

Technique: Clinch (Aggressive Opponent)

Position: Standing

Overview

Most martial arts rely heavily on the use of strikes to defeat the opponent. This strategy may work against a smaller opponent, but is very risky against a larger, more athletic opponent who could potentially knock you out each time you put yourself in range to strike them. The best strategy is to establish a clinch and take the fight to the ground where you can conserve energy, neutralize strikes, and win the fight with ease. The key to establishing a clinch on an aggressive opponent is to understand that there are two safe distances in a fight: all the way out, or all the way in.

Technical Slices

1. Close the Distance

- *Indicator:* Opponent becomes aggressive and commits to attacking you with strikes
- *Essential Detail:* Maintain at least a two-arm distance from the attacker
- *Most Common Mistake:* Failure to protect your face during the entry
- *Bad Guy Reminder:* Your intensity (or lack thereof) should match your partner's confidence level
- *Safety Tip:* If your partner forgets to block, don't knock them out
- *Core Principles:* Distance (3), Reconnaissance (12)
- *Drill Orders:* Keep the distance, close during aggression, reverse roles

2. Bonus: Over-Under Clinch

- *Indicator:* Opponent prevents you from getting double underhooks in the clinch
- *Essential Detail:* Strong balance and footwork while pummeling for double underhooks
- *Most Common Mistake:* Failing to keep the opponent from pummeling in on the back side
- *Bad Guy Reminder:* Solid body contact and constantly moving footwork/base.
- *Core Principles:* Centerline (31), Mobility (30)
- *Drill Orders:* Over-Under Clinch start, 10-12 reps, reverse roles

Reflex Development Drill

Practice the

Clinch (Aggressive Opponent) – Standing (L7)

in combination with the

Leg Hook Takedown – Standing (L6)

Fight Simulation Drill

1. Clinch – Standing – Aggressive Opponent (L7)
2. Leg Hook Takedown – Standing (L6)
3. Positional Control – Mount – Low Swim (L3)
4. Americana Armlock – Mount – Standard (L2)
5. Take the Back – Mount (L4)
6. Rear Naked Choke – Back Mount – Strong Side (L5)

Mindset Minute

Once the fight begins, remain calm and avoid the temptation to trade punches with your opponent. Focus on keeping a safe distance and then shoot in when they become aggressive. If a person attacks you without notice (throws a surprise punch) use the same strategy – instantly cover your face and lunge forward to establish the clinch. So, whether it is in a predictable fight situation or a surprise attack, any time the opponent becomes aggressive, don't think twice, bite your teeth, protect your face, and close the distance. No matter what, once you commit to the clinch do not retreat.

Street Tip: Punch Power Scale

Not all punches are created equally. Every strike exists on a Power Scale from 1-10. 1s, 2s, and 3s are generally weak strikes from positions of restricted mobility, while 8s, 9s, and 10s are powerful strikes thrown from stable positions and the perfect distance. The reason why jiu-jitsu wins is because we violate the traditional distance from which fights are fought. Instead of standing in the "red zone" trading high-risk strikes, we exist in the green zones where strikes have the least power. The best part about fighting from close range is that even though the attacker doesn't have the distance for their level 10 strikes, we are perfectly positioned for an entire arsenal of level 10 submissions.