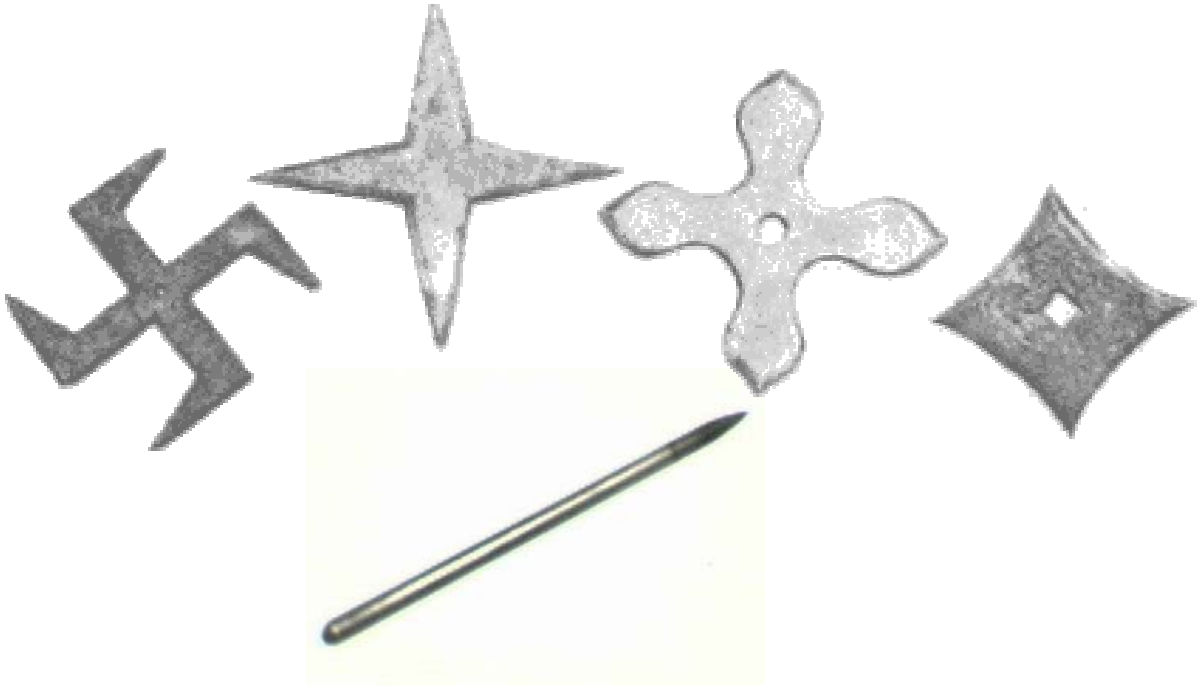
A Warrior Concepts' Mastery Series Manual

SHURIKEN

Mastering the Ninja Night Warrior's Throwing Star



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Chapter 1
Introduction to World of the Ninja Star!

This may not come as a huge surprise to you, but the number one request that I get through my classes, seminars, and through my web site is for information about the study of weapons. And no other weapon, except perhaps the sword, inspires more mystery and curiosity than the *shuriken* or Ninja star.

This book is a basic training manual designed to lead you into the foundational skills for developing mastery with the "throwing star." It is one of many books, currently available, and yet to come, where I will be sharing my thirty-plus years of study, training and experience so that you can master these skills and increase your own level of understanding, proficiency, and of course, safety.

In the following pages and chapters, I'll be discussing not only how to use this weapon in different situations and against a wide variety of attacks, but also topics like;

- **a history of the shuriken and its development**
- **myths and realities about the ninja star weapon**
- **the proper steps for training if you really want to master this powerful weapon**
- **the different types of shuriken**
- **and so much more.**

I have been training in the martial arts in general since I was a young boy in junior high school. Having begun my training in a little karate club in 1975, I have sought out and trained with literally dozens of teachers in almost as many styles over the course of my lifetime. In 1981, I discovered *Ninjutsu*, the art of the Ninja. And the rest is history (so-to-speak).

What this means is that, unlike other instructors, I bring a perspective on these lessons that is very different from most - both from within and outside of the art of Ninjutsu. This fact, coupled with my real-world experience as a former federal police officer, undercover investigator, and bodyguard - occupations that can't afford to "play" with martial arts and self-defense tactics that may or may not work - allows me to offer you a perspective that provides not only authentic techniques but, techniques that will WORK in a real-life violent situation - and in *Today's world!*

In short, I'm not just giving you techniques in this book - I'm not just showing you ways to do things. I'm telling you "how" to train if you want to be able to do more than just "look good."

One last thought before we begin. The methods contained within this book were developed for actual warfare by warriors, not "martial artists". There may have been a day, centuries ago, when those two terms were one and the same. But, not today. In today's world of violence-as-sport entertainment, where boxing and so-called "professional wrestling" bring in more money than any other sport - in a world where martial arts are believed to be a sport where "kids" of all ages can win trophies for being able to beat up another human being - it's just not so.

The point here is that, while there ***are*** techniques and descriptions of tactics and strategies within this book that are dangerous and even life-threatening to the assailant, I have not included all that I could have. And the reason for that is simple:

I don't know you.

And it would be morally and ethically irresponsible of me as a teacher to pass on information that could endanger innocent people if you are the wrong type of person.

No.

To get the super-advanced material, I'm going to have to get to know you. And that means meeting you in person and getting a feel for the kind of person you are, and the heart you express to the world.

Kind of "woo-woo," I know. But in the most traditional sense, and in keeping with the legacy of how these teachings were kept out of the wrong hands, that's just the way it has to be. It's my obligation as a teacher of the lineages I represent to make sure that I only pass this on to the right people in this and the next generation. If you want more, then I highly suggest that you contact me about private training or attending my seminars and camps.

With that out of the way, let me also say that, I don't think you'll have to worry about not learning a lot of really cool and powerful stuff within these pages. There is something here for the beginner, intermediate, and advanced student alike. Guaranteed!

So, if you're ready to enter the realm of the Ninja's fighting art and the world of shuriken training...

Let's get started!

Chapter 2
Power in the Palm of Your Hand!

The weapon, commonly called a "ninja star" is properly called a *shuriken* (pronounced "shoo-ree-kehn") in the Japanese language. As a weapon, it is not limited to the Ninja Night Warriors of the tiny island nation, however.

The history of the throwing star can probably be traced back to the time when man first picked up a rock or stick and threw it at his enemy or an animal attacker. Once he realized that items like this from his natural surroundings could be used as weapons, it wasn't long in the grand scheme of things before he was creating his own, 'improved,' versions of rocks and sticks - weapons with much greater capacity to do damage.

A Lesson From History

Atop Togakure mountain (present-day Togakushi), in the ranges northwest of Nagano, Japan, there is a museum dedicated to the Ninja warriors of old. Every year I take students to Japan for training with my senior teachers and the grandmaster of our art. As a part of this trip, students are also lead on tours and day-trips to places, like Togakushi, that are significant to the history of our martial lineages.

In this little museum, students can see examples of some of the earliest shuriken prototypes. Innevitably, they're always surprised to see that, contrary to the heavy, cumbersome, and overly ornate designs being sold as "martial toys" through catalogues and in supply houses today, many of the

original shuriken of our Ninja ancestors were nothing more than chiseled stones or sharpen sticks tied to create star-like patterns.

Dispelling the Myths

This sudden realization brings home the lesson that, for the most part, shuriken were NOT killing weapons. It's not to say that they could not knock someone out or puncture the flesh. But, the materials themselves, and the technology for creating them, were not advanced enough to produce the same items that are being sold today with the weight and surgical sharpness to cause greater damage.

Students suddenly realize that many of the myths and legends were just that - myths. However, we know that myths and legends usually have their basis in fact. And the same is true about these weapons. In fact, it was in the ninja's best interest to allow myths and stories to persist, especially if they would cause their enemies to fear them even more.

One story about the ninja star that is probably the most commonly talked about today, is that ninja operatives dipped their throwing stars in poison.

