

## Chapter 3

# Elbow Shields and Hit Blocks

In conjunction with the *jurus* the student must practice a series of moves which will build their counter offense. I did not use the word self defense, even though this is what it is. The reason is simple. A *Silat* man does not wish to fight and will avoid it if possible. But once the combat has begun there is nothing left to do but stop the attacker quickly and as decisively as possible. I want to leave you with no doubt that anyone foolish enough to attack a good *Silat* man can and should expect to get hurt real quick. Sometimes the word self defense connotes the old image of the master painlessly tossing the thugs about until they all rise and congratulate him on his great skill. Maybe even asking to take lessons from him. Well maybe in the movies, but not in real life. Is it brutal? Yes it is, but if you feel that if you punch me, your arm will break and if you kick me, your leg will be shattered, then I believe you will most likely leave me alone and all will be well. If not then I will still be ok, and if I must then go to court to answer a lawsuit, well then I will send you a get well card and hire a good attorney. But I will still be here to see my wife and children. Better to be judged by twelve than carried by seven. Breaking his leg may be even more humane than breaking his nose and knocking out some teeth before he stops.

### **Elbow Shields**

With this in mind we shall begin with a series of hit blocks that are known as the *siku perisai* or elbow shields. Following along with the photos you will note that the practitioner has assumed a normal stance and then for the first move makes a sweeping low movement with the front elbow in a downward arcing manner. This is the same lower gate elbow move, which can be utilized

in the practicing of the *jurus*. (Photo 51) It is used to hit any incoming punches or kicks directed at the lower half of the anatomy in normal usage. As you can see in the photo this blow uses the hard bony end of the elbow against softer targets of the attacker (Photo 52). In this art, this is what is meant by hard blocks. The word hard is referring to the bony parts of the body used, not in the strength of the block. In this type of hit blocks the harder the attacker throws his blows the more severe will be his damage. Of course the torquing rolling action of this move



Photo 51

combined with the slight sinking of the body on impact can greatly increase its force. Now in elbow striking, whether defense or a combination, the usual rule is never reach for the elbow strike. In other words you must be in range to use it rather than trying to step forward into the blow. If you would do that it would telegraph the blow and go against the principle of camouflage.



Photo 52

## Long Elbow Shield

There is one very effective use of this elbow shield move against incoming high punches that is seldom seen, despite the fact that it is quite easy to do. (Photo 53) The photo illustrates this high gate technique. As the punch comes in you simply roll the elbow towards it. The wrist is bent and the palm is almost facing forwards as the punch is picked off. This is sometimes called a pinpoint precision hit block but in fact as I said it is quite easy to do. Be very careful when practicing this to have the partners hand padded up so as not to shatter the bones of his hand on impact.

