Muay Thai
Advanced Thai Kickboxing Techniques
Christoph Delp
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Songchai Rattanasuban: photo 20
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Preface

I had already been involved in full-contact sports for some years before I decided to travel to Thailand for training in 1995. I went to Maha Sarakham province in the northeast of Thailand to learn Muay Thai. Master Decha accepted me in his camp and invited me to live with his family. Over a period of several months, I was in continuous contact and dialogue with my trainers, Master Decha, Saknipon Pitakavarin, and Kenpet Luksilam, providing me with the opportunity for an intensive study of Muay Thai. During that time, I developed the concept for my first book, *Muay Thai: Kampf and Selbstverteidigung*.

My enthusiasm for Muay Thai, and the affection of the Decha family and their friends, were the reasons for my regular subsequent travels to Thailand for training. I maintain friendly ties with this gym to this very day and have revisited it on a number of occasions. I have also trained for brief periods in many other gyms.

During one of these travels, I got acquainted with Ajaarn Somboon Tapina. He invited me to his camp in Suratthani, where he supported my in-depth studies. I am grateful to him and his wife for welcoming me to stay with them on that occasion and during my following training travels. Ajaarn Somboon Tapina always took the time to answer my questions on the subject of Muay Thai and prepared me successfully for a fight in Thailand.

In addition, I was fortunate to be trained by the several-time champions Apideh Sit Hiran at the Fairtex Gym and Master Chalee at the Muay Thai Institute. (Some biographical notes on these excellent fighters and trainers follow.) At these two camps I also had many good trainers, such as Master Natchaphol, Master Noi, Master Gong, Jakid Fairtex, Kom Fairtex, and Paisitong Jorsambad.

At all camps in Bangkok, in the provinces of Maha Sarakham, Buriram and Suratthani, in Pattaya and Koh Samui, which I visited
for training, I always enjoyed a warm welcome and respectful treatment. All my experiences with trainers and athletes at Thai gyms were positive. I am very grateful for the help and assistance given to me for the seven Muay Thai books I have published so far.

Muay Thai is a traditional martial art that developed many centuries ago. Nowadays, it is used for fitness training, competitive sport, and self-defense. The training is meant to improve power, stamina, agility, speed, and coordination. In the long term, a moderate training schedule provides the opportunity to build and maintain fitness.

As a competitive sport, Muay Thai inspires enthusiasm with its hard and spectacular confrontations. In each match, there are five rounds during which the fighters attack at the highest technical level. The efficacy of the Muay Thai techniques is proven in the ring time and again, a painful experience that many fighters from other types of martial art have. The techniques can also be adopted directly for self-defense. Muay Thai simultaneously teaches the fighter how to avoid an opponent’s technique and how to counterattack.

Muay Thai, part of the extraordinary cultural heritage of Thailand, should receive the attention it deserves. Muay Thai has given me so much joy; through my books I would like to make a contribution to the public awareness of this martial art.

A heartfelt thank-you to all who have helped me in the preparation of this book, particularly my family, my sister Barbara for the proof, Ajaarn Somboon Tapina, Amnuay Kesbumrung, Chitsanuspong Nittayaros (Master Decha), Songchai Ratanasuban, Colonel Somphob Srisiri, Oliver Glatow, Saengruck Ruckscharoenkul, Daniel Gallus, Menny Ossi, Richard Delp, and the fighters shown in the photographs.
I wish all readers much enjoyment with this book, and hope that Muay Thai will give them as much joy as it gives me.

Photo 1: Author Christoph Delp in front of the Muay Thai Institute, Bangkok, 1999.

Biographical Notes

Christoph Delp, born 1974, ‘Diplombetriebswirt’ (master of business administration, graduate of managerial economics) and author. Trainer for Muay Thai and fitness.


**Trainers**

**Ajaarn Somboon Tapina.** Fighter name: Roongrit Taveesak. Born 1940, seventy professional fights, many years listed in the top ten of the Rajadamnern Stadium, approximately one hundred amateur fights in boxing and Muay Thai. Former senior umpire of the Suratthani province and deputy president and professor at the University of Suratthani. He taught in Canada and Australia. Today president of the Muay Thai Martial Arts Academy, Suratthani (www.muaythaitraining.com).

