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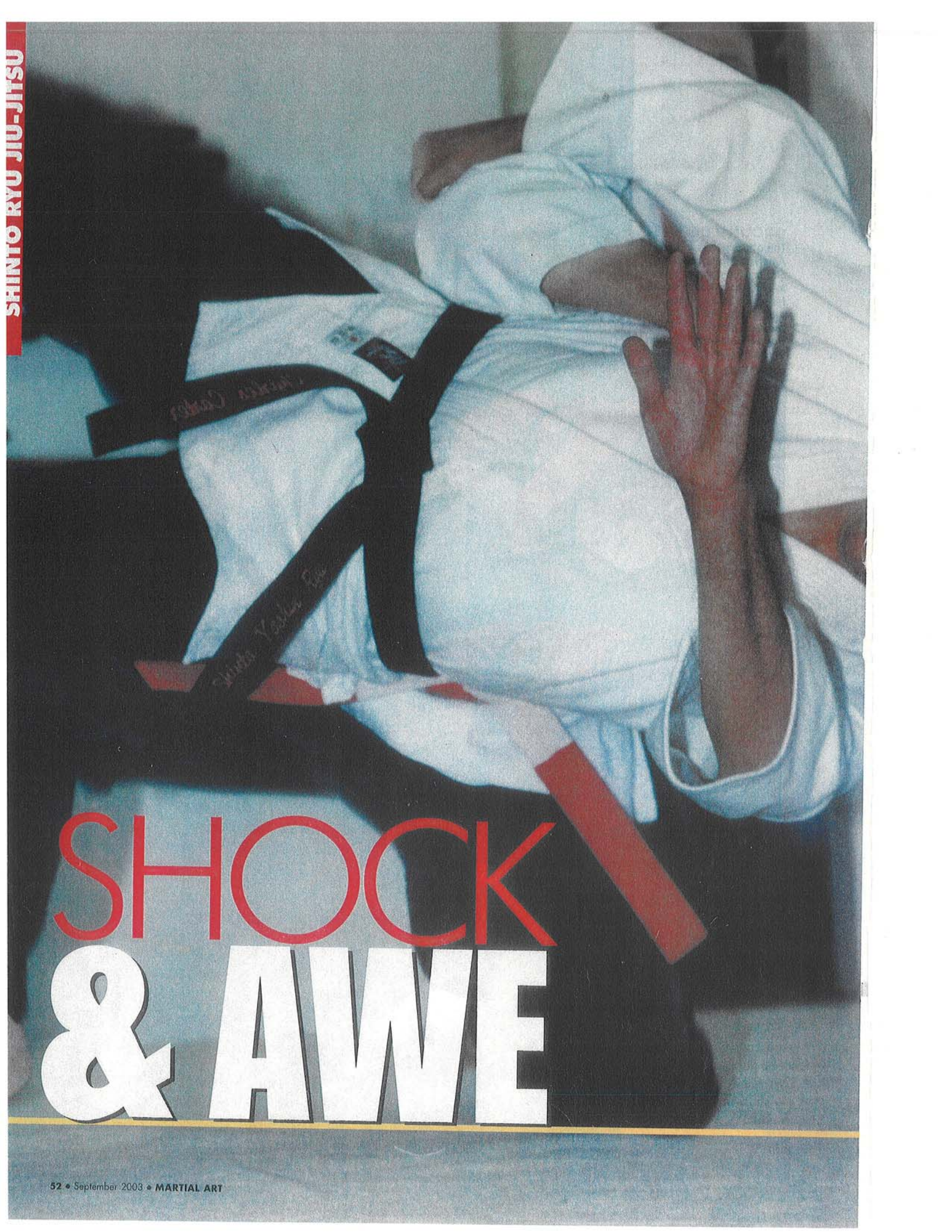
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Even we had to read this twice. Fumio Demura doesn't place a whole lot — if any — importance on rank. Find out why and much more about this shito-ryu stylist in this startling interview. *By Jose Fraguas*

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On the cover:
Shorin-Ryu Stylist
Fumio Demura



SHOCK & AWE



The motions may be gentle, but the techniques of **Shinto Yoshin Ryu Jiu-Jitsu** are a completely different story

