

GEOFF THOMPSON'S GROUND FIGHTING SERIES

# CHOKES AND STRANGLES



**GEOFF  
THOMPSON**

SUMMERSDALE

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## **Important note**

With ground fighting techniques the author recommends that you practice only under supervision to avoid accidents and always employ the 'tap system' in practice (if you want to submit or a technique is too painful or you wish to stop practice at any time tap the mat, tap yourself or your opponent with your hand or foot; if this is not possible just say to your opponent 'tap'). If an opponent taps out it is imperative that you release your hold immediately or suffer the consequence of what might be serious injury, and remember, what goes around comes around. If you do not release when he taps he may not release the next time you tap.

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

# About the author

Geoff Thompson has written over 20 published books and is known world wide for his autobiography *Watch My back*, about his nine years working as a night club doorman. He holds the rank of 6<sup>th</sup> Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1<sup>st</sup> Dan in Judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage, screen and TV in development with Destiny Films.

He has published several articles for GQ magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has been featured many times on mainstream TV.

Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

For full details of other books and videos by  
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# Introduction

## Medically speaking

Welcome to the third volume in this Ground Fighting series, *Chokes and Strangles*. This is the most devastating, misunderstood and dangerous of all the volumes and the practice of what the Japanese Judoka call Shimewaza should be treated, at all times, with the utmost respect, also I do not recommend its practice to minors.

Fatality is the possible consequence of misuse or misunderstanding. A good choke/strangle can take a man to unconsciousness in under three seconds, if held on after unconsciousness it can cause brain damage - even brain death in around 15 seconds.

In a real situation, with time distortion brought on as a part of the adrenal syndrome, 15 seconds may appear to go in the blink of an eye and before you know it you have killed the opponent (which is OK if that's what you intended) and would/could be facing a murder charge. Understanding this



at the offset is imperative so that practise and actual use can be tempered with, and to, some degree of control so that unfortunate accidents can be avoided.

In the controlled arena we use the tap system to avoid unconsciousness, the recipient tapping himself, his opponent, the floor etc. with his hand or his foot to signify submission, at which point the move should always be released. Outside, of course, there is no such practise and the opponent's response to a choke or strangle will be unconsciousness, whereafter every second is and can prove fatal.

I remember one situation when I worked in the Diplomat pub in Coventry, a great little place right in the heart of Coventry city centre. I was actually with Sharon on this particular night and we were talking away when I noticed a couple of men arguing. Trying to be pro-active and stop the situation before it started I moved over to them and politely asked them to discontinue the argument otherwise I would have to ask them to leave. Now I don't quite know whether they just didn't hear me because they were so deeply engrossed in the argument (adrenal deafness is not an

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uncommon side effect of the fight or flight syndrome) or whether they didn't take my warning seriously, but either way they totally ignored me. Just as I was about to ask them again they kicked off and started fighting, they moved about five feet, locked in a ferocious vertical grappling embrace, and ended up on the main dance floor just by where Sharon and her friend were standing.

I tore after them like a fast thing, grabbed one of the men in a rear choke and pulled him from the other. By this time my partner 'Kenny the body builder' had come to my assistance and grabbed the other guy. The one that I held in the reverse choke was going crazy trying to get me off him. I turned him from a rear choke to a side choke/head lock and increased the pressure to control his thrashing. I whispered into his ear that if he didn't calm down I was going to have to knock him out. The hold was now secure so I was in the right position to do so if need be.

Again he refused to listen and went crazy trying to throw me off: he was a strong guy. I tightened the lock once more and his struggling ceased, when I gently released the grip to see if

he had 'gone' he fell to the floor in an unconscious heap, he didn't come around for a couple of minutes and when he did I helped him up and showed him to the door. He asked me who had 'sparked' him, I told him that I had and he said 'Oh!' and left without further ado.

I personally have had very many KO's in the street with these techniques and I am in no doubt of their potency. It's a good feeling when you have secured the hold (whichever one you are employing) and you know that the fight is over because, once on, the chance of escape is almost non-existent. In my early days I knocked several people out with chokes and strangles by mistake because I did not appreciate their potency, where I held people with what I would consider restraining force I knocked them out because the force was too much. Through experience I learned to use enough control to restrain an opponent when ejecting him from the club, without knocking him out, though I was always then in a position to take the hold to unconsciousness if the need arrived.

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They say that a little knowledge can be dangerous, many people have been killed in street encounters through the misuse, most often an inadvertent misuse, of the choke and strangle because the hold has been secured and then not released. This is not usually gratuitous misuse it is usually through fear, fear that if the opponent gets out of the hold he may batter you senseless so you hold on for dear life, it is what I call the 'panic grip'.

The way someone grips you in the dojo or gym will be very different from the way that they grab you in a real encounter, even breaking the opponent's gripping limb may not release the panic grip and often nothing less than unconsciousness will do it. It is an incredible thing to witness, and I have been witness to it many times. When one of my friends got stabbed outside a city night club he grabbed and gripped his attacker so tightly that when he fell to the floor, as a result of the knife wound, he pulled him with him and it was not until my friend lost consciousness, even though four of his attackers friends laid into him on the floor, that the grip was released. Sadly my friend died in this unprovoked, unsolicited attack.

It is my intention to give the reader enough knowledge to be able to use these techniques, only in times of self defence, with the control that they demand. Often in practice, as you will see if you do any degree of live ground fighting, one's arms, even legs get tied into a position that disables you, or the opponent from being able to tap out so it is for this reason that I recommend training under supervision - this is very important.

Basically the difference between a choke and a strangle is that the choke cuts off the airways via the wind pipe at the front of the neck and the strangle cuts off the blood to the brain via the carotid arteries at either side of the neck - both former and latter stopping the flow of oxygen to the brain and thus causing unconsciousness. Depending upon how long and how tight the technique is held this can vary from very mild unconsciousness to deep unconsciousness and even death.

The most efficient strangle depresses the superior carotid artery, preventing oxygenated blood reaching the cerebral cortex. The compression usually has to be very strong

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because the carotid artery is protected by the muscular band of the thick sternocleidomastoid muscle, on the side of the neck. Often when you employ the choke/strangle it may be neither one nor the other, rather you have gripped the opponent partly across the throat and partly across the neck, so it is a part choke and a part strangle slightly cutting off the blood and partly cutting off the air - it doesn't really matter as long as it still does the job, which it will.

I have never known an accident with choking or strangling technique in the controlled arena that has ended in death or serious injury, though there have been, and I have known very many in civvy street. Personally I have found the choke to be far more dangerous and prone to accidents than the strangle, with a strong naked choke using the bar of the wrist as the depressing implement it would be, and is, very easy, even by accident, to collapse the opponent's wind pipe and/or severely damage the larynx or the trachea - so, again, care should be taken at all times in the controlled arena and the knowledge should be taken to use as a tempering yard stick into the pavement arena.

People often ask me ‘how do you know when to let go of the opponent in a real fight so that you don’t kill him?’ In theory, if you have taken the choke/strangle from a vertical position the opponent will let you know that the move is ‘on’ by falling over (unconscious), though in practice this is not always the case. In my early days on the door when I did not really understand the mechanics of the techniques I knocked many people out without intending to and then, afterwards, wondered what I had done. On many occasions I held a thrashing, violent attacker so tightly that I never felt the drop of body weight when he went unconscious because I, in an overzealous bid to control him, actually held the KO’d opponent off the floor, and when I slightly released the hold to see if he had ‘gone’ (as I always do) he plunged to the floor in an unconscious heap.

When you are on the ground it’s even worse because when the opponent does finally ‘go’ there will be no plummet of body weight. Later I learned to look for the signs of imminent unconsciousness so that I could take a person, if I wanted to, very close to unconsciousness without actually completely knocking him out or, if I felt it needed it, into a mild

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unconscious state, or if I thought it was called for (sometimes it really was) right out of the game.

Basically most untrained people go through the same ritual when you apply the choke, though the more sensible people just capitulate, innately knowing that they have no chance of escape. Firstly they go crazy and buck and bronk like an unbroken stallion and try to rip your arms from around their throat, for these few seconds the enemy will be very strong, this is his in-fight adrenalin going to work (more about that in my Fear book).

When their energy dissipates and they realise that they cannot escape they go through a kind of pleading ritual (they can't usually speak because you are crushing their throat) where they almost pat your arms in an innate version of the tap system, their breathing at this point will be a sickly gurgling sound - former and latter are the pre-cursors to unconsciousness.

A couple of seconds after this they will not move at all, and if they are standing you may feel a drop in the opponent's body



weight as his legs abandon him. When he stops trying to escape and his hands are no longer touching your choking arm, he is 'out of there' and this would be a good time to release the hold. If you're unsure maybe hold it for a couple of seconds more but no more: death will be knocking at the door.

In your adrenal haze it is very easy to miss all of these signs, even though they will be staring you in the face, but the more you learn to temper and fine tune the hold in the controlled arena and spot the same signs in your training partners just before they 'tap out' the better you will be able to judge the right time to release in the real situation.

I have also found the choke/strangle ideal for controlling someone that perhaps did not need knocking out or beating up, but did need calming down. Once I had them firmly in the hold, sometimes standing other times on the floor, I would talk to them and calm them down. It always worked because, to the people that have never experienced being choked it is a very frightening feeling. This panic usually always brought on capitulation without actually hurting the opponent, and if

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the little chat did not work then I was in a very good position to 'put their lights out'.

If I was dealing with a very nasty person I would even whisper in his ear, just before I knocked him out, 'good night!' Psychologically this frightens the pants off the opponent because it intimates to him that you are in control (which of course you are) and that not only are you capable of knocking him out but you can actually tell him when you are going to do it. When he comes around, and probably for the rest of his life, he will remember you and that particular incident.

So, to reiterate, give the chokes and strangles the utmost respect in practice and in reality, learn to know them well so that abuse does not become a by-product of ignorance.

As I have said with the other volumes in this series many of the positions that you find yourself in may leave you in a good position to get back to your feet whilst your opponent is still in the horizontal position. If this is an option I feel that as a rule of thumb it should usually always be taken, in a self defence situation it should be your prerogative.

If the situation is a match fight then there may be contributing factors that needed to be brought into the computation. Just because you're vertical and the opponent is horizontal does not guarantee that the victory is automatically yours. If he is a strong fighter, someone prepared to take a few kicks to get back to his feet, he may do just that, get back up and kick your arse. You may have spent five minutes trying to get the opponent to the floor because he is out punching or kicking you, he may be far superior to you in vertical fighting - if that's the case then the last place you want to be is back on your feet.

Often a brilliant vertical fighter, boxers and kickers especially, are like upturned turtles on the floor. If that's the case then keep them there until you have finished the fight. If you are fighting numbers then the floor is absolutely the worse place on earth to be - get back up as soon as possible. If you can't get back up, he's not just going to let you, then you have to make the best of a bad job no matter how unfavourable the odds may be.

