civilised sometimes).

Bear in mind that I was training with the objective of analysing what they did best, so that I could figure out how I could beat them using what I did best. I've met quite a few martial artists who go along to a boxing or wrestling gym and become boxers or wrestlers – in other words, they actually adopt boxing or wrestling tactics. I think that's the wrong way to go – you are NEVER going to beat any sort of experienced combatant by trying to use his own tactics against him. After all, he's spent 10 years or whatever

getting his act together – whereas you've done a few months of training in that particular system.

My own theory is that you suss out what he can do - then figure out how you can beat him by applying tactics that you have spent 10 years or so perfecting. NEVER, I repeat NEVER, fight the other guy's fight!!

Because I wasn't locked in to a particular style, I looked at who was best at the skills sets I needed to learn. I could just ask myself "Who could help me bridge the skills gap that I'd identified?" then go out and find that person.

I think that stylistic bias is quite prevalent in Martial Arts and often automatically closes off options and can even make a martial artist one-dimensional. For example, I looked at Choy Lay Fut and Wing Chun. There's a history of enmity between these two styles and their practitioners usually emphasise the difference in tactics – Wing Chun focuses on using very efficient straight techniques against the longer path Choy Lay Fut moves etc. On the other hand, Choy lay Fut has brilliant and dynamic circular moves.

However, if you look past the stylistic differences in approach, you'll see that these two fine styles are absolutely complementary – some Wing Chun tactics make up for some weaknesses in Choy Lay Fut and vice versa. Remember the Yin and Yang – a core concept of Taoism and so important in many aspects of martial arts.

On one hand, Choy Lay Fut has excellent multi-opponent tactics, but, on the other hand, probably isn't your best choice when fighting in a public toilet or phone box – whereas Wing Chun is very effective in very tight spaces. Choy Lay Fut has very good Kum Na (ground fighting) and Chin Na (grappling) moves – whereas Wing Chun doesn't really emphasise that aspect of combat. So, by emphasising the differences between two styles and saying "I'm a Wing Chun, Choy Lay Fut, Hung Gar (or whatever) practitioner and am only going to practice traditional WC/CLF/HG" you automatically close your mind to options outside your own school.

If we look at the Wing Chun form Bil Tse, for example, we'd see that it contains a lot of moves that are quite different from those seen in other Wing Chun forms – they're circular ones. Bil Tse is often billed as "the Wing Chun of Last Resort" since it supposedly contains techniques that you can use when the "normal" Wing Chun tactics are failing you. I find it quite amusing that it resorts to basically circular techniques – and, if those techniques are so effective that they are trotted out in cases of dire emergency, why don't we put more energy into really exploring them and making them a part of the "normal" Wing Chun? So, by segregating or isolating a body of technique, you can take it out of the mainstream of consciousness – and limit your options (particularly if you're the poor sod who hasn't yet had the "secret techniques" revealed to you).

Similarly, if you have a stylistic bias against short, straight line techniques – or grappling moves - and end up in a very tight situation that absolutely cries out for such techniques, you're likely to end up with some ape performing a clog dance on your skull.

As Bac Fu Do evolved over a period of years, I incorporated whatever was needed to make me as complete a martial artist as I could. Naturally, I was sometimes criticised by the traditionalists, who wanted to preserve techniques that were handed down by Master X in 1642 – and which I thought of as being drastically out of step with a modern combat environment (nowadays, I spend more time playing with guns than I do with spears – and

why I shoot in IPSC (International Practical Shooting Confederation) competition. However, Bruce Lee sprang onto the movie and Martial Arts scene and, all of a sudden, eclecticism was IN!

So, with that bit of background, Bac Fu Do has some core concepts that I hope will continue to evolve (if you practice other styles, look at them and ask yourself whether they are mirrored in your style's concepts) – or whether they might be of any use whatsoever to you. Please remember that these are supposed to be flexible concepts – NOT something that you adopt slavishly:

- *Directness – Basically, I like to put my closest weapon into my opponent's closest target (when your hand is close to someone's head and an eye is 10 centimetres away, why try to bring a kick all the way up from the floor?).*
- *3 Levels, 4 Gates, 5 Angles – in defence, we need to be adept at covering the 3 levels of our body and the four quadrants from which attacks might come. In offence, we need to be adept at penetrating to the 3 levels and 4 quadrants, using our 5 basic angles of entry (up, down, straight, backhand, forehand).*
- *Relaxation, Spontaneity and Explosiveness – relaxation breeds spontaneity (the ability to react effortlessly and appropriately to a given set of circumstances) and explosiveness (the ability to deliver overwhelming kinetic energy into an opponent's weak areas). I'll go into this in a lot more detail in "Power Development". Conversely, a tense mind translates into a tense body - which translates into slower and less explosive technique - which means that your moves become more predictable and obvious and the other bloke may have time to avoid them and may even survive one of your strikes.*
- *Fluidity and Continuity – powerful technique is great but, if your individual moves aren't delivered seamlessly, there will be gaps between them that an opponent can capitalise on.*
- *Adaptability – combat is chaotic and we need to prepare ourselves to adapt to rapid changes in circumstance.*
- *Simultaneity – "one, two" moves (block, then strike) are generally less effective than simultaneous deflections and counters – in the latter, you are hitting the opponent on your first move and he has less chance to react.*
- *Rhythm Change – do NOT get into the trap of maintaining a constant or even rhythm, change it constantly or your opponent will use your own rhythm to beat you. The superior fighter will soon impose his own rhythm on the fight – then you're fighting his fight not your fight!*
- *Use of Angulation, Oblique and Circular tactics – more of this in "Linking Combinations" and "Mobility and Footwork" but, essentially, use whatever*