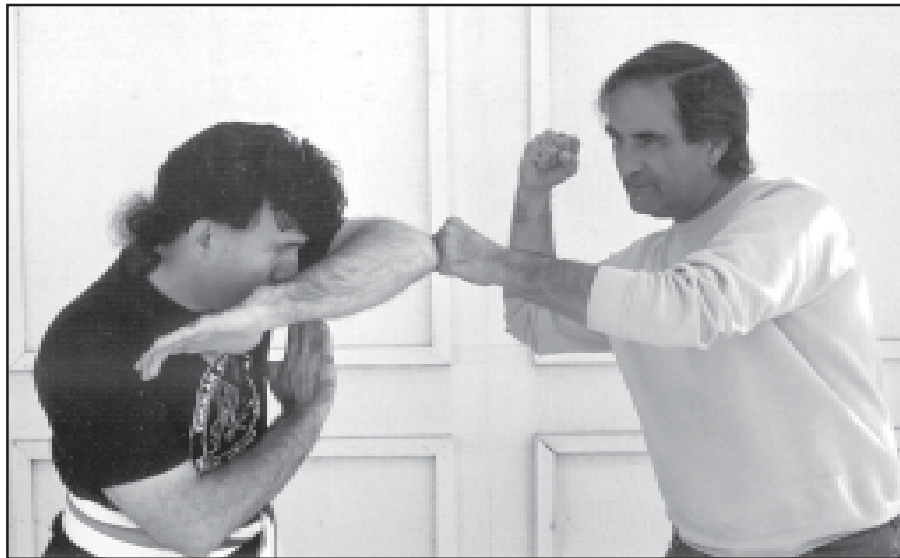


Photo 53

From the elbow hit the hand is allowed to continue on its arc per the photograph until it is in a position where the fist is up and the wrist is bent as shown. (Photos 54-55) As the photo illustrates you snap the fist to a straight position, being careful to align the center knuckle with the target, as this is the knuckle of impact. The strength of the blow depends on how relaxed you are as it moves forward, suddenly snapping with tension on impact. Notice that the blow allows for the natural movement of the arm as it comes out of the elbow strike and so leads to the flow that you are looking for. From here the hand opens and you make a movement as if you were about to smooth your hair down as shown in Photo 56. This is your high elbow shield to your one side. It



Photo 54



Photo 55

acts as the principle of body armor as you are not trying to pick this blow off at a particular place but to produce the guard letting the other person run into the elbow. (Photo 57)

The next move should be studied closely as it involves a rather unorthodox type punch. After the combing motion with the hand it continues behind the head and is then brought forward at about the center of the head. (Photo 58) From here a fist is formed and as the body pitches slightly forward the blow comes up and over your head from high to low and slams into the attacker's head just above the nose, raking downward with the impact (Photos 59A-59C). Notice that the wrist is bent downward to facilitate the knuckles striking first. This blow is called the *ayer terjun pukul* or the waterfall punch. It is very hard to see coming and is extremely powerful. At the conclusion of where the impact would be you allow the punch to continue downward, open your hand and snake it upwards. First the palm is towards you and then it turns palm out and goes high as illustrated, which are in fact covering upward hit blows, if needed (Photos 60A-60C). This next position is a decoy move designed to entice your opponent to strike at your seemingly open rib area. This concept of course would mean that if he did strike to your ribs, you would counter it by striking it downward into his attacking blow with a downward elbow strike. Of course that is the next move