**Chitsanupong Nittayaros,** Master Decha. Born 1960, 145 fights, many fights as an amateur. Studied sports and graduated in sports and health. Trained many successful Thai fighters and taught in Australia, Greece, Japan, the Philippines, and Brunei.

**Chalee Khuntharee,** Master Chalee. Fighter name: Pharuhatlek Sitchunthong. Born 1961, 219 professional fights, five-time champion in different weight divisions. He studied sports and graduated in sports and health. Master Chalee is internationally known as former head trainer at the Muay Thai Institute, Bangkok.

**Narong Songmanee,** Apideh Sit Hiran. Born 1935, approximately three hundred professional fights, seven-time champion, challenger in boxing for the WBA and WBC title. Apideh Sit Hiran is considered a living Muay Thai legend and, to many, he is the
best fighter of all time. He is also a very successful trainer and teaches in Thailand at Fairtex Gym, Bangkok.

**Performers**

The performers shown in the photos are professional Thai boxers. The number of fights cited refer to fights in large stadiums, such as Lumpini, Rajadamnern, and Rangsit.


Photo 6: Patrick Gayle. Born 1975, professional fighter, actor (e.g. Black Mask II), stuntman. Seven professional fights in Thailand until June 2001 (seven knockouts). Champion Hua Hin province. He is shown in the book Bodytraining für Zuhause (Delp. 2002).

Part I

Muay Thai as Competitive Sport

Photo 8: Lukporkoon Por Yodsanan carries out a jumping knee kick.
Chapter 1

Development of the Sport

Muay Thai has been practiced as a competitive sport for many centuries. In the twentieth century, far-reaching changes were implemented, such as construction of boxing stadiums and the use of boxing gloves, which led to increased popularity and international appreciation of this form of martial arts as sport. In recent years, Muay Thai gyms have been opened in many countries, and the number of students has significantly increased. It is currently under discussion what changes are required to establish Muay Thai worldwide.

Audiences in Thailand

The changing interests of Thai audiences are a considerable problem. Only a few decades ago, families of all social classes went to the fights, as the matches were adored as art. To the enjoyment of the spectators, the athletes tried to impress the crowds with a large variety of techniques. The best competitors were heroes and were frequently better known than today’s current champions. Professor Somboon Tapina tells of a public festival atmosphere at important fights. Some of the spectators gambled, but this was not the main reason to see the events.

The situation has changed. Now the audience in the stadiums and those watching on TV are mainly interested in betting. The focus is on who wins, not on a large variety of attractive techniques. The amount of money in bets has an influence on the competitors’ purse, which is the reason why the competitors do not really
Muay Thai: Advanced Thai Kickboxing Techniques

attempt to show their technical skills but conduct very hard and energetic fights. Apideh Sit Hiran criticizes this approach, which results in many clinch situations. In his time as an active fighter, the style was more rational, and fighters attempted to seek an early end once the opportunity arose. Other interested parties complain that the athletes are only feeling each other out in the first and second rounds, leading to boring fights for many spectators who are not predominantly interested in gambling.


Muay Thai fans are demanding that fights should again be focused on the arts, to the delight of many enthusiastic spectators. The fighters are being urged to apply the greatest possible variety of techniques from round one to round five, so that more
and more spectators who are interested in the sport, and not in betting, return to the arenas. For such changes to be implemented, the promoters, owners of gyms, and umpires must jointly agree on changes to the scoring system. Once the sport succeeds in attracting the crowds back into the stadium, it will facilitate attempts to establish Muay Thai on an international scale.


Amateur Sport in Thailand

The majority of gyms in Thailand are for professional athletes. The respective managers and trainers are entitled to a part of the purse, which is why they try to train their fighters for competition at the earliest opportunity. They equip their gyms with the
bare necessities and admit a limited number of athletes for training. Efforts are made to select fighters from poor backgrounds who are motivated to improve their own living conditions and the conditions of their families. Excelling in Muay Thai means leading a very disciplined life. Fighters must be prepared to live in this way. Punters who exert a great influence on professional Muay Thai often visit the gyms.

