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ESCAPES
THAT WOULD
MAKE HOUDINI
PROUD!**

*"It doesn't matter
how many times
you hit someone
if the punches
don't hurt."*

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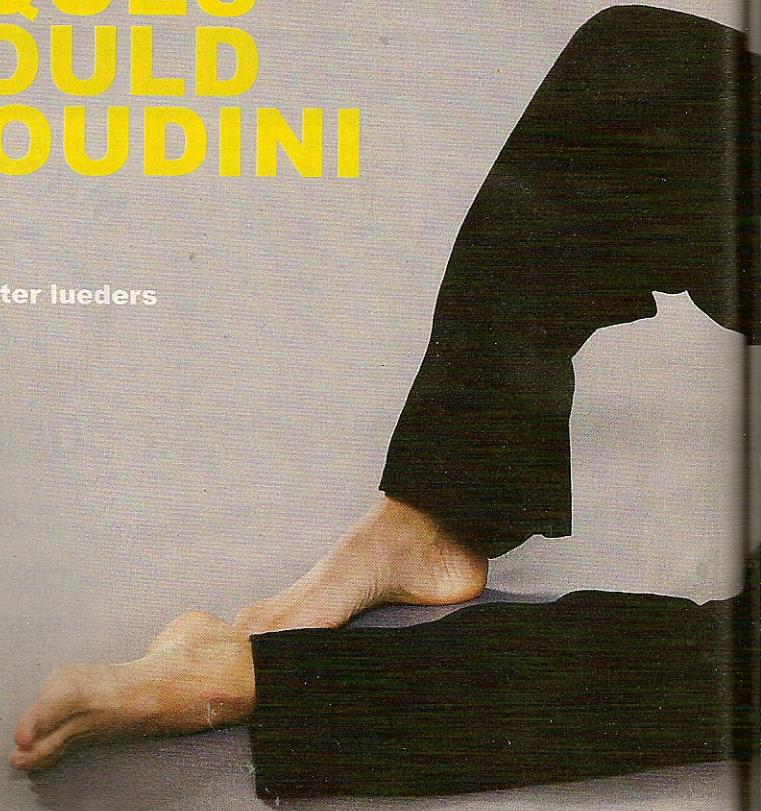
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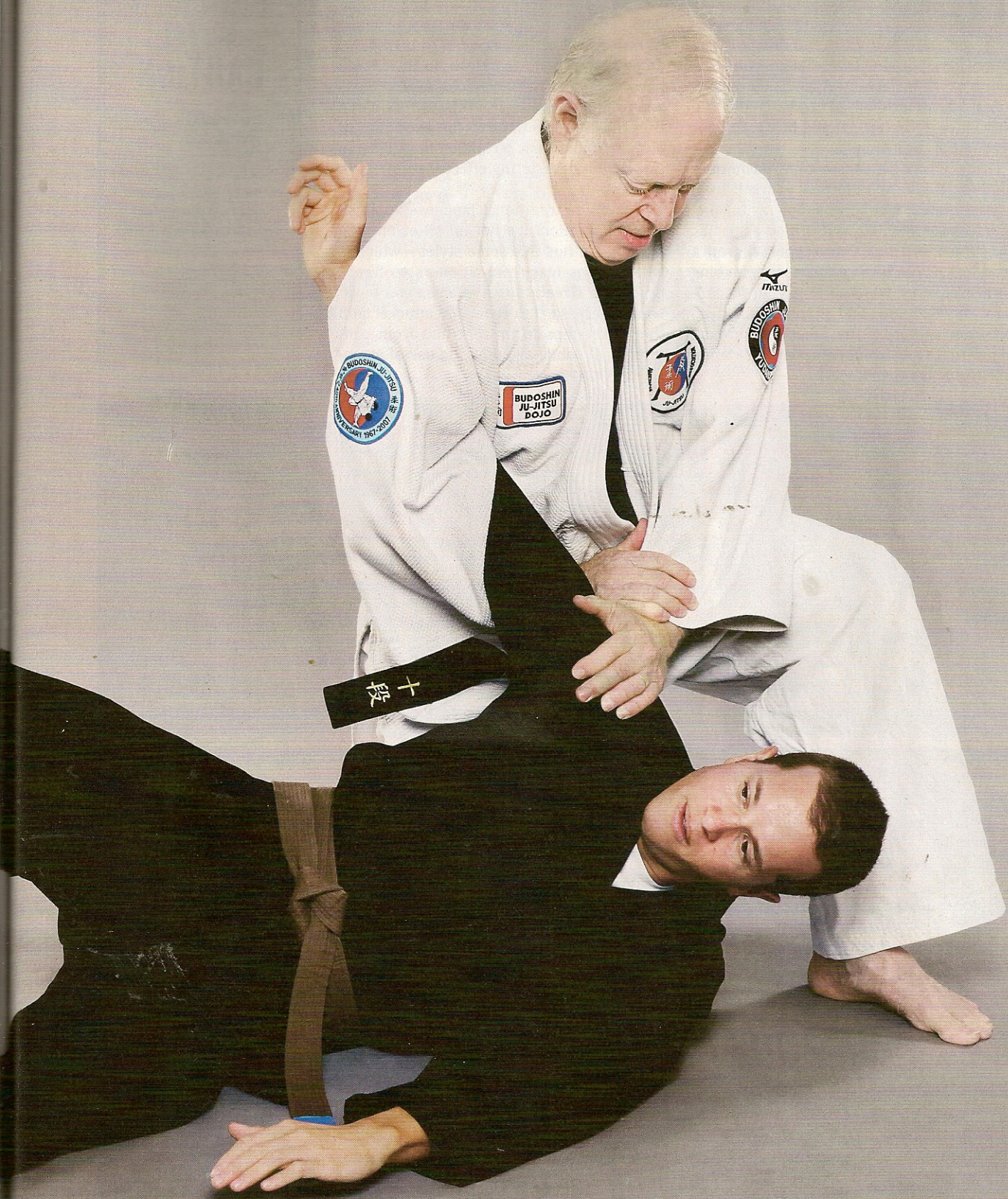
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LIFESAVERS