approach is most appropriate. Don't just assume that because a straight line between two points is shorter than a curved line, it is most effective – efficiency and effectiveness aren't always the same.

- *Distancing (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) – use techniques that are appropriate to the distance between you and your opponent (don't lunge forward to put in an elbow attack when you're within punching or even kicking range).*
- *Vital Target points – ALWAYS target the weak points in the opponent's body.*

I think that many people could look at those concepts and readily adapt them to their own style – after all, I have to thank people like Grandmasters William Cheung and Hung I-hsiang for some of them, Moss Hollis for others and so forth. As Bruce Lee once said “Take whatever is useful and discard what is not” – or words to that effect. I really like working across stylistic boundaries and enjoy seeing a Karateka take something and fit it into his or her own art, or another Kung Fu practitioner look at some of his own tactics a bit differently in the light of something I've said. We can all learn from each other – indeed we need to if martial arts are to evolve to meet modern circumstances.

I firmly believe that to practice something in exactly the same way it was taught in 1642 is an enormous disrespect to the person who first developed it – who was probably considered a radical thinker in his or her day. If, during our martial arts careers, we can't add to the overall sum of human knowledge, we should have stayed in bed. Remember that 25 years training can, sadly, also equate to one year's training 25 times over – so get out there and make a difference.

● **Linking Combinations**

My focus is on combination fighting, rather than concentrating on the “One Point Kill”. I believe in fluid combinations - more than I believe that we will get the opportunity, in the middle of a chaotic street fight with people jostling you etc, to get in a thunderously devastating single hit.

That's why Bac Fu Do's power development system stresses the development of Fah Jing or explosive energy, aimed at producing a “jolt” of energy that we can apply very quickly – as soon as a split second opportunity presents itself. You've seen some of my breaking techniques and commented on the fact that I didn't just break bricks or tiles, I shattered them – with debris for 3 or 4 metres around and even broke the besser blocks supporting the tiles – sometimes from only 3 or 4 inches away. Undoubtedly, one of those hits would cause distress if directed into someone's vital points.

However, what I think is more important is having the type of power that can be applied very quickly without the need to really “set” the body. The sort of relaxed power that can be incorporated into a flow of motion and – when the opportunity presents itself - can be channelled into any technique in a sequence.

Once you have that sort of relaxed power, you can look at how to most effectively deliver it and I think that there are some aspects of delivery that are probably quite common. So, I'd like to look at:

- *Flow/Continuity – it's no good having power if it's fragmented, with large gaps in between individual techniques because of the level of body "setting" that needs to occur. This just gives an opponent windows of opportunity through which he can insert counters. Techniques should flow effortlessly, your energy release should be as short as possible and there should be no discernible gap between them.*
- *Timing – timing is more important than sheer speed. One of my seniors said to me a while ago "Sifu, when I watch you from the side, your moves don't seem to be all that fast (cheeky young bastard – gotta remember that I am 63!), but when you're in front of me, they're so fast that I can't avoid them. Why is this so?" I said "Grasshopper, it's because I'm better than you are. My timing is better than yours and I'm putting my techniques in between yours, while you're still adjusting – so there".*
- *Rhythm – broken rhythm is less predictable than constant rhythm. Don't adopt your opponent's rhythm – make him adopt yours.*
- *Controlling the Opponent (Elbow and Head) – if you control the elbow, you control the body. Where the head goes, the rest of the body must follow.*
- *Structural Efficiency - put your Closest Weapon into his Closest Target*
- *Relaxation – relaxation breeds spontaneity and explosiveness. Tension breeds slowness and predictability. Use no more tension than you need and for as short a time as possible*
- *Bridging Movements – any contact with an opponent's body structure gives you a bridge to penetrate his defences. So, if you've made contact (or he's made contact via a block), don't automatically pull back your striking hand – instead, capitalise on his gift. If you don't know how – talk to a Wing Chun guy!*
- *Integrating Oblique, Circular and Angular techniques – a bit like broken rhythm, don't be sucked into doing a predictable series of anything, for example, straight punches. An adept opponent (as opposed to the other kind) can avoid the first one then the others are also off course. I like to mix long and short techniques, straight ones, circular ones etc coming in from various oblique angles – this tends to confuse the opponent's defences, gives you more opportunity for body contact even if you miss (and, thus, creation of effective bridges).*
- *Footwork and Mobility – don't confuse bobbing and weaving around a ring with the sort of mobility that you need in the street. The most useful street footwork revolves around small body shifts – oblique moves, small pivots etc – and*