Well-to-do parents do not wish their children to train at such locations. They are, however, aware of the importance of regular fitness and self-defense training, which is why their children are trained in other types of martial arts. To this end, for example, Tae Kwon Do gyms dedicated to the training of pure amateurs have started to spread in Thailand.

This situation induced the Thai government to promote Muay Thai, as it is part of Thai cultural heritage. The government is now attempting to establish the amateur sport on a large scale, and many control measures for the professional sphere have been initiated. As a result, all social classes are beginning to accept Muay Thai as a martial art again. Gyms financed by their income from amateur training can now be found in Thailand. These are well equipped and maintained, and subject to strict controls. They are open to anybody, regardless of their age, sex, or prior athletic experience. Different courses, in accordance with performance standards, are offered, and the students are presented with a certificate at the end of a course.

**Acceptance and International Recognition**

Muay Thai enjoys an ever-increasing popularity as a sport and form of self-defense throughout the world. The efficiency of the
sport has long been known, but few qualified trainers could be found outside Thailand. Many courses were offered by people whose knowledge was based on a combination of experience in different types of martial art and some fleeting impressions gained by watching assorted Muay Thai videos. In addition, fights without Thai approval featuring competitors at vastly different levels were staged. All this led to negative media reports on Thai boxing. The sport was described as brutal and unregulated, and this was attributed to a certain social class.

Recent years have seen a positive trend due to the Thai government’s campaign and the efforts of Muay Thai followers. At the same time, the large number of fitness programs with martial art elements led to social acceptance and appreciation of Thai boxing. Many Thai boxing courses are now being offered, and new gyms with Thai trainers have opened.

For this reason the performance level of fights outside Thailand has improved considerably. They can no longer be compared to the fights staged some years ago, which frequently could not satisfy the organization and quality requirements of Muay Thai. Nevertheless, many such fights are still carried out beyond the limits of Thai regulation.

In the future, the representatives and promoters of the sport must cooperate and present a common picture of Muay Thai. They must coordinate their efforts with officials in the areas of martial art and fitness. Rules and regulations must be coordinated and comprehensive trainer education should be introduced. If all this is done, Muay Thai could be established internationally and even become an Olympic competition, like other types of martial art.
Muay Thai as Fitness Exercise

Numerous fitness programs with martial art elements have been pushing their way onto the market since the mid-nineties. The courses are frequently booked up and attended by celebrities such as Jennifer Lopez, Carmen Electra, and Brooke Shields. These programs have furthered the public awareness of the positive influence of martial arts on elements of physical fitness, such as agility, strength, stamina, and coordination (see Delp, 2002).

Many of those who founded the various contact-sport aerobic courses now take each other to court in order to maintain and strengthen their market position. However, disputes regarding who copied who are often dubious. Often a former boxer or Tae Kwon Do fighter, in order to market himself better, will allow himself to be depicted in Thai boxing shorts and offer courses
with elbow strikes and knee strikes, claiming that these techniques were taken from his original fighting art.

In fact, similar programs have been on the market for many years, albeit without any large advertising budgets. As Master Decha reports, he had taught Muay Thai with aerobic elements since the mid-eighties. At the time, he conducted such courses with a large number of participants in Australia, but these classes were never marketed extensively under a common name.

The different fitness programs include Muay Thai techniques because of their proven efficacy and daily use in Thai boxing rings. Muay Thai’s potential has not yet been exhausted to its fullest, at least not under the name of Muay Thai. Muay Thai itself is useful as training for fitness, self-defense, and competition. The sport must become more open and react to trends and
requirements. For example, programs with effective Thai boxing techniques could be offered as “Muay Thai Aerobics” or “Muay Thai Bag Workout.” Thai boxing training can be a very sensible alternative fitness exercise for individual and group training. Students wearing pads can practice a great number of effective techniques on moving targets and lose weight in the process.