**JUJITSU ESCAPE
TECHNIQUES
THAT WOULD
MAKE HOUDINI
PROUD!**

by george kirby - photos by peter lueders





In virtually any violent encounter that falls short of attempted murder, your goal will be to escape from the threat as expeditiously as possible. If an assailant is gripping your wrist and dragging you somewhere you don't want to go, your first concern is to make him let go. If a bully puts you in a head lock in a bar so his buddy can hit you, your first act should be to get your head out of the lock.

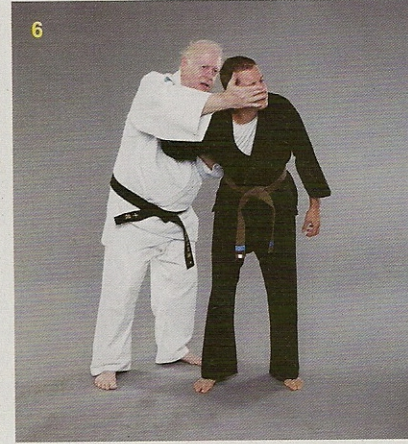
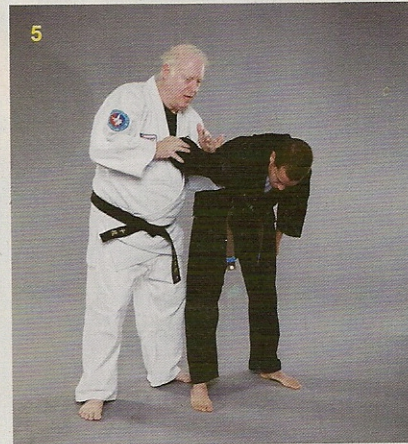
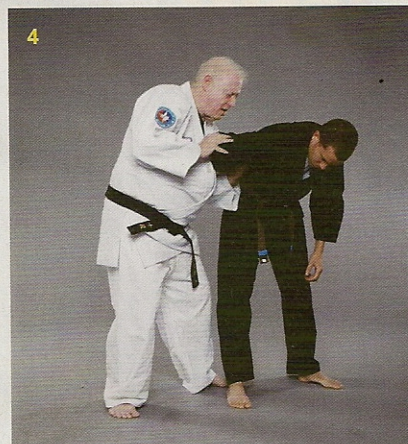
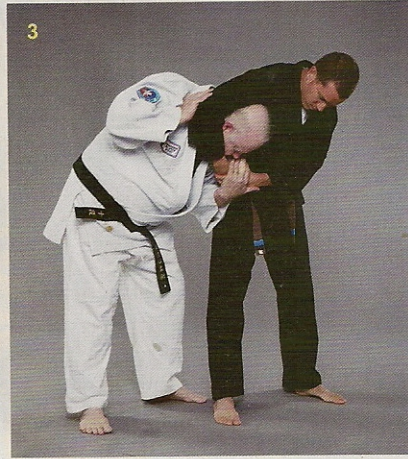
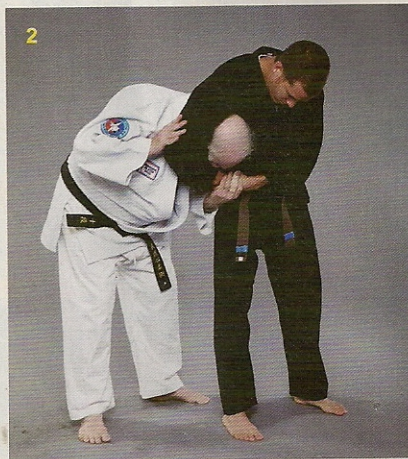
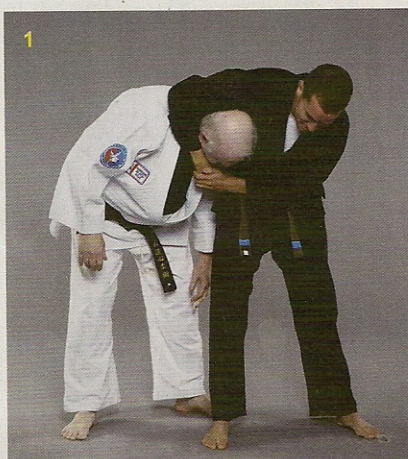
That's where *jujitsu's* escape techniques come in. If you need to free yourself from a wrist grab, it can be as simple as turning your hand or angling your arm in a specific direction. If you must extract yourself from a head lock, it can be as easy as maneuvering his arm forward while turning your face toward the aggressor and slipping your head out from behind. If the other person isn't committed to harming you, the altercation will probably be over.

IN REALITY, HOWEVER, the severity of the attack will determine the severity of your response. If the other person is intent on causing bodily harm and begins by laying hands on you, you'll obviously need to thwart his attacks—but before you can do that, you'll need to break free of his hold. Again, this is where jujitsu comes in. Although its name translates as "gentle art," the execution of even the most basic technique in its arsenal can have a devastating effect if you need it to.

In fact, the traditional Japanese art is all about escalation. It's not an all-or-nothing fighting method like some styles—which is what causes many practitioners to freeze up on the street. Jujitsu enables you to do what's necessary to repel the attacker and then take steps to prevent him from continuing, all while avoiding the use of excessive force. >>