## Chokes and Strangles

### **Note (1)**

Throughout the text, and from here on in, I will refer to the chokes and strangles in the abbreviated form of 'C & S'.

### **Note(2)**

There are several C & S that can be employed from your back, and from kneeling position. In order to keep the books in the series categorical I have not entered them in this text, they will be covered in detail in *Fighting From Your Back* and *Fighting From Your Knees*.

### Review

For those who have read the first two volumes of this series, *Pins: The Bedrock* and *The Escapes* I apologise for repeating material already covered. I would like, before I start talking about chokes and strangles from the various positions, to review quickly the basic pins, because if you don't know them a lot of the speak throughout the text may seem like gobble-de-gook.

I have no intention of actually going into the histrionics of the holds, how to defend them and how to attack from them, etc. That, as I said, is a volume on its own. I will repeat, though, that the pins are the bedrock of ground fighting and to go on to finishing techniques of a complex nature before learning the imperative basics is a quick way to failing at everything that you attempt.

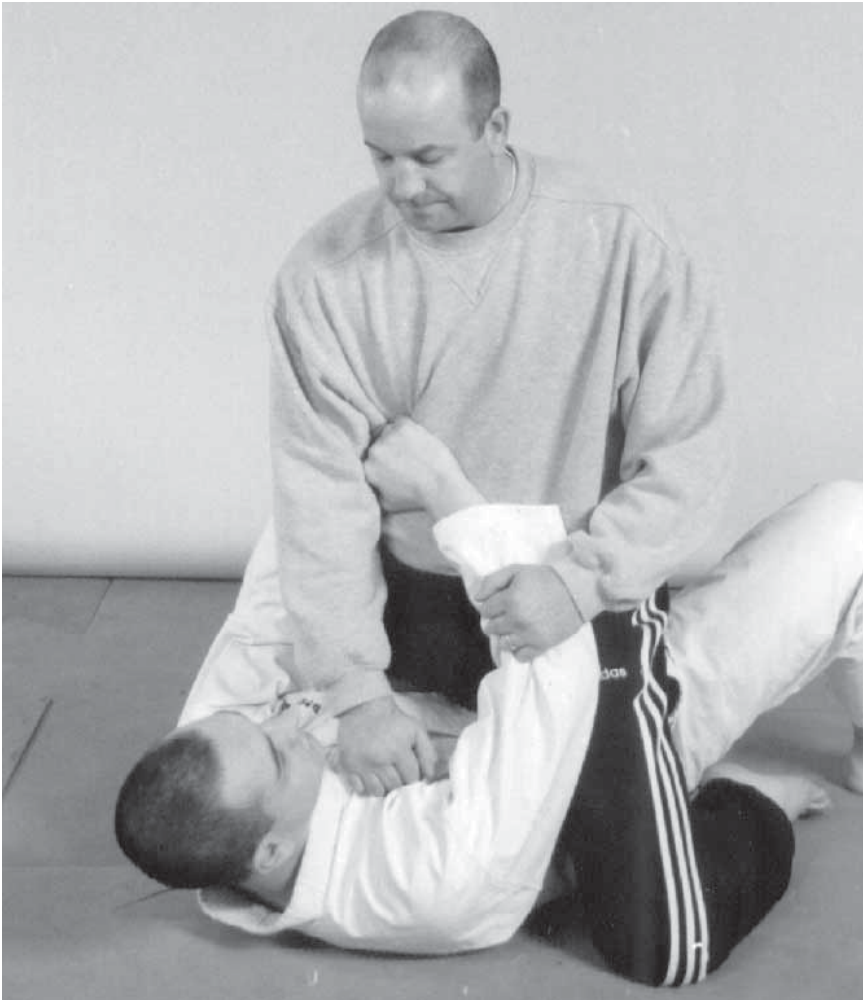
Master the standing and walking before you try the running and sprinting, the control of the opponent on the floor, via the pinning techniques, is so very, very, VERY important that to miss it is like diving in the water before you have learned to swim.

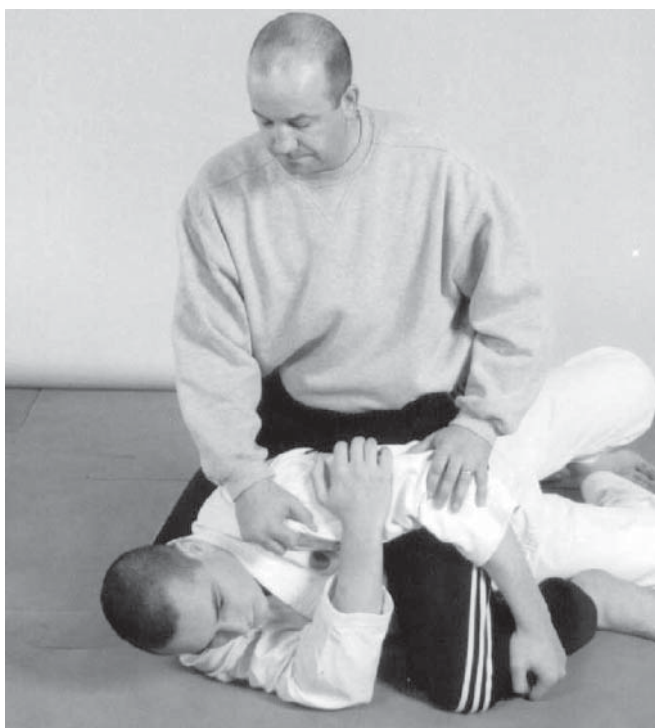
## Chokes and Strangles

All I will list in this chapter is the holds themselves with one accompanying illustration so that, if you haven't read the other books and have no knowledge of the 'ground' you'll at least understand the 'speak'.

### The Mount Position:

#### Side mount; Reverse mount





## Chokes and Strangles

### The Side Four Quarter



### The Scarf Hold

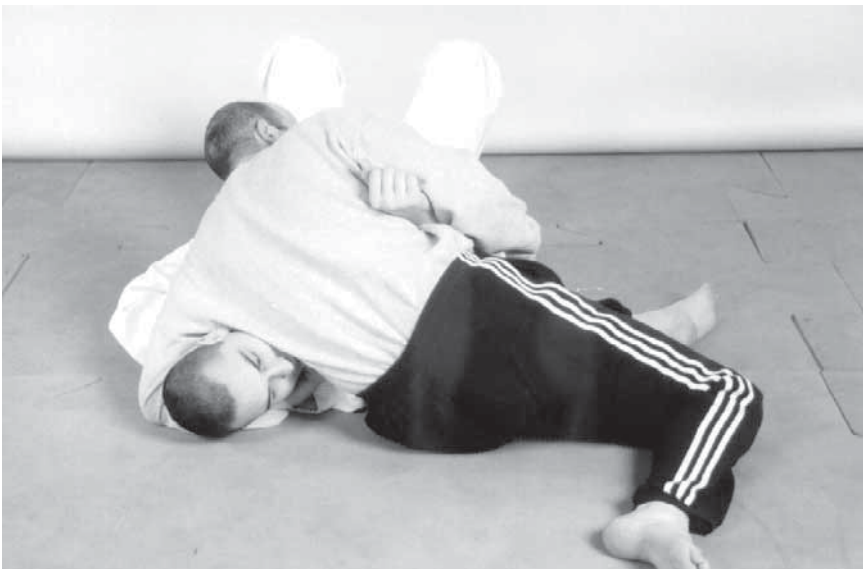




## **The Jack-Knife**



## **Reverse Scarf Hold**



## Chokes and Strangles

### Upper 4 /14 Pin



# Chapter One

## ***Chokes and strangles from the mount position***

Throughout this text we will be talking about C & S not only using the wrapping motion of the arms (wrapping the arm or arms around the neck/throat to secure the hold) but, where applicable, also using the fingers to procure the same effect, though to be honest the wrapping motion is always a lot more effective. Having said that, I have finished quite a few situations using the grip of my fingers around the opponent's larynx (to be detailed later).

The mount position is a very favourable finishing position, as detailed in *Pins: The Bedrock* and *The Escapes* in this Ground Fighting series. Many experienced ground fighters finish the majority of their fights from here. It is particularly good for finishing with C & S because, once on his back, the inexperienced fighter will usually want to turn onto his belly to protect his face from your blows and in an innate attempt to escape.

## **Chokes and Strangles**

When someone is punching you in the face it is very natural to see turning to your belly as a good means of defence, in reality, to the experienced ground fighter an opponent that turns onto his stomach is a finished opponent. Most will use blows to the opponent's face purely and simply to get him to do just that, turn over, so that they can employ the ultimate coup de grace, the C & S.

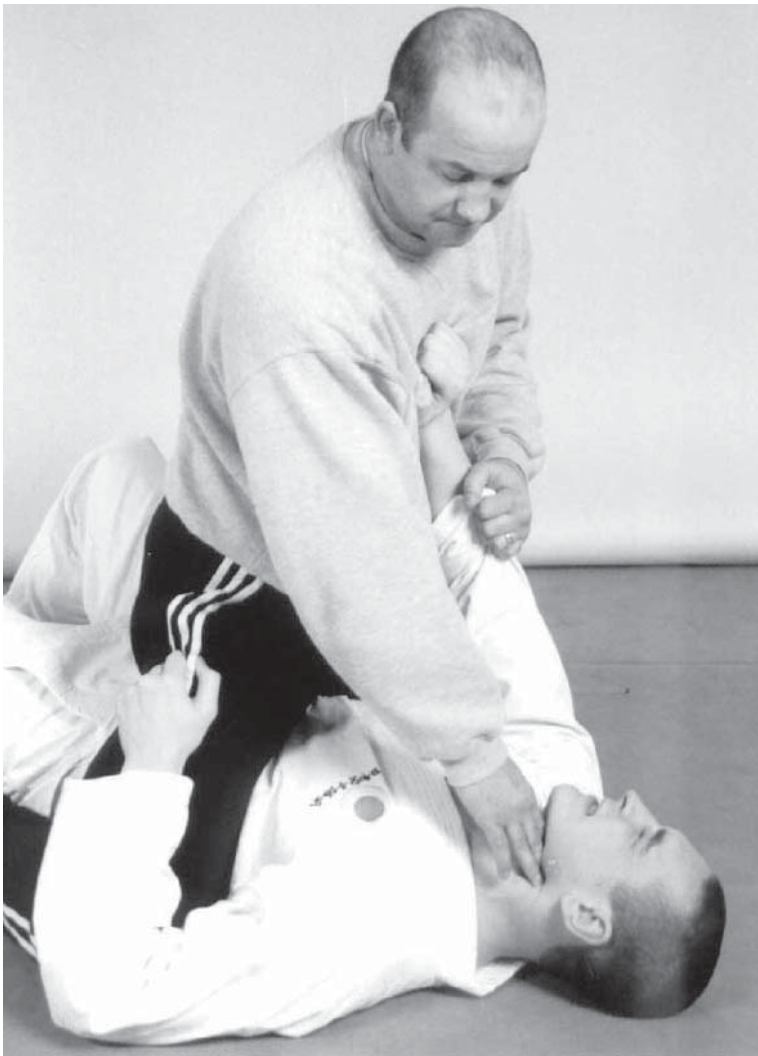
If you are fighting an experienced grappler he, of course, will know this and go to almost any length not to be turned over. This is where turning techniques are very handy. Smothers and C & S from the mount, without the turn, also come in handy.