Excerpts from an Interview with Niyom Lagsanapang

Under his fighting names Niyom Sit Hiran and Niyom Ratanasit, Niyom Lagsanapang appeared in more than three hundred professional fights. He has been a several-time Thai champion and the best international fighter in his section. In addition, he was listed among the best Thai fighters for approximately six years. Particular mention must be made of his fight as Rajadamnern champion versus the Lumpini champion at the time, Rerungruay Srisoonthorn, which he won by knockout in the first round.

The interview dates back to the year 2000, on the opening of the Muay Thai Martial Arts Academy in Suratthani.

C.D.: Where does your interest in Muay Thai come from and at what age did you start training?

N.L.: The sport was very popular at the time, and I was also fascinated. If I did not have the money to pay for a ticket, I would climb the adjoining trees and watch the fights from there. At the age of twelve, I started with regular training.

C.D.: When did you have your first fight?

N.L.: I had my first fight at the age of ten, without any previ-
ous training. A fighter was required at a festival, and I volunteered. I won this particular children’s contest and had a nice ring experience, which led me to start with regular training.

C.D.: How many fights did you have and what was your rate of success?

N.L.: I had more than three hundred professional fights and was a two-time champion. In 1954, I defeated Rernghai Srisorthorn, the Lumpini champion at the time, by knockout in the first round.

C.D.: At what age did you finish your career and what did you do thereafter?

N.L.: I had my last fight at thirty-three. Subsequently, I worked for some time as a manager and trainer. However, I did not have the success I had hoped for, so I retired from this profession after a number of years. Thereafter, I opened my own specialty fish shop. Today I am a pensioner.

C.D.: Are you still active in sports?

N.L.: After my active time as fighter, I trained in various types of sport. I am still jogging and regularly ride my bicycle.

C.D.: Are you still watching Muay Thai fights and can you detect changes from your active time?

N.L.: I regularly watch fights and can see many changes. Today’s fights are dominated by power instead of using the brain, so fights come to many clinch situations. This is neither attractive to watch nor particularly efficient. Today’s purses are much higher than in the past, although we used to have a far bigger audience. There was some betting, though not as much.

C.D.: What do you think of the athletic development of foreigners who enter fights in Thailand?

N.L.: The foreigners are improving. Frequently, I like their style. They apply many different techniques and are particularly well trained in boxing techniques. We have only few good foreign
boxers in the lower weight classes. However, the higher the weight class, the more the situation changes in their favor.

**C.D.**: Did you ever sustain a serious injury during a fight? And what is your physical condition now?

**N.L.**: I have never incurred a serious injury and I am in good shape even today.
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land generally corresponds to the regulations of Lumpini Stadium (page 19) and Rajadamnern Stadium (page 23).

The following is a guideline for international classifications. Some associations have slightly different weight divisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight Class</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini flyweight</td>
<td>not over 105 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior flyweight</td>
<td>not over 108 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyweight</td>
<td>not over 112 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior bantamweight</td>
<td>not over 115 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantamweight</td>
<td>not over 118 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior featherweight</td>
<td>not over 122 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featherweight</td>
<td>not over 126 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior lightweight</td>
<td>not over 130 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightweight</td>
<td>not over 135 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior welterweight</td>
<td>not over 140 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welterweight</td>
<td>not over 147 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior middleweight</td>
<td>not over 154 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middleweight</td>
<td>not over 160 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super middleweight</td>
<td>not over 168 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light heavyweight</td>
<td>not over 175 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super light heavyweight</td>
<td>not over 182 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruiserweight</td>
<td>not over 190 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavyweight</td>
<td>not over 209 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Super heavyweight</td>
<td>over 209 pounds</td>
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**Equipment**

In the categories up to and including the welterweight division, the fights are carried out with 8-ounce boxing gloves. Heavier divisions use 10-ounce gloves.

The athletes must wear Muay Thai shorts of a predetermined design. In addition, an abdomen protector of hard material and
a mouth guard must be used. For further protection, elastic bandages around the foot joints are permitted but not prescribed. Amateurs must also use head guard, elbow and body protectors. Some associations prescribe shin guards.

**Medical Support**

All athletes must undergo regular medical inspections in order to obtain a license for fights. In addition, shortly before a fight, a doctor examines the athletes for injuries. These checkups should also include tests for doping and infectious disease, although this is not always done in Thailand.