Now, before I say anything about whether or not that's true, let's take a walk down "common-sense" street, shall we? Let me ask you a couple of questions.

First, how would the ninja carry such a weapon? If the pointed tips of the weapon were dipped in a lethal, fast-acting poison, how would the ninja avoid being accidentally poked by his or her own weapon? I mean, after all, the shinobi operative was required to climb, roll, bend, and crawl to get to their objective. What was the likelihood that they wouldn't inadvertantly jab themselves through their clothing?

Hmmm.... perhaps they could carry them in tough-skinned, leather pouches. Perhaps.

But then... how would they be able to draw and throw the weapon at a second's warning, should they have to? And speaking of drawing the weapon under pressure...

... what if they accidentally pricked a finger during the draw?

See what I mean?

The reality of the situation is more likely linked to the fact that...

...there was no cure for tetanus, or lock-jaw, in the ancient world of the East or West.

All it took was a little rust, and you now had a weapon that could deliver a much greater killing potential. But, fast acting? Hardly. After all, few things are as fast-acting in our own modern world as the myths attributed to the poisoned ninja star.

Other Myths

There are countless myths about the ninja, his skills, and weapons. Some of the other ones that I routinely encounter from intelligent, and well-meaning individuals, and even martial arts teachers, include:

The shuriken was a killing weapon. Uh, no. Outside of an accidental cut across a shallow artery causing a deeper than usual cut, the typical star, thrown from a distance, does not have enough weight, momentum, or depth-potential to penetrate the body deeply enough to reach the life-sustaining organs.

Even the idea that the point of the star could "penetrate the gateway to the brain" - the eye - and kill, is bull. The accuracy, timing (for the blade to meet the eye socket of a "moving" adversary), and design of the weapon just do not allow for this to happen.

Another common myth is that the ninja carried a bunch of shuriken around with them. Again, lets think about today's world. What would happen if ***you*** got caught with a bunch of shuriken by the authorities?

Right!

And, in ancient Japan, nothing would have screamed "Ninja!", like a bunch of these little babies tucked away in a pounch, especially being carried by someone wearing one of these ninja night suits peddled in the magazines and catalogs!

Again, the reality is something a bit different. What if the shuriken was designed from, or disguised as something else? What if, with the proper disguise himself, the ninja operative could get away with carrying dozens of these metal plates, and even if he was searched and they were found, nothing would happen?

It's true. And the disguise was often that of a simple... carpenter.

Take a look at the picture above that shows a "star" shuriken and a throwing spike, known as a bo-shuriken, locked together. Do you have any idea what that set-up could be, especially to a carpenter four or five centuries ago?

The reality is that the spike is a nail and the "star" is a carpentry tool known as a ***kugi-nuki*** or “nail-puller."

Often, modern practitioners of the martial arts look at something from days gone by and try to make an assumption about it based on modern knowledge and technology. When, in fact, that assumption couldn't be

farther from the truth. Long story short, the nails of ancient Japan had no head and, since there were no claw hammers either... get it?

The stars themselves were simply flattened squares that were used like washers (also called *senban* - but more on this later) that the spike would be bent over to hold corners and such in place. The spike was driven through the hole in the center and then pounded at an angle across the plate to hold it in place. If a mistake was made, with or without the plate, another one could be used to pry the nail-spike up and then slipped over the shank to pull it out of the wood.

I know. Not as glamorous as the image of a black-clad ninja stalking around the country-side, but neither is the sight of a country-side littered with the bodies of stupid ninja who would have believed they could do what the creators of these myths suggest!

Common Uses of the Ninja Star

The truth is that the shuriken was a hand-held or thrown weapon used primarily for distracting, confusing, and unbalancing an adversary. And, in a time where superstitions about gods and demons were common, as well as a rigid code for doing any "thing" was in place, unconventional tactics born of unconventional thinking was perfect for tipping the advantage in the Ninja's favor.

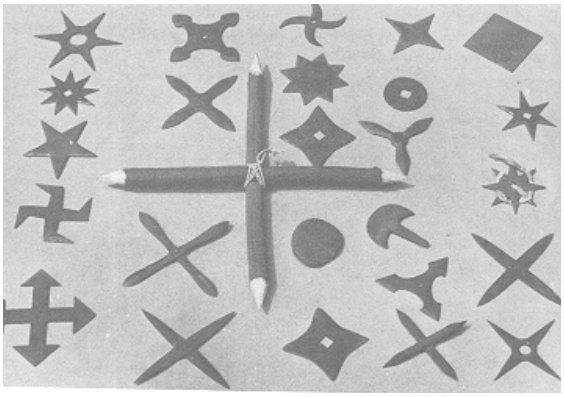
As a throwing tool, the shuriken could have been used to cut a sentry from a distance. From a hiding place near a gate the ninja wished to enter, the blade could be thrown in such a way as to create a cut before spinning off and disappearing. The guard, believing that he was being attacked by an invisible swordsman and not wanting to take any chances, would run off to get help, leaving the area unattended.

The weapon could also be tossed or thrown from within a defensive situation in a way and with the timing that would conceal it. The assailant, being cut or hit by an unseen weapon, is suddenly confused and open to a followup attack. In addition, the weapon could be used as a delivery device for carrying messages or burning compounds for setting fires - something that was a constant threat in a culture where wood and paper were the primary building materials!

While we're at it, we should probably also get over the idea that the shuriken was something that was limited to just a ninja weapon. Sorry, just ain't so.

There were many Samurai lineages throughout history, and individual warriors themselves, who employed the use of thrown blades as well. But, just as with any of the tactics, skills, and tools associated with the ninja...

...it's not so much about this or that being a Ninja "thing," as much as it is **in the way the Ninja employed it**. To be a Ninja is to think *"outside-the-box"* of conventional thought, understanding, and wisdom. It is a realm that, when actualized, allows the practitioner a tremendous sense of freedom to operate and produce results in a way that seems to be almost magical to everyone around them.



It is true that, since the lineages of Ninjutsu are older, and stem from an age even before the time of the people we have come to know as Samurai, that they not only used the shuriken first, but developed it to a much higher degree than anyone else. This is true of the shuriken as much as it is of any other principle or concept in their arsenal.

And this brings me to, what I believe to be, the **greatest myth of all**. This myth is even stated right there in the name that most people give to the weapon: ***"throwing star."***

In truth, the last thing that a good combatant wants to do in a violent situation is to throw away his weapon. This is just as true for weapons like the spear and knives, as it is for shuriken.

And therein lies one of the weapon's greatest strengths...

...to be concealed in the hand during punching and grabbing, and then brought into play at the perfect time to inflict greater damage to an opponent during defensive action!

Of course the ninja had methods for throwing this powerful little weapon. But, they also had methods for throwing a staff, sword, and many others, too. That doesn't mean that was their primary or favored tactic, though.

Going Beyond the Form

One of the major priciples involved in mastering the shuriken, is to go beyond the form. In the art of Ninjutsu, all weapons can be categorized under five general classifications. I've written quite a bit about these classifications in other articles and books, and you can read more about them by following this link to a special page on the Warrior Concepts Online web site:

http://www.warrior-concepts-online.com/weapons.html

You can do a little research later, but here's a quick overview.

The ninja prefer to focus on principles and concepts over set-in-stone "forms." So, instead of trying to learn and list a whole set of similar weapons like long sword, short sword, *ninja-to*, knife, etc...

...we say ***"bladed."***

And so it goes with the remaining four classifications:

- ✓ ***Stick***
- ✓ ***Flexible***
- ✓ ***Projectile, and...***
- ✓ ***Combination***

Understand?

So, which category does the shuriken belong to?

Careful. This could get tricky.

Remember how I said the ninja learns to think outside-the-box? Well, here's a good example of that in action.

While some would classify the shuriken as a "bladed" weapon, because it is a flat "blade," at least in its hira "flat" or *shaken* 'wheel' form, others would say that it's a projectile weapon because its thrown. But...

...is it limited to either of these?

