

Cane you dig it?!

By:

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During many belt testing's I notice that the attacker uses a variety of different weapons to attack with. On occasion I see an attacker utilizing a cane. Oddly, after the "good guy/girl" defends themselves against the person with the weapon, in this case a cane, a majority of the time I don't see them securing the weapon or prepare to use it if the attacker gets back up and decides to initiate a second attack. For a while I kept asking myself why? Well, simply put it's because we don't traditionally use weapons in Taekwon-Do and many students don't have a law enforcement/military background. So thinking in this manner is not as natural for most martial artists.

As a young teen-ager, I attended a tournament at Baker College located in Flint, Michigan. During the half-way mark in this event I met a gentleman named David Weatherly. He invited a group of Koreans to come to this event because Mr. Weatherly was being promoted to Master in HapKiDo. These Korean Masters did a demonstration and I saw some amazing techniques. One of them used a fan to defend himself against an attacker. Another gentleman used a cane to defend himself. The dynamics of this demo amazed me and helped me to understand a little about Korean weapons. Later in my life I got stationed in South Korea at Kunsan Air Base. When I first got there I trained under an 8th Dan by the name of Grand Master Oh in an art called Kuk-Sool HapKiDo. In his class I got to watch a few students train with the cane. Watching this remotivated me to want to learn more about using the cane as a defensive weapon.

While in South Korea I got to learn of my follow-on assignment. It was to Keelser Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. My instant thoughts were, "No way am I going to find a good HapKiDo school in Mississippi." So, I did some searching on the internet for some potential people and places to train with when I got to Mississippi. My search of the internet located me a person by the name of J.r. West, owner of West HapKiDo in Ridgeland, Mississippi. Due to being a guy who believes in training under quality people I drove 3.5 hours one way to meet Grand Master West. When I met him I was very surprised. He was very welcoming and a funny gentleman. I explained to him I was looking for a HapKiDo school to train under and told him about my background. Furthermore, I explained that I was fine with starting over as a white belt and work my way up to whatever I could earn in his dojang.

During one of his popular USKMAF (United States Korean Martial Arts Federation) seminars his students, mostly master instructors, taught various topics on HapKiDo. One of the clinics was on the Cane. Instantly, I signed up for that course and began learning a variety of cane techniques. As I progressed in my HapKiDo training students working towards their black belt had to learn and demonstrate numerous cane techniques. My enjoyment and passion for cane techniques only grew from that point on.

Cane techniques are fun to learn because they offer a variety of options. For example you can strike with the cane and keep your attacker at a distance. If the attacker grabs you, you can implement close quarters strikes, chokes and break aways. A cane can also be used if the attacker punches or kicks at you. Using the cane to block, trap, choke and throw is common in HapKiDo training. Attacking your opponent's pressure points is another use of the cane. This can cause your opponent not only pain, but can also allow you to apply force that will allow your opponent to exit without any real harm. Again, this explains another great use of the cane in a self-defense situation.

Once a student understands the Use of Force laws, the nomenclature of the cane and has been instructed by a qualified instructor you will see the advantages of using a cane for self-defense. The cane can be carried on a plane, in a car or in plain view walking down the street. It looks harmless and ordinary, yet it can cause severe pain to your attacker. So, if you get a chance to train under a qualified instructor with the cane, I highly recommend you give it a try. Someday you'll need a cane to get around due to old age. Might as well arm yourself now with some techniques because we can't fight old age.