During fights, the doctor must be right next to the ring in order to ensure the safety and health of the athletes. If blood is discovered in the eye of a fighter from a cut above the eye or a deep cut elsewhere, the doctor must tell the umpire to stop the fight.

After a knockout, the injured fighter will be suspended for a certain number of weeks. The length of time depends on the type of knockout and possible earlier injuries.

**Whai Khru and Ram Muay**

Prior to each fight, the athletes perform a Whai Khru and a Ram Muay out of respect for their teacher and their camp. These performances are accompanied by traditional music (see pp. 29-38).

**Music**

Muay Thai fights have been accompanied by music for many centuries. The orchestra is usually made up of four musicians, although at smaller events the music is usually played by a tape recorder. Such a Muay Thai group should also accompany events outside Thailand, in order to uphold the tradition of the sport.

The music starts as soon as the speaker has announced the Whai Khru and Ram Muay ceremonies and continues until both
fighters have ended their performances. Subsequently, the speaker issues the order for the start of the fight, and the musicians resume playing, now with considerably more vigor.

They endeavor to follow the action in the ring and play slower or faster depending on the action. If the athletic performance turns out to be less than eventful, they play very fast to push the fighters ahead. The musicians cease their playing only during breaks.

**Whai Khru and a Ram Muay**

**Length of the Fight**

Professional male fighters have to go through five rounds of three minutes each. Between rounds there is a two-minute break. Pro-
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You have either reached a page that is unavailable for viewing or reached your viewing limit for this book.
Chapter 3

Stadiums

Thailand has two big arenas: the Lumpini Stadium and the Rajadamnern Stadium. They are the venues for several fights each week. The atmosphere at these events is extraordinary. Thousands of spectators yell and shout to encourage their favorites. Many tourists recall a visit to such an event as an unforgettable experience.

Thailand has many other stadiums, and the Rangsit Stadium deserves special mention. It has developed into the Muay Thai Institute, a training site for national and international athletes.

Lumpini Stadium

The Lumpini Stadium is internationally renowned for its Muay Thai and boxing events. Since December 8, 1956, it has been the venue for regular fights. Before Lumpini Stadium’s completion, the Rajadamnern Stadium was the only venue in Bangkok, so athletes had long waits between fights. The Lumpini Stadium was established for the protection of the martial art of Muay Thai and to enable athletes to compete in many fights.

The stadium was also meant improve the chances of success for classical boxers in international competition (for example, at the Olympic Games), thereby honoring Thailand. The stadium is controlled by the army and is also used for army events. The first manager was Lieutenant Colonel Erb Saengrit. He was in charge of the Lumpini Stadium until June 1961 and rapidly established its national reputation for Muay Thai fights and international boxing events.
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### Fight Schedules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesdays</td>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fridays</td>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturdays</td>
<td>5:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tickets, depending on the distance to the ring cost, 1000, 500, or 250 Baht.

### Lumpini Champions in November 2001

- **Mini flyweight (not over 105 pounds):** Yodsanlai Petyindee (champion since August 21, 2001)
- **Junior flyweight (not over 108 pounds):** Pomsawan Por Pramook (champion since May 29, 2001)
- **Flyweight (not over 112 pounds):** Thapaothong Euipmentair (champion since August 10, 2001)
- **Junior bantamweight (not over 115 pounds):** Pettapee Liengdonmuang (champion since January 24, 2001)
- **Bantamweight (not over 118 pounds):** Fasuchon Sit-O (champion since July 17, 2001)
- **Junior featherweight (not over 122 pounds):** Saenghiran Lukbunya (champion since July 17, 2001)
- **Featherweight (not over 126 pounds):** Vacant Number one challenger: Orono Majesticgym
- **Junior lightweight (not over 130 pounds):** Sumkor Chor Ratchatasupak (champion since April 22, 2000)
- **Lightweight (not over 135 pounds):** Namsaknoi Yoothakarnkamthorn (champion since April 25, 2000)
- **Junior welterweight (not over 140 pounds):** Chokdee Por Pramook (champion since March 13, 2001)
- **Welterweight (not over 147 pounds):** Vacant Number one challenger: Nuengkrakarn Por Mueng-Ubon
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Rajadamnern Stadium

Next to the Lumpini Stadium, the Rajadamnern Stadium is the best-known arena for Thai boxing contests. Only the best athletes get the opportunity to fight in one of these stadiums.

