

## THE MASTER TRICKS AND THE COMPLIMENTARY TRICKS OF MUAY THAI

**Mae Mai Muay Thai** or the master tricks of Thai boxing means of movements of Using Mai Muay Thai. The Trainees of Muay Thai must learn and practice before training another tricks in more details The old qualifications teachers had divided Mae Mai Muay Thai to 15 Mai.

## MAE MAI 15 Mai

### SALAB FAN PLA



### THE MASTER TRICKS OF MUAY THAI

This master trick is the main movement or the basic trick used for defensive or to escape from the opponent's straight punch by stepping out the armed-circle lets the punch passed by the face.

**The attacker** throws the straight left fist to the defensive's face and steps the left foot forwards at the same time.

**The defensive** escapes by stepped the right foot obliquely right side 1 step and always the body to the right side about 60 degrees the weight on the right foot, the right leg bent a little, in order to away the head and the body out and escapes from the attacker's punch. Then pounces on the upper part of the arm with the right hand and catches the attack's wrist with the left hand then turns front wrist up (This action is similar to break the hand)

## PAKSA WAEG RANG

### Defenses in-circle

This master trick is the teacher's trick (or the basic trick) to move in and used another tricks.

**The attacker** throws the straight left punch to the defensive's face then steps the left foot forwards.

**The defensive** stepped hurry forwards oblique to a half of the left side in the opponent's left arm and swaying the body about 60 degrees the weight on the left foot then bent the both arms to counter the upper part and the lower part of the attacker's arm, the both fists close to each other (similar to put the palms of the hands together in salute), the elbows open about 1 span (25 centimeters), the head and the face are covered by the both arms then glanced towards the opponent's right punch.



## CHAWA SAD HOK

### Elbow out-circle

This master trick is the main basic to escape from the straight punch by Stepped out and counter by throwing the elbow.

**The attacker** throws the straight left punch to the defensive's face and steps the left foot forwards.

**The defensive** steps hurriedly, then always the body about 30 degrees to a half of the right, the weight on the right foot, bent the left arm then striked the elbow to the attacker's rib.



## INAO THANG GRIT

This muster skill-is the main basic technique deface the straighten punch And uses the elbow closes to the body in-circle.

**The attacker** throws the straight left punch to the defensive's face then stepped forwards.

**The defensive** steps quickly with the left foot forwards then the body always about 60 degrees to the nearly left side the weight on the left foot, penet the right elbow parallel to the floor and threw it to the attacker's rib.



## YO KHAO PRASUMARU



**Throws the down punch to the chin, bent the body 45 degrees**

This Mae-Mai used for defense the straight punch by bending the body down at close quarters lets the punch passed over the head then threw up the punch to the chin.

**The attacker** throws the straight right punch to the defensive's face and steps with the right foot forwards at the same time.

**The defensive** steps quickly with the left foot and slightly lowers the left knee while the right stays straight, and bends the body down forwards about 45 degrees weight on the left foot, at the same time throws up the right punch under the attacker's chin. Turns the head back to look at the attacker's chin while skill holds the left arm guard up on the front of the chin.

## TA THEN KHAM FAK



### Throws the high punch to the chin, bend the body 60 degrees

This master skill is the main basic used for defense the punch to the chin technique and push the attackers first away with your arm.

**The attacker** throws the straight left punch to the defensive's face. Steps the left foot forwards at the same time.

**The defensive** steps the left foot of forwards to the half right to the attacker closed quarters, bending the right arm to push the left punches out. Bends the left knees a little and throws up a left punch to the attacker's chin.

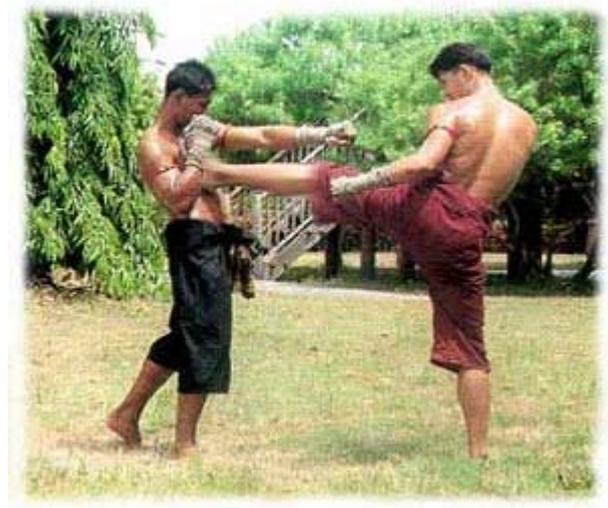
## MON YAN LAK

### Defense the punch by throwing the kick

It is the important master skill. This Mae Mai used to defense the fists by throwing a kick to the top of the chest or abdomen.

**The attacker** throws the straight left punch and steps the left foot forwards.

**The defensives** always out wards to the right about 45 degrees, the weight on the right foot. Bends the both arms to guard the face, at the same time throws the left foot to the top of the chest of the abdomen of the attacker to push him away.



## PAK LOOK THOY



### Defense the kick with the elbow

This master skill use for defense against the kick by throwing the elbow to the shin.

**The attacker** stands in kicking distance and throws the right kick to the defensive's rib the defensive Bends the body a little and bends the both arm to guard the face.

**The defensive** then always the body to the left then steps the left foot to the back. Bends the right arm and holds up to strike the attacker's kick. While still guarding the face with the left arm.

## DAB CHAWALA



### Grapes the punch and throws the fist

This master technique used for defense the straight punch by throwing the fist to the face.

**The attacker** throws the left punch to the defensive's face, steps the left foot forwards and guards the chin with the right arm.

**The defensive** steps the right foot forwards to a half right escape from the attacker's left punch, turns the body to right side. Grabs and pressed down the attacker' left arm and throws the left punch to the face then jumps to a half right side.

## JARAKHE FAD HANG



### Defense the punch by kick

This master skill used when the opponent throws the punch to the wrong target and loses his balance, then turns the body to kick by swinging the heel back.

**The attacker** throws the straight left and steps the left foot forwards.

**The defensive** is quick to jumping with right foot to half right in order to escaped the attacker's punch. Bends the arm to guard the face. Stands on the left foot and turns the body to kick at the abdomen or head with the right heel.

## HAK NGUANG AIYARA



### Throws the elbow to the thigh

This master trick used for counter the kick by throwing the elbow to the thigh.

**The attacker** throws the right kick to the defensive's rib, bends the both arms to guard the face.

**The defensive** is hurry to stepped the right foot forwards closed to the attacker. Turns the rib to the left, bends the right knee, while the left was straight, then catches the attacker's right foot with left hand and pulls it up, strikes the right elbow to the attacker's ham and holds the attacker's right foot on the high to lost the balance in order to defense the attacker's elbow.