Photo 56



Photo 57



Photo 58



Photo 59A

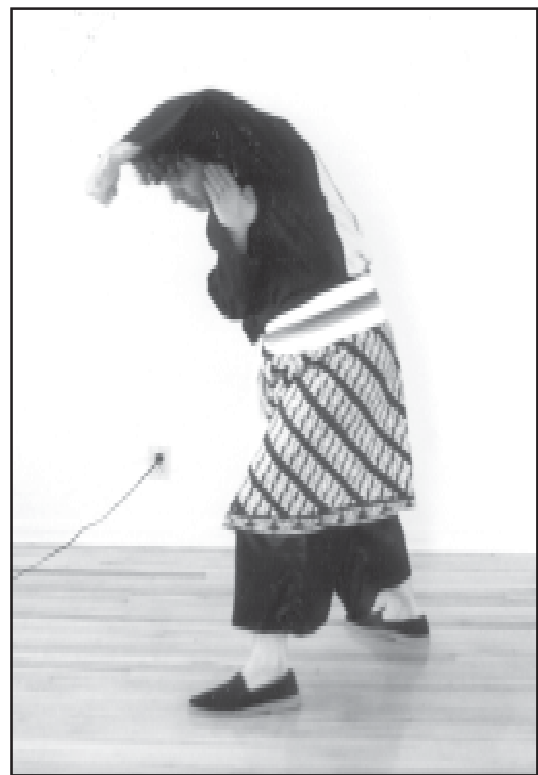


Photo 59B

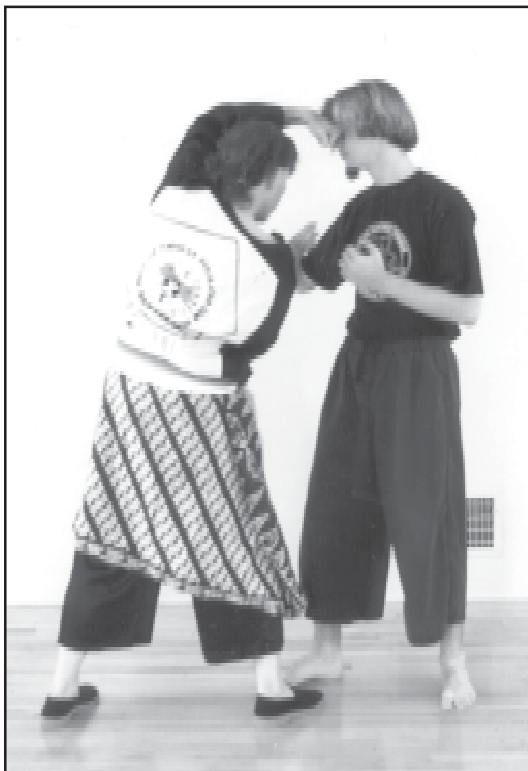


Photo 59C



Photo 60A



Photo 60B



Photo 60C

of the elbow shield and it is done with a palm out to palm in rotation with the movement being brought all the way down to your side protecting against a rib blow in the same motion. This shield is just there as the principle of body armor. (Photo 61) It is very important that the elbow is held against the body with no gap in between. This will prevent any blows from sneaking underneath, and it also prevents you from taking a full powered kick to your unsupported arm and having it slammed into your body, being hurt by your own elbow. The correct position is shown with the arm only being pulled back far enough to keep your elbow even with your back (See Photo 61 again).

From here the natural return blow is a straight punch, which is now done (Photo 62). The next move is to counter another high blow but this time delivered to the other side of your head. Study the photo and notice how the elbow is formed going across the body to pick this off with the principle of the thorn, the counter offensive blow is then brought directly out in the form of a side inverted punch as shown. (Photos 63A-63B) Directly from this punch the arm is brought in the position shown with the high elbow. This motion is called *burong sayap* or bird wing hit block. (Photo 64) This counters a high inside punch and the blow of it is the twisting straight punch downward to the groin bladder area (Photo 65).

This concludes the basic long elbow shield. Again the key to this series of movements is to learn to be able to flow through it with complete fluidity so the moves actually make up a way for you to move towards your opponent in an overlapping protective manner. Done correctly you can respond no matter what is thrown at or from where it comes. Practice the techniques slowly in front of a mirror until it all blends together. It then becomes invisible to the attacker and is useful. You can move without throwing in the counter blows only making the elbow moves. Mix it up, make it changeable so it can not be timed or figured out, then you will succeed. As in the *jurus* a slight lowering of the heel with the slight stomping should be done each blow or hit block with the shield.





Photo 61



Photo 62



Photo 63A



Photo 63B



Photo 64



Photo 65

### **Short Elbow Shield**

There is also a short version of the elbow shield. This one is useful when you are in very close range and the opponent is throwing a barrage of blows. Notice in the photo that the high hand is covering the side of your head, while the low hand protects the same side of your body in the ribcage area. (Photo 66) In the photograph the hands switch places, with the elbow coming down to guard the rib cage as the other hand goes high. (Photo 67) The third position is similar to the first one, except that the entire body is turned at the waist so that the high elbow is now protecting the other side of your body in the high gate. (Photo 68) Notice that these hand positions make the outline of a box with one side left open. Even though it appears that one side is vulnerable, it only requires a slight angulation to bring into play a half fist blow and or an elbow strike should the attacker fall for this decoy. The moves are done one after the other in an overlapping manner as you hit block and strike out. The half fist hand is my favorite. It is fast and it is hard to see blows delivered from over the top or underneath.