BY TERRY L. WILSON

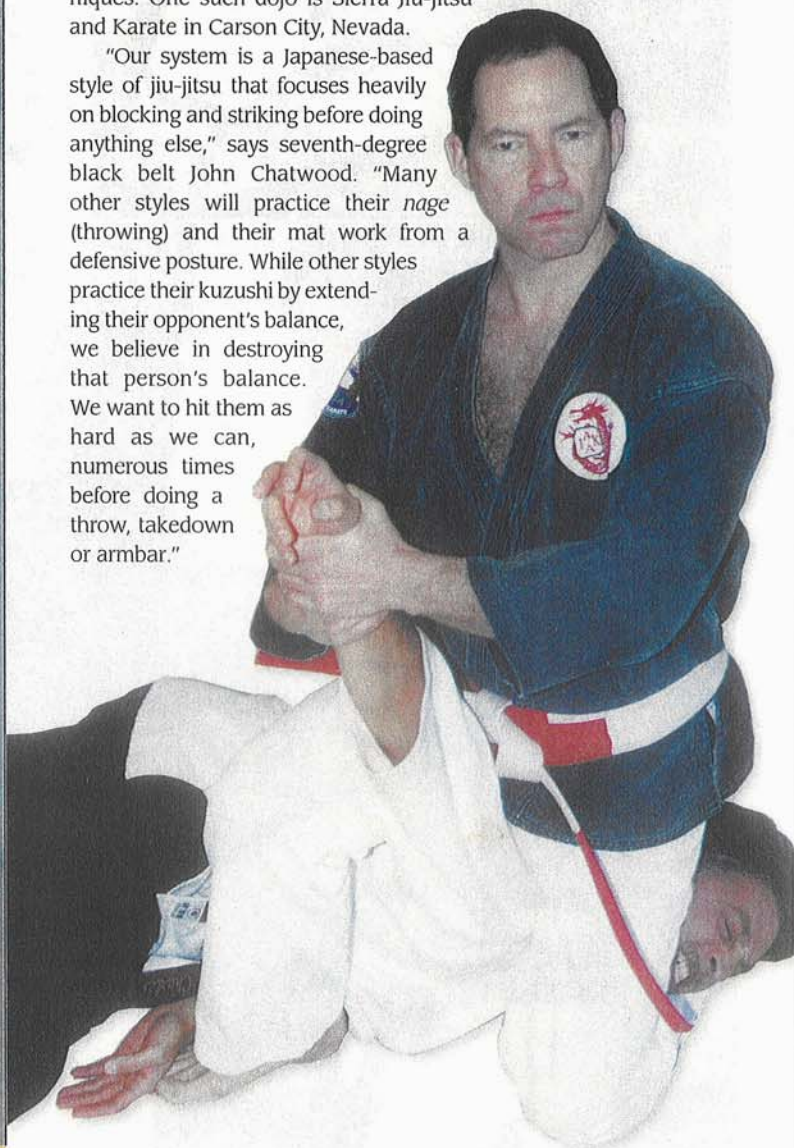
It's the first lesson in judo. You learn how to disrupt your opponent's balance so you can throw him. This is called *kuzushi*, and there are eight directions in which a person can be pushed and or pulled to accomplish "off balancing." Because judo is considered a sport, *kuzushi* is achieved without injuring your opponent.

In the Japanese art of shinto yoshin ryu jiu-jitsu, strikes and kicks are often employed as a form of *kuzushi*. A much more lethal method of taking an opponent off balance, these karate techniques are used to win a fight in the street, whereas judo *kuzushi* is used to win trophies and ribbons.

