

UNITING THE WORLD THROUGH **MARTIAL ARTS**

TKD *TaeKwonDo* **TIMES**

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The Outward Knife Hand Strike

by Master Terry Wisniewski

The Outward Knife Hand Strike (OKHS) is one of the most common striking tools in all of martial arts. The muscular outer edge of the hand contracts into a rigid striking surface through the isometric contraction of the thumb and fingers. Its purpose is to strike (and break) targets to the side of the practitioner. If done correctly, it is a powerful and devastating technique.

In order to generate maximum power, you have to make sure that the board is the correct height and that you are at the correct angle and distance.

The height should have the center of the board at approximately 1" below your shoulder when you are in an L-stance.



Example of a proper knife hand.

BODY POSITION

The distance and angle should have your extended breaking arm with the fingers just past the edge of the board, and your feet at a 45-degree angle to the front face of the board. This should also result in the foot closest to the board having its big toe in the vicinity of being directly under the closest corner of the board. There must be a space of several inches between the elbow of the extended arm and the board, which ensures the body's correct position to support the generation of power through rotational speed and leverage on impact.

WINDUP/PRE-ACTION

Lift your front foot slightly off the ground as you stand up and swing the front foot backwards while rotating or lifting the front hip away from the face of the board. As you move your lower body, swing the striking arm back at shoulder height allowing it to flex naturally at the elbow, crossing with the palm facing up on top of the other non-striking forearm, which is lifted to provide reaction. Maintain a comfortable visual contact with the board at all times. Do not over-twist your body.



Aerial view of correct body positioning



Model demonstrates the pre-break position



Once correct positioning is established you can see here the pre-action windup for the strike



Close-up view of the correct arm positioning before executing the break

STRIKE

Start the strike by rotating back towards the board swinging, extending the arm in a whip-like action as you step towards the board. On impact with the board, the striking hand should rotate palm down and the stepping foot should be passing under the corner of the board. As you complete the break, you will follow through so that you are in a walking stance facing approximately 45-degrees behind the board. Both the hand and foot that are moving must travel in an arc.

WARNING

If you find that you are making contact with your forearm, it is because you are either:

- A). Not standing far enough in front of the board to start.
- B). You are trying to "pull" through the board (having your body behind the board before you have broken it). Some people prefer to increase the distance from the board and break with their hand in the center of the board, or the edge that is closest to them. In my experience, by doing this, students are more timid because their fingers snap together and hurt more on impact.



Model demonstrates the post-break position



Close-up view of the correct arm positioning after executing the break

SAFETY

If you have children and beginners who have not developed the strength or coordination to safely execute a proper knife hand at full speed, let them break with a closed "sidefist" or hammer fist until they are comfortable.

You can also paint or mark two lines on the floor in relation to the center of the board holder at 45-degrees to the

face of the board to help them find the correct angle.

For beginners and children, use a thin pad (half-inch thick foam sleeping bag pad or flat pool noodle) and cut it to 12" x 6" to cushion the impact point to help overcome the fear most people have of striking a hard surface. But make sure it is not too thick, because that makes breaking too difficult. **TKD**

• Master Terry Wisniewski is a 7th degree Black Belt in ITF Taekwon-Do and founder of Tien Lung Taekwon-Do. He is a full time professional Taekwon-Do instructor with three schools. As a 9-time coach for Team Canada he has trained World Champions in Patterns, Self Defense & Power Breaking.



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