I would submit that it might even appear to be a combination weapon, as it has multiple purposes or characteristics combining more than one of the other classes. But is it this either?

It's not a combination weapon in the sense that a *yari* ("spear") or *naginata* ("halberd") is. Each of these is a bladed weapon attached to a stick or staff. And it's not like the *kyoketsu-shoge* (pronounced 'kyoh-ketsoo-show-gay') or *kusarigama* ('koo-sah-ree-gah-mah') "chain & sickle" weapon.

See. It depends on how you view it. And with the right perspective, the shuriken is at the same time, part of any of these classifications, and yet free of being limited by any of them as well. Truly a Ninja's weapon!

Do you see where I'm going with this. If you do, then you already see that this is not just another book about...

- ☯ **Martial arts**
- ☯ **Ninja,** *or...*
- ☯ **Weapons**

It's a whole lot more. And, if you look closely at the lessons being conveyed, you just might find the hidden key to living and thinking like a Ninja, each and every day of your life - in everything you do!

In upcoming chapters, we'll take a look at, not only the different types of throwing methods, but also at some of the ways that the ninja-magician can use the shuriken as a hand-held weapon to confuse, damage, and defeat his enemy. You'll find techniques and tactics against punches, kicks, grabs, and weapon attacks that will definately help you to break free from the limited thinking caused by these and other myths.

But for now, let's start our training by laying a proper foundation for defending like a master warrior...

Real togakure-ryu Style Senban Shuriken...

If you're a serious student and tired of trying to find quality training gear in a world of martial arts "toys" and cheap facsimilies, here's a bit of help.

To get your own high-quality, laser-cut and black powder-coated, WCI Senban Shuriken, training weapons that will take your training to the next level and really allow you to train and develop your skills toward Mastery, go to:

http://www.warrior-concepts-online.com/shuriken.html

Chapter 3
Mastering the Basics of the Ninja's Shuriken

Before we get started into the physical training and skills with the shuriken weapon, it's important that we get a handle on just exactly what a shuriken is. We talked a little bit about this in the previous chapter, especially when we dispelled some of the myths surrounding this mysterious little piece of ninja hardware.

The word shuriken is made up of three syllables, and when written using Sino-Japanese kanji characters, we see that it is broken down into:

SHU = "hand"
RI = "hidden", and...
KEN = "blade"

Which gives us the meaning of a 'blade concealed in/by the hand.' But, knowing what we do about the earliest forms of this weapon, we also know that this name probably came later in history - with the concept of a "blade." And, you'll notice that, nowhere in the name are the words or concepts of "star," or "throwing."

There is, however, a very similar word, *shiriken* (pronounced, “shee-ree-ken”) that developed as a method for throwing a knife or short sword. In this case, the kanji for ri (“ree”) is that of “flipped” or “reversed,” etc. In this case the sword was flipped or held in reverse fashion with the hand on the blade and the butt-end pointing at the enemy. The weapon was then thrown at the adversary for a “kill.”

I’ll be making mention several times throughout the book, about the tendancy of some to superimpose their own assumptions about what something means. To many English speakers, whose ears are not tuned to Japanese pronunciation and linguistics, *shuriken*

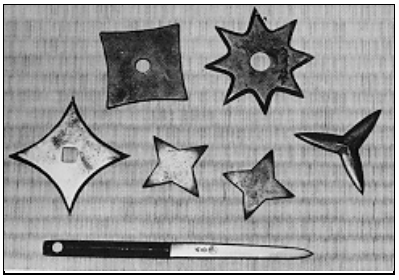
and *shiriken* can sound indentical. In some cases, it's merely poor research by one teacher that gets passed along as the "gospel" for all future "followers" to believe in.

This kind of thing, if extended globally, can be seen in many of the lessons and ideas passed down from our Japanese warrior ancestors. Modern-day martial artists have long been mistranslating many concepts out of a basic ignorance of how the Japanese saw a particular thing in the days, years, and centuries before the landing of Admiral Perry and the introduction of Western "things" into the tiny island-nation.

Let me just finish by adding that, the shuriken are not the only things being misunderstood and "re-translated" with someone's ideas. We can begin with the basics themselves. And, when something as simple as the word koshi, usually translated as "hip" in the modern context, is encountered in a historical technique description on a scroll, can be end up being very different when seen through the eyes of a 14th or 16th century writer, you start to understand just how big of a problem we could be facing.

That being said, let's move on to...

Types of Shuriken



Contrary to popular belief, there are actually several types, or forms of shuriken. Whenever I point this out, many of my students readily jump to the conclusion that i'm talking about how many points the "stars" have. When, in fact, I'm not talking about that at all.

What I mean is that there are two basic types of shuriken. If we can drop the concept or notion the weapon being a "star" at all for the moment, and remember that the definition of the word "shuriken' doesn't translate to "star" anywhere within it, we can make progress. That's because the star-shaped weapon that is most familiar to both martial artists and non-practitioner's alike is only one form of the weapon - regardless of the number of points. After all, a "star" is a star.

The two types of shuriken are the;

Hira-shuriken (aka ***Shaken***) - flat, “wheel” blade, and the...

Bo-shuriken - "stick" or spike

Each “type” had many names associated with them. The names were either...

- **lineage-specific**, as with the number of points on a hira-shuriken
- **Based on the object the weapon was made from** (i.e. *kugi-gata* “nail-form”, *hari-gata* “needle-form”, etc., or...
- **Based on the actual object that was thrown** (i.e. *kunai-gata* “utility-tool-form”, *kankyuto-gata* “piercing-tool (for leatherwork and armor-making) form”, etc.

As the last class points out, the idea was to learn the concept so that you could use whatever was at hand. Other items that were thrown were things like the kogai “ornamental hair pin” used by Japanese ladies, and hashi “chopsticks.”

Though there were different forms and lineage-specific details for using these weapons, like all true budo tactics, there are common principles and concepts that are universal for each type of shuriken - wheel or “star” shaped, or the stick of leaf form.

Let's briefly take a look at each major “type.”

The Hira-Shuriken

This version of the weapon is indeed the star-like pattern you're probably most familiar with. Also called a *shaken* or "wheel-blade", this form was usually contructed from very thin plates of iron with a various number of points according to the ryu-ha or school. Within the Togakure Ninja school that I have been taught, there are typically three and four pointed versions, although there can be more.

The point (so-to-speak) of having fewer tips was precisely to allow the Ninja to hold the weapon in special ways to give that added *"something"* to punches and hand techniques when fighting at close-quarters. The 4-pointed version is called a ***"senban"*** shuriken in the Togakure school. And, as I pointed out above, the word senban means "washer" in Japanese, and points directly to the disguise and impersonation skills of the ninja. Of course, in their original form, the *hira-shuriken* of yesterday look very different from the pretty little toy "stars" being peddled in martial arts supply stores here is the West.

The Bo Shuriken

This version of the shuriken weapon, unlike the "star" or "wheel" form, is often overlooked by most, as it doesn't fit the conventional throwing-star model. In fact, they're often considered by many to be more in the category of throwing knives than shuriken. This, of course, is not the case.

Bo shuriken are, just as the name implies, straight, stick-like, spikes. They can have either one or both ends ground to a point. And, while most of those available today possess a round shank, it's more likely that the models of ancient times were more square and slab-like. Since they would have been cut from thick plates of heated metal, and the lathe technology for metal-working was not prevelant, it's far more likely that this is true.

Bo shuriken also have several methods for throwing, depending on whether or not the Ninja wanted the spike to fly straight into its target, or turn end-over-end to get there.

But, with either the throw, the grip was the same, using a unique positioning of the fingers that form a channel that the bar can slide through and maintain its intended trajectory.

Modern equivalents

Again, we want to get out of the limited thinking that cages the minds of the average person if we're to master the skills and what it means to be a Ninja. Just as with our shinobi ancestors, the law frowns on the use and even possession of these weapons in many places around the world. No matter though. Because, just as authorities never outlaw pens, umbrellas, brooms, and closet dowel rods for hanging our clothes and therefore they will never take 'stick" weapons away from us (even if they outlaw every martial arts weapon in the book!). The same goes for such items as ash trays, saucers, cell phones, and other items resembling the model of the hira-shuirken, “they” can never take away all of the things around us that can be employed like a shuriken without radically changing life as we know it.