explosive, close quarter drives into the other person's space. It's about putting yourself in a position to avoid punishment and to be able to inflict your own.

● **Developing Effective Footwork**

Bac Fu Do puts a tremendous emphasis on footwork and mobility – believing that an effective practitioner shouldn't really need blocks. Basically I think that the best defence against an incoming attack is not to be where it's going to land. No one did this better than Grandmaster Bill Cheung. Bill was like the invisible man when you tried to hit him – or maybe the Scarlet Pimpernel if any Oldies out there remember him (“They seek him here, they seek him there”) - he was very elusive. I thought he had the best footwork of any Wing Chun practitioner I'd ever seen

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To my mind, blocking is a low level activity that might help you to survive the first attack, but isn't going to guarantee longer term survival in the fight. Fights are won by effective counterattacks, not by blocks- and the quicker you regain the offensive, the better. That's also why all BFD blocks are light deflections, rather than power blocks, that blend with the opponent's incoming line of force – allowing you to devote all your energy to the counter strike. If the truth be known, I think power blocks are not very functional and the power blocking system was one of the reasons I switched from the Japanese arts.

If we look at our footwork and mobility, we can see that it needs to achieve several objectives:

- *We need to be able to avoid, or at least ameliorate, punishment*
- *We need to place ourselves in a superior tactical position – where we have reduced the number of natural weapons that an attacker can bring to bear on us and where we have increased the chance of our strikes being unhindered*
- *We need to build body mechanics that facilitate the rapid and effective development of explosive power*

There are two major schools of thought with regard to stances. Some people believe that a wide, very stable stance is critical to power development. I believe that sheer stability isn't very important in most street situations – that mobility is more critical to survival than having a strong stance.

Look at a typical, fairly wide stance – such as a traditional forward bow stance, or Zenkutsu Dachi – you will see that it can be about 2 shoulder widths long. It is effective in delivering power in a certain direction and in resisting incoming force from that same direction – but is unstable from just about every other direction and is very vulnerable to attacks from the side (such as when you have delivered a punch to an attacker in front of you, and his mate at the side decides to kick you in the groin).

In addition, the wide stance is so stable that it offers no chance of ameliorating the effects of an incoming strike by riding it out. Any strike delivered to someone who is really solidly “set” is going to hurt because, by the time the inertia of his body is overcome to the extent where he will “give”, it’s too late – he’s already had something important ruptured or broken.

Furthermore, if an attacker is jostling, pushing and shoving you all over the place, it is very hard to set yourself in order to deliver a strong, long path technique – whereas you can get in an opportunistic short technique that will open up further opportunities to put in stronger, finishing techniques.

Because we practice developing a close range “jolt” of energy, I find that I can apply force very quickly without the need to adopt a wide, very stable stance – I only need to achieve stability for a split second while I release my energy into his body cavity. This ability to generate power in close quarters (say, within 10 or 15 cms of his body) and very quickly, means that I can capitalise on fleeting opportunities that present themselves even if I’m off-balance at the time.

So, I can afford to use a shorter stance - one that is probably closer to the Sanchin Dachi stance that many Karateka will know, than to the Zenkutsu Dachi. In fact, I don’t like the term “stance”. In BFD, stances are merely transitory positions that we adopt fleetingly within a flow of movement. This shorter position, in turn, means that I have much better upper body mobility (useful both in avoiding punishment and in getting my own techniques in from odd angles), that I have better protection to groin attacks from the side, that I am not as totally committed to the movement as I would be in a much wider stance and have more reserve to deal with any change in positioning by my target.

In BFD, we tend to be really at home in “nose to nose” range and, hopefully, having moved to the outside of an attacking limb. Working to the outside has the advantages that (a) you are restricting an attacker’s ability to bring his natural weapons to bear, (b) there is less chance that you will be trapped on the inside and vulnerable to attack by other parties and (c) you are better able to use the dynamics of the group against itself by interposing one group member in between you and the others.

To help us achieve what we see as a tactically superior “outside” position, we tend to focus on rapid oblique (45 degree) or angular movements and small pivots. We try to keep as close to the attacker as possible – again, to deny him room to use his natural weapons effectively – and are always ready to break contact and beat a hasty retreat, if necessary.