History

In 1941, the then prime minister of Thailand, Field Marshal P. Pibulsongkram, gave orders for a national boxing stadium. A court on the Rajadamnern Nok Road was chosen for the project and can still be found there today. Construction started on March 1, 1941. During World War Two, work stopped temporarily due to supply shortages. In 1945, the work restarted, and the project was finished in four months. The first fights took place on December 23, 1945. During the following four years, the stadium had no roof. In 1949, a roof was planned. In the course of modernization, which took until 1951, the capacity of the stadium was increased.

In the first seven years after its opening, the stadium was managed by the Royal Representation. During that time the stadium operated at a loss, which is why it was then leased to a Thai firm. The manager at the time, Chalerm Cheosakul, requested permission to continue his work and founded the Rajadamnern Company, Ltd., on May 24, 1953. Ever since then, this firm has operated the Rajadamnern Stadium. Over time, the stadium has become one of the best-known international arenas for Thai boxing and is considered to be a Thai institution.

Address

Rajadamnern Stadium
Rajadamnern Nok Road
Pompab Satroo Pai
10200 Bangkok
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Songchai Ratanasuban

Songchai Ratanasuban is the best-known Muay Thai promoter. He became popular by staging events at the Lumpini Stadium, featuring the best fighters with highly interesting contests in his program. He also made it possible to watch the events on television.

In line with his slogan, “Muay-Thai—Thai Heritage—World Heritage,” he has promoted the international recognition of Muay Thai. He has organized events in France, the Netherlands, the United States, Morocco, and Japan.

On December 19, 2000, he retired from his post as Lumpini promoter and joined the Rajadamnern Stadium. Previously, the Lumpini Stadium enjoyed a better reputation for Muay Thai, as it had been staging superior events to the ones at Rajadamnern. Following Songchai Ratanasuban’s move, the reputations of these legendary stadiums are expected return to comparable standing.
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Chapter 5

Ram Muay

Ram Muay combines different dance styles with one type of exercise. Through its performance, the fighters honor their trainer and their gym. They concentrate on, and remember, their own skills, tactics, and their trainer’s advice. Ram Muay helps the contestants to calm their nerves and mentally prepare for the fight. The exercise is also a form of body stretching.

In earlier days, Muay Thai experts could determine the fighter’s home camp from the Ram Muay, as each camp taught a particular exercise. Nowadays, many fighters have their own style, which makes it difficult to determine a camp.

The Ram Muay follows immediately after the end of the Whai Khru. For its performance, a special type of walk is employed for all changes of position, such as the Yaang Sam Khum, which is very popular.

Yaang Sam Khum

First raise the front foot and pull up the toes (photo 30). Now rest the toes on the floor in front of the body and shift the foot to the outside and slightly turn the body. In the final position, the entire foot is resting on the ground and the exercise is repeated with the other foot (photo 31). Continue until the desired position in the ring has been reached.

Variations of Ram Muay

For Ram Muay, the fighters choose a traditional style, combine styles, or create their own show. The best known traditional styles are: Pra Ram Plang Sorn, Hong Hern, Nok Yoong Fhon Hang,
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This trick can be carried out with the front or rear foot. For use of the front foot, you must transfer the weight to the rear leg. This technique can induce your opponent to use one of his or her own weapons, which you, however, should anticipate and be able to counter effectively.

Apideh also showed this technique to perfection in his contests.

**Return Strike with Elbow**

This technique comes into use after a cutting elbow or hitting-down elbow has missed the head. Supported by a move of the hip, you promptly return the elbow in a direct line and hit your opponent’s chin.

If your elbow fails to make contact, your opponent will usually attack, opening up an opportunity for full contact with your return strike. Should he or she not attack after all, you must take a step in your opponent’s direction for better impact of the blow.