Photo 66



Photo 67



Photo 68

## Leaf Parries

The next series of hit blocks I will show you are the basic ones, referred to as leaf parries or *duan menangkis*. They are taught from the normal stance as shown in Photo 69. The impact point is at the base of the hand, in the bony region. They are most effective when done with the rear hand working in conjunction with the lead hand. In this case the lead hand assumes about seventy percent of the force of the hit block, leaving the rest to the rear hand.

The positions for three basic punches are shown first. There are many points to remember. First of all make sure that your thumb is held in on these with all fingers lightly held together. Also the fingers are flat, not cupped. The correct application can be obtained by the complete relaxation of the movement until the point of impact, at which time the hands make a snapping forward movement from the wrist. This, when tensed at impact produces the immobilizing effect on the arm of the attacker that is sought. Notice that the



Photo 69

hard bony parts of the hands are applied against the softer muscle, nerve areas of the attacker, so the harder he punches the more he will be hurt. (Photo 70A-70C)

These parries have three basic modes, that of the leaf parry, then that of the half fist (Photo 71) and full fist modes (Photo 72), *sa tengag genggam* and *genggam*. Be very careful in practicing these latter two as they can quickly do severe damage. The disadvantage to these over the open hand is they are of the pinpoint precision type that requires more timing and practice to do them



Photo 70A



Photo 70B



Photo 70C



Photo 71



Photo 72



Photo 73

accurately. Also shown is a basic parry against an overhead type attack. (Photo 73) Be sure and angle your head out of the way on this one, while delivering the blows. Notice how each hand is pointing in opposite direction to give maximum hitting area.

### **Against The Snap Kick**

The next basic move is against the common front snap kick. Notice that the *Cimande* practitioner has moved his lead leg backwards to keep it safe. (Photo 74) This is done without him actually moving backwards at all since the back leg was not moved. We do not usually move back, but prefer to angle off to the side and then quickly move in again. In this lead leg withdrawal the attacker has thrown the side kick and the *Cimande* fighter has opted to just withdraw the leg enough so that he can perform the hit block to the attackers leg. This is done in the full fist mode although, done correctly by an advanced practitioner the half fist can also be used. The fist is the safest as your fingers are the most protected. The center knuckle is driven into the attacker's leg on this hit block.

I'm showing you one follow up which is the lead leg joint kick that follows that attackers leg



Photo 74



Photo 75



as it pulls back. (Photo 75) It is like his withdrawal has sucked your counter blow right back with the leg, and since the leg has just received a painful blow, the attitude of the attacker will be more on his pain than your counter blow.

Remember that to do this hit block you must be in a low stance or the kick has to be high enough that you are not reaching forward to deliver your blow. Again never reach for any hit block but let it get as close as possible before you retaliate. In this manner you lesson the chance to fall for a fake and also you will not accidentally move yourself to far out of position by your movement, and will maintain the principle of body armor.

### **Middle Gate Protection**

Next we will move to an area roughly between the bladder, just above the groin, and the belly button that we use both arms and legs simultaneously to protect the middle gate. Anything above this region is protected with the arms and hands, and anything below this region is protected by the legs. But in this in between area both are used. Shown here is the devastating hit block against a roundhouse type kick to the midsection or thigh area like a Thai kick boxer might use. The leg is raised and the arm is positioned as shown in Photo 76 making sure that you keep your elbow on the inside of the leg. The point of preferred contact is with the knee into the attackers shin area. One can also use the shin after proper conditioning and muscular build up of the muscle that partially covers the shin bone on one side. The arm is there in case the leg hits higher than wanted and tries to slide through. You do not hold the elbows on top of the knee as you could spear yourself, and you do not hold it on the outside as it could be hit. At the same moment of impact one good counter is to immediately fire the blocking leg to the attacker's support leg, since all of his weight is on this, it is easily damaged with a good kick. Again this is for an arcing in kick. Against the side kick the former or this one can be used. In this case the elbow is rotated counter clockwise and driven down into the attackers leg while you again withdraw the lead leg into the *depok* position coiling yourself for the counter kick. (Photo 77)