Get the idea?

Just as learning how to use the Kubotan:Self-Defense Keychain allows you to employ the same tactics, skills, and techniques with a pen, ruler, or other small, hand-held item, learning to use the *shuriken* literally mutliplies what you have at-hand to use in your own defense - a hundred-fold, if not more!!!

To get you thinking along these lines, here's a short list of items that can be used, both hand-held and/or thrown, as a weapon once you've mastered the use of the shuriken:

Credit cards
Coins
Business cards
small, flat stones
Chopsticks
Pens & Pencils
Wallet
CD/DVD (and their cases!)
small Picture frames

small Books
Tea Saucers
Drink Coasters
Cookies/Crackers
Nails
Chisels
Wrenches & Screwdrivers
Scalpels
Meat Thermometers
Medical Thermometers
ID and Security Badges (especially the stiff, lamenated kind)
Police and Security Badges
small, flat medicine boxes (like those that decongestants, etc are sold in)
Waitress' Meal Check Book
Floppy Disks
Knitting and crochet needles

...in fact, anything that is shaped like either version of the shuriken can be pressed into use. Even your cell phone, iPod, eye glasses, toothbrush, or a sandwich can be pressed into service once you understand the concepts that gave birth to the original weapon. The difference, of course, is whether or not it has an edge, what kind, and how you can press it into service to defend yourself.

You know... Everyone gets so caught up in the idea of these "way cool" martial arts weapons, as though they have some kind of magic power, in-and-of themselves. But, the trueth is, hitorically, they were just tools - everyday tools - pressed into service AS weapons.

- ***Nunchaku*** are rice flails for seperating the grain from the chaff
- ***Tonfa*** were gristmill handles
- ***Sai*** are farmer's sickles
- ***Shuriken*** were taken from... Well, you know...

I'm always telling my students: *"Go to Lowes or any hardware store. Walk in, go to the garden and other "tool" sections, and...*

...look at all the "way cool" martial arts weapons!"

The point here is that, if you’re going to get past the usual mindset that limits most martial artists and potential warriors, you’re going to have to see beyond the names, conventional titles, and specific “forms” of things.

But hey...

...that's what training is for!

You're not going to learn things like that sitting on your duff behind a computer screen...

...just reading about how it's done!

Holding the Weapon for Maximum Effect!

Basic Grips

As a means of getting you started, I've selected a few of the most common grips that I teach my students when presenting this material. Once you become proficient in these (please note that I didn't say... *"after you learn these"*), then you can start adding more or experimenting with some of your own ideas. But, be careful with the *"I made it up myself"* routine. Unless you have the experience of using this, or any skill, under duress, when a blood-thirsty attacker is putting the pressure on you, you can't be sure if your home made technique is going to work or not. And learning that it really doesn't in a life-or-death situation is not my idea of a good time.

Holding the Hira-Shuriken for hand-held Defense

When holding the standard, 4-point shuriken for hand-to-hand combat (it's not recommended to try to hold a star with more than four points), it's important to make sure that the weapon you're using is either not sharpened at all, or is only sharpened at the tips.

That brings up another myth about the throwing star. And that is that **it has to be sharpended from tip to center** along the blades. Maybe it looks more lethal that way, I don't know.

But again, there's a problem with this. First, the entire bladed section isn't going to touch the target and therefore doesn't **need** to be sharpened. The shuriken that I have made for my students are from an original pattern. These shuriken are so thin that they cut extremely well and don't have to be sharpened at all!

If you're interested in getting a few of these little gems for your collection, you can order them directly from me by calling the academy (information is at the back of the book) or by using this link:

http://www.warrior-concepts-online.com/shuriken.html

The other, more critical problem is that...

...if your star is sharpened too much, you can't hold it for hand-to-hand combat and therefore seriously limit its uses. In other words, you HAVE to violate the first principle of combat and force yourself to...

...throw your weapon away!

Now... how smart is that? Would a real ninja box themselves in like this?

No. Of course not!

Take a look at the picture of the hira-shuriken gripped for hand-held usage. Notice the finger placement? This is very important as this position allows for the most flexibility, strength, and adaptibility when using the weapon in-close.

From this grip, we can...

...punch directly into a target...

...execute a clubbing, parrying, counterstrike to an incoming limb...

...employ hooking, trapping strikes and cuts to hidden targets...

...hook onto soft, exposed parts of the assailant's body or clothing (like a claw) with the bottom point, and...

...we can also flip the weapon over from hand-held...

1

2

...to throwing position...

3

4

...and back again...

1

2

...to hand-held position...

3

4

... in one quick, deft motion!

5

Want to see this one in live action? Click here to view a short video clip that demonstrates how this is done. Then, go practice the maneuver until you can do it with your eyes closed - while moving - and without cramping your hand or dropping the weapon!

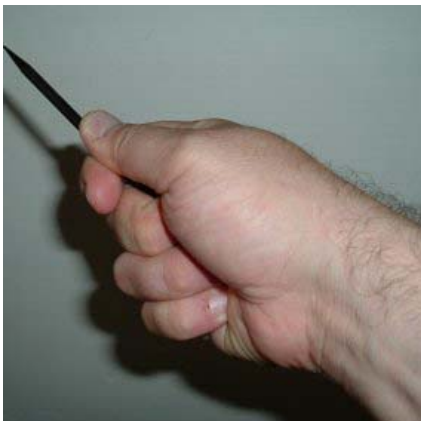
There you go. One grip...

...5 or more uses...

...just to get you started!

Holding the Bo-Shuriken for Hand-to-Hand Combat

Due to it's simple shape, the bo-shuriken's use is pretty self-explanatory. Take a look at the pictures to see the fore and reverse grips for the weapon. For those of you who have properly trained with a knife, the answer is "yes," the thumb belongs along the shaft of the weapon. Unlike the knife, with a much larger grip area, using the thumb as shown here weakens the grip.



(Fore Grip)

Not so with the bo-shuriken. Its slim design requires some reinforcement to increase leverage and strength during pressure point and stabbing attacks with the weapon.

(Reverse Grip)

The reverse grip is easy to hide when the arms are hanging naturally at your sides. In addition to stabbing, this position makes it possible to hook, grab, and control parts of the assailant’s body while other weapons or tactics are being used.

Holding the Hira Shuriken for Throwing

Again, the hira, or star-wheel version of the shuriken, has two basic grips - each grip matching an intended throwing method. In keeping with the Ninja's principle of “naturalness" and doing that which will produce the results we want in the easiest way possible, we want to hold the shuriken star so that our grip and extending arm will naturally produce a throw that will do what we want.

The two most common intentions when throwing a star-shuriken is to either:

1. Stick it in something, *or...*

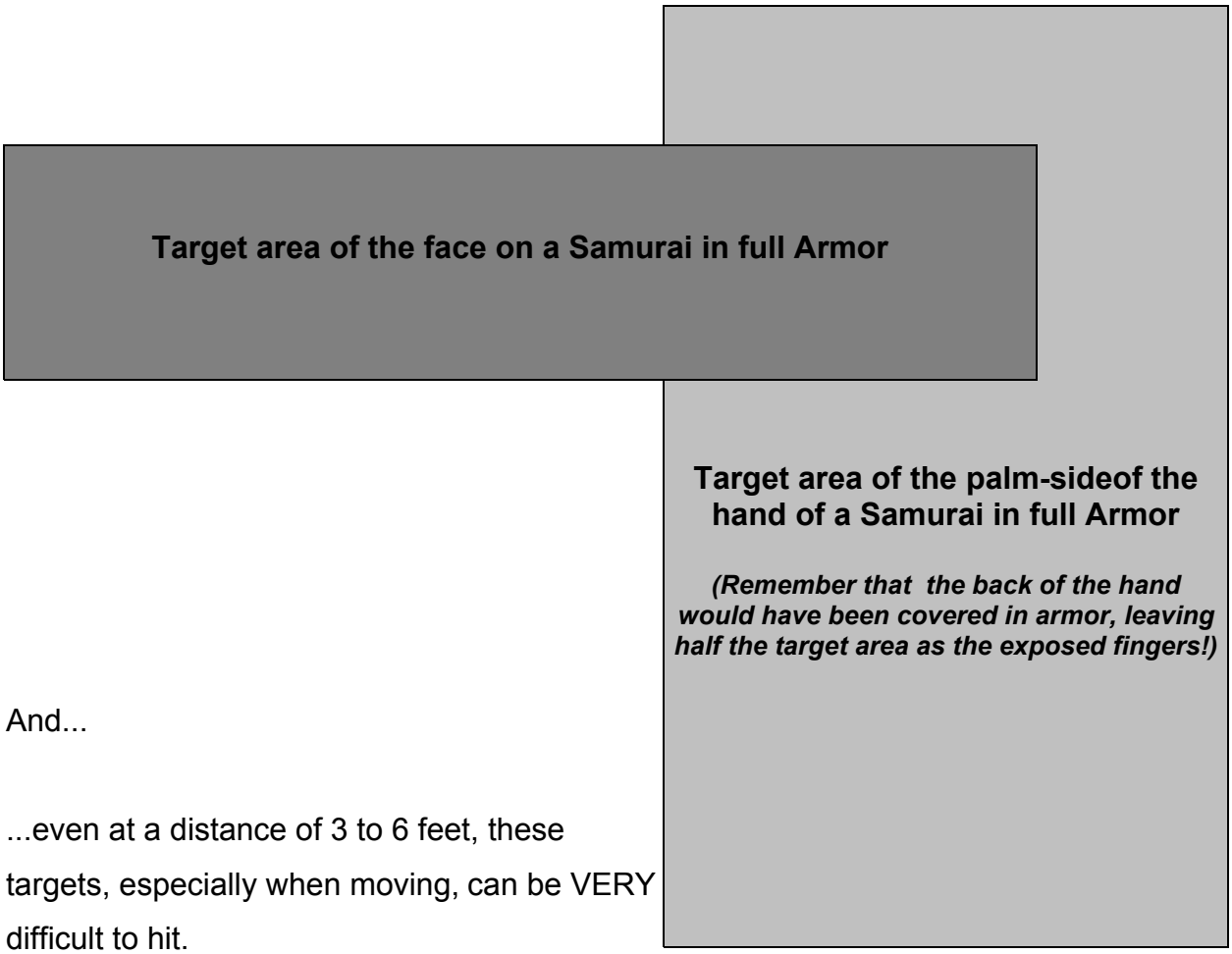
2. Have it cut the target and spin away.

I know that, for most, the idea of getting a throwing star to stick into its intended target really gets their blood pumping. Watching my students get frustrated because their shuriken hit the exact spot on a target but failed to stick, is a common occurance in the dojo ("training hall"). But, let me ask you...

...what would happen to a ninja in 16th century Japan who threw a star at a Samurai dressed in wooden or at the very least, thick material-based armor? Nothing would be more surprising than to have your assailant pull the weapon from his armor (or body), and throw it *BACK AT YOU!*

And besides, against a Samurai in full armor, the only exposed places to target would be the slight opening between the top of the *men* "face plate" and the front rim or visor of the *kabuto* "helmet.," the hands, and the feet (remember, it was a sandle-based society).

To get an idea about the size of these targets, look at these rectangle blocks.



And...

...even at a distance of 3 to 6 feet, these targets, especially when moving, can be VERY difficult to hit.

We'll talk more about the difference between throwing at a stationary target and actually trying to hit a moving adversary in the heat of a fight in the next section on throwing the shuriken.

For now though, just like I teach in my combat handgun courses, it's important to understand the effect that our grip and posture has on keeping a weapon on target when we're under pressure.

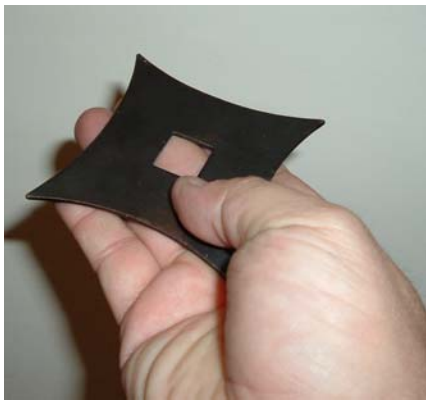
Take a look at the two grips pictured on the next page.

You'll quickly notice that the hand position is very different for each. It's precisely this difference that causes the shuriken to leave the hand and travel to the target in a manner consistant with the effect we're trying to cause. And that is either to:

1. **Stick**, or...

2. **Cut**

Grip for throwing the shuriken in a way that will cause it to stick into it's intended target *(less spin)*



Grip used for creating a buzz-saw-like spin-cut at the target *(more spin)*

Remember: Due to the fact the ninja star is designed primarily as a distraction tool and is not likely to cause damage enough to disable your attacker, the spin-cut throw is the prefered method for most defensive uses. That way, he can't pull the star out of the wall or his body part (his anger intensified by the pain!), and throw it back at you.

Ironically though, the throwing method for getting the star to stick...

...is the easiest to learn!

And finally...

Holding the Bo-Shuriken for Throwing

Unlike the usual grip used by most knife throwers, the grip used for launching the bo-shuriken is unique. The hand is formed in a way that uses the fingers to create a channel that the weapon sits in. The channel also acts as a guide, much like the barrel of a gun, to give greater control as the spike leaves the hand on it's way to the target.

Even though it has, like the star, two throwing methods, the grip for the bo-shuriken doesn't change.

The basic grip for the spike-like bo-shuriken

(Point forward)

(Point backward)

In Conclusion...

Remember that what I'm presenting here is one way to do these things. I believe it is the right way, not just because it's what my teachers taught me, but...

...because I've tried other methods and found that they were not in alignment with the Ninja's principle of naturalness. In other words, after trying many different "ways," these

methods allow me to produce the results I want with the least amount of energy, power, and wear-and-tear!

However...

If you find that another method works for you and you can produce the same results with the same or less effort, then by all means ...

USE IT!

Just make sure you're being honest with yourself and not just selecting a method because it's what you learned first, it's fancy, or it's a favorite.

That being said, and now that we've looked at how to hold the weapon, let's move on to...

Throwing Postures

Just as important as your grip, is the posture from which you use to launch the shuriken. And while a master practitioner should be able to throw from just about any position he or she finds herself, we have to begin somewhere, don't we.

The following pictures show the basic bladed stance for launching the hira-shuriken using both a horizontal "frisbee-like" throw, and an overhand "baseball-like" throw. Please note that I used the terms "*frisbee*" and "*baseball*" to give you a reference point that you're familiar with, NOT as a description of how to actually throw the weapon.

For Vertical, Overhand Throwing

For Horizontal Throwing

Understanding distance with the Bo-Shuriken

One of the important principles that you'll need to understand for effectively using the bo-shuriken, is that of distance. Because the spike doesn't have the benefit of multiple blades that radiate out from center, like the "star" weapon, you'll need to be able to calculate the rotation of the weapon to insure that the point meets the target at the right time.

As a side note, remember that you're thowing a piece of metal at someone in the heat of a fight. Can you imagine being hit in the face, or anywhere on your body, out of nowhere...

...with a piece of metal?!

The point is, even if you don't make the weapon stick into the target, remember the important thing...

...you HIT the target with a solid object! And, unless you’re fighting the Terminator, he WILL respond!

As a means for practicing to get to know the flight dynamics of the bo-shuriken, a good rule of thumb is that the weapon will make a half-turn about every three feet it travels to the target. This is assuming, of course, that you're using the throwing method I describe here.