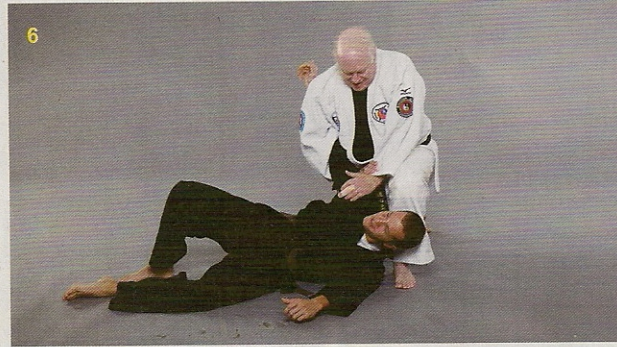
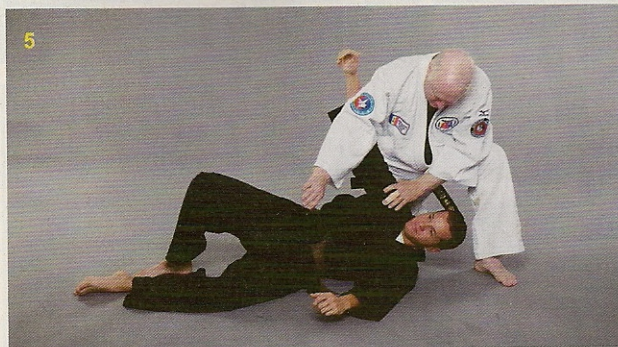
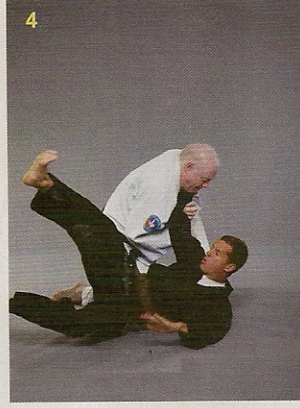
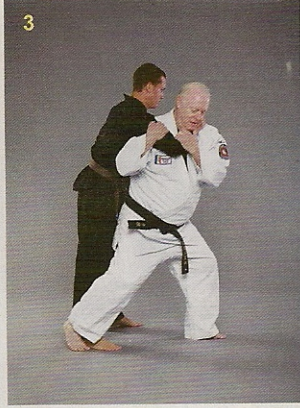
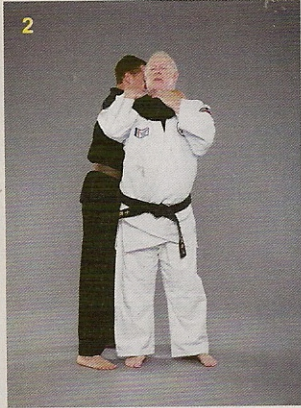
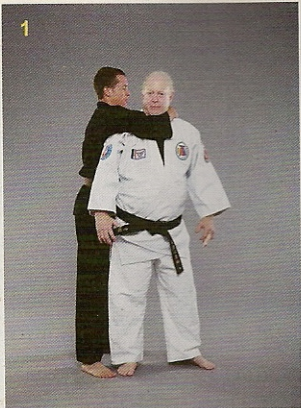
PROCEED WITH CAUTION

The techniques shown and discussed in this article can cause serious injury, even in the *dojo*, if they're not executed slowly and carefully with the full cooperation of the defender and the attacker. You don't need to move fast to make them work properly; you just need to move smoothly. So take your time learning them.



○ ESCAPE FROM A HEAD LOCK:

The attacker has momentary control over George Kirby (1). The jujitsu expert immediately turns his head toward the man's torso and moves his chin toward his chest. At the same time, he grabs the opponent's upper hand with his inside (left) hand in a palm-up orientation while resting his right hand against his elbow (2). Kirby holds the man's hands in place with his left hand as he pushes his elbow with his right hand while pulling his head out of the lock (3-4). If a distraction is needed, Kirby can stomp on the man's foot. The martial artist maneuvers his left hand around the aggressor's right arm, clamping down on his upper arm with his palm facing down (5). He then uses the middle finger of his right hand to press the infraorbital nerve at the base of the nose, turning the man's head to his left (6). This makes for an effective come-along technique.