**Front Kick to the Pivot Leg**

This technique is aimed at your opponent’s pivot leg. Use this technique parallel to an opponent’s round kick, when your opponent is unable to defend. Apideh applies this kick with the heel and a lateral position of the foot for a firmer stance. In training sessions, the ball of the foot should be used, as the heel is very hard.

Particularly suitable targets are the inner side of the thigh and the knee. A hard execution of the technique can result in a knock-out.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Countertactics are simultaneously defensive and offensive techniques. The success of an opponent’s technique can be avoided by a faster one, or an attack can be first warded off and followed up by a quick counter. In this way, you will deliver an effective blow and ensure that your opponent cannot apply additional techniques.

Photo 39: Professor Somboon Tapina taught Christoph Delp a number of countertactics and frequently discussed the efficacy of various countertactics with him, Suratthani, 2001.
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Lean Back and Punch (Same Stance)

This countertactic is used in defense against a jab, provided both fighters have the same stance.

Lean back so that your opponent’s jab misses the target. In the process, your weight is shifted to your rear leg. Promptly counter with a jab and transfer your weight forward for greater impact to the blow. Do not lean back too much, or your opponent may continue jabbing. In addition, your chin must be lowered to your chest to protect your throat.

Photos 45 to 47 show the red fighter leaning back with a subsequent transfer of his weight toward the opponent and the delivery of a jab.
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Paksa Waeg Rang

This traditional technique is used against a powerful jab accompanied by a step to the front or a straight punch.

As soon as you detect the beginning of the blow, take a step forward and turn the upper part of your body slightly toward your opponent’s arm. In the process, block with the arm opposite to your opponent’s technique and deliver an uppercut elbow to the head. Some trainers teach the technique so that both lower arms are directed from the inside toward the opponent’s punch arm while keeping the arms about 20 centimeters apart. The elbows will be somewhat wider.

In photo 167, the fighter in red defends himself against a technique with the right arm. If the opponent delivers the technique with the left arm, he must turn his body to the right and strike with the left elbow.
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Ta Then Kam Fak

This traditional technique is used against a powerful jab accompanied by a step to the front or a straight punch.

Once your opponent starts his or her technique, take a step to the front, bend your front leg, and transfer your weight to this leg. In addition, the upper part of your body can slightly lean to the side. In the course of your forward move, push your opponent’s punch upward with your opposite lower arm. Subsequently, you can deliver a technique with your other arm or a knee kick to the unprotected part of your opponent’s body.

In photo 171, the fighter in red defends himself against a punch with the right arm. For defense against a left arm he must block with his right lower arm. If, in the process, he moves his right leg to the front, he can deliver a forceful hit with his left arm.
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Khun Yak Jab Ling

This traditional technique can be learned for defense against a quick combination of a punch, kick and elbow.

The fighter in red initially blocks his opponent’s straight punch with the raised guard to the outside (photo 179). Thereafter, he defends himself against a round kick by hitting the opponent’s thigh with the bone of the elbow (photo 180). Finally he blocks a hitting-down elbow (photo 181) and is now prepared to counter.
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Batha Loob Pak

This traditional technique originates from the Kon Muay Thai and is used for defense against a powerful jab accompanied by a step to the front or a straight punch.

Deflect the punch with the opposite hand to the outside. As an alternative, the upper part of your body may lean back to get out of reach of your opponent's attack. Then carry out a quick front kick with your heel or the entire foot to your opponent's head (photo 187). This is usually done with the rear foot, as this will give you more power and may even lead to a knockout.
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Hanuman Hag Darn

This traditional technique originates from the Kon Muay Thai and embraces the simultaneous use of the elbow and knee.

If your opponent attacks with a powerful jab and a forward step, or a straight punch, deflect the technique with the opposite arm to the inside. Then take a small step forward with your foot on this side of the body to the outside and deliver your elbow and your knee to your opponent’s body. The elbow is directed to the head and the knee to the stomach.