## NAKA BID HANG



### Twists the leg and strikes the knee to the calf

This master trick use to defense the kick by catching the tip of the foot With the both hands and twist it, then throws the knee to the leg.

**The attacker** throws the right foot to the defensive's rib, bends the arm to guard the face.

**The defensive** is hurry away to the left, the weight on the left foot, grasps the attacker heel with the left hand and grasps the tip of the foot twisted outwards then throws the right knee to the attacker's calf at the same time.

## VIROON HOK GLAB

### To counter the kick by throwing a kick

This master trick use to counter the kick by throwing the heel to the ham.

**The attacker** raises the left foot kick to the defensive's rib.

**The defensive** is quick to throw the left foot to the left ham of the attacker, While holding on the both arms to guard the face. The kicking must do in rapidly and strongly to stroked the attacker turned back and lost his balance.



## KHUANYAK JAB LING

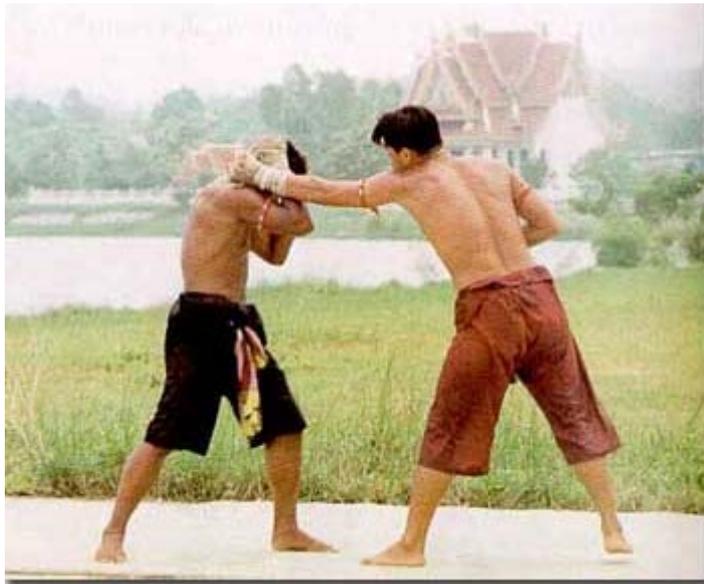
### Defense - fists - kick - elbow

This master trick is the very important trick use for defense the opponent who is the quickly fighter by throwing the punch kick and elbow continually. To training is deviled into 3 parts.

#### **Part one**

**The attacker** throws the straight left punch to the defensive's face and steps the left foot forwards.

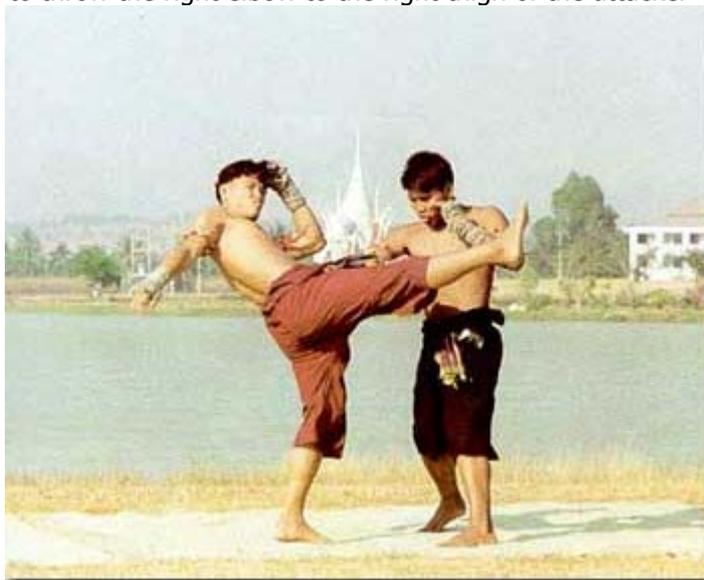
**The defensive** steps the left foot hurriedly forwards close to the attacker's face. Wipes the attacker's left hand out by the right arm.



#### **Part two**

**The attacker** throws the right foot to the defensive's rib.

**The defensive** hurry to away the body to the back estimates half of the left by stepping the left foot. Then ducking to throw the right elbow to the right thigh of the attacker



### Part three

**The attacker** bends the right arms and throws the elbow to the defensive's head.

**The defensive** quickly bends the arm into his guard to wipe the attacker's elbow and hurries to away the body and step back wards to the back about a half step.



### HAK KOR ERAWAN

**Pulls the neck down and throws the knee**

**The attacker** throws the straight left punch and steps the left foot forwards towards the attacker and inserts the right arm to grab the attacker's left arm, then jumping to jerk the attacker's neck down and throw the knee to the face.



## **Control of Breath**

### **Biology aspect**

The control of breath, in–out from the lungs is a passive biomechanical response i.e., you do it naturally without working on it. Contrary to what many people believe, it is level of CO<sub>2</sub> that trigger breathing rate/responses, *NOT* oxygen. This is why it is more important to focus on the out breath than the in breath.

You should breath in with your nose and out with your mouth. This prevents any unnecessary inhalation of carbon dioxide.

*IF YOU BREATH OUT HARD, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY BREATH IN*, where as breathing in hard or soft doesn't really make a big difference to what happens in your lungs.

Hence a lot of fighters make “chhh” noises when striking. Tradition says to make “yeeshhh” sound when striking with the knee and “sssa” sound is used when elbowing or punching.

Also, the out breath tenses the abdominal muscles, and so protects nerve centers, guts and etc., so breathing out when getting struck is also good, as prepares for hit, and also means there's no air in you to get knocked out.

### **Psychology aspect**

A common problem with beginners, one I particularly suffered from many years ago, is the big gulp and breath hold while charge. I didn't even realize I wasn't breathing till people told me “God sake, breath will you”. Again the “chhh” (or “yeeshhh” or “sssa” or whatever sound you find comfortable and natural to make) with every strike makes sure you are breathing. A few folk will know, if you can't hear yourself breathing, your probably not!

Regularly practicing your breathing when doing your pad/bag work, will make it become almost intrinsic, so that when it comes to fight time, you don't have to think about it – you'll do it naturally by instinct.

## **Oxygen Overloading**

When we inhale, our lungs are not filled up much beyond the upper third of their actual volume. We are only using a fraction of our vital capacity and the process of oxygen exchange in our bloodstream is inefficient. The blood is improperly cleaned of carbon dioxide and our brains and nervous systems are not fully oxygenated. We can experience many negative effects-physically, mentally, and emotionally-as a result.

This is basically where you purposely hyperventilate to overload the body with oxygen. This is used when you are preparing for fight or between rounds. You simply do a series of very quick, sharp breaths while really exhaling hard. This will give you a surge of needed power.