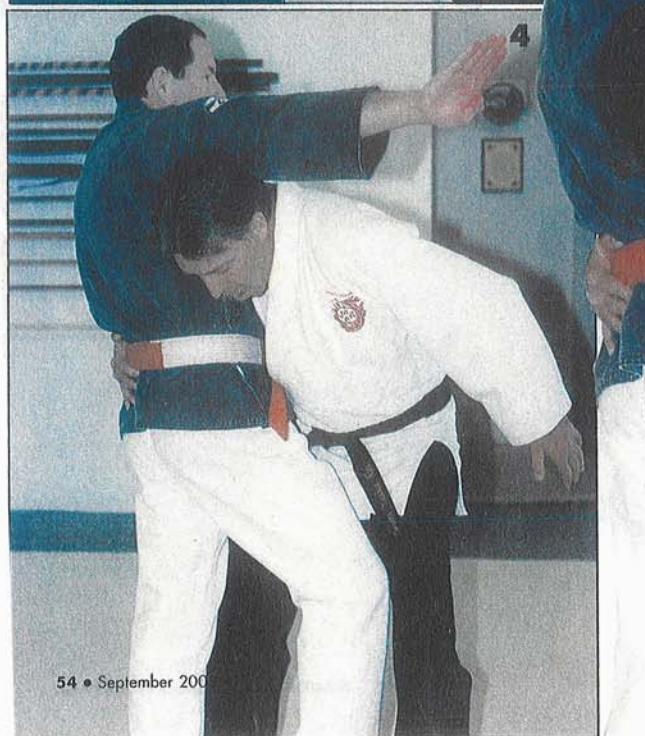
This in no way diminishes the effectiveness of traditional judo as a self-defense art, it is just that jiu-jitsu was created for combat and all of the subsequent techniques were designed to kill or maim an attacker.

Although shinto yoshin ryu is one of the oldest systems in the martial arts, there are only 40 plus schools in the United States that teach this combination of karate and throwing techniques. One such dojo is Sierra Jiu-jitsu and Karate in Carson City, Nevada.

"Our system is a Japanese-based style of jiu-jitsu that focuses heavily on blocking and striking before doing anything else," says seventh-degree black belt John Chatwood. "Many other styles will practice their *nage* (throwing) and their mat work from a defensive posture. While other styles practice their *kuzushi* by extending their opponent's balance, we believe in destroying that person's balance. We want to hit them as hard as we can, numerous times before doing a throw, takedown or *ambar*."



SHOCK & AWE



IN ACTION

Let's see how he puts everything together. Let's say an attacker goes at Chatwood with a huge punch. Initially, Chatwood would block the technique to the outside. Then, he would step inside and deliver an elbow strike to his opponent's ribs, taking away his balance and air. From there, Chatwood swiftly moves to the rear of the attacker, grabbing the collar and throwing him backward over a bent knee.

"I like this move because the attacker has no idea where he's going," says Chatwood. "Then we allow for the hardest hit there is ... he hits the ground. I then follow him to the ground with an armbar or another appropriate submission technique."

As in any form of fighting, the ability to "set up" your opponent for an attack is paramount to success. In shinto yoshin ryu, Chatwood employs the strategy of countering an attack to set up his offense.

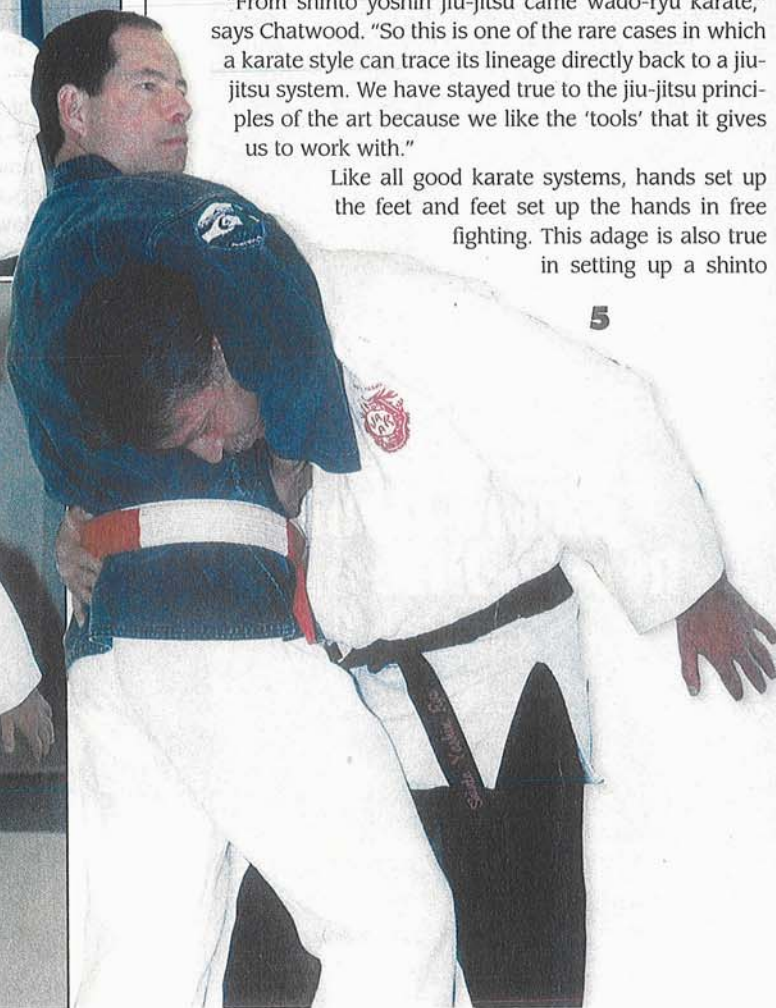
"What we do is sort of a counter art," says Chatwood. "Although we do have numerous first strikes, I like to wait until the opponent makes a move, which commits his balance, then we'll move inside. We don't stay to the outside like many other styles of jujitsu or karate. We believe in staying very close to our opponent. However, on that inside move we do use a strike or kick to take away their balance as we move in for a throw."