Throwing for Accuracy and Power

The key to throwing the Ninja star or spike with precision and enough power to do the job, lies in the Ninja's use of the body in motion. The ninja's *taijutsu* "body art" of relaxed, flowing, movements that gets the body weight fully behind the weapon is the key. Regardless of whether we're delivering a punch, kick, cutting with a sword, or throwing the shuriken, the principle is the same.

If you're unfamiliar with *taijutsu,* or the ninja's unarmed fighting style, the following description may help. But, remember that nothing beats actual experience with a master teacher. You're always welcome to attend one of my live seminars or even my yearly Spring or Fall Ninja Training Camps for more personal, hands-on training.

For information about seminars and camps, here's the link to the pages on the web site:

For a schedule of upcoming seminars:
http://www.warrior-concepts-online.com/seminars.html

For information about Ninja Camps:
http://www.warrior-concepts-online.com/ninja-camps.html

Look at these pictures to get an idea of the flow inherent in the movement of launching the throwing star weapon at a stationary target. Remember that, we are really practicing the proper skills for being able to hit any target, whether stationary or moving, with these skills. And, while it may seem like a good idea to "cheat," and change the way you're doing things, you will only be lengthening your learning curve. This will only mean that it will take much longer to master these skills.

Here are the steps for throwing the flat, star-like weapon at a target horizontally...

Step 1: Begin in a bladed position with the weapon in the lead hand near the midsection - the trick is to use the body as the sighting mechanism and not the flailing arm

Step 2: Keeping your body level, shift across your lead knee as you extend the lead arm forward toward the target

Step 3: From the fully-extended position, the lead hand and fingers are pointing directly at the spot on the target where you want the weapon to hit. The trick with this throwing method is to move your hand in a straight line from stack to release.

Horizontal Throwing

From a basic bladed posture like the ninja's *ichimonji no kamae*, hold the star in the lead hand using one of the grips shown in the previous section. The lead arm should be bent so that the weapon is held, palm-up, in front of the midsection. Then, using a smooth, gliding movement, shift your weight forward over your lead knee while simultaneously extending your lead arm out towards the target. The elbow should remain in a tucked position in front of the ribs, then extend out in a straight line towards the target as the hand and lower arm shift into place.

This movement is very different from the arcing "frisbee" throw that I often see being done. This type of throw should be avoided, even if it is tempting to do when throwing

at a stationary target. The main reason for this is that the practitioner has to time the release of the weapon at the precise place along the arc for the weapon to move in the correct direction. And, if you've ever thrown a frisbee this way, you know how much your friend has to move to chase and catch the toy!

The throwing of the blade is more like dealing cards. Instead of flipping the wrist, creating the tell-tale arc, simply extend the weapon towards the target in a straight line, as if you were "feeding" the weapon to the target.

You'll know when you have this correct as the lead arm will be pointing directly at, and not past, the intended target at the moment of release. If you've gone past the intended target, you know that you're throwing an arc.

Vertical Throwing

From a basic bladed posture like the ninja's *doko no kamae*, hold the weapon in the rear hand using one of the grips shown in the previous section. For this description, I'll be focusing on throwing the nail-like bo-shuriken, but the basic principle and technique holds true for the hira-shuriken.

The lead arm should be straight in a good kamae-based, covering position (you may be moving away and parrying or covering against an incoming attack). The rear arm is bent, with the forearm vertical so that the weapon is held, fingers-up, beside the ear or top of the head.

Then, using the same smooth, gliding movement described for the horizontal throw, shift your weight forward over your lead knee while simultaneously extending your rear arm out towards the target. This extension should, again, create a natural straight line and not be swung in a downward arc from the shoulder. The elbow should remain in a tucked position beside the ribs, then extend out in a straight line towards the target as the hand and lower arm shift into place.

This movement is very different from the arcing, whipping, "baseball" throw that I often see being done. This type of throw should be avoided, even if it is tempting to do when throwing at a stationary target. The main reason for this is the same as for the horizontal throw - you have to time the release of the weapon at the precise place along the arc for the weapon to go where you want it to. And, in the heat of combat, against a moving target... you don't have that luxury!

And, just with the horizontal throwing action, you'll know when you have this correct as the lead arm will be pointing directly at, and not below, the intended target at the moment of release. If the spike is not sticking in the target where your fingers are pointing, either your throw is too weak or you're whipping.

Here are the steps for throwing the spike-like, bo-shuriken weapon at a target...

Step 1: Begin in a bladed position with the weapon in the rear hand at the side of the head - remember to use the body like a cannon where the barrel is pointed BEFORE firing the weapon

Step 2: Keeping your body level, shift across your lead knee as you extend the rear arm forward toward the target

Step 3: From the fully-extended position, the throwing hand and fingers are pointing directly at the point on the target where you want the weapon to hit. For more power, you can continue to step through with your rear leg before releasing the weapon.

In both forms of throwing, it is the extending arm and final “natural” movement of the hand and wrist that creates or elliminates spin on the weapon as it leaves the hand. There is no need to force anything, if you know what is happening with and as a result of the body movement.

As you can see, as with all things related to the ninja and the true *budo* of real warriors, there is much more to the shuriken then meets the eye.

But, as I said, just reading about how to do it won’t do much for improving your skill level beyond where it is right now. If you want to just have something to talk about with your friends in the dojo, over coffee, or on the net...you probably don’t need to do much more than maybe re-read a section or two to make sure you got your facts straight.

However; if your goal is skill proficiency and mastery, then there’s lots of work to be done. And that will require effort, discipline, and commitment to putting in the time needed. Even then...

We’re only half-way.

Now that we’ve covered the history, background, and basics of throwing the shuriken - what, to most people, is the “obvious” or *omote* aspect of this weapon, let’s turn our attention to the “hidden” or *ura* realm of...

...using the shuriken as a hand-held tool for self-defense.

In Section II of this book, I’ve outlined some example techniques for using both the hira and bo-shuriken against common punching, grabbing, and kicking attacks. You’ll also find a few techniques for using the shuriken in a close-range encounter where swords are involved.

My goal was not to overwhelm you with a ton of techniques. But, instead to cover the essential principles and concepts for using the weapon effectively, and in a way that takes advantage of it's ability to seemingly come out of no-where to confuse, harrass, and inflict damage upon the unsuspecting assailant foolish enough to attack you in the first place!

SECTION II

Hand-held Self-Defense Tactics with the Shuriken!

Chapter 4
Defenses Against Strikes and Kicks

When using the shuriken as a close-range self-defense tool, remember that the weapon is there to assist your techniques, not make them something they're not. No weapon can make up for lousy skill when it comes to self-defense. If you can't do things like evade strikes, maintain your balance, and move freely and quickly *without* a weapon, it's not going to be any different with one. Just as a person who couldn't hit the broad side of a barn with a rock, that same person isn't going to do any better just because he's throwing a shuriken!

The following techniques are some basic and not so basic examples of using both the hira and bo shuriken against punching and kicking attacks. Please note that we are using a rubber, practice weapon, like our students train with. This is both for our partner's safety and to be able to practice without causing damage to ourselves should we make a mistake.

Also note that, because we are using a mock-up and not the actual tool, you will not see the blood, torn flesh, or hear the blood-curdling screams that will accompany the proper application of these techniques in action under real conditions.

As an added bonus to your training, make sure that you also train with these techniques WITHOUT the weapon. After all, the are simply unarmed techniques where a weapon has been introduced to make them even more effective!

Hira shuriken vs. a Straight Punch

Evade the incoming punch by shifting back and to the outside of the attack on a 45 degree retreating angle and...

...deliver a circular parrying/cutting counter cut to the incoming arm.

You can impale the back of the hand/arm directly, or...

...shift the hand to create a gouging cut with the weapon's protruding blade.

Continuing with the same momentum created by your retreating action, rock back in across your lead knee (the same action as throwing) and...

...punch into the thin muscles and tissue surrounding his ribs.

Immediately step or leap back and away.

From your new position of safety, you can flip the shuriken over into throwing position and send it flying towards his face if he attempts to recommit to the fight.

Defense Against a Straight Punch #2

Avoid the incoming strike by stepping outside...

...and forward while turning your chest flat to the attacking arm.