## **Breathing During Fight**

Internal breathing is like a tea kettle that is building up steam. As the pressure in the kettle increases, there will be a slow release of pressure through a small hole in the spout. There will always be near constant pressure within...With a rapid series of strikes, there will either be a release of several short bursts of air, or a release of a continuous stream of air out of the lungs. At the same time there will be air pressure maintained within the lungs, much like the tea kettle...Exhale when delivering a strike or kick, and train yourself to exhale and tighten the muscles when receiving a blow. This prevents the air from being knocked out of you and prepares your body to absorb the impact.

Minimize your breaths. Shorter breaths mean even less vulnerability to a strike. Force your breath out through your mouth; inhalations will return through the nose almost automatically. Breaths are taken between movements (strikes, steps, blocks, drawing the arm back), and even during your breaths, you should hold your teeth tightly together, so you could more easily take a blow to the chin.

## **Breathing Exercise**

Push your stomach muscles out and down to make them hard but not quite rigid. Practice breathing in and out while maintaining this strength--have a partner press into your stomach with a fist while you breathe until you feel yourself breathing naturally against pressure. Your exhalations now can be made with a tight stomach; normal exhalations are relaxations of the diaphragm and vulnerable moments as far as getting hit in the stomach is concerned.

Breathe deeply through the nose, without lifting up the shoulders, and imagine the air flowing through your nostrils, up the front and around your head, then down the

neck and spine, and around the groin and up to the center of your belly (just under navel), where it is tightly coiled and locked. When you exhale, slowly expel the air from the center of your belly up pass the solar plexus, up the wind pipe to the throat and out slowly from the mouth. The tongue must be presses against the bottom row of teeth, so as to provide a free flow out. On completion of exhalation, give a last strong push, focusing on the center of your belly and all the abdomen muscles. Keep the eyes fixed directly in front of you and avoid blinking.

## **Stance and Footwork in Detail**

There is only one stance in Muay Thai. Every technique is performed from this fighting position. One leg is placed in front of the body with the foot of that lead leg facing straight towards the opponent. The other leg is placed behind with the foot of that rear leg facing at about 45 degrees away from the lead foot. The rest of the body is also turned at about a 45 degree angle in synchronization with the rear foot. Half-facing is much more advantageous to the fighter than front-facing or side-facing because it minimizes the target areas by half. Front-facing exposes most of one's vital points while side-facing makes it extremely difficult to effectively deliver any of Muay Thai's most powerful techniques. The distance between each foot should be about shoulder-length and shoulder-width apart from each other. The Thai boxer stands upright while keeping the bodyweight on the balls of both feet.

There are 2 variations on the basic fighting stance that depend upon which leg contains most of the bodyweight and which heel is raised higher than the other. If most of your bodyweight is in the lead leg, then the heel of your rear leg should be higher than the other. "Round" kicks can be performed a bit more quickly from this variation. If most of your bodyweight is in the rear leg, then the heel of your lead leg should be higher than the other. "Straight" kicks can be performed at a slightly accelerated speed from this variation. The shoulders are raised and the forearms are lifted in front of the face. Most, however, prefer to leave their shoulders down and raise them only when a technique is being executed as keeping them up all of the time tends to reduced a combatant's energy levels. Always keep your chin down, though, and focus your eyes on your opponent's torso area. Observing your opponent's hips and shoulders should help you determine when that individual will strike next as well as which limb your adversary will use. Hip movement usually indicates the execution of a kick or knee strike while shoulder movement usually indicates the execution of a punch or elbow strike.

The hands can either be in an open or closed position depending upon the personal preferences of the boxer in question. Some choose to bounce their lead legs up and down in order to be able to execute a "straight" kick at any given moment. In order to perform some of the offensive leg techniques from the lead leg, the Thai boxer rapidly switches to the opposite stance (where the lead leg becomes the rear leg and vice versa) beforehand so that the technique is given maximum leverage for maximum power. Leg techniques delivered from the rear leg will be much more powerful than from the lead leg. The footwork prevents the legs from being crossed during combat as doing so places the element of risk to the Thai boxer in terms of balance.

<b>STEPPING MOVEMENTS</b>	
<b>BACKWARD (direct)</b>	Move rear leg straight behind. Lead leg follows it while maintaining basic fighting stance.
<b>BACKWARD (alternating)</b>	Move lead leg backward while keeping your rear leg at the same position. The feet and entire body should be in the opposite stance.
<b>FORWARD (direct)</b>	Move lead leg straight ahead. Rear leg follows it while maintaining basic fighting stance.
<b>FORWARD (alternating)</b>	Move rear leg forward while keeping your lead leg at the same position. The feet and entire body should be in the opposite stance.
<b>LEFTWARD (direct)</b>	Move left leg to the left. Other leg follows it while maintaining the basic fighting stance.
<b>LEFTWARD (circling the opponent)</b>	FROM RIGHT-LEAD (or "SOUTHPAW") STANCE, move rear leg backwards and to the left. Lead leg follows it while maintaining basic fighting stance. FROM LEFT-LEAD STANCE, move lead leg forwards and to the left. Rear leg follows it while maintaining basic fighting stance.
<b>RIGHTWARD (direct)</b>	Move right leg to the right. Other leg follows it while maintaining the basic fighting stance.
<b>RIGHTWARD (circling the opponent)</b>	FROM RIGHT-LEAD (or "SOUTHPAW") STANCE, move lead leg forwards and to the right. Rear leg follows it while maintaining basic fighting stance. FROM LEFT-LEAD STANCE, move rear leg backwards and to the right. Lead leg follows it while maintaining basic fighting stance.

<b>TURNING MOVEMENTS</b>		
<b>B=Backward CW=Clockwise CCW= Counterclockwise F=Forward L=Leftward R=Rightward</b>		
<b>DIRECTION</b>	<b>from LEFT-LEAD STANCE</b>	<b>from RIGHT-LEAD (or "SOUTHPAW") STANCE</b>
<b>CW (90 degrees):</b>	Turn the entire body 90 degrees R by pivoting on the balls of both feet. The right leg should be in lead.	Change to LEFT-LEAD STANCE by either moving the left leg F or right leg B and turn the entire body 90 degrees R by pivoting on the balls of both feet. The right leg should be in lead.
<b>CW &amp; L (180 degrees):</b>	Move the right leg 2 shoulder widths to the left and turn the entire body CW 180 degrees by pivoting on the balls of both feet. Your right leg should be in lead.	Change to LEFT-LEAD STANCE by either moving the left leg F or right leg B. Follow same instructions as listed from LEFT-LEAD STANCE for CW & L (180 degrees).
<b>CW &amp; R (180 degrees):</b>	Move left leg 2 shoulder widths to the right and turn the entire body CW 180 degrees by pivoting on the balls of both feet. Your right leg should be in lead.	Spin the left leg around the right leg 2 shoulder lengths F and 2 shoulder widths to the right and turn the entire body CW 180 degrees by pivoting on the balls of both feet. Your right leg is acting like the axis of a wheel and should still be in lead.
<b>CCW (90 degrees):</b>	Change to SOUTHPAW STANCE by either moving the left leg B or right leg F and turn the entire body 90 degrees L by pivoting on the balls of both feet. The left leg should be in lead.	Turn the entire body 90 degrees L by pivoting on the balls of both feet. The left leg should be in lead.
<b>CCW &amp; L (180 degrees):</b>	Spin the right leg around the left leg 2 shoulder lengths F and 2 shoulder widths to the left and turn the entire body CCW 180 degrees by pivoting on the balls of both feet. Your left leg is acting like the axis of a wheel and should still be in lead.	Move the right leg 2 shoulder widths to the left and turn the entire body CCW 180 degrees by pivoting on the balls of both feet. Your left leg should be in lead.
<b>CCW &amp; R (180 degrees):</b>	Change to SOUTHPAW STANCE by either moving the left leg B or right leg F. Follow same instructions as listed from SOUTHPAW STANCE for CCW & R (180 degrees).	Move left leg 2 shoulder widths to the right and turn the entire body CCW 180 degrees by pivoting on the balls of both feet. Your left leg should be in lead.