THE FOUNDATION

While watching Chatwood and his students go through their workout, it's obvious that their forms, strikes and kicks have a strong Japanese base. In fact, shinto yoshin ryu is the foundation for one of the oldest of the martial arts.

"From shinto yoshin jiu-jitsu came wado-ryu karate," says Chatwood. "So this is one of the rare cases in which a karate style can trace its lineage directly back to a jiu-jitsu system. We have stayed true to the jiu-jitsu principles of the art because we like the 'tools' that it gives us to work with."

Like all good karate systems, hands set up the feet and feet set up the hands in free fighting. This adage is also true in setting up a shinto



yoshin ryu jiu-jitsu attack.

"We'll use a number of kicks, but we don't do a lot of high head-hunter type of kicks," Chatwood explains. "Our focus is more on a low, roundhouse kick against the outside of the thigh or lower calf. Foot sweeps are also an important part of our set-ups. We'll also use a very fast snap kick to the groin and inside of the thigh to attack and off balance our opponents."

When an opponent throws a roundhouse kick, Chatwood likes to counter by stepping inside of the attack using a punch or elbow strike to counter the attack.

"If someone throws a back leg snap kick, we'll move off to the side and grab the leg," he says. "Then we'll extend it out and help our opponent drop down to the splits."

FREE FIGHTING

Free fighting takes on a different attitude at Chatwood's dojo. The blend of karate kumite, judo and jiu-jitsu makes for some interesting sparring sessions.

"We do kumite, but we do jiu-jitsu kumite," Chatwood explains. "We start off in a very regimented program with a limited amount of actual sparring. As their skills improve, I'll increase their degree of contact. Then after they achieve a green belt, we'll introduce a handful of takedowns and sweeps. Eventually our students will be encouraged to get inside their opponent, execute throws, sweeps and takedowns after doing a striking or kicking entry."

One of the training procedures incorporated into Chatwood's program is a high regard for control and safety. The person executing the throw is responsible for the safety of the individual he is throwing. Subsequently, the student must have perfect "control" of his counter (none to light contact with strikes and kicks) and he must have total control of the throw to insure that his attacker lands properly.

DIFFERENT, EFFECTIVE

The warm-ups are another unique aspect of Chatwood's training. In true shinto yoshin ryu fashion, he has included both karate, judo and jiu-jitsu techniques into his pre-workout program.

"Our warm-ups are sort of interesting," says Chatwood. "All of our exercises have been developed around the hardest exercises I know — having a person pick up his own body weight a number of times. For example, we'll combine a roundhouse kick stretch, with a kicking technique and a side fall. We start by executing a back leg round house kick, spinning around then dropping into a side fall then quickly getting back up and doing it again on the opposite side."

Next up? Back leg snap kicks and a double punch, while holding the leg up in the air. Then they immediately go into a judo roll.

The result?

"We have a warm-up that employs kicks, punches, falls and tumbling," he says.

CROSS-TRAINING

Not only does that provide a nice cross section of warm-up drills, Chatwood is a firm believer in the power of cross-training. The success of blending a striking art with a throwing art develops a well-rounded martial artist. It is this "flexibility" in thinking that sets shinto yoshin ryu apart from other systems.