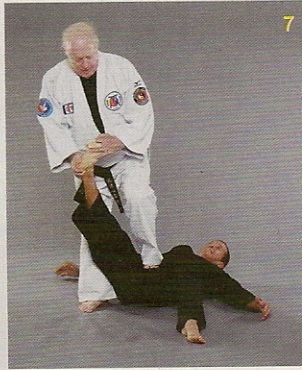
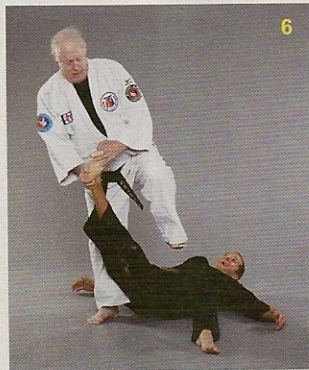
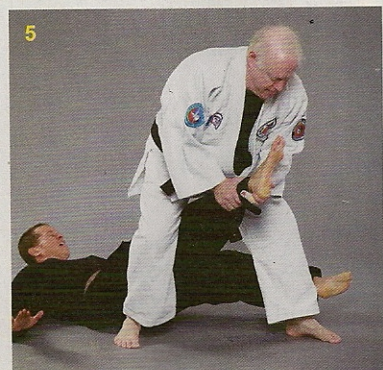
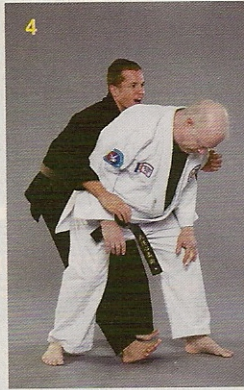
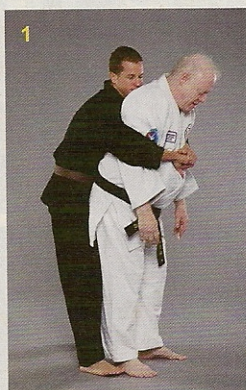


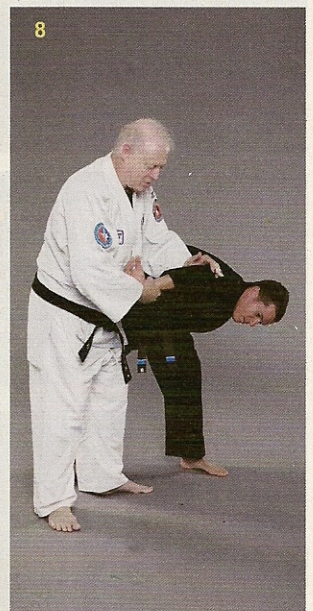
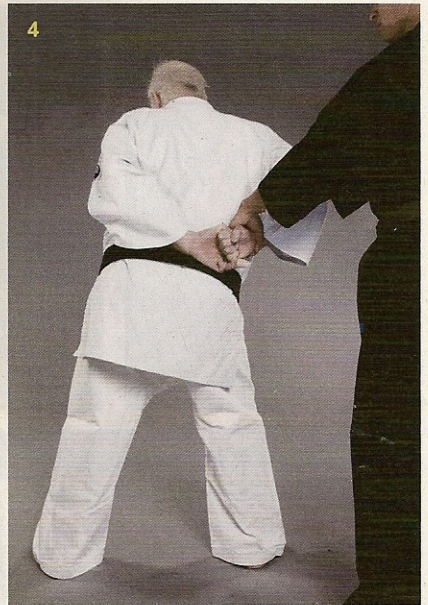
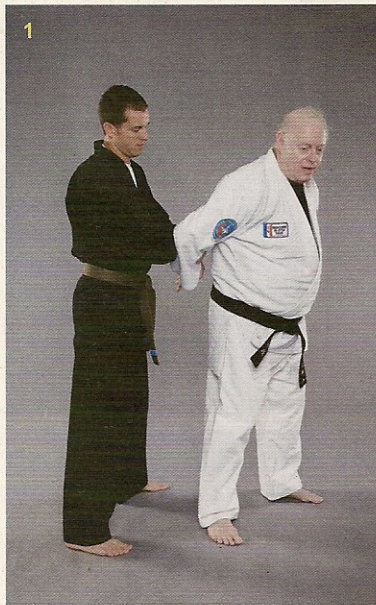
○ ESCAPE FROM A REAR FOREARM CHOKE:

The assailant approaches George Kirby from behind and wraps his right arm around his neck (1). Kirby grabs the man's forearm with both hands to relieve the pressure (2). He presses the musculocutaneous nerve (on the biceps) using the middle finger of his right hand, then pulls the choking forearm down and holds it against his chest (3). Note how Kirby lowers his body so he can block the attacker's right ankle with his own right ankle. Next, the jujitsu master drops to his knee and throws his opponent (4). To finish, Kirby makes sure his right thigh is against the man's back so he can't turn to avoid the coming pain (5), after which he places his left shin against the back of the man's head and effects a figure-4 armbar (6).