Photo 195 shows the technique against a punch with the right arm. If the opponent uses his left arm, the fighter in red must deflect the punch with his right arm to the left. Subsequently, he should take a step forward with his right leg to the outside and use his left elbow and knee.
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The training is attended by a large variety of people, from an Australian lifesaver, to a soldier or a Harvard student. Some athletes try to make money on the professional Thai boxing circuit; others enjoy an extended vacation. Many interested parties train with their own martial arts studio in mind. Muay Thai training is open to many kinds of people.

Photo 198: This group photo with Christoph Delp was taken during training at the Fairtex Gym, Bangkok, 2000.

Are women permitted to participate in training and do age restrictions exist?

Fights between women are becoming more and more popular in Thailand, and a large number of gyms are available for women. There is no age restriction for participating in training. Even
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What Should Be Taken Along?

- **One set of proper clothing.** If you visit a Thai government authority you must be properly dressed. This is also recommended for all official functions and invitations. Otherwise you only have to take along the bare necessities, as clothing can be purchased in Thailand at a favorable price.

- **Diarrhea medication, insect repellent, suntan lotion, and prophylactics.** These should be taken along as a precautionary measure. Large supplies are not required as all of these products are readily available at numerous Thai pharmacies.

- **Credit cards (Visa/MasterCard) and traveler’s checks (American Express).** Visa and MasterCard can be used at cash dispensers and in shops. They are not only a means of payment but are also best suited for the withdrawal of cash. However, cash machines can often be out of service for a number of days, so it is best to carry traveler’s checks for this purpose.

- **Important telephone numbers and addresses.** Important telephone numbers and addresses that you should have on you are these of your diplomatic representatives (as listed below), the head office of Thai tourist information, your travel agent, and your airline.

- **Copy of your passport and flight ticket.** Keep a copy of your passport and keep it separate from the original. This will enable your embassy to issue a temporary passport without much delay if the original should be lost or mislaid. If you lose your flight ticket, you will need a copy to present to the airline.

- **Mouth guard.** It is difficult to buy a mouth guard in Thailand. Some of the fighters do not wear a guard, which is certainly not recommended, on account of possible injuries.
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Glossary

The following is a listing of the best-known basic Muay Thai techniques, first listed in English, and then in Thai. They are comprehensively described in the book Thai-Boxen basics (Delp, 2001).

**Fist Techniques**

- **Hook punch** (mat hook, mat weang sun): Lateral punch with the arm kept nearly parallel to the ground.
- **Jab punch** (mat jab, mat throng chock num): Straight punch technique with the front arm.
- **Straight punch** (mat throng, mat throng chock tam): Straight punch technique with the rear arm.
- **Swing** (mat weang yao, mat kwang): Lateral punch technique with a wide swinging motion.
- **Uppercut** (mat ngad, mat seri): Punch technique carried out from below with the arm held at an angle.

**Elbow Techniques**

- **Cutting elbow** (sok tad): Lateral elbow technique with the hitting arm held horizontally.
- **Elbow cuff from above** (sok sub): Elbow from far above, often in the process of a jump.
- **Hitting-down elbow** (sok tee): Diagonal elbow technique from above, for which the elbow must initially be turned up.
- **Lift-back elbow** (sok kratung): Elbow to the back from below.
- **Reverse elbow** (sok glab): Elbow technique in the process of a turn.
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During the last twenty years, Muay Thai, also known as Thai boxing, has become popular around the world. Practitioners enjoy this martial art for fitness training, competitive sport, and self-defense.

Christoph Delp has studied intensively at many gyms and training camps in Thailand. In *Muay Thai: Advanced Thai Kickboxing Techniques*, he shares his experience of the people, history, and traditions of this exciting part of the country's extraordinary cultural heritage. Color photographs of Thai boxers demonstrate the techniques athletes must learn to succeed in professional or amateur contests, including well-proven offensive tactics as well as ways to counter an opponent's attacks. Historical Muay Thai techniques are also examined, which can be used by an experienced fighter to achieve a surprise victory.

*Muay Thai: Advanced Thai Kickboxing Techniques* includes sections on:

- Muay Thai as a competitive sport
- The rules of competition
- Traditional ceremonies
- Stars and stadiums
- A professional training program
- Competitive tips and tricks
- Effective counterractics
- Historical techniques
- Training in Thailand