"One of the strong advantages of cross-training is that we prevent injuries," says Chatwood. "When a person is cross-training, he is not over working just one

Career Highlights

- John Chatwood began his career in 1979 under Douglas Grose, a 9th-degree black belt.
- Chatwood is head of Shinto Yoshin Ryu in the United States, the American Jiu-Jitsu and Karate Association (AJKA).
- Chatwood is also the treasurer of the United States Ju-Jitsu Federation, which is the recognized United States governing board of jiu-jitsu for the World Games.

6 COMBINATION 1

The attacker throws a punch that the defender blocks with a knife block, striking the arm downward (1). The defender responds with a back-leg snap kick while pulling the attacker forward (2). The defender then executes a forward punch to the attacker's throat (3) and then throws a knee to the inside of his leg (4). Next, he wraps an arm around the attacker's neck (5) and then drops straight down and throws his opponent (6). He concludes the sequence with an armbar (7).



SHOCK & AWE



COMBINATION 2
 When the attacker throws a punch, the defender slides deep to the outside, executes a brush block (1) and immediately comes back with a rear elbow strike to the attacker's rib (2). To generate power, notice how the defender turns his hips. The defender then kneels behind his attacker, latches onto him and throws him over his leg (3-4). He concludes with an arnbar (5).

Photos courtesy of Terry Wilson



part of his body. He's not constantly getting his body pounded into the mat or extending his joints with constant kicking and punching."

Acquiring this extra information is time consuming, but it's well worth the effort.

"It takes longer to learn our system because of all the different techniques we employ, but they (students) pick up such a broad base of knowledge that I find I have a group of very talented students and a much lower injury rate," he notes.

EIGHT CYLINDERS

To keep everyone running on eight cylinders, Chatwood has created some entertaining training tools that you don't see everyday in the dojo. Such as? Bubbles. That's right. The kids love it when Chatwood pulls out his bubble gun. It shoots soap bubbles into the air, and his young students do their best to bust them with a variety of kicks and punches.

"They'll throw more kicks and punches in one minute getting at those bubbles than they would ever do training by themselves," says Chatwood.

Training with a boken is another unique drill he employs. While an instructor pokes gently at them with the sword, the students must do backward and forward rolls to avoid contact.

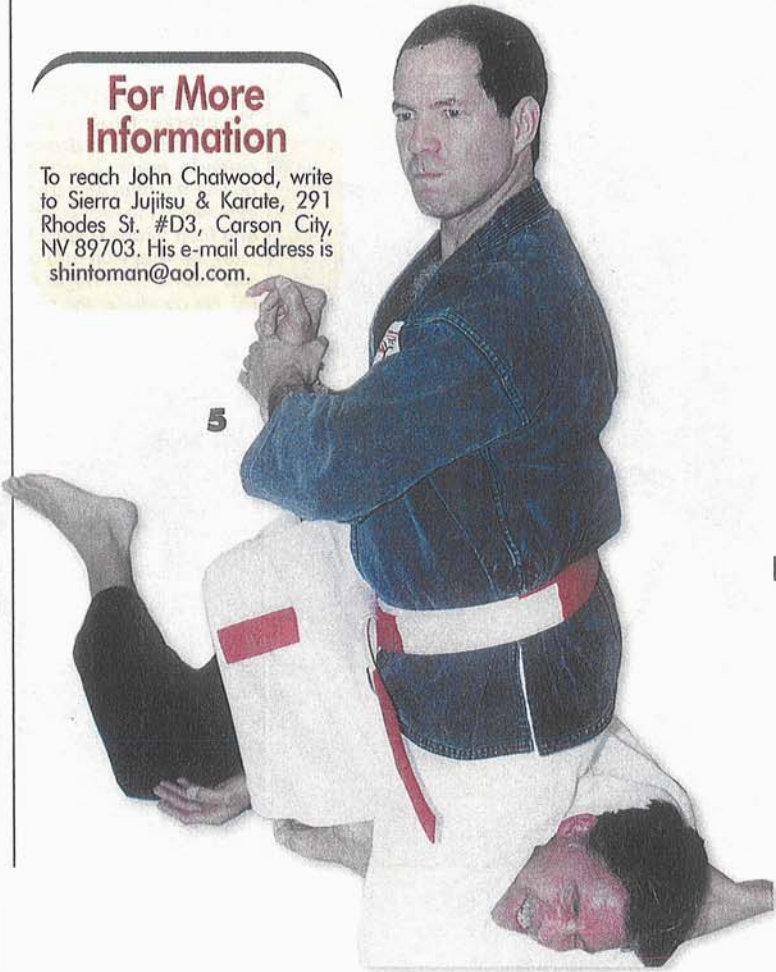
"It's a game to them," he says. "At the same time, they're gaining knowledge and improving their skills."