○ ESCAPE FROM A BEAR HUG:

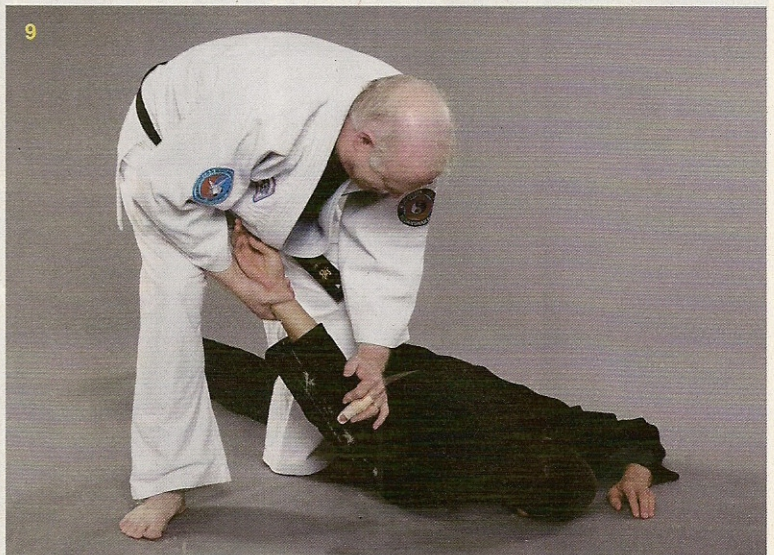
His arms pinned, George Kirby is held from behind (1). He lifts his right foot and heel-stomps the man's right instep (2-3). He then steps back with that leg, which causes his butt to hit the attacker in his midsection, further off-balancing him (4). This distraction makes it easier for Kirby to bend down and grab the man's foot with both hands, after which he lifts the leg to knock him over (5). Kirby uses his left foot to stomp on his opponent's body, targeting any area below the navel (6-7).



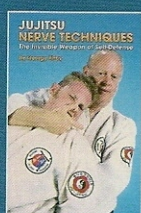
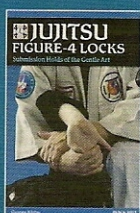
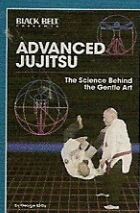
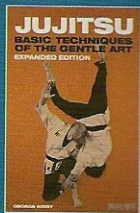


○ ESCAPE FROM A REAR ARM LOCK:

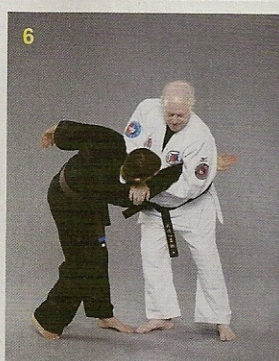
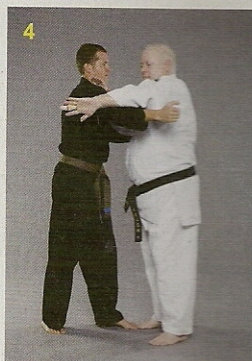
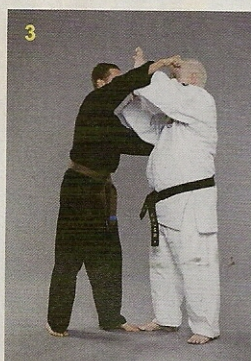
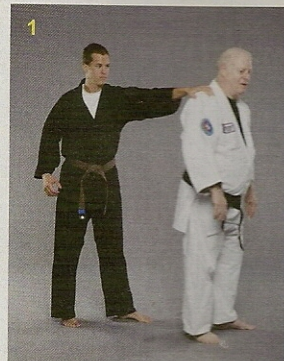
The assailant has George Kirby's right arm bent behind his back (1). Kirby can respond with a foot-stomp distraction (not shown) before beginning his escape. Rear view: With his left hand, he reaches toward his trapped limb (2) and grabs his own right hand (3). Next, he lowers his body slightly as he sidesteps to his left, holding the arm-locked limb in its original position (4). Side view: Once he gets the trapped arm to the right of his body, he lets go with his left hand (5). He turns to his right to face the attacker, raising his right arm (6). His right hand grabs the man's forearm as his left hand cups the elbow and rotates the arm clockwise (7). As the assailant starts to fall, Kirby pivots clockwise, swinging his right leg back to create space (8). Pressure on his right arm causes the man to fall at Kirby's feet (9).