## **Defensive Head Movements**

Just a short insight to cover the most basic head motions.

**SLIP:** You place your head over one of your knees by bending that knee. Causes your body to "lean" that direction and you therefore "slip" the punch.

**SIT:** Bend your knees and drop straight down. Gets your head underneath a punch or kick.

**LEAN:** Lean backwards away from a strike. I personally only recommend doing this to avoid a kick. If you lean backwards during an "onslaught" by your opponent, then you will be unable to defend or counterattack effectively.

**BOB N' WEAVE:** Sit and step to the side at the same time. Not only gets you out of harms way, but puts you at a superior angle offensively and defensively.

A few tips regarding Head Motion in Muay Thai:

1. Always use your *LEGS* to perform the head motion, not the hips or waist. Keep your body upright and your eyes forward. You have to be able to see what is happening and if you bow over, you will become a victim of a knee, rising kick, any variety of hand techniques.
2. In my opinion, **SLIPPING** in Muay Thai is the most important head motion to learn, followed by **LEANING** away from high roundhouse kicks. **SITTING** and **BOB N' WEAVE** head motions are inherently risky due to knees and kicks.
3. Always remember, each gym is different. The names for these techniques are not always the same, and are taught and used differently depending on where you are. I may not like certain head motions for Muay Thai, but another gym may be able to teach and use them effectively in their fight game.

## Kicking When It Is Too Close To Kick

There are three ways you can approach this issue. I would recommend discussing the options with your trainer to find out what they recommend. There may be a particular skill set they want you to master first before branching out into a bunch of different variables.

However, these are the three options I would toy around with:

**1. STEP SIDEWAYS-** as you suggested yourself. You will not lose any power, but it will take practice to step and time the impact of the kick for maximum effect.

**2. STEP BACK-** You were dead wrong on this one, my friend. This is actually the one I recommend doing, but hear me out. When I recommend that you step back, I mean that I recommend that you perform the J/C/RK combo using a broken rhythm.

In other words, throw the jab and cross, then step back to set for the kick, then step back in with a proper round kick. It is better to practice doing each individual technique correctly than to rush through and force a combo.

I drill my students on this all the time. Don't throw a technique unless you are "set" to throw it. If you force it, you will be off balance and throw a sloppy technique that will be easily defended, ineffective, and leave you open for a counter attack.

There is also a way to step back *AS* you kick. I refer to this as a "Fade Away" kick. I have only recently begun teaching my current crop of students this kick. If you are in too tight to effectively kick, step backwards as you launch the kick. Again, this is something that will take practice, but can be extremely effective, as I have found that the ability to kick your opponent from what is normally considered clinching distance is a very effective skill.

**3. BENT-LEGGED KICKS:** Rather than stepping to put yourself at the correct range/distance to your intended target, bend your leg to compensate instead. I use this method hand-in-hand with the "Fade Away" kick mentioned above. Bent-legged kicks are surprisingly powerful, especially the more you practice them. The key thing is to make sure that even though you are bending your leg, make sure that you continue to drive with your hip with this kick. It is easy to screw this technique up and throw a weak kick.

As I said above, you really need to consult your trainer before you try to use any of these techniques because these may be skills that they don't want you to learn yet.

However, if your trainer gives you the go-ahead to try them, I would recommend practicing them in this order:

1. STEP BACK/SET/STEP FORWARD AGAIN WITH KICK
2. SIDEWAYS STEP
3. BENT-LEGGED KICK
4. STEP BACK/FADE AWAY KICK

I forgot to address part of the scenario you gave. Throwing multiple kicks. If you find yourself too close after your first kick, you are moving in the wrong direction as you kick. From the sounds of it, you are continuing to shuffle forwards with each kick, which brings you ever closer to your target so that you eventually jam your own kick.

Throw the jab-cross. As you throw these two punches, you typically will move forward.

*BUT*, after throwing these two punches, you should shuffle back into position for the round kick, then step at the *ANGLE*, or *SIDEWAYS* to set up for your multiple kicks.

Since you are trying to throw 3 kicks, you should probably move sideways, and after each kick, come back to position and then continue to "shuffle" sideways with each kick.

The different methods of executing the kick I mentioned in my initial post don't *\*exactly\** fit the scenario you were referring to, but they are still the main ways that I teach to deal with/compensate for distancing as you kick.

## Going "Dirty"

Thai boxers are known for being extremely respectful outside of the ring. You will never see a Thai boxer bad-mouthing his opponent(s) like you see in the Western Boxing world. Thai's believe in doing all their "talking" in the ring, letting their fighting speak for them.

Below, I've listed a number of techniques that are considered "dirty pool", but are still ring legal.

**Nº1-** When a mid-body level kick comes, you can trap and spike it with your elbow.

**Nº2-** When clinching your opponent, get your glove into his face and cover his nose and mouth so that he has difficulty breathing.

**Nº3-** Also, while clinching, use your chin to dig into your opponents face, especially the eyes. Thai boxers like to enter the ring with a few days razor stubble for two reasons. One, the stubble helps punches, elbows, etc slip off the face, and two, to dig it into their opponents face.

**Nº4-** Again, during the clinch (notice a trend?), when fighting for control of an opponents neck/head, or defending from having your head pulled down, you can reach across his face and jam your elbow into it. Use your elbow/arm as a stiff barrier, keeping it in his face. Dig it into his nose or eyes or mouth...

**Nº5-** Again, while clinched, you can wrap your leg around your opponent and heel kick him in the back of the leg or buttocks.

**Nº6-** Throw a haymaker-like punch, but hit him with the bony part of the wrist rather than the fist. This is a good knockout technique because the wrist/forearm area is not protected with boxing gloves.