Photo 76



Photo 77

### **Against Wheel Kicks**

Against the wheel kick the *Cimande* practitioner uses the bottom edge of the foot, which is slammed into the thigh area of the attacker's leg. This area is very tender and again illustrates an important point that should always be made use of. All blows either kicks or punches only travel fast at the end of the blow, i.e. punches are fast at the fist, kicks at the foot, but neither is moving very fast at the shoulder or the thigh. Therefore by directing the slashing attack at this point you are more likely to hit the target when done at combat speed. Notice that when done in the first photograph with the blow coming into your open side the strike takes a circular movement after impact and then slams back into the attackers support leg again with the joint kick (Photos 78A-78C). If the attack comes toward your back, notice that the blow you deliver is immediately turned and the leg is struck then in the same manner (Photos 79A-79B). The amount or lack of arc is determined by the direction of the incoming weapon.



Photo 78A



Photo 78B



Photo 78C



Photo 79A



Photo 79B

### Side Kicks

Often the *Cimande* fighter will jam the opponents kicks by quick short snappy side kicks directed at the lower legs as soon as the opponent begins to lift his leg to kick. (Photo 80) This is very useful to keep an opponent off of you until you decide to attack and finish him. If the kick has gotten off before you can jam it, the following

can be used. This lower leg hit block that is pictured is for a straight on or angled front snap type kick to the knee area. First let me say that because the legs are such favorite targets in *Silat*, the low stance, with the frontal knee position is essential. Done correctly a fighter can take a very powerful blow to the knee with little or no effect, as the joint can not be locked and hyperextended. However, these hit parries will set you up for good follow up attacks. If the blow is coming straight in as shown you will



Photo 80

make a small circular motion with the knee going away from the angle of the kick, if it has any (Photos 81A-C). Otherwise you move in the direction that will set you up for an inside or flanking attack at the attacker's inside. As his blow passes my knee, which the evasive move has caused him to miss, I slam my knee into the side of his leg off balancing him. From here I can do many different counters, such as a sliding forward knee and elbow counter shown. (Photos 82A-82B) If I choose, or the angle demands it, I can evade to the outside of the leg and execute a sweep or leg trap takedown a shown. (Photos 83A-83D)



