

Technique: Punch Block Series**Overview**

Our natural behavior to protect against strikes when trapped beneath someone is to block our face or try to escape. Unfortunately, these intuitive responses will often put us at the perfect distance for the attacker's punches to be even more effective. In this lesson, we learn how to use the critical principle of distance management to neutralize strikes and stay safe, all while exhausting the attacker's energy. First we will teach you the five "stages" of punch protection individually, and then we'll put them all together at the end.

Technical Slices**1. Stage 1**

- *Indicator:* Assailant is in your guard and throwing strikes.
- *Essential Detail:* Manage the distance by keeping control of his head and arm.
- *Most Common Mistake:* Exerting too much energy while keeping closeness.
- *Bad Guy Reminder:* When you "swim," make sure you are attempting to push off of their body to create distance.
- *Drill Orders:* Bad guy will start sitting up in the guard and simulate punches, achieve Stage 1, swim for 10-15 seconds, reverse roles.

2. Stage 2

- *Indicator:* Assailant retracts his free arm to throw punches to the body.
- *Essential Detail:* Use your shins to block his punches while controlling the back of his triceps with your hands and forearms.
- *Most Common Mistake:* Allowing space between the forearm and thigh when in Stage 2.
- *Bonus Detail:* Use your forearm to guide his head into place on the drop and avoid a head-butt.
- *Drill Orders:* Start in Stage 1, bad guy will simulate wide low punches, Stage 2, back to Stage 1, reverse roles.

3. Stage 3

- *Indicator:* Assailant retracts his body in an attempt to create distance and land punches.
- *Essential Detail:* Place your knees on his chest with your feet just outside his hips, and elevate your hips.
- *Bad Guy Reminder:* Make sure you sit up and give your partner as much pressure as they need to be able to elevate their hips.
- *Most Common Mistake:* Not protecting your face while in Stage 3.
- *Safety Tip:* When returning to Stage 1, be cautious of an accidental head-butt or elbow strike.
- *Drill Orders:* Start in the guard, conduct 2 cycles: 1-2-3-1, 1-3-1. Reverse roles.

4. Stages 4 & 5

- *Indicator:* The assailant attempts to stand up while in your guard.
- *Essential Detail:* Keep your hips on the ground and place your feet across his waist with extended legs to keep him out of arm's reach.
- *Bad Guy Reminder:* Lean forward realistically to make it easier for them to drop you to Stage 1.
- *Most Common Mistake:* Using the wrong leg to pivot in Stage 5.
- *Safety Tip:* When transitioning from Stage 3 to Stage 4 drop your hips for neck protection and better control.
- *Drill Orders:* Start in the guard, conduct 2 cycles: 1-4-5-4-1, 1-2-3-4-5-4-1, reverse roles.

Reflex Development Drill

"Callout Game" – Bad guy will present indicators based on their distance and position, and good guy will not only address the indicators with the appropriate stages, but she will also verbalize the stage number. Do this for approximately one minute and switch roles.

Mindset Minute

Blocking all the punches and exhausting all of your energy in the process is just as bad as not blocking any punches. Focus as much on relaxing and breathing as you do on blocking the punches. Always remember that the final goal is to establish Stage 1 control, it's the safest and the most energy efficient position to be in, plus it gives you the most submission opportunities.