JUJITSU DOCUMENTED!

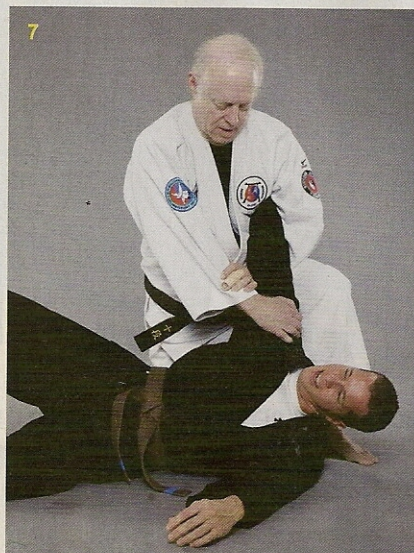


To own your own archive of George Kirby's techniques, grab a copy of the following: *Jujitsu: Basic Techniques of the Gentle Art, Expanded Edition* (165 pages, \$18.95); *Jujitsu: Intermediate Techniques of the Gentle Art* (256 pages, \$18.95); *Advanced Jujitsu: The Science Behind the Gentle Art* (131 pages, \$16.95); *Jujitsu Figure-4 Locks: Submission Holds of the Gentle Art* (131 pages, \$18.95) and *Jujitsu Nerve Techniques: The Invisible Weapon of Self-Defense* (233 pages, \$16.95). All titles are currently discounted online. (800) 581-5222, blackbeltmag.com



○ ESCAPE FROM A REAR SHOULDER GRAB:

A man accosts George Kirby from behind and prepares to unleash a sucker punch (1). As he's pulled around, Kirby uses his right arm (2) and then his left (3) to block any strikes. (Raising his right arm first also can serve as a visual distraction.) Kirby wraps his left arm around the opponent's right arm (4) and key-locks it (5). To break the man's balance, Kirby pushes up against the trapped elbow and down against the shoulder (6). Once the attacker is on the ground (on his side with Kirby's right thigh against his back and his left foot behind his head), the jujitsu master sets a figure-4 armbar (7). To finish, he thrusts his hips forward to inflict pain and, if necessary, dislocate the elbow.



PRESENTED IN THIS ARTICLE are five street attacks you're likely to encounter. They might not appear life-threatening, but if you don't take action quickly, you risk great bodily harm. The jujitsu techniques offered in response are fairly simple by design. Why? Because simple moves are the most effective when you're under duress.

The scope of jujitsu means that within the art are numerous responses to the same attacks—not just the ones shown here. None is wrong as long as it works. The best one for any particular situation is the one you're most comfortable doing.

AS YOU WORK on your escapes, keep the following concepts in mind:

Any jujitsu pin or lock taught in class can easily become a joint dislocation or break on the street. All that's required is a bit of extra pressure, torque or speed. The difference between the opponent feeling pain and the opponent being injured is a fine line. In a real fight, you'll rarely have time to evaluate your options; immediate action will be needed to preserve your safety, so make sure you know exactly where that line is.

Ideally, an escape should have three elements—just as all jujitsu techniques should. The first is a distraction such as a strike, kick, stomp, nerve attack or verbal utterance. Your goal is to increase the attacker's response time. Studies have shown you can buy yourself .3 to .7 seconds while his brain processes the unexpected sensation or information.

The second element is the actual technique sequence, which is designed to release his hold, counter his attack and ultimately establish control over him.

The third element is the finishing move. It could be a strike to a vital area or a pin, lock, submission, break or dislocation—provided, of course, such an escalation of force is warranted. In other words, to stay on the right side of the law, you can use a finishing move only if you're unable to withdraw and the attacker represents a continuing threat. ✘

In the November 2011 issue, Black Belt will present five more essential jujitsu escapes guaranteed to boost the readiness of all martial artists.

About the author:

A 10th-degree black belt, George Kirby has taught jujitsu for 43 years. In 2007 he was inducted into the Black Belt Hall of Fame as Instructor of the Year. For more information, visit budoshin.com.