Photo 81A



Photo 81B



Photo 81C

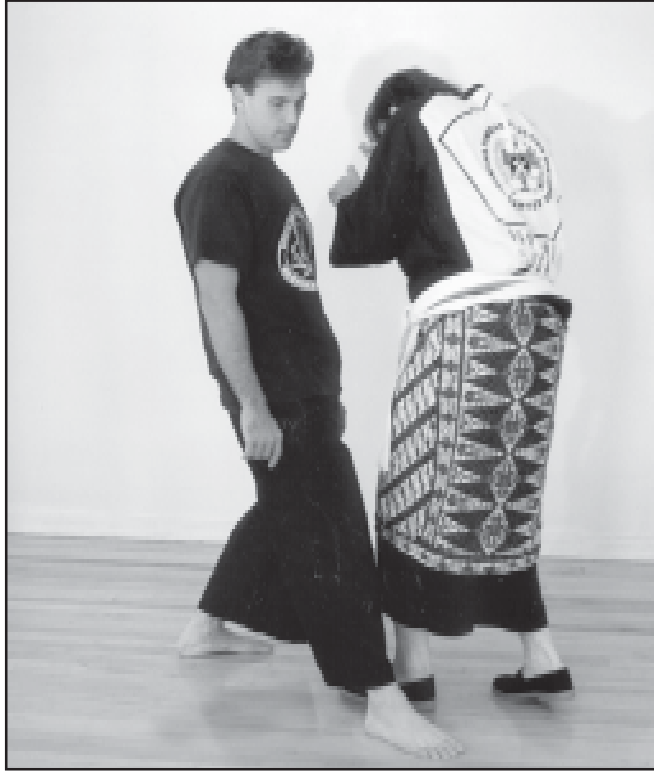


Photo 82A



Photo 82B



Photo 83A



Photo 83B



Photo 83C



Photo 83D

## **Shin Blocks**

The next lower hit block we will look at is the shin kick to the upper calf area just below the knee. In this counter you simply turn the knee towards the kick and drop your weight slightly downward into his leg. (Photos 84A-84B) You pivot on the ball of the foot for this move. This can be very painful for your partner so take extra care in practicing this. If the blow is more of a foot sweep done with force and in a telegraphing nature, as often seen, you simply lift the foot off of the floor moving it in the direction the kick is going, as shown. (Photo 85) The attacker's leg will fly by giving you plenty of targets to counter hit.

## **Stop Kicks**

One may also simply use a stop kick if someone uses a back foot sweep against you. This is a highly telegraphed sweep and in itself is only seen in *Pencak Silat* by crude beginners. If you are fighting in close and a short foot sweep is attempted one may use this stomping action from the *jurus* to pin the foot down momentarily which again allows many follow ups such as the knee blow to the trapped leg (Photos 86A-86B).

This constitutes the basic hit parries that we will cover in this volume. Combining these with the elbow shield will give the starting student a very good basic offensive defense. In practicing the basic parries you should practice each of them independently until the action is perfected. At that time you may begin to have your training partner throw them in different order, always starting very slowly and gradually raising the speed until you become efficient at stopping them. After this point is reached your partner should drop the speed down slightly and continue at this speed until you begin to tire and get sloppy at which point he again lowers the speed until you have finished your session. Always try and raise your level of proficiency.



Photo 84A



Photo 84B



Photo 85





Photo 86A



Photo 86B

## **Indirect Vision**

It is very important that in fighting and the practicing these hit block you never look directly at the attacker or his eyes. (Photo 87) Energy is taken in and released through the eyes. Only a few seconds of fixation on something will draw energy and power from your body and will allow your conscious mind to take over providing you with many doubts and fears, which will keep you from performing properly. Always fight and move using indirect vision, which is to say peripheral vision. You see out of the comers of your field of view. You may train yourself to begin this by spiraling your gaze around in the approximate center of your opponent's chest catching the movement from your peripheral vision as they come in. This also keeps your head still as if you are trying to whip your head all around to follow blows you can become disoriented quickly. Later when fighting you will look almost directly to the left or right of your opponent seemingly unconcerned with the goings on. This will allow your subconscious mind which is linked to your real self to come forth and do what it has been trained to do, defeat the enemy. It's like there is another person inside you that you are nurturing and training. Eventually with the proper physical and mental training, see Parts II and III, this inner person will step outside of your normal body when needed to get the job done. In the process of releasing him you turn your normal worldly vision off and allow him to slip forth while you watch out the comer of your eyes.

There is one trick you can use to drain the strength, from the other person's eyes. But first prove it to yourself. Begin by looking at yourself in the mirror. Look into your own eyes in the reflection and soon you will notice you are feeling tired. The eyes seem to get heavy. At this point the opponent is very susceptible to being defeated by mental and or physical means. So the trick is to make him think you are looking into his eyes by staring in the general direction. In fact you are looking over his shoulder at other things in the background. In this manner you can sustain the gaze for a much longer period of time. Try it in the mirror, look over your shoulder to something else and you will see that you last much longer. If he locks onto your eyes however (which is what you are trying for) he is the one who will become drained. In effect you are learning to look through your

opponents just as you envision to strike through them.

In Indonesia there have been battles fought simply by eye contact. If it is done in this manner then the person who breaks the contact first is the loser and that is that. Sometimes this redirected gaze is tried to try and force the opponent to break the gaze. Again I will remind you to execute the stomping action by lowering the foot flat to the floor on the hit blocks and follow ups.



Photo 87