**Nº7-** Like boxing, it is illegal to hit an opponent who is down. However, if the opponent has not hit the floor yet... I have seen many fights ended when an opponent gets that extra kick or even a knee in before their opponent hits the floor after they have thrown or dumped them.

**Nº8-** Push Kicking opponent in the face. This is the most insulting thing you can do in the ring. You would not make a Thai as angry if you said very explicitly derogatory remarks about his parents. In Thai culture (and many Asian cultures) the head is considered the most important part of the body (practically holy!), the feet the lowliest. To push kick them in the face is to say that you are beneath the

dirt under my feet. When a Thai push kicks to someone's face, he does not strike with it, rather he brushes his opponents face with it, heightening the insult factor.

As you can see, Thai's like to play for keeps. However, they keep it in the ring. The above techniques are all legal in the ring, but considered to be "dirty pool". Most fighters refrain from using them, as they can expect like treatment if they do. As an interesting note along the same idea, this is why many, many Thai fighters rarely ever use elbows in the ring. There is sort of a "gentleman's agreement" amongst boxers that if you do not use elbows, neither will I. If you do, however, expect like in return.

## **Muay Thai: Throws and Takedowns**

In the sport of Muay Thai, you do not often see a competitor throw his opponent to the canvas during a bout. This is because in most cases, takedowns and throws are not legal in Muay Thai.

There are however, situations where you can legally perform a takedown or throw in the ring, and I will outline below the basic takedowns and throws of Muay Thai.

### **TAKEDOWNS:**

In Muay Thai, takedowns are typically sweeps. There are many different ways to get a sweep on your opponent, but there is one important thing to keep in mind: You may not perform a sweep or takedown by throwing the opponent over any part of your body.

What this means is that hooking-style sweeps and hip throws are not to be used. If you "sweep" someone's leg, it must be done using a roundhouse style kick.

That being said, the most common takedown in Muay Thai is after catching an opponent's roundhouse kick, you kick their support leg out from under them.

This can also be accomplished by kicking their support leg out from under them without catching their support leg. This requires excellent timing, but as start to kick, you will kick to the inside of their support leg at the same time, taking them off of their feet.

Another takedown, which I don't see used often enough, is the push kick. Unfortunately, the push kick is rarely utilized to its fullest benefit in the ring. Someone who masters the push kick can easily knock an opponent off of their feet with a well-timed kick to their opponents hip. The most opportune time is when your opponent begins a roundhouse kick, push kick him in the hip on the same side he is kicking from. Done correctly, your opponent is going down. There is a Thai phrase to describe the body motion made by the falling boxer, which describes the motion made by a fisherman casting his nets. The falling fighter spins in a very similar fashion.

This next takedown is rare (I've only seen it once), and may have been a fluke, but I once saw Rambah step in close and knee his opponents thigh without clinching. His opponent's leg went out from under him and he dropped like a sack or wet rice.

### **THROWS:**

As mentioned, throwing an opponent over any part of your body (ala Judo) is illegal in Thai boxing. There are two basic throws we teach in my gym.

When clinching, I have mentioned how you turn your opponent like a steering wheel to take him off-balance to counter his knee strikes. Well, take this same technique a step further and take him to the ground. Performed correctly, your opponent can actually go down performing a cartwheel.

With all due respect, the best example I can think of is when Kit Songrit fought Rick "the Jet" Roufous. For those of you who are familiar with the match and have seen the tape, Kit Songrit spun Rick to the ground midway through the 3rd round (I think it was that round) and lost 3 points for a major foul (there was apparently a HUGE language barrier problem and Kit Songrit and his corner were unclear on the rules of the match. At least, that's their official version of the story). However, you could not ask to see that throw performed with more precision than that. A textbook-perfect throw. When a throw is performed in the Muay Thai ring, this is the most typical one seen.

The atypical throw seen in Muay Thai is the Belly-to-Belly Suplex. *OK*, it isn't really that, but we refer to it that way b/c it is a belly-to-belly throw. When you are clinched with your opponent, you grab him around the torso and hug him tight, then lift and throw him sideways. The beginning of the throw is identical to a true suplex, but rather than throw yourself with your opponent to the ground, you release. The object is to break the clinch and get your opponent off of you. Your opponent will not always fall to the ground due to this throw, but you do get him or her off of you.

Well, that's essentially it. There are subtle variations of course which I don't believe I need to describe. You get the idea, that's enough...

## **Clinch (Prumb)**

Clinch or PRUMB in Muay Thai terms is one of the most distinctive features of Muay Thai fight. If you want to become complete fighter you must know how to enter clinch, what to while clinching and how to exit clinch.

I stress that when you enter a clinch, grab at your opponents arms first and pull down and across your knee. Throw a quick knee or two, *THEN* go for neck control.

Do not wait until you have the control position to throw a knee. When you feel your balance is right and there is an opening, *STRIKE!*

As you close in for the clinch, get in a straight knee strike on the way in! This may be the most important knee strike of the clinch exchange. It is doubtful that once you get to the inside fighting that you will always be successful at gaining the control position to fire off the devastating clinching straight knees.

### **OFFENSIVE CLINCHING:**

I agree with Muay Thai tradition on entering with hand techniques, those work best in most cases, especially when you're at range to throw uppercuts and hooks. Its very easy to transition from a punch to a grab. We might as well include elbows in this category.

You can also enter off of a roundhouse kick. Throw the roundhouse kick, but don't let it rebound. Drop it to the floor right at the point of impact, then step in, grab opponent's shoulder and pull him over a knee strike.

### **DEFENSIVE CLINCHING:**

There are multitudes of defensive clinching scenarios. Essentially in each case, you smother your opponent's attack with the clinch.

**BOXING:** Parry or block your opponent's shots as you step in for the clinch. Parrying and trapping are preferred against straight punches because you don't need to grab your opponent's head to begin kneeing. Grab/parry/trap your opponents arm and pull him across you knee as you fire one into him.

For hooks and uppercuts, you will smother/block and grab for the neck.

**PUSH KICKS:** Parry the push kick to the side and step in with the clinch. Grab for the neck. You can parry the kick to the inside or outside.

For example, if you parry your opponents right-legged push kick to your right, you will be on his outside. He will be able to do little to counter you. But, your

clinging will be awkward and limited because of the angle you close in on him. The ref is likely to break you to prevent an injury.

If you block his right-legged kick to the left, you are now on his inside. You have a much better angle to get some solid knees in, but he will be in a much better position to counter you.

ROUNDKICKS: You can block, catch, or "pass" the kick to close for the clinch.

To clinch off of a blocked roundhouse kick is self explanatory. Block the kick, then as your opponent recovers, step in for the clinch. I would advise going for the neck in this case, but don't ignore the arm-clinch if its there.

If you catch/trap your opponents kick, reach in and grab his lead shoulder and pull him over your knee. Then fire away. Give him one or two before dropping the leg and going for complete neck control.

