

# Ninja Fists

Contributed by Administrator  
Sunday, 19 June 2005  
Last Updated Sunday, 19 June 2005

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Excerpt taken from Stephen K. Hayes book, "The Ninja and their Secret Fighting Art"

### Shikan-ken (Extended-Knuckle Fist)

The shikan-ken is the fundamental fist of the Togakure-ryu. It is used against hard, broad surfaces of bone structure. The fist is formed with the fingers half-folded, leaving the middle knuckles protruding. The striking points are the knuckles, which may be applied to the facial bones, breast-bone, and sides of the middle ribs.

The punch goes straight in, bullet-like, with all the force behind the striking points. The elbow should not rise along the outside of the fist's path, or the punch will bend and hook. The elbow is kept close to the ribs, forcing the punch straight into the target. The teacher warned that the fist is not flipped into place and withdrawn, but used to knock the adversary back. The thrust of the punch continues through the impact with the target.

### Fudo-ken (Clenched Fist)

This is the conventional clenched fist, which can be used to strike from many different angles. It is used against a variety of targets, but is especially effective against areas of the body in which the edges of the bone structure are accessible. This fist is formed by curling the fingers into the palm and clamping the thumb beside the index finger. The front slab of the fist, the outside knuckles, or the inside knuckles can be used to strike targets such as the nose, jaw, lower edges of the ribs, arms, and legs.

### Boshi-ken (Thumb-Drive Fist)

The boshi-ken is unique to the ninja's system of combat. This fist's single striking point is used against semisoft targets, generally muscles covering bone structure. It is especially well suited for attacking nerve centers with precision. The fist is formed with the thumb protruding, and the hand in a position resembling that used to grip a golf club. The thumb is positioned for a driving jab,

reinforced by the curled index finger. This single striking point is used to attack targets such as the side of the neck, the sides of the upper ribs, the solar plexus, and the lower abdomen to the inside of the hip bones. As with most of the punches in ninjutsu, it is essential to follow powerfully through the target, and not merely poke and retreat.

### Shuto (Sword Hand)

The sword hand is not really a fist, but it is an important striking weapon. The lower outside edge of the palm is used against the structures of the limbs and neck, as well as for striking into the joints. In the shuto, the planes of the palm and fingers form an angle of 45 degrees, and the thumb is clamped along the base of the index finger.

When beginning the sword-hand strike, maintain the hand in a conventional fist to disguise your intention. The hand swings around into the target, drawing power from the weight and motion of the arm and body. At the instant before contact, the hand is opened to shuto position and smashed through the target at a 90-degree angle to its surface. The hand is not flicked into place and quickly withdrawn. The strike is intended to stun or to break through the bone structure attacked.

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