Slip your trailing hand that's holding the shuriken under and inside the attack to be able to cut the artery on the inside of his upper arm.

Then, drive the forward tip of the weapon into his throat...

...before reaching across...

...and cutting the side of his neck to finish him.

Defense Against Punches and Kicks with the Bo Shuriken

The defender observes the attacker from the *ichimonji no kamae* ("foundation posture")...

...with the *bo-shuriken* in reverse grip, held in the lead hand.

As the attacker punches, using correct timing and movement, the Ninja avoids, catches the incoming wrist of the assailant while raising the spike into a *doko no kamae* ("angry tiger posture")...

....before rocking in and impaling it deeply into the captured forearm of his assailant.

As the attacker attempts another punch, the defender retracts the spike and jams the attacker's punching arm...

...before sinking and driving the metal shaft into the his opponent's thigh. From here, the defender can continue to inflict damage, or escape, depending on his attacker's next move.

Defense Against Grab and Punch Combination with the Bo Shuriken

Evade the incoming blows and...

...jam the tip of the weapon into exposed targets as in the last technique.

Finally, against an incoming punch, avoid the blow with last-second timing and...

...ram the weapon into the attacker's fist between the webbing of the fingers and the bones of the hand, driving it deep inside.

NOTE: As an advanced training exercise, you can combine this technique with the last one - using the first move in this string continue where the last one in the previous technique left off.

Remember that kata are *"moments of potential in time,"* not set-in-stone" things.

Control now becomes very easy as the Ninja defender simply twists and levers the imbedded shaft to gain compliance and...

...move the assailant into position...

...for a painful throw or takedown. Even after the assailant is on the ground, the defender continues to apply painful manipulation with the bo-shuriken *from within the attacker's <u>own</u> hand!*

A broken or impaled body part like this is an excellent control from this point out. All you need to do is hold onto the affected area and strike or move it to intensify pain whenever the assailant tries to continue. Eventually, he will need to move away to take care of his injuries or simply pass-out from the mind-numbing pain!

In using the bo-shuriken with the foregrip, simply apply the same principles and tactics as those used with the Kubotan, self-defense keychain weapon. The idea is the same.

If you need some basic instruction with the keychain weapon, go here.

Defense Against a Kick with the Hira Shuriken

The defender watches as the assailant launches a heel-stamping kick to his midsection.

Avoid the kick by slipping forward to the inside and punch the point of the weapon into the inner side of the incoming leg.

As the assailant comes forward to lower his injured limb, deliver a backhand jab to the face with the blade on that side of the shuriken.

As his head flies back from the pain, move in and apply a scissoring choke to his exposed throat and, if he continues to press the issue, you can lever your arms to cut across his throat and finish the encounter!

Chapter 5
Defenses Against Grabbing Attacks

Just as with the defenses against punches and kicks, the shuriken becomes an aid to an already effective technique. The benefit in a grappling situation though, is that the pain caused by the weapon allows you to break the attacker's balance, attention, and will so much easier.

It's important to remember to keep the weapon concealed, even while using it. If the assailant realizes what you have, he will take steps to defend and protect himself against it. This means that he'll also "turn up the volume" on his attack - he'll fight harder.

Knowing what weapon you're using gives him an advantage where, only seconds before, not knowing kept him in the dark and even more confused about how you were causing so much pain!

Remember that the following techniques use just as much, if not more, psychology, as they do physical technique. If you can remember this important point, and use it to your advantage, not just with the shuriken - but always - you can gain control of a situation long before the assailant ever realizes that he's lost it!

Defense Against a Bully-Type Grab with the Shuriken

Here's a technique that can employ either the *hira* or the *bo* versions of the weapon. As long as you do this convincingly and don't over-act, he'll believe that he has control of this limp, ragdoll of a wimp that he's just taken a hold of. In reality, what you're doing is employing the Ninja's ***kyojitsu tenkan ho*** method of 'disguising truth and falsehood' to get your hands into position above his grabbing arms.

Employing the magician's trick of "palming" the shuriken, the Ninja defender appears to be attempting to calm the attacker.
As the opponent grabs, the defender goes with the force of the assault. This move

simultaneously convinces the attcker that he's in-charge, and allows the Ninja to get his hands above the assailant's targets!

...before he knows what's happening to him, the point of one of the blades is slammed down and into the muscles of his arm.

Which is immediately followed with the defender jamming another one of the points on the weapon up into the underside of the attacker's chin/throat.

From this position of total control, another point is raked down his sternum and lower torso...

...to fold him in on himself and take away his ability to move...

... before punching into his hip/thigh area...

...and driving him to the ground!

Defense Against a Single Hand Grab with the Hira Shuriken

From an observation position...

...avoid the incoming grab attempt and parry the attacker's wrist with your outside, free hand.

Simultaneously grab his wrist and slam the point of the shuriken extending from the side of your hand into the soft, nerve-loaded area of his upper ribs or arm pit.

Following along with his body's natural reaction to the pain...

...slam his arm down in a pumping action several times to impale the underside of it on another

blade AND drive the original point even farther home into his torso.

After retracting the weapon...

...back away into a solid defensive posture and watch for his next move... if he has one!

Defense Against a Wrist Grab with the Bo-shuriken

The defender conceals a bo-shuriken in his hand - itself placed along the assailant's sight-line so he can't see it...

...as he positions himself to negotiate and reason with his attacker.

As the assailant grabs the leading wrist, the defender flexes his knees to neutralize the force and maintain his balance and positioning.

Leveraging his arm from the elbow (NOT the hand, he maneuvers to free himself from his attacker's grasp.

To distract and jam a possible follow-up punch from the opponent's free hand, the defender sends out an *omote shuto*, "palm-down knifehand" into the assailant's temple.

He then produces the hidden shuriken and places it across the bone structure in the attacker's wrist. After reaching under the arm and securing the free end of the weapon, securely trapping his opponent's limb...

...he steps back and drops the assailant.

A joint control on the arm and a well-placed weapon convince the assailant that the defender is the one in control!

Defending Against a Double Lapel Grab with the Hira Shuriken

Fighting is always a last resort. But, if it's necessary, the Ninja is ready with a concealed hira-shuriken in his right hand.

As your opponent grabs your clothing strongly in an attempt to control you, allow your arms to flail upwards with the force of his grab....

...before he knows what's happening to him, slam the point of one of the blades down and into the muscles of his arm.

Next, slam the flat surface of the steal plate into his face to drive his head back and cover your next move.

Reach over his head and...

...jam the bottom tip of the shiruken into the tough, resiliant skin that makes up his scalp.

Then, using a coordinated effort, and taking advantage of his reaction to the pain, simultaneously pull his head forward...

...into waiting should slams to the face.

The attacker's own natural reaction to move away from pain actually helps to increase the damage potential of your shoulder strikes...

...until he is finally rendered dazed...

...and unwilling to continue!

Chapter 6
Defenses Against a Sword Attack

Here's a few for the traditionalists!

In ancient Japan, it was not uncommon for a Ninja operative to be unarmed when encountering a fully packed Samurai or Bushi. In this case, the ninja had better be able to pull a trick or two out of his pouch, if he or she stood a chance.

As an important note, it's important that we respect the skills of the swordsman - even a mediocre one. Contrary to the techniques that are routinely depicted in martial arts magazines, videos, and on web sites these days, it is VERY difficult to beat a trained swordsman. Hell...

...it's difficult to get in on, let alone beat, an ***untrained*** person flailing at you with a knife, machete or any other weapon, like a shoto or katana with a 28 - 36" razor blade attached to it!

Defending Against a Downward Cut Using Taihenjutsu & Shuriken

Unlike most martial systems, where the practitioner's resist or avoid going to the ground at any cost - or those who take a fight to the ground as a default as though equalizing a fight somehow increases your chances of survival, the Ninja's taihenjutsu ("body-changing arts") utilize rolling, leaping, breakfalls, and other ground-covering maneuvers for both offensive and defensive tactics.

As the attacker cuts, using correct timing and movement, drop and...

