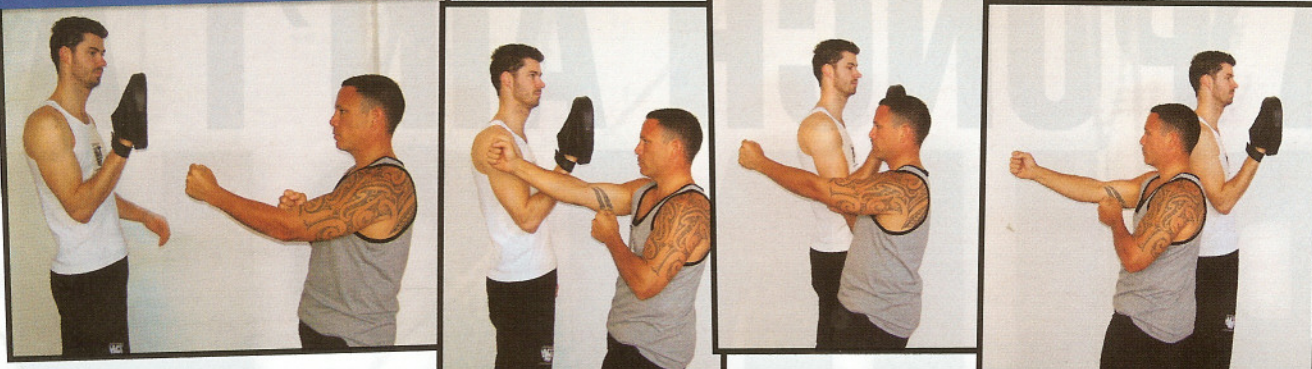


## Chain-punch footwork



The focus-mitt represents the position of the head and would always be in front of the chain-punches. This sequence demonstrates how deep the WingTsun fighter penetrates the opponent's stance. Within three chain-punches, the puncher steps completely through his opponent with his bodyweight behind the punches. If the above-shown punches had gone to the head, it would have been driven back at least a metre and continuously hit at the same time.

to prevent hand injuries). The set-up for chain-punches is usually a front-kick or side-kick to the opponent's advancing leg, followed by chain-punches, often mixed with elbows and knees on different levels to overwhelm the attacker.

groin area with every step) and the constant forward movement of the WingTsun fighter, giving the opponent no chance to reorganise or recover from the rapid onslaught.

It is important not just to focus on the speed of the

**The set-up for chain-punches is usually a front-kick or side-kick to the opponent's advancing leg, followed by chain-punches, elbows and knees.**

The advantages of the chain-punches are that if correctly executed, they deliver powerful punches with one's whole bodyweight behind them, in very quick succession. Once the first punch has connected they are quite difficult to defend due to