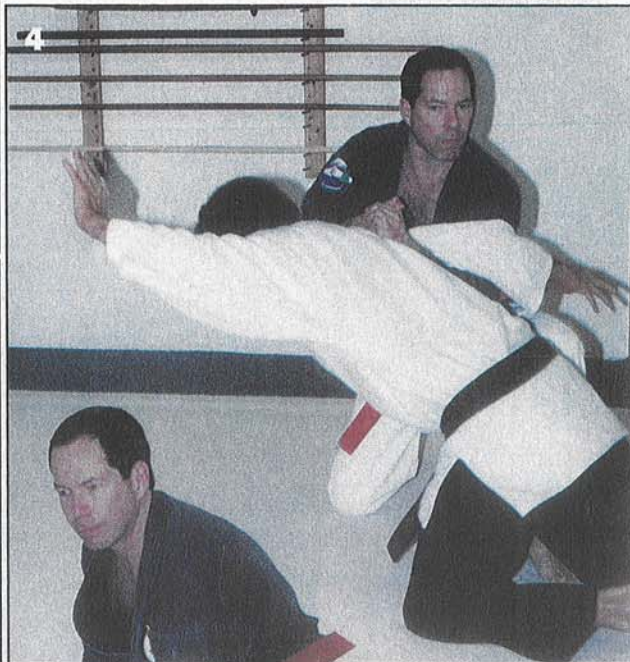
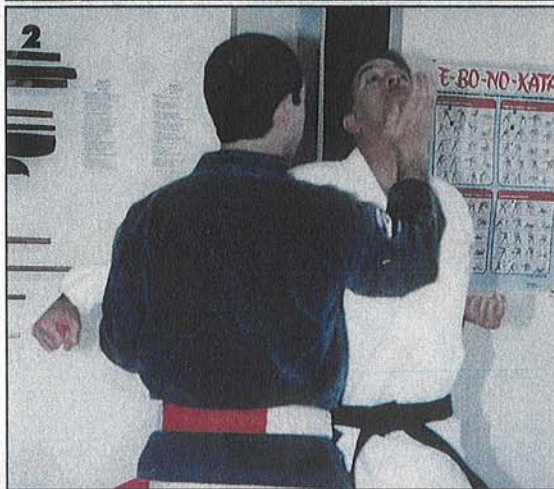
GROUND FIGHTING

And one of the skills entails learning how to handle yourself on the ground.

"Ground work is very important," says Chatwood. "In so many fights, the confrontation ends up on the ground."

For More Information
 To reach John Chatwood, write to Sierra Jujitsu & Karate, 291 Rhodes St. #D3, Carson City, NV 89703. His e-mail address is shintoman@aol.com.





Thus, they stress arm bars from a number of positions. "I tell my students, 'Any armbar they can put on a person standing they can put on them on the ground,'" he says. They also teach wristlocks, chokes and a variety of submission holds. Plus they throw in strikes and knee attacks on the ground.

FIRST PRIZE

When you walk into Sierra Jiu-jitsu and Karate in Carson City, Nevada, for your first lesson, you want to be alert and pay attention. After all, the techniques you'll be learning are designed to help you defend yourself should you ever get attacked on the street. And don't be deceived by the gentle moves. Looks are deceiving.

"Jiu-jitsu translates to 'the gentle art,' and people think that the gentle art is the techniques themselves," says Chatwood. "One of the things we teach in Shinto Yoshin Ryu Jiu-Jitsu is that it is the motions that are gentle. However, the techniques are totally devastating."

Which is exactly what you need if you are forced to defend yourself on the street. ☺

About the writer: Terry Wilson is a martial artist and freelance writer who lives in San Diego.

DEFENSE VS. REVERSE PUNCH
 The attacker throws a reverse punch. The defender slides forward while performing a low hammerfist block, striking the inside of the attacker's arm (1). The defender continues the sliding motion forward and executes a palm heel strike to the attacker's face (2). The defender locks the attacker's outside arm (3) and slams him to the ground (4). He wraps things up with a shoulder lock (5).