To help us maximise the kinetic energy we can deliver into the target zone, we try to ensure that the foot of the leg off which we are hitting (does that make sense?) is pointing straight into the target zone – we don’t hit off a back leg where the foot is pointed outwards, away from the line of force. Bone always supports line of force. We concentrate on short, sharp movements most of the time – again, rapidity is critical.

After we make contact, we keep pressure on the opponent by attacking at an oblique angle to his stance and by using our legs to deliver stamping kicks, low knees etc into his base. This can be done at the same time that you attack his head and upper body, ensures that he is kept off balance and thus makes it harder for him to re-set his stance, in order to counter you.

This type of footwork is, of course, designed for street, not sports use. My feeling is that there is little use in a street fight for the type of footwork that we tend to see in the ring.

In the ring, bobbing and bouncing are fine – you have a nice level floor surface, good lighting, a relatively large area in which to move, you only have one opponent (unless you've really pissed off the referee) and you have a referee to step in if you start taking too much punishment.

By contrast, in the street you are likely to be defending yourself on pretty bad floor surfaces, in poor light, in a cluttered and small space, against more than one attacker – and the referee will be nowhere in sight!

So, emphasise economy of movement – do just enough to avoid punishment, put yourself in a tactically superior position and to maximise your chance of delivering enough kinetic energy into his target areas to stop him. That's what it's all about and, if your footwork doesn't achieve those objectives, I suggest that you re-evaluate it.

● **Power Development**

Most people will be aware of what I categorise as the traditional “long chain approach” – in which you really need a fair amount of distance between you and the target to achieve a truly explosive action. This type of power generation is generally evident in the Japanese, Okinawan and Korean arts.

By contrast, a lot of Kung Fu styles develop the ability to apply explosive power from very close to the target area – for example, Wing Chun has the “One Inch Punch” (which is not particularly useful in itself, but which is supposed to be on the end of each and every technique that you do). I tend to lean more towards a “One Inch Thumb to the Eyeball” or a “One Inch Rip to the Testicles”. Preying Mantis has its Fright Impulse Power, Hsing I has its own very explosive tactics etc. Regardless of style, it's clear that Chinese martial artists identified a need to be able to deliver power in very cramped circumstances.

Let's look away from the “raw” energy side of things and look at a more “focused” approach. I want to deliver maximum kinetic energy in to an attacker's vital target areas. In High School (yes, I did actually finish what is now Year 12), the formula for kinetic energy was $\frac{1}{2} \text{ Mass } \times \text{ Velocity squared}$ – it was a long time ago, but I'm pretty sure that I'm right. Therefore, if we double the mass, we double the kinetic energy in a strike – whereas, if we double the velocity, we quadruple the energy. Increased velocity also means that the opponent has less chance of picking out an incoming strike and you need to engage with the target for a far shorter interval – and the Law of Probability means that, the longer you're engaged, the more chance there is that you'll cop something unpleasant. So, I tend to go for velocity, rather than body mass – which, being a small, dainty sort of chap, works well for me.

*I said earlier that relaxation breeds spontaneity and explosiveness. So, we train to keep any unnecessary muscular involvement out of our techniques. The involvement of a specific muscle at a particular point in time, **MUST** add to the summation of force achieved when you hit the target. If it doesn't, it means it is unnecessary to involve it. As an example, pretend I'm doing a straight punch. This involves teaming the movement of my legs, hips and arms to assist the rapid extension of my arm through someone else's body. Extension of the arm is the Triceps' job. If we tense the whole arm up during delivery, we tend to involve the Bicep – which is antagonistic to the Triceps. So, we have*

a sort of demarcation dispute – in which the Triceps wants to straighten the arm and the Bicep really, really wants to bend it.

I don't know about you, but I try to avoid driving with one foot on the accelerator (the Triceps) and one foot on the brake (the Bicep) – and, I've got pretty close to teaching my wife not to do it when she's driving (although she still rides the clutch) and have high expectations that she won't be doing it by the time I die.

So, in BFD, we use a relaxed, fast approach to the target (with no Bicep involvement inhibiting the Triceps from doing its job), culminating in a very short, convulsive jolt as we move through the target zone, then immediately relaxing. We tend to focus on “collapsing” our chest region into the technique, while keeping our torso upright from the chest down, then pretending that we have released an electrical shock into the target zone. We can achieve a significant energy release, while still controlling our opponent's arms through elbow contact.

To assist in the rapid involvement of all necessary body parts in a very short interval of time, we use a “squeeze point” for closed fist techniques and a “flex point” for open hands and we tend to use a stamping action as a trigger point in our energy release – much as some styles use a “Kiai” shout.

We practice achieving all this through the use of a “drop step” drill, in which a student practices releasing a close range punch or palm into a pad, using a dropping, collapsing type of energy.”