To "pass" the kick is to block/parry the kick. This only works for mid-body and high kicks. If your opponent throws a right-legged roundkick at your ribs, your left arm stays in *TIGHT* to your body. (elbow to the ribs, wrist/hand to the jaw). As the kick impacts, your right arm reaches over top of the kick and grabs the leg. You then perform a very slight backward movement and "scoop" the kick through to your right, directing it at the floor.

This will hopefully prevent your opponent from using the momentum to spin back around into his fighting stance to defend. You step in and grab him. Again, you will be grabbing from the side/rear and the ref may break the clinch.

Again, these are not the only methods to close for the clinch, but just some of the most common ones that I teach.

There are often times when two opponents have a "Clinch Receptive" match, where both fighters just step in and clinch with each other. There is no setup, they just step in and do it. In cases such as this, I teach my fighters to stand up as tall as they can, on their tiptoes, and reach *DEEP* with their lead hand while using their rear hand to parry their opponent's grab.

Remember, the person who has the "high ground" in a clinch has the advantage.

The one thing Muay Thai tradition tells us is to *LET THE CLINCH HAPPEN*. You cannot force it or you will get hurt. You should also always go in with one arm first while protecting your face with the other. Circle off to the side while exploding you forearm into your opponent's chest and neck. Cup the back off the head and snap his head towards you using a jerking motion with your lats and biceps. Then enter with the other arm and take plum, constantly moving your

opponent and firing weapons while jerking his head in and out and moving him around.

### **Clinching Basics**

For those with grappling experience, you will find this similar to "swimming". That is where you practice getting a control position by "swimming" one arm in at a time under your opponents arms to get the underneath control position for a throw or the like.

In Thai, the phrase or name used to describe clinching is translated as "*GETTING DRESSED*" (think of it as "preparing to knee")

"Getting Dressed" is the action of your and your opponent "swimming" or snaking your arms inside for the control position. The second your feel your opponent move an arm to the inside, you should move your arm to regain the inside.

The difference is, rather than gaining the control position under the arms for a throw, you are trying to gain the inside position on your opponent's head/neck area.

There are variations on the control position, I'll discuss the most basic one that I teach. The position you want is to have both of your hands/arms to the inside, grasping your opponents head/neck in a pincher-like grip, and his head trapped to your chest. You can also rest your chin on the top of his head to *KEEP* his head down.

When clinching, the hand position should be on the back/top portion of your opponent's head, not the back of his neck. Keep the elbows locked in *TIGHT* to pinch the carotid arteries, and to prevent your opponent from snaking his hands back in to gain the inside position on you. (the pincher grip on the carotids is not enough to make someone pass out, but it is enough to make them feel a little faint or light-headed, and any advantage is a good advantage)

The hands themselves can be held in two recommended ways. You can either cross them at the wrist (both palms towards you), or you can cross them with the palms towards each other. Remember, do not interlace your fingers! You will have boxing gloves on!

With your arms in the correct position, your elbows should be pressing into your opponents collar bone. Use this to your advantage, as a fulcrum to pull their head down into your chest.

When you begin to clinch with someone, you should try to "gain the high ground." Try to get over top of your opponent first so that you have the high position. This way you can rest your weight on your opponent, forcing them to work harder. I teach my students to use their lead hand to reach high and deep to get the upper

position, and their rear hand to deflect the opponent's hands so that they cannot get a good grip on you.

I also teach my students to grab with the lead hand and apply the clinch with just that hand. To do this, after you grab behind the opponents neck/head, you push the elbow across to the center of their chest and use the upper arm as a wedge between you and him. This leaves one hand free to punch, elbow, or deal with whatever he's trying to do with his hands. You can use the lead hand clinch to throw your opponent off balance, and then knee as he's vulnerable.

While "getting dressed" it is recommended to actually keep your chin up! Any other time, you would keep your chin down, but while clinching, if you have your head tucked, it's easier for your opponent to trap your head.

When clinching, get up on your tippy toes to help get you over top your opponent so you can get the upper position. Once you achieve the upper position, rest your weight on them. Make him hold you up!

While "getting dressed", only "swim" one arm in at a time. Never "swim" both hands in at once. This would leave you with both hands off of the opponent, and allowing them to have the inside and get your head down.

Also, while "getting dressed", keep your hips glued as tightly to your opponent's hips as possible!!! Do not leave room for a knee to get in. When you "feel" that you are in position to knee, break your hips to the back and fire one (or more) in there, then get your hips back against his!

*MOVE AROUND!!!* Do not stand in place and clinch, rather, *CONSTANTLY* be on the move! Use your arms to toss your opponent around. Push on your opponent's shoulders/arms while pulling on his neck to throw him off balance, leaving him open for your knee strikes. Try to throw the opponent to the ground if you can! (and *KICK* him as he falls!)

If you are having trouble with getting the upper control position on your opponent, grab around his body and hug him close. From this position, you can break your hips to the back and throw clinching curve knees.

If your opponent has grabbed you around the body and pulled you too tight to break your hips back to knee, grab each of his arms in a guillotine-like hold, trapping them, then push forward hard with your shoulders (dig your chin into his face, neck, collar bone) and push your hips back hard also, then attack his legs and hips with clinching curve knees.

If your arms are trapped in this manner, push forward with one, pull back with the other *HARD*. Once you have one arm free, grab him by the neck and start pulling down and try to get in your own knee strikes.

## **Clinch Swing Knee Strikes**

Remember, when you throw these knees that you have to thrust your hips back to make enough room for you to make contact with your knee bone rather than your thigh. Your opponent is going to try to smother your knees by crowding in close with his hips, so you have to break your hips out to the rear to create the room.

Also, when doing this, try to snap your two knees together. Snap the striking knee into your other knee.

And, add a little hop so that your support foot pivots. You want to strike *THROUGH* the target with your knee.

I have my students do a drill where they stand in front of one another and hold each others shoulders. They take turns throwing these strikes in-between each other so that the knees just miss their partner. They have to hop/pivot so that the knee strike passes all the way through to the other side.

## **Clinch Knee Strikes Defense**

The first method: *SIDESTEPPING*, is a very good technique. When you are in a clinch, you aren't going to be sidestepping a technique. Your opponent *HAS HOLD OF YOU!* You aren't going anywhere! What was really meant is a combination of manipulating your opponent while utilizing footwork to throw him off balance, thereby nullifying the knee attack.

When in the clinch, you and your opponent are fighting for control of each others head. Ideally, you want to have your opponent's head in a pincher grip, with your forearms on his collarbone, and your heads behind the back/top portion of his head. Using your forearms as a fulcrum, you pull his head down into your chest, bending him over in front of you. From this position, you are able to throw straight knees at will into his abdomen, chest, and face.