## **Fingers to the throat**

Poke the points of your fingers into the opponent's throat, preferably between the neck muscle and the wind pipe, and lean all your weight onto them. I use this more to turn an opponent than to finish - but have finished with it also. It is an incredibly sensitive area that will have an effect.

## Chokes and strangles from the mount position

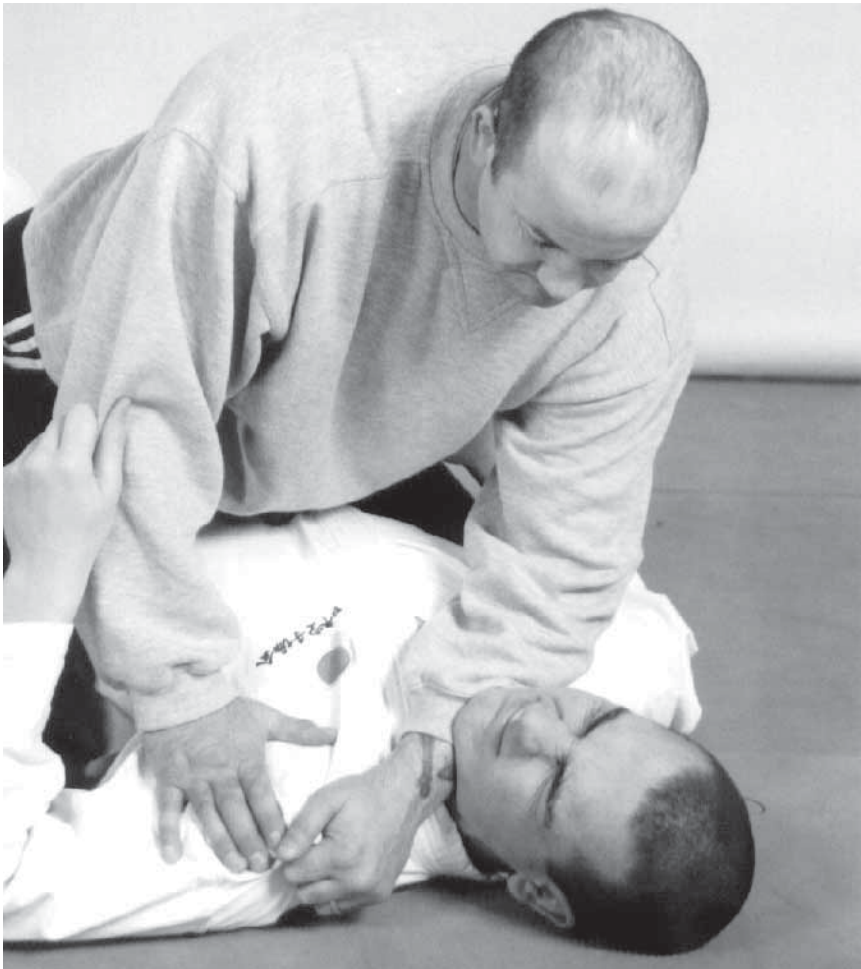
If using it as a means of turning the opponent then attack the left side of the throat to turn to the left and the right side of the throat to turn to the right. As a rule of thumb the opponent will move away from pain points so you literally push/pull/rip/strike etc in the direction that you want him to go.



## Chokes and Strangles

### Forearm crush

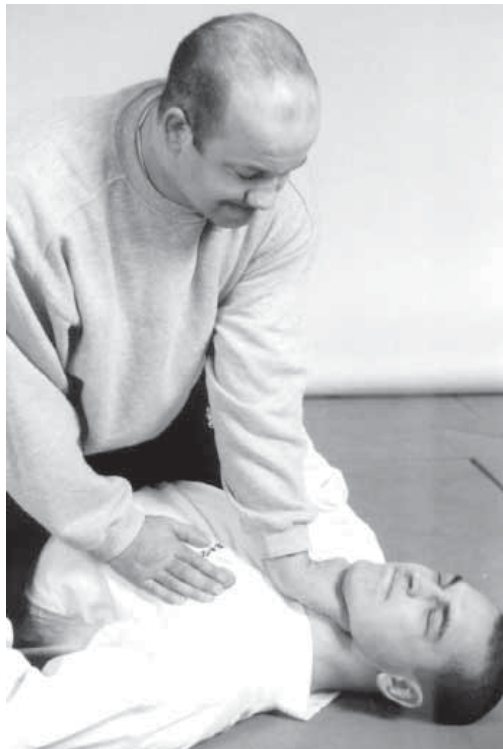
Lie your forearm, either one, onto the opponent's throat/neck and lean all your weight onto it, even going onto one knee if you wish, this will close the wind pipe and block the opponent's air way, in his bid to escape the extreme pain of this technique the opponent will often turn over leaving himself very vulnerable to a reverse mount choke.



## Chokes and strangles from the mount position

### Larynx grab

Though very crude this is one of my favourite and indeed best finishers, it is so basic and obvious that many people do not notice it or they ignore it. Grip your fingers around the opponent's larynx and windpipe and squeeze as tightly as you can, try to make your fingers meet, again if this does not stop the opponent it will surely encourage him to turn to escape. I often use my free hand to attack the opponent with this hold, and with every other hold where I have one hand free - there are no rules, do what is needed to finish or secure a finish.



## Chokes and Strangles

### Mount choke

This is a naked strangle but from the front as opposed to the conventional reverse position. It can be executed with the right or left arm. Wrap your right arm under the opponent's head and join the other side with your left hand. If you squeeze tightly from here you will attack the opponent's neck bone at the rear and form a crank which is painful but not always a finishing hold. To secure the strangle, force the opponent's face to the left or the right by poking him in the eye/cheek bone/nose - anywhere sensitive, so that he turns his head and thus exposes his neck to the bar of your right wrist.

Make sure that the bone of your right wrist is running along the opponent's neck, from here squeeze your arms tightly to secure the strangle. If you need more leverage go on to the balls of your feet and focus your body weight forward onto the opponent or, if you need or want more leverage still, jump into a jack-knife (on your left) position and move in a clockwise direction to tighten and add intensity to the grip. This will also act as a kind of tourniquet to tighten your hold and suppress the carotid artery.



## Chokes and strangles from the mount position

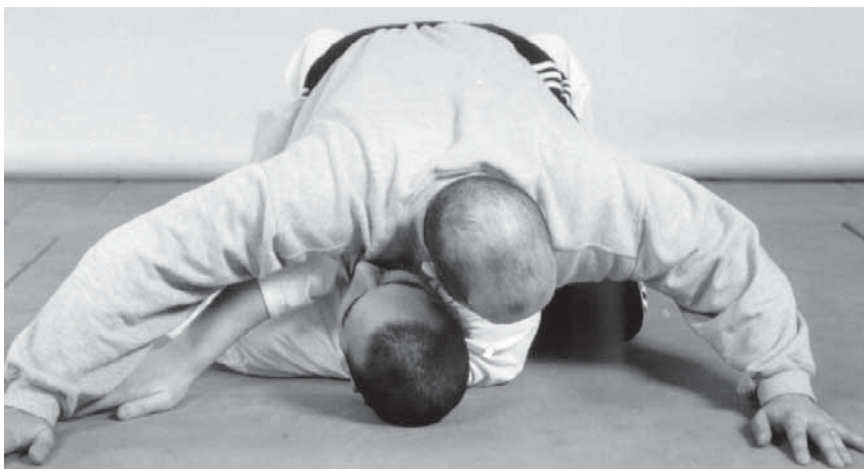
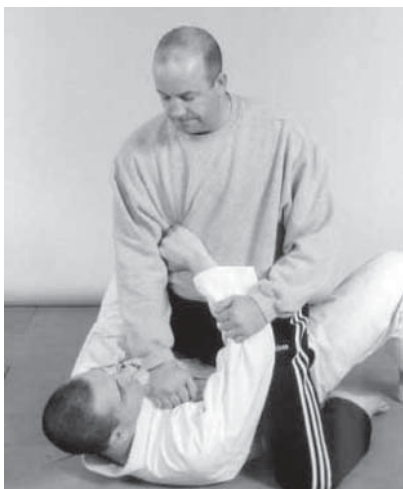


## Chokes and Strangles

### Trap arm choke

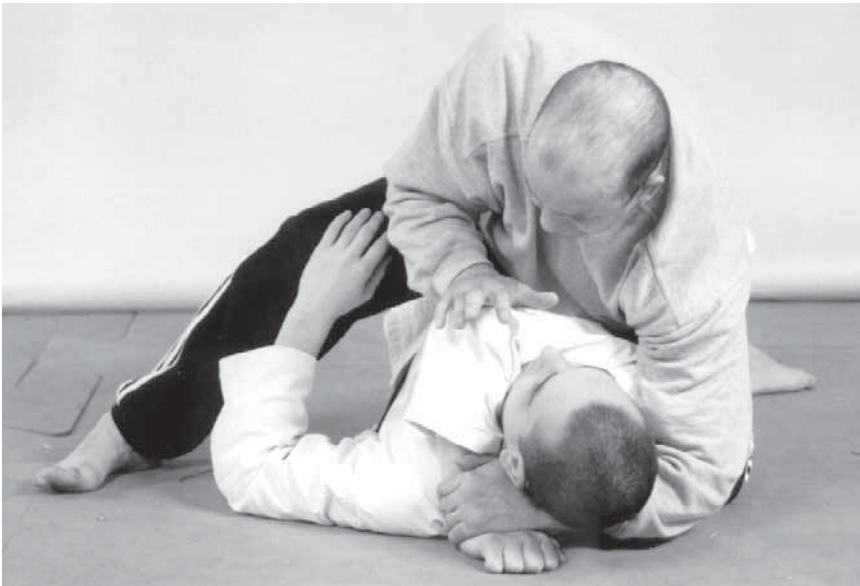
Instinctively the opponent will put one or both hands towards your throat/face/chest in a bid to attack you or defend himself. Knock his right arm with your left hand by striking it at the elbow, across to your own right and immediately lie on top of it, this will disable his arm from use. To form a strangle, feed your right arm under the opponent's head and join at the other side of his head with your left hand, make sure the bony part of your wrist is running along the opponent's neck. This will form the better part of the move. Lean your weight forward and squeeze with your arms to make the strangle. It helps if you can force the opponent's face across, via any pain point, so that the neck is better exposed. If you need to add weight to the move jump up onto the balls of your feet to focus your body weight into the action. If you need more still, jump from the mount into the jack-knife and crank the opponent's neck in a clockwise direction, which will act as a kind of tourniquet and tighten your hold.