...roll past the incoming attack.

By rolling behind the attacker and forcing him to find his target, the Ninja gains the necessary time to retrieve a stack of shuriken from within his jacket, and...

...as his opponent turns to cut again...

...unleash a barrage of the tiny blades at his face, hands, and neck...

...causing him to go on the defensive. Then, while his attacker is distracted, the Ninja warrior has the time and distance to get out of there!

As a variation, the Ninja can also cut or stab his assailant's incoming ankle with an exposed point on the shuriken as he enters his evasive roll. This will seriously slow the attacker down, make the follow-up technique much easier, and allow him to escape much faster.

Defense Against a Sword Draw-and-Cut "Stand-Off"

From a stand-off kind of position where you can't wait for the attacker to make the first move, you can throw a shuriken that has been previously concealed in your sword-drawing hand to distract him long enough to execute your own draw-and-cut maneuver. After this first move, the rest is easy!

By borrowing the magician's trick of "palming," we can appear to be ready to draw, giving the opponent no reason to doubt that this will be a fair exchange of skill where he is probably the better combatant.

From a distance, the little bit of the shuriken that is visible to you, will be completely hidden from your attacker's view.

Instead of drawing his own sword as the opponent initiates his draw and cut maneuver, the Ninja fires off a hira shuriken directly at the adversary's eyes...

...to stall him and create time for the defender to easily go for his own weapon. This was especially important for a combatant dealing with a more highly skilled opponent. The lesson here is... *If he's faster than you, create a situation where he is forced to slow down or stall.*

While the opponent is responding to the shuriken, the Ninja is free to execute a damaging draw-and-cut maneuver of his own to his enemy's leading, sowrd-drawing arm.

With the assailant now in a position where he is dazed and confused by the shuriken attack, and in a position where he is incapable of continuing with his initial attack, the Ninja moves into a *daijodan no kamae* ("great upper level sword posture")...

...and continues through with a *kiri-sage* ("downward cut") to finish the encounter in his favor.

Chapter 7
Defending Against Someone Throwing a Shuriken at...YOU!

As much as martial artists and those studying self-defense would like to believe that their techniques and weapons are unbeatable, the truth is that...

...you don't really know a technique or weapon as well as you should if you can't defend against it!

Think about that for a second.

Are your techniques really THAT superior?

Is any weapon really THAT invincible?

If so...

...what will you do if someone attacks YOU with it... just lie down and die?

No.

Mastery in the Ninja's arts of "winning against all odds" demands that you not only know how to use a weapon like the shuriken effectively, but also that you know how to defend yourself against it should someone try to us it on you.

The point of the following techniques is this:

You don't truly know a weapon unless you understand it's weaknesses and limitations.

But... never forget the most important lesson of all:

You are defending agains the "opponent," not just the working-end of his weapon!

Unarmed Defense Against a Thrown Shuriken (Strategy #1)

Using last-second, evasive turns and shifts of the body to avoid incoming blades is the best course of action if you can't find objects with which to hide behind. Also, putting sufficient distance between you and the weapon thrower also increases your odds of not being damaged. And, even if you are hit, moving with the attack or being farther away, lessens the damage that can be inflicted on you.

REMEMBER: The *shuriken* is a harassment weapon and not likely to do serious damage if it hits you. Keep your wits, even when damage occurs in a fight, and you're more likely to keep your life! As I always remind my students: *"If the "TV" hasn't been turned off, the game is STILL ON!"*

Use rubber mock-up shuriken to practice successfully evading and avoiding incoming weapons - at least until you've developed sufficient skill *(you don't get hit 9-out-of-10 times!)*

Use extreme caution when using live blades of any kind and make sure that...

1) You have a <u>sympathetic</u> training partner *(one who wants to see you do well, without cheating for you),* and...

2) You only use blades that are <u>clean</u> and free of rust *(unless you're sure that your tetanus shots are up to date!)*

The key here is in developing not only last-second timing but, also the ability to move your body *<u>WHEN</u>* you *<u>have</u>* to *(as opposed to only when you're "ready")***!**

Unarmed Defense Against a Thrown Shuriken (Strategy #2)

Contrary to the movie images popular in the media and even in video games today, showing the Ninja catching blades between his hands, a true Ninja never willingly comes in contact with a live weapon, unless he or she has no other choice. Evasion is always preferred over trying to block or "catch" a weapon, regardless of whether we're talking about a shuriken, katana blade, or even an unarmed fist.

From the *hoko* ("open-bear") or *hoi no kamae* ("encircling posture"), you can watch as the weapon comes in and then...

...with proper timing...

...use a smacking/slapping, motion to deflect the weapon away from vital targets - in this case down and between your legs and into the ground behind you.

Again, as with all defenses against edged weapons, just know that you WILL likely get cut during the defensive exchange.

But also remember that, your job is *NOT* to avoid being stabbed or cut...

...your job is to avoid being stabbed or cut to the extent that *the fight is over for YOU!*

Using a Weapon As a Shield Against Incoming Shuriken

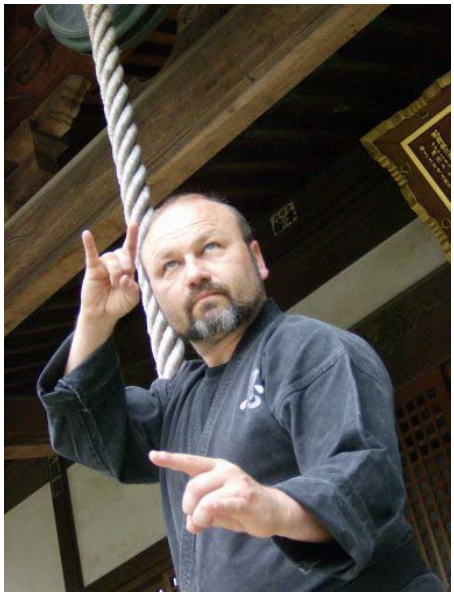
The trick with this technique is to avoid using big, sweeping movements against any single weapon. Understand that you only need to protect a small profile and, creating the correct position makes it very difficult for an attacker to get even a bo shuriken in on you - no matter how good he is!

The Ninja warrior's *kongo no kamae* ("Diamond-Thunderbolt Attitude") **and *tate no kamae*** ("Shield Attitude"), **sword and staff postures are deceptive in that they do not appear to provide the necessary protective cover against a thrown weapon like the shuriken.**

And yet, with the aid of the attacker's own faculties of sight and depth-perception *(and their inherent limitations)*, **these protective postures make it very difficult for an assailant to get an accurate "bead" on his target.**

Simultaneously, they allow for the Ninja defender to use the slightest of movements to evade and parry an incoming weapon without giving up the benefit of cover.

About the Author



Shidoshi Jeffrey M. Miller is the founder and chief instructor of Warrior Concepts International in Sunbury, Pennylvania. In addition to being a master teacher in the Bujinkan Dojo, he is also an initiated lay teacher of Japanese Tendai Mikkyo. He has been studying and training in the ancient ways of the Warrior since 1975. From a very young age, he felt drawn to the authentic lessons and lifeways of the ancient warrior ideal and the realms of spiritual empowerment. But, after going through many schools, teachers, and styles, it wasn't until 1980, that his search lead him to a new martial art that had found it's way to the Western-world - *Ninjutsu*, or *Ninpo* as it's known in it's higher order. The lessons learned and the skills that he has spent decades perfecting, along with his real-world experience as a police officer, undercover investigator, and body guard, makes Mr. Miller the perfect choice for getting the lessons you need.

His web site, warrior-concepts-online.com is loaded with articles, free information, and products to help you master your self - regardless of whether you're looking to improve as a martial artist, learn the ways of Japan's ancient Ninja Warriors, or to gain the real-world self-defense skills necessary to survive in today's often violent world.

He is the author of hundreds of articles as-well-as several other books and videos on the topics of self-protection, personal development, and warriorship; including:

The Karate-Myth

Controlling the Fight

KUBOTAN: Self-Defense Keychain

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