However, one of the first things any Thai boxing instructor who's worth studying under will teach you is how *NOT* to get caught like that, and if you *DO* get caught, how to get out of it. Most serious injuries in Muay Thai that I have witnessed are due to a fighter insufficiently dealing with being at the business end of the clinch. Believe me, a knee to the face is quite ugly to witness. (Stop the fight, bring in a mop. You get the idea...)

Now, since most fighters are well enough versed in the clinch to *NOT* get bent over in front of you, you therefore have to knee while fighting for the advantage. When you find yourself with sufficient balance and enough room to snap one in there, you do it.

When you are holding onto an opponent in the clinching manner, you don't have to see what they are doing. You can actually feel it. When you feel your opponent shift their weight to knee, you twist their upper body by pulling with one hand, pushing with the other. While doing this, you are sidestepping.

To clarify this technique, let's say while you are clinched, the opponent is trying to knee you with his right knee. You should pull downwards and to the side on his neck with your right hand, while pushing him up and forwards with your left. You are essentially trying to turn him like a steering wheel. As you turn him, step at an angle backwards (the "sidestep" previously mentioned) with your right foot. As you twist your opponent around 180 degrees, your right foot becomes the lead foot, and the left foot becomes the rear foot. Since your opponent is being pulled over to his left and off balance, his right ribs are exposed to your left knee. You know what to do.

The other technique is to scoop the leg. I don't teach this method for a few reasons:

**№1**-it leaves your scooping arm tied up with his weight on it. Both of his hand are free to punch, elbow, whatever.

**№2**-to scoop an opponent's leg in this fashion, you are taking a big risk of eating the knee in the process.

This is a legitimate technique if you are studying for self defense. But it is not for Muay Thai competition.

Let's get back to basics however. I wanted to comment on those two methods of defense first, since they were previously mentioned, but now I want to backtrack.

First, when clinching with someone and preparing for the knee, keep in mind that your opponent will be trying to knee you also. You should therefore keep your hips *GLUED* to your opponent. The best defense against knees is to be too close for your opponent to knee. Remember to keep your stance wide to keep your balance.

Another thing to keep in mind is that normally when boxing, Thai boxing, or whatever, you should keep your chin down to your chest to prevent KO's. However, while clinched, if you keep your head bowed down, you are doing half of your opponents work for him. So in this case, keep your chin up. Practice keeping the shoulders up high and almost arching the back of the neck so that your opponent cannot pull your head down.

If you are in a clinch with someone that has superior clinch skills to yours, then you can wrap a leg around him to make sure he cannot create the room to knee you. While doing this, kick him with your heel in the back of his legs to frog them. (yes, this is a legal technique!)

You can also wrap one arm around the back of his head so that the back of his head is in the crook of your arm. The opposite arm grabs in the crook of his arm and pulls down. Turn sideways and raise your lead side knee into his body sideways, so that your instep is extended on one side of his hips, the knee on the other (the shinbone should be parallel to the ground). Push forward with your knee into his hips while pulling on his head and arm with your upper body. You will get him "stretched out" and unable to do anything. From this position, you can either release and get back to the clinch so that you have an advantage, or wait for the referee to break the two of you up.

Another escape from the clinch that I teach is to do a double hand push on your opponent's hips while ducking out. *THIS TECHNIQUE IS VERY RISKY, AND SHOULD ONLY BE USED AS A LAST RESORT!!!* Many people make the mistake of simply trying to duck under the persons clinch to get out. However, this is the cause of the really ugly injuries that I mentioned before. If you find yourself forced to escape this way, push *HARD* on both of your opponents hips while doing your best to keep your head safely tucked between them. The injuries that I have seen are because fighters have tried to just duck out of a clinch without the double-handed push.

### **Basic Clinch Counters**

Now for the basic counters. The first three are for when there is some space and the last five are more for when it's tight.

**1.Swimming:** this is just the basic arm weaving motion that everyone teaches. I break it down as follows:

**A.** Clear your elbow. A common mistake is to simply slip your hand inside and reach for the neck. This becomes difficult because your forearm is trying to force his elbow out the way. Of course he feels that and braces his elbow against the center of your chest making it next to impossible to complete the basic swim (unless your tricky). To avoid that, move your hand and elbow inside before you reach for the neck.

**B.** Confirm your grip on the back of his head with a short abrupt tug and....

**C.** Push your shoulder into the center. Think of trying smash his nose with your shoulder. If you do it right it will feel like your shoulder just pops out from under his forearm. If you don't do this, the fact that you got your hand onto the back of his neck doesn't mean a whole lot because he's still controlling both of your shoulder with his forearms.

**D.** Repeat above with opposite arm.

**2.Chin lift/press:** Reach diagonally over and across your opponent's arms and cup the top of his shoulder. Lever his chin upward with your forearm and push him away to create space. Next, swim the other arm in and grab the back of his neck. Finally, swim inside with the arm that was levering his chin. The press is exactly the same movement but his chin is down making it hard to slide your forearm under it. When this occurs push your hand/forearm across his face/chin turning his head to the side and cup over top his shoulder. Finish as before.

### **3. Two variations on the crowbar:**

**A.** Near arm: I usually move to this when my opponent moves his elbow inward to block the basic swim but you could also just go directly into it. Reach inside with your right hand and as he blocks by turning the elbow inward, reach across his body and cup over top of his right bicep. As you do this it is important to shrug your shoulders up so you partially trap his left arm between your neck and right shoulder. Now lever his left arm upward by lifting your right elbow up and rotate your right shoulder forward. If you do it right your opponent will feel a slight shoulder wrench on the left side. Finalize by swimming the left hand in and then the right.

**B.** The far arm: Brett already described this one. The only thing I would add is to shrug your shoulders up to control the arm more.

The next five escapes work well when your opponent has pulled you tight with the neck tie-up.

### **4.The pinch:**

In this escape your opponent has pulled your head down against his chest. Assuming his head is on your left side, grab the back of his head with your left hand and shrug your right shoulder to control his hand. With your right hand (palm up) push inward and up on his left triceps/elbow while driving his head down. The movement feels like your trying to pinch his head and elbow together and is very uncomfortable for your opponent. If you get this position he cannot effectively knee you while you can knee freely or transfer to another control tie-up position.

### **5. Elbow Fold:**

From a tight neck tie-up reach under both arms with your right hand and cup the outside of his right arm near the bend of his elbow. Pull his elbow inward and rotate your left shoulder forward pressing your chest against his arm. At the same time wrap your left arm around his shoulders (like your trying to headlock him). At this point his right arm is pretty much useless as it bent at an awkward angle and smashed up against his chest. Knee or transition to another control position.

The next three all begin with the same motion and footwork.