## Chokes and strangles from the mount position

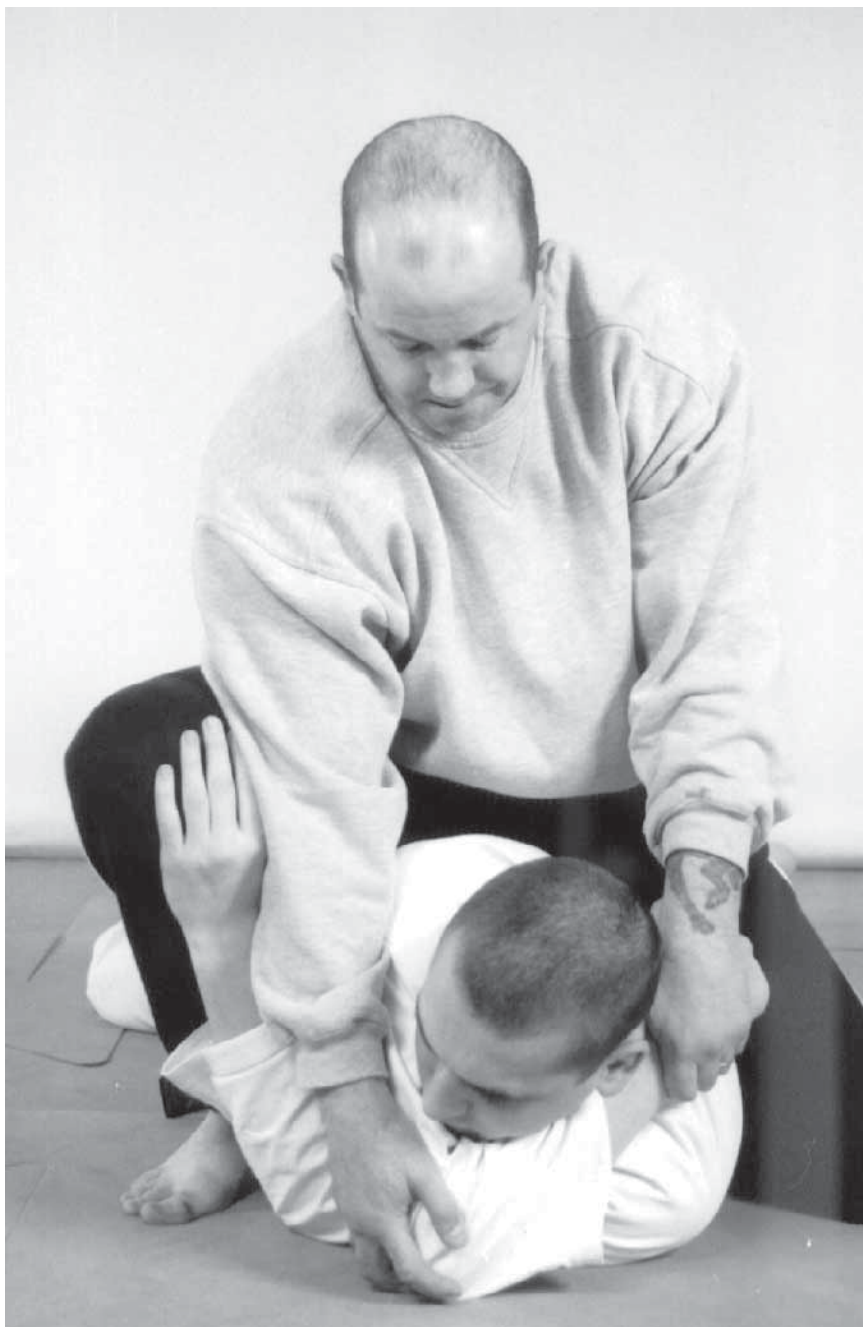


## Chokes and Strangles

Separate to this technique, once the arm is trapped initially, you can feed your left arm under the opponent's head, from left to right, and grab the opponent's trapped hand at the wrist and pull his own hand under his head. In effect choking him with his own arm. To make it tighter pull tightly with your left hand, sit up and push his elbow with your right hand, which acts as a strong choke. If this is not finishing the hold then, as you push and pull his trapped arm, sit slightly off the opponent so that you can force him to turn onto his belly leaving you in the mount position from the rear.



## Chokes and strangles from the mount position



## Chokes and Strangles

### Smother hold

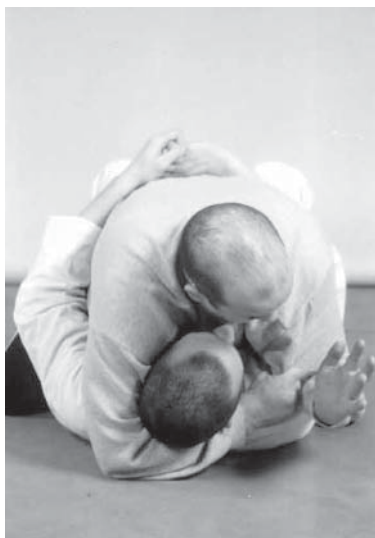
When the opponent's face is upwards lean onto it with your chest and cover his mouth and nose, this will block his airways and stop him from breathing. To better secure the technique hold the opponent's face and head at both sides with your hands, use eye gouges and face pokes, even punches, to keep the head in position. If the opponent's face is not positioned properly for the smother use your fingers, again in the eyes or face, to push it to the position that you want. For better leverage jump onto your toes and focus your weight behind the technique or jump to a jack-knife position and do the same.



## Chokes and strangles from the mount position

### The figure eight choke

This is quite a complicated choke, but very effective once it is 'on'. It is not one of the holds that I chase but if the opportunity arises then I'll take it with both hands (if you'll forgive the pun). Feed your right arm under the opponent's head, from your right to left, at the other side grip your own left biceps, or grab your shirt if you can't reach through enough, and feed the left arm over the opponent's throat, making sure that the bone of the wrist is laying over his wind pipe and grab your own right biceps/shoulder (or grip the sleeve). Squeeze tightly to finish the hold. If you need more leverage go onto the balls of your feet and focus your weight onto the hold, if you need to you can also jump to a jack-knife position.



## Chokes and Strangles

### Triangular leg choke

Again this is not really a move that you chase, because you'd probably never get it, rather it is a move that you take when it is offered. It usually occurs when the opponent bridges you directly behind him in a bid to escape and places his right arm between your legs to try and force you off him, instinctively he tries to sit up to escape. As he forces you over your right leg will be over his left shoulder, his right arm between your legs. Throw your left leg over your right foot so that the back of your left knee is over the right foot. Scissor your right leg down to tighten the hold and squeeze together with your thighs to complete the choke.

To make the choke stronger and tighter pull the opponent's right arm through the gap as far as you can and pull his head downward to expose the neck. Your right thigh will cut off the blood at the left side of his body and his own shoulder will cut off the blood from the right side. Leg chokes take a lot of practice but, once you have the right 'feel', they are amongst the strongest of all ground fighting techniques.



## Chokes and strangles from the mount position



## **Chokes and Strangles**

### **Turn and choke**

From the mount position this is the bread and butter technique, the most devastating and sought after of all. This is the favourite coup-de-grace of the legendary Grace family from Brazil, now residents of, and taking by storm, the USA. If you haven't seen their material I highly recommend that you seek it out, they are on the cutting edge of the ground fighting (and all-out fighting) scene.

Basically the mount position has been secured and defended (see Volume One for the details of securing, defending and attacking [from] this and all the other base pins), now you are going for the finish by attacking the face of the opponent until he either turns or is punched out, nine times out of ten he will instinctively turn to escape. When the opponent does, turn your end up in the reverse mount position, sitting on his back. From here feed your right arm, or left, around his throat, from right to left, and secure at the other side by gripping your left hand and squeezing to finish. To make the hold more secure, after feeding the right arm through, grip your left biceps/shoulder with your right hand and wrap the

## **Chokes and strangles from the mount position**

left arm, with the palm of the hand on the back of the opponent's head.

This position allows you to bring the powerful back and chest muscles into the hold, when you squeeze do so not only with the arms but also with a hug of your back and chest. If the opponent rolls over go with him and wrap your legs around his body in a scissor guard, which adds to the control.

If you push the opponent's head forward with the left hand this will help close the airway and also crank his neck. It is usual for the opponent to try and push up onto his hands from this position, this being the first step in his bid to get back to his feet. To be honest this just makes the choke easier to apply because in using his hands to push up (in a kind of press up action) he leaves his neck and throat unprotected.

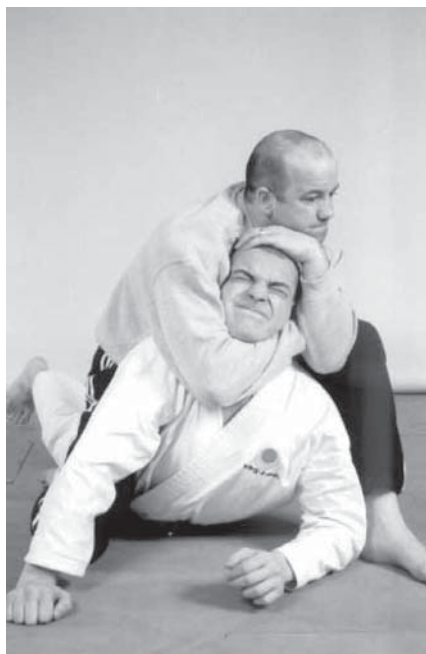
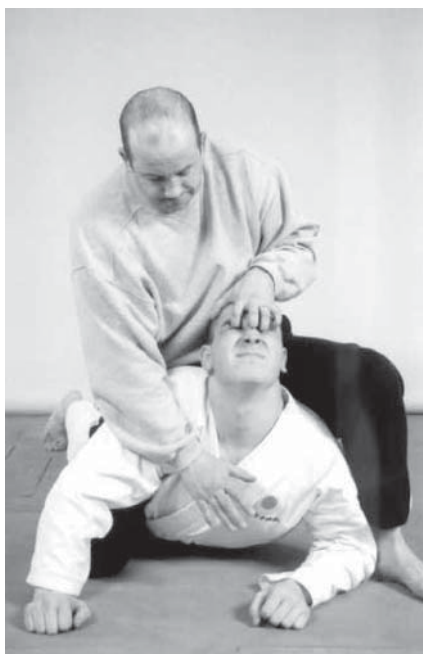
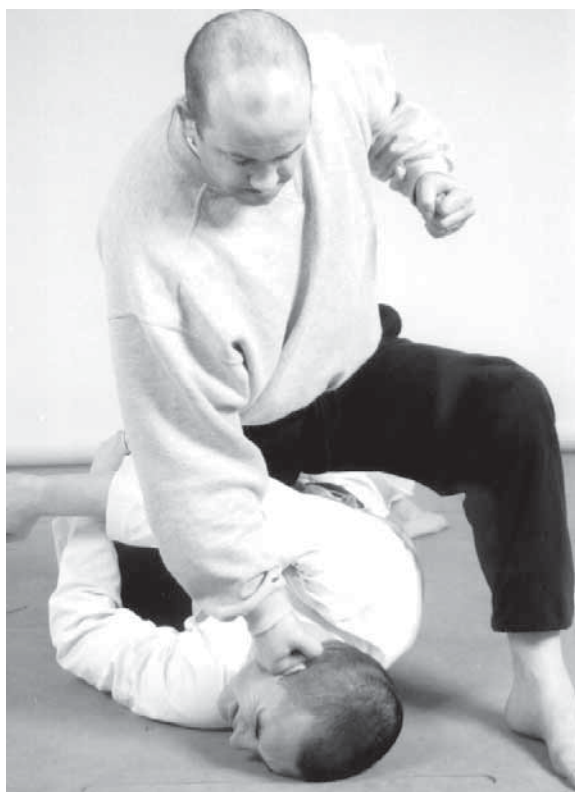
It is important at this point, however, to be able to do the choke equally from both sides, he may get up in such a way that one side of his neck is not open for attack and so you have to go in from the other side. If, once the hold is secured, the opponent forces you over onto your back, he will

## Chokes and Strangles

probably, in a futile bid to escape the hold, just go with him and scissor guard him as you fall. It won't make any difference at this point whether he stands up, rolls over, flips forward or flips back, wherever he lands he will still be in the choke and will still get knocked out. The more he thrashes about the quicker he will 'go' because he will be using up all of his oxygen and, because your C & S is cutting off any further supply, he'll have no reserve tanks to call on.

If the opponent is a little shy (or switched on) and uses his hands to protect his neck then reach over and grab your fingers into his eyes to force his head back, then secure the choke. As I said before the opponent will usually move away from pain, so give him some pain and he'll go just where you want him.

## Chokes and strangles from the mount position



## Chokes and Strangles

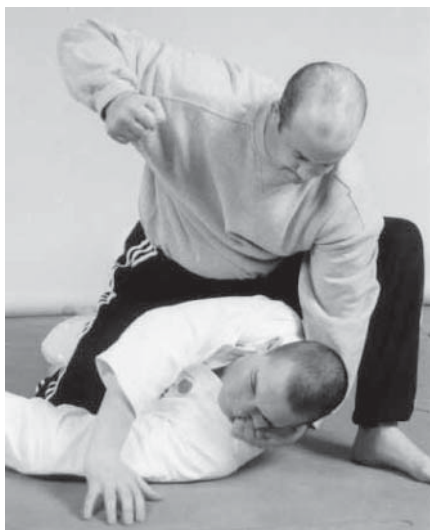
### Lip turn to choke

One of the cruelest ways to turn an opponent, this is my favourite, is to feed your left arm under the opponent's head, from left to right, and hook your finger/s into the side of his mouth, being very careful not to go in too far and get bitten. Once you have your fingers in the lip, pull the left hand back through the same way as you fed it in (being sure to bring the lips with you). He will, 100%, every time, turn to his belly once the grip is secured.

If you don't want to turn the opponent straight away this is a good way of holding him so that you can, if you wish, punch him out from the mount position, or even turn him to the side mount to do the same. Again, if the circumstances warrant it (if the opponent has called you fatty or baldy or something bad like that) you can literally rip the opponent's mouth clean away from here. It is such a powerful grip that it does not bear thinking about.

Again, once the opponent is on his belly secure the choke in the usual way.

## Chokes and strangles from the mount position



## Chokes and Strangles

### Eye turn and choke

The same as the last technique, only this time you place your finger into the eye socket to pull the opponent into the position that you want him, if it is to turn then, once over, secure your choke in the usual manner.





## Chokes and strangles from the mount position

### Nose turn choke

Feed your left arm through, as per last 2 techniques, and hook across the bridge of the nose, or if possible up the nostrils. Pull the opponent to the desired position with the pain compliance. Once over secure the choke.



## Chokes and Strangles

### Roll and choke

This is when the opponent rolls to escape, the defence to this is detailed in *Pins: The Bedrock* and *The Escapes* in this series and should be referred to for more detail. Basically, if you do not want him to turn just tighten your thighs and he will not be able to. If, however, you are willing to let him turn, at the end of the day he is far more vulnerable on his belly than on his back so allow him a gap and, as he rolls to the right, let your right arm hook around his neck and immediately couple it with your left in the usual manner. Scissor guard him with your legs to add security to inevitability.



## **Chokes and strangles from the mount position**

### **Strangle from the side mount**

Many times you will find yourself in the side mount, especially if an opponent is reluctant to roll over onto his belly. This leaves the opponent's neck vulnerable to a strangle. Feed your right arm around his neck, from right to left, and couple with your left at the other side, either by gripping hands or by gripping your left biceps and wrapping the left arm behind his head.

From here squeeze to finish, and if this doesn't offer the leverage that you need then jump to the jack-knife position and focus your weight into the hold by going onto the balls of your feet.

Again, from the side mount the usual tricks work. If you wish completely to turn the opponent for a rear mount choke, grab the lip/nose/eye by feeding the left arm underneath the opponent's head, from left to right, or simply push, poke, butt etc. the opponent to encourage him that turning to his belly would be a good thing.

## Chokes and Strangles



## Chokes and strangles from the mount position

### C & S from the rear mount

Often you will find yourself on the rear mount without having to really try, once here the usual chokes and strangles apply. The same as if you had forced the opponent to turn and if he defends his neck, use your fingers in his eyes or nostrils to bring his head into position to choke. From the rear mount you can also reach through and get a tight grip on the opponent's chin and, by pulling it back as far as you can, crank his neck and back from there but be very careful, it is very easy to damage severely an opponent's back and neck with this kind of technique. On the pavement arena that might not be a worry, in the controlled arena it certainly is (you'd lose a training partner for one thing).



## Chokes and Strangles

As with all techniques, and I'm very sorry for repeating myself throughout this series of books (I have to really - I can't just presume that you have read them all, but if you haven't why the hell haven't you?). These being no different, they have to be practised until they are second nature.

In a real situation you are unlikely to have time to think about the mechanics of a hold. The chance may be there for a fleeting second and if missed, gone forever, missing a finishing move on the ground (or vertical for that matter) can be the difference between winning and losing. Winning and losing can mean, of course, the difference between life and death.

So work with repetition and review (repeat the techniques again and again in one session, at the next session start by reviewing what you covered in the last session). I remember when I broke my right wrist, I was in plaster, on and off, for nearly two years, for that two years I could work only with my left hand (it was a right messy job wiping my bum with the left hand, let me tell you) often doing ten thousand punches with it in one session.

## **Chokes and strangles from the mount position**

There are different schools of thought on this matter and I can only vouch for myself and the many people I have taught, but think about it, look at the way they teach in schools, repetition and review, and look at the way that every army in existence trained and train. They repeat drill over and over and over until it becomes a part of the soldiers that they train. They train these soldiers for life and death situations and if it didn't work they wouldn't be doing it.

## Chapter Two

### ***Chokes and strangles from the side 4 1/4 pin***

As detailed in *Pins: The Bedrock* and *The Escapes* in this series the side 4 1/4 is a strong pin and easy to defend but it is, primarily, a traveller's rest hold, a place where you rest on the way to a more potent pin like the scarf hold, the mount position or on the way to getting back to your feet. However, it does have some potency as regard to finishing holds, these we shall explore in this chapter.

It is par for the course with ground fighting that you don't chase or fight for a hold, the best are the ones that the opponent gives you when he tries to escape and leaves an opening that cannot be ignored. I have always stated, and I re-state it here, that to be an all round ground fighter you need to know several finishes, and escapes, from every position so that you never find yourself lost for a technique.

This will only come with having a vast repertoire and getting in loads of flight time to pressure test and perfect them.



## Chokes and strangles from the side 4 1/4 pin

Undoubtedly you will then end up with a small main artillery and huge support system, rainy day techniques if you like, as a back up.

### Lean and choke

Grab the opponent's left shoulder with your left hand and lie your left wrist across his throat, being sure to place the bony part across the wind pipe (or neck, depending upon how his head is lying). Turn your weight slightly over to the left side and lean/focus it on the technique. If he can he might try and turn over onto his belly to try and escape, if he does mount him from the back and employ the usual reverse mount choke.

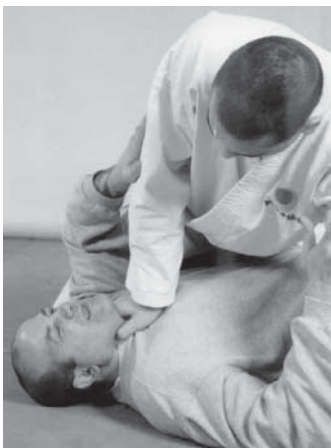


## Chokes and Strangles

### Larynx grab

To be honest I go for this technique whenever the throat is open for it and I have a free hand. It is a real nitty gritty technique that can have a profound finishing effect on people who are not used to being attacked in the neck/throat area. It causes panic not least because we all associate the throat with breathing and not being able to breath with death. So indirectly the opponent, on a conscious or subconscious level, will associate any throat grab, squeeze/attack with death.

Even if it does not finish the opponent it usually persuades him to move to a different position, usually over onto his belly, where he will feel safe, but where he is, in actuality, not safe at all. So I use this technique to ‘persuade’ people to turn into a better position for me to utilise a more potent choke/strangle, if I finish with it then that is a ‘Brucie bonus’.



## Chokes and strangles from the side 4 1/4 pin

### Triangular leg choke

If the opponent has his right arm between your legs, he will often do this to try and escape. Wrap your left leg past his face and under/around his head (if his head is not high enough to get under use your left elbow to force it up) bring your right leg through and hook your left instep around the back of your right knee, as tight as possible, and squeeze. Be careful in practise, this is a very powerful technique. It needs to be practised because the opponent will easily pull his head free if your do not secure it very quickly.



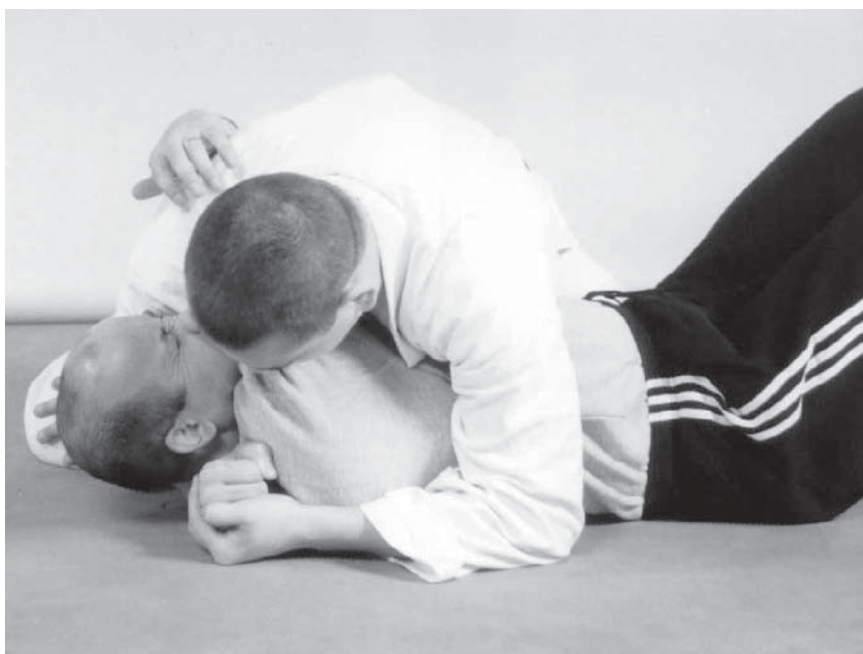
## Chokes and Strangles

### Arm trap choke

This is a broken choke where, like any choke/strangle that is broken by the opponent's arm, his own arm serves in making the choke more effective. Sweep his left arm, with your left arm, over and across his face, continue the anti- clockwise movement and feed your left arm underneath his head and back out the other side where you couple your left hand with your right hand. Make sure that the bone of your left wrist is across the opponent's neck, push your left shoulder into the opponent's trapped arm (this will cut off his carotid artery) for best effect. Squeeze tightly to secure the finish.

If you need more leverage you can climb to the mount position. Jump onto your toes and focus your weight behind the technique, or, jump from the side 4 1/4 into the jack-knife and focus the weight onto the technique from there. This is a very strong technique.

## Chokes and strangles from the side 4 1/4 pin



## Chokes and Strangles

### Under head choke

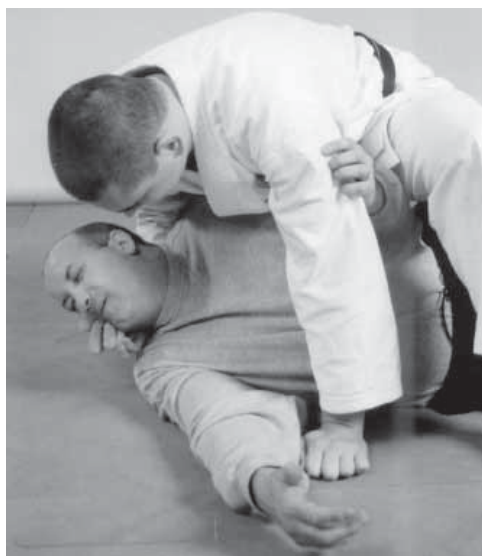
Feed your left arm under/around the opponent's head, from his left to his right, and feed your right arm under your own body and couple with your left, via the hands, and squeeze to secure the finish. If you need more leverage lean back as you pull, or even climb into the mount position and continue cranking the neck from that position.



## Chokes and strangles from the side 4 1/4 pin

### Mouth turn and choke

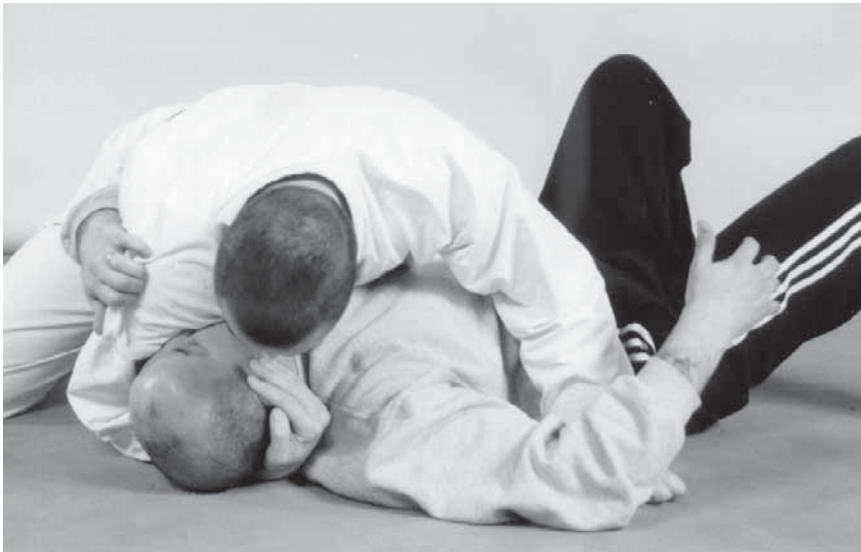
Feed your left arm under the opponent's head, from his right to his left, and latch your middle finger into the corner of his mouth (or across his nose - in his eye socket), pull (yank if you really want to damage) the arm back under the head. In the same direction as you fed it through, forcing the opponent to turn, mount his back and secure the usual rear mount choke.



## Chokes and Strangles

### Smother

Wrap your left arm around the opponent's head/neck, from his left to his right, and lean over to your left so that your shoulder and back cover his mouth and nose. Lean your weight on so that the hold is secure - he will panic and bridge you off if it is not very tight. Alternatively you can place your left arm-pit across his mouth and nose and lean your weight onto the hold (this is especially effective if the arm-pit is a smelly one).



There are more techniques from this position that you will find yourself when practising all out ground fighting and, as long as they do what they are supposed to do, use them.



## Chapter Three

### *Chokes and strangles from the Scarf Hold*

The Scarf hold is one of the strongest pins on the ground. It's easy to defend and very difficult, even though there are several escape techniques, to get out of it once you are in. It doesn't hold a great host of choke and strangle techniques, though there are some, but it does lend itself to rest and move, (taking a rest on the ground or moving to a better, more potent pin like the mount).

I find this pin better for striking/attacking the opponent via the gouging and punching techniques, than actually choking him out. Many inexperienced fighters do panic though when held in the scarf hold because it is such a controlling position, this usually forces an in-fight release of adrenaline that will make them very strong for a few seconds - and empty their fuel tanks just as quickly, others still capitulate because they mistake the in-fight release for fear.

## Chokes and Strangles

### The Guillotine

Lean across the opponent's face and grab, with your left hand, your own right biceps and allow the bony part of your left wrist to lie across the opponent's neck/throat. Lean all your weight on to the technique for better effect. If the neck needs exposing more to open up the carotid artery for attack hit the left side of his face (far side) with your left elbow to force his face to turn to his own right before executing the choke.



## Chokes and strangles from the Scarf Hold

### Straight choke

If the opponent's right arm comes free, which can often be the case, you can tie it up in several ways, these are detailed in Volume One and Four of this series. One of these ways is to pull his arm underneath you and sit on his biceps, this will then leave his neck/throat open to a clean choke. Your right arm is already in position so just couple it up with your left hand, being sure that your right wrist, the bony part, is running along the opponent's neck.

If you want to expose his neck more use your left hand to pull it in to position, via the eyes/nose etc, then lean your body onto the head to keep it still, then couple the hands together and execute the choke. As you squeeze your arms to tighten the choke simultaneously lean your weight forward, as well as helping to tighten the choke this also acts as a semi smother.



## Chokes and Strangles

### Triangular leg choke

This is especially effective if the opponent constantly lifts his head in an attempt to sit up. As he lifts his head sit through with your rear left leg and hook it over and around his neck. Wrap the instep around the back of the right leg and squeeze with the thighs - a very strong cranking choke that should always be employed with great care. As a foot note here on the triangular leg choke, it can often take a long time to get the right feel with this technique.

Many do not feel supple enough or feel that their legs are not long enough to employ it to effect. It took me six months to really find the 'feel' with leg chokes with many failures along route, but once you've got it it's a real strong finish. I've KO'd a few opponents with this technique (once or twice by mistake) and it has become one of my favourite, and best employed. So take heart, don't abandon it too early and if you are not supple enough then get supple, short legs need not impede this technique either, extra practise will compensate. The number of people who have tried this technique and failed at the first attempt and have then discarded it as 'un-workable', is untrue, don't be one of these people.

## Chokes and strangles from the Scarf Hold



## Chokes and Strangles

### Arm trap and choke

Again this is an ideal technique if the opponent frees his right arm and tries to use it to escape, usually by pushing your face backwards. As his hand touches your face turn your face sharply to your own right and parry the arm with your left hand across your face. Then quickly lie across it, it will be now trapped across his own neck/throat. Couple your right hand to your left and squeeze (and lean forward) to finish.

If you need more leverage you can either jump to the mount position or the jack-knife, on the balls of your feet, and focus your weight behind the technique - a very strong finishing technique.



## Chokes and strangles from the Scarf Hold

### Fist/finger choke

Use the fist or fingers of your left hand to attack the opponent's throat. Push the finger or the fist hard into the side of the opponent's wind pipe, or from this position you can simply grab the opponent's larynx and employ the larynx grab.

### Smother

Let your arm-pit/shoulder fall over the opponent's nose and mouth and lean all your weight on his face to block his air ways. If his face is to the side then use your left hand to push, via any pain or pressure point, into position. From here, to add weight and leverage to the technique, I usually jump to the jack-knife position on my toes and focus my weight behind the technique.



## Chapter Four

### ***Chokes and strangles from the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down***

This is another travellers rest hold that, though a strong pin and easy to defend, does not hold a lot of finishing potency. It is a good place to control and rest and, if you wish, get back to your feet, it is also excellent for travelling to the better suited mount position - a finisher's paradise.

#### **Smother**

Simply lie your chest over the opponent's mouth and nose and focus your weight to close the air ways. If the opponent's head is to the side use poking techniques to force his head into an upright position.





## Chokes and strangles from the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down

### Larynx Attack

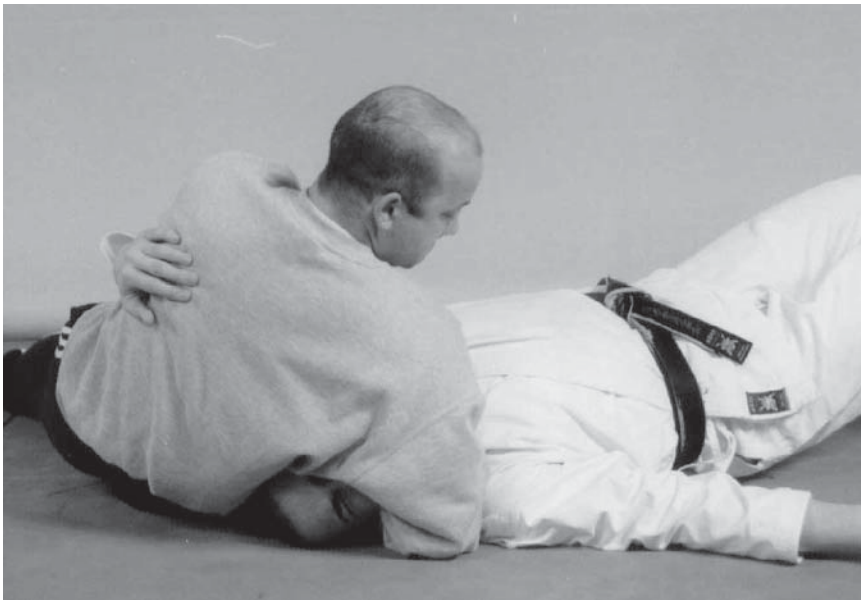
Bring your hands through to the side of the opponent's neck and jam your thumbs into either side, and underneath his wind pipe, try to make the thumbs touch for best effect. If this doesn't stop him it may well encourage him to turn to his belly to escape, if he does spin around, mount him from the back, from here the usual reverse mount choke is yours.



## Chokes and Strangles

### Reverse scarf Hold choke

Feed your right (or left) arm under/around the opponent's head, from your right to your left, and couple at the hands with your left arm. Sit through into reverse scarf hold and, as you turn, force the opponent's head to your right by pushing it with your back. If you find it easier you can get the opponent's head in the right position, exposing the neck, at the beginning of the move by poking his eye or cheek with your fingers before sitting through into the reverse scarf hold. Tighten the arms and lean backwards to finish the move.



## Chokes and strangles from the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down

### Turn-reverse mount choke

By attacking the opponent's eyes or face with your fingers you can force him to turn onto his belly to escape the pain, as he turns quickly spin around his back into a reverse mount and execute the choke from there. If you do not get, or indeed go for, the reverse mount and the opponent kneels up from the belly position hook your arm under/around his neck, from your right to your left, and couple at the other side with your left hand to make the choke, lift upwards and squeeze the lock to finish. All finishes from the kneeling position will be heavily detailed in *Fighting From your Knees* in this series.



## Chokes and Strangles



## Chokes and strangles from the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down



## **Chokes and Strangles**

### **Leg choke from Juji Gatame (arm bar)**

Often when you go for an arm bar (to be detailed in Volume 4 of this series) the opponent will grip his left hand to his right to block the bar. If this happens there are a number of things that you can do, this book being a book on C & S I will keep it generic. Feed your left foot through the opponent's arms, as illus, and allow your right leg to sit at the top of his head. Pull at his arms as though trying to break his grip, this will pull his head off the floor and allow you to wrap your left leg, from the front to the back, around his neck.

Wrap the instep of your left foot around the back of your right knee and squeeze very tightly with your thighs - again beware, this is a very powerful technique that cranks the neck and wrenches the back as well as procuring the choke.

## Chokes and strangles from the Upper 4 1/4 Hold down



## Chapter Five

### ***Chokes and strangles from the scissor guard position***

I use these chokes more as a means of getting from one place to another, more specifically to get from the opponent's scissor guard to the mount position. The scissor guard is a very strong defensive position that a veteran ground fighter can hold for a very long time, in fact some one like Royce Gracie (pronounced Hoyce) has been know to hold an opponent here for half an hour or more waiting for him to make a move so that he can finish. Getting past it can be difficult and is covered in depth in *Arm Bars and Joint Locks*.

Basically speaking there is not a great deal of leverage from inside the guard position to really finish with a choke but attempts at a choke will force the opponent to defend and whilst he is concentrating on defence he is not thinking about holding his scissor guard. As Marc McFann said to me in a seminar that he held for the BCA (actually he said it to us all, I just thought it'd sound better if he said it just to me) he



## **Chokes and strangles from the scissor guard position**

knows people that can bench press 400lbs and they can squat 500lbs, but they can't do both at once. So distracting an opponent forces him to fight on two fronts which means he is splitting his resources down the middle. Having said all that I have finished from here with the following, also.

## Chokes and Strangles

### Larynx grab

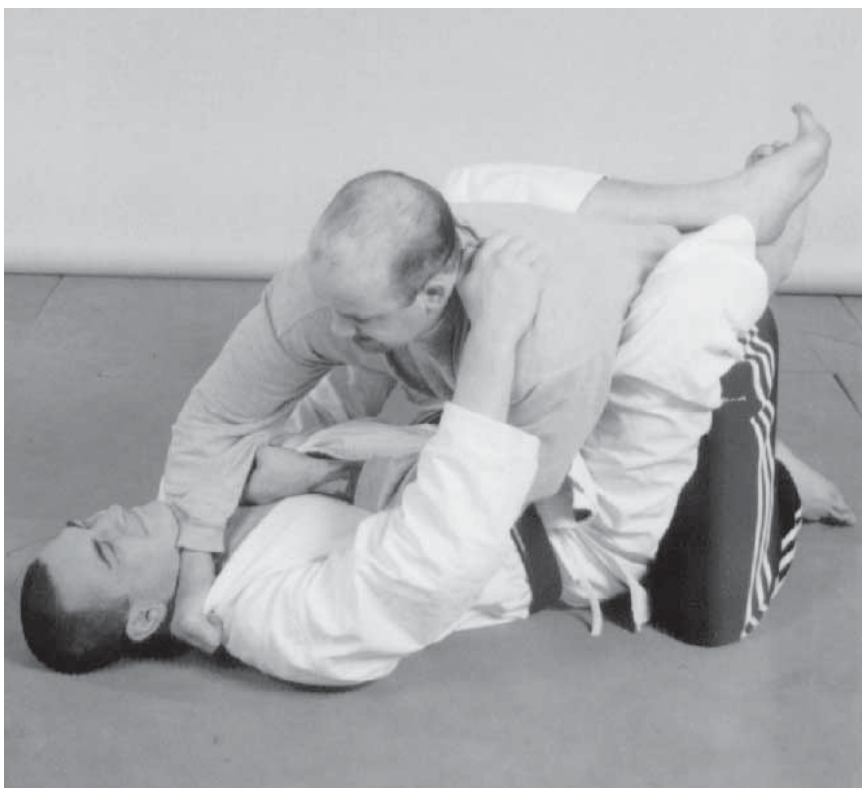
Simply reach through and grab the opponent's larynx, being sure to avoid the strong neck muscles, and grip as hard as you can, try to make your fingers meet at the back of his throat for best effect.



## Chokes and strangles from the scissor guard position

### Lapel Choke

Now this is a very strong choke and, if secured, an excellent finisher from any position that allows it. Obviously, it relies on the opponent wearing a jacket (or a tie would suffice). Grab the opponent's right lapel, palm down, as deeply to the back as you can, with your right hand and grab his left lapel, slightly lower down, with your left hand, palm down. Pull down with your left hand and forward with your right hand to tighten the opponent's jacket around his neck and throat to finish the hold.



## Chapter Six

### *Drilling*

As with every volume in this series I shall finish with the drilling chapter. This is where you isolate a technique and drill it again and again to load it into that computer we call a brain.

We are using the compliancy of an opponent here to allow us to drill fast and smooth and get as much flight time in ‘doing’ as we can. The more reps the better, and the more training that you do on these concepts the quicker you will become proficient at them.

As with the other books and drilling in general I will give you a few of the drills from various positions that I practice myself, but bearing in mind that you can, and should, drill every technique to distraction if you want it to be yours. If you only half do it you’ll only be half good and if you’re only half good the techniques will fail for you probably more often than they work. 1,000 days to learn technique, 10,000 days to polish.

### Drills from the Scarf Hold

#### Sit through and leg choke

Sit through and wrap your left leg around the opponent's neck and couple with your right and squeeze, then move back to the original position and start again. 30 reps at a fast and smooth pace-both sides.

#### Arm trap choke

Trap the opponent's arm across his neck, couple your hands and jump to the jack-knife, back to the start position, release the opponent's arm and then start again. 30 repetitions-both sides.

## **Chokes and Strangles**

### **Drills from the mount**

#### **Turn and choke**

Throw 4 simulated punches to the opponent's face, when he turns to his belly put on the choke and then release and let him turn back. Do the same again to the opposite side. 50 repetitions each side.

#### **Finger turn and choke**

Feed your left arm under the opponent's head, grab his lip and turn and choke, let him turn back and do the same to the opposite side. 50 repetitions each side.

#### **Trap arm-turn and choke**

Knock the opponent's arm across, lean on it, feed it under his head, pull with your left hand and push his elbow with your right, turn him, choke him. Let him turn back to the original position and start again the opposite side. 50 repetitions each side.

### Drills from the side 4 1/4

#### Lean and choke

Grab the opponent's shoulder with your left arm and lean your wrist into his throat. 20 repetitions, jump over to the opposite side and do the same from there.

#### Triangular leg choke

Sit through past the opponent's face with your left leg and wrap it around his head/neck, bring your right leg forward and wrap your left instep round the back of your right knee and squeeze. 20 reps, jump to the other side of the opponent and repeat.

#### Mouth turn and choke

Feed your left arm under the opponent's head and place your finger in the corner of his mouth, pull him onto his belly and secure a reverse mount choke, go back to the original position and repeat 20 times. Do the same from the opposite side.

## Chokes and Strangles

There are of course many other drills, this is just a selection to whet your appetite. Make as many drills as you can and practice them diligently, not forgetting that, at some point you will need to wrestle all out and learn to place the techniques against the opponent's will - that's when you will really start learning. Try and make up your own drills using all the different C & S from around the body, use compliancy to develop the technique so that it is smooth and speedy, then when you have it, take it in to the uncompliant arena and put the pressure on.



# Conclusion

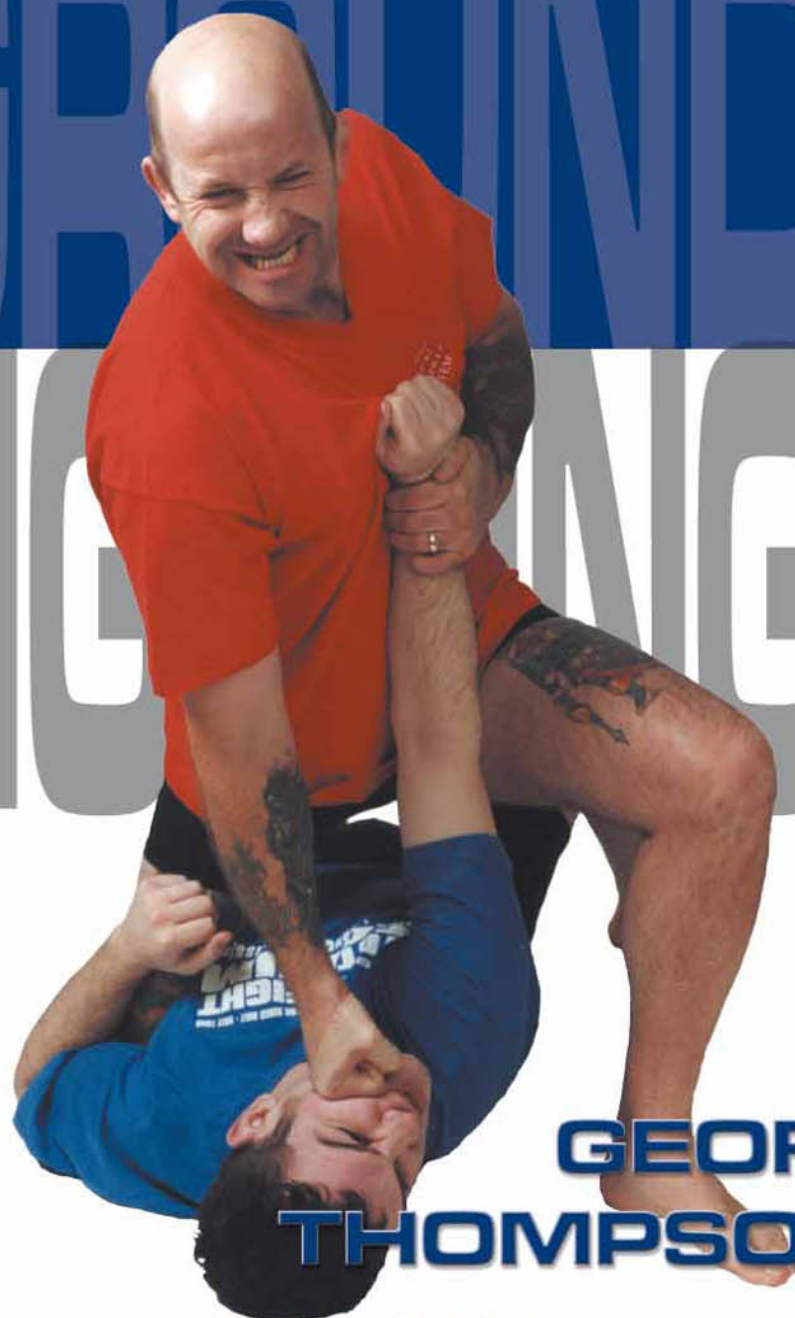
Another part of the jigsaw, and one of the most important pieces because it finishes a situation so clinically and so finally, but, as I said and I do not apologise for repeating myself. It is not much good with out all the other pieces, the picture is not complete until all the pieces have been collated and fitted in place. The deeper you dig with ground fighting the deeper it gets and it can take a long long time to really master the art, but with the base of pins, the escapes and then the finishes you are well and truly on your way.

These then are the pieces to the jigsaw, you must wrestle off to fit those together to make the whole picture or you'll just end up with a box full of pieces that are neither use nor ornament. So get the flight time in and, no matter how painful, exhausting, laborious or confusing it may at times seem keep working. Before you know it the picture will be complete, and, as a consequence you will be complete also.

**Other books in this series:**

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# **ARM BARS & JOINT LOCKS**



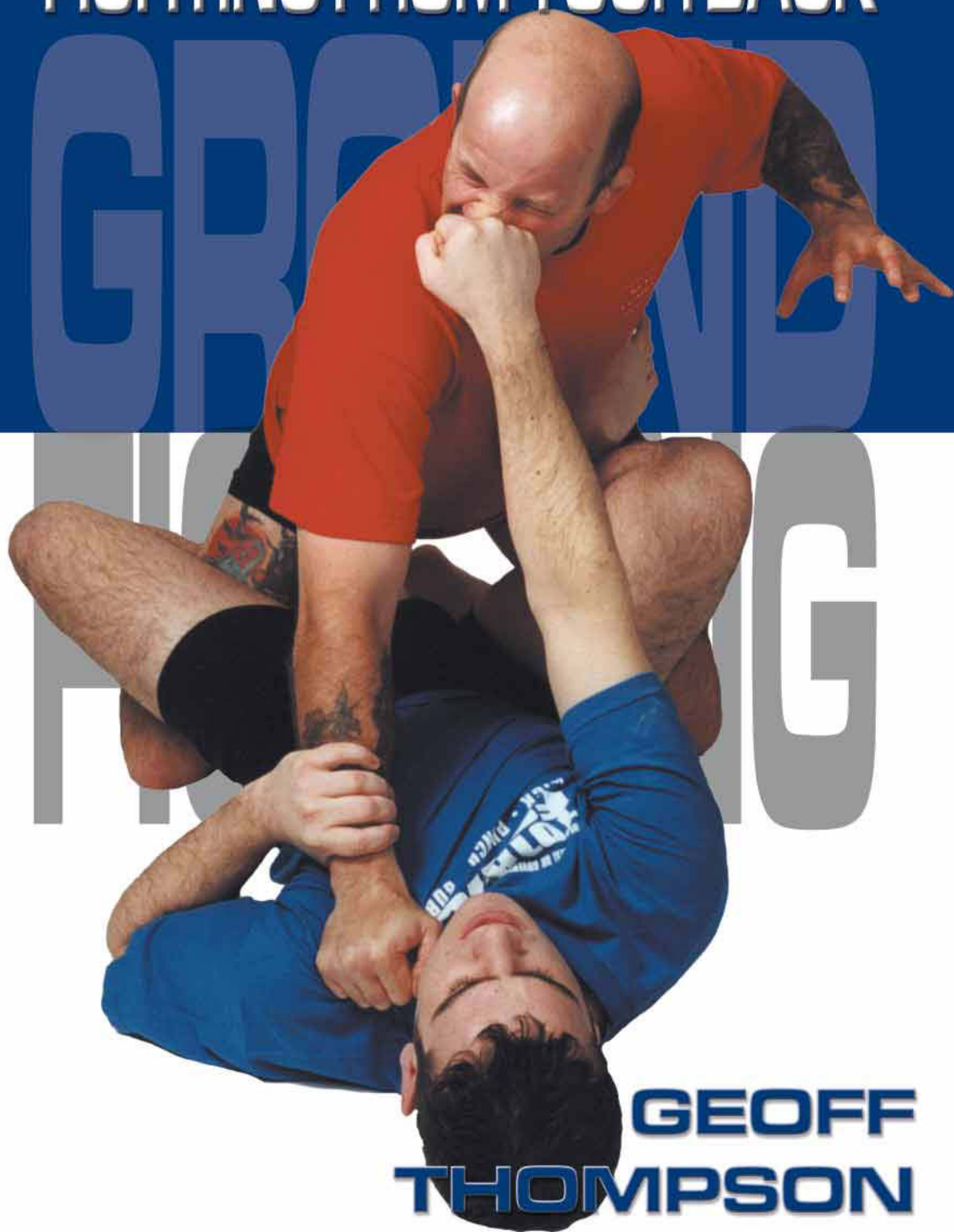
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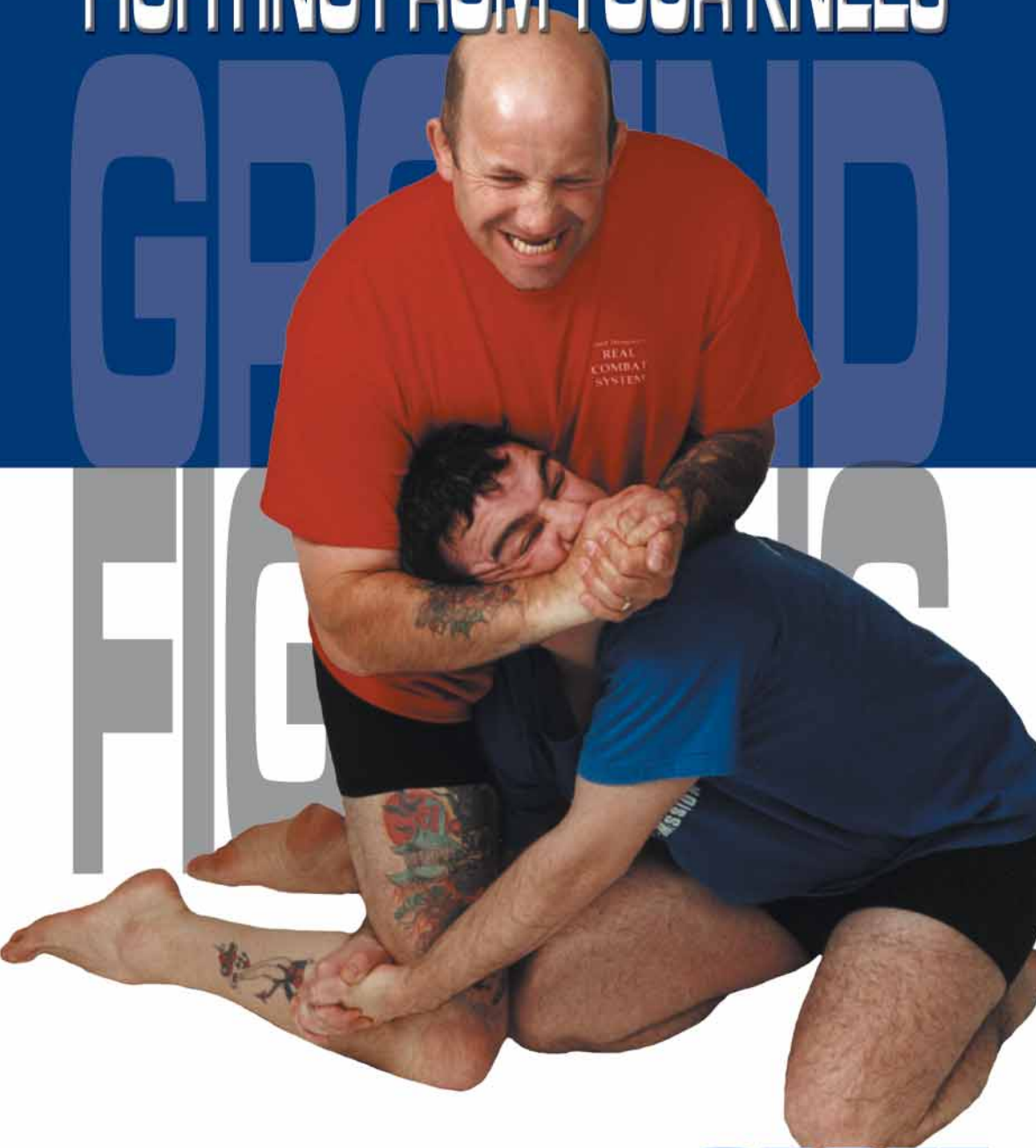


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