### **6. Head tilt:**

In this escape your opponent has pulled your head down against his chest. For this description, assume his head is on the right side of yours. Place your left foot between his legs and move hips as close as possible to his. With your right hand reach over top of his head (your right hand and fingers should be draped over his head with the your fingers extending downward toward his right ear). Swing your right leg around behind you and pull down hard on your opponent's head with your right hand to pivot his body to your right. The motion of your pull should be a wide arc from the position of his head toward your right hip. The sideward pull of his head combined with the pivot generally causes his right elbow to flare outward just enough that you can swim your left arm inside.

### **7. Elbow lift:**

This is the same as the last one but as you pivot the opponent around you place the heel of your left hand under his right elbow and lever it out and up. Knee or transition to another control position. Commonly this movement is used to transition into the head and arm tie-up.

### **8. Head press:**

Similar to the previous two only as you pivot you feel that he's not as stable as he should be. Continue the arc of his head and push it down between his arms with both hands as you step backward (pulling him toward you). When you finish his head should lower than yours. Even though he still has his hands in the neck tie-up position because his head is being pressed down he doesn't have any leverage to control you. Upward knee to the face is the most common follow up.

After students have a good grasp of the basic movements I start to teach variations and combinations of the eight basic techniques. Some of the variations seem different than the basic escapes but they are based on the concepts/principles that are learned through the basics. Remember that nothing works well by itself. If your playing around with these movements in sparring think about attacking with them in combinations while adding various knee attacks, your basic movement skills (pushing, pulling, turning), and takedowns. If you can do that you will find all of these techniques open to you and your clinch skills will soar.

Also, keep in mind that the neck tie-up is not the end all and be all of the Thai clinch. There are many other control tie-up positions available and other areas of interest as well - such as takedowns.

## **Cro-bar Clinch Escape In Detail**

Say your opponent has inside head control with both his hands behind your head. Take your right arm and go over his left arm and under his right arm. Take your left hand and grab your right hand and push up thereby creating space under his right arm. Take your left hand and slide it where space was created by the push. Work your left hand back up behind your opponents neck and try to get belly to belly.

I escape from the clinch by posting on his hip with my left arm. This keeps distance and keeps his momentum moving back so knees aren't a huge threat as you escape. Slide your right arm under his left and grab his right bicep. Your right elbow should be under his left elbow. You now have a fulcrum and a lever. Shoot your elbow straight up. The clinch is broken.

Before beginning any of the basic defenses below it is best to partially control the opponent's body in some way. I always emphasize the importance of keeping at least one hand on your opponent at all times (which is one of the reasons I don't prefer the far arm crowbar). When you have at least one hand on your opponent you maximize your ability to push or pull him off balance when he attempts to knee or elbow you; and you reduce the chance that he can quickly disengage and punch/kick you while your still thinking about his arms. How you attach yourself to your opponent depends on what control tie-up he's using and where your positioned. For the neck tie-up typically you'll do one of the following:

- 1.Hug over the top of his shoulders and grab behind his neck.
- 2.One hand over the shoulders the other controlling his hip(s).
- 3.One hand across his neck monitoring his shoulder (ex: right hand on right shoulder).
- 4.Hugging the body
- 5.Variations and fluid combinations of the above.

## Exiting The Clinch

Exiting the clinch. I really do not like using the shovel punch method because I find that you end up leaving yourself open. Either that or the "Shoeshine" method isn't being properly described.

But it all depends on what position you are in when you are trying to exit the clinch in the first place. Your position determines what methods you can safely employ to break.

**DOMINANT:** You are in the dominant position. You have your opponents head trapped to your chest. This is easy. There are essentially three main "exits" from this clinch that I teach.

1. Push your opponent off of you, following with a few high roundhouse kicks to the head.
2. Rather than push your opponent away, simply release your hold and follow with a flurry of short hooks (both sides) to your opponent's head.
3. Dump your opponent on the ground with a legal throw. The throw that I am thinking of is what I refer to as the "Steering Wheel". You grab behind your opponents neck with one hand, push on his shoulder or under his elbow with the other hand, step back and spin him to the ground.

**EQUAL FOOTING:** Neither you or your opponent has the upper hand in the clinch, but you want to break away anyway.

1. Probably the best method is to push your opponent off of you. As you are "getting dressed", you push *HARD* on his shoulder/s rather than go for neck control. This should get him off of you.
2. Or, you can break from clinching with some elbows. Again, rather than fight for neck control, start throwing some short, tight elbows. This could backfire if your opponent defends by trying to smother you with a tighter clinch. If you succeed in breaking the clinch, you can follow up with punches and kicks as your opponent steps back. Of course, this method will depend on whether or not elbows are allowed in your match.
3. Also, see the above throw mentioned in the DOMINANT control exits. This same throw applies to the "stalemated clinch".

The throw is probably the *BEST* clinch escape from a stalemated clinch, followed by the push, and last, the elbow attack escape.

**OPPONENT DOMINANT:** You find yourself where you don't want to be, your head is in control and your opponent is trying to light you up with clinching straight knees.

1. Don't *EVER* just duck out of this clinch!!! The whole event will grind to a halt as they bring in a mop to clean what's left of your nose off the canvas. I am *NOT* joking. I've seen this happen more times than I care to discuss.
2. The first thing you should do is get as close to your opponent as you can. Keep your hips glued to his. Grab around his body and hold him tight so that he has no room to knee.
3. From the tight position, you can then try to stand up straight and arch your back. You may be able to break your opponents hold just enough for you to be able to snake your hand back in and fight for neck control.
4. Or, just bring an arm over top and get your forearm/glove into his neck/face and push back. This will be very uncomfortable to your opponent and can cause him to break his hold just enough for you to snake a hand back in...
5. Or, snake one hand over his arm, then back under his other arm. Then push up with your hand and down with your elbow. This is called the "Crowbar Escape" as you are using your arm as a lever.
6. The Knee Shield. Get one arm around the back of your opponent's head so that the nape of his neck is in the crook of your arm. With your other arm, grab on his arm in the crook of his elbow and pull down on it. Raise your knee into your opponent's abdomen and use this as a shield. Push the knee into your opponent's abdomen as you pull back with your head. The referee should step in at this point and break the action if you are able to hold this and you don't transition to another escape method.
7. The Knee Escape. Same as above, but when you raise your knee, turn your body sideways, and turn your knee/leg sideways so that your shin is across your opponent's abdomen. Your knee should be by the opponent's hip on one side, and the top of your foot "hooking" his hip on the other side. Again, you push forward with your knee/shin and pull back with your shoulders/head. This will get your opponent nice and stretched out.

For those of you familiar with Jiu-Jitsu, and the triangle choke. This is similar to how you "stretch" your opponent out prior to applying the hold, when you have hold of his sleeve and pull while pushing into his hip with your foot.

Again, if the way it was described was correct, I am adamantly opposed to the "Shoeshine" method. Think about it: If your opponent has control of your head,

and you try to break with punches to his abdomen, while he is firing away with straight knees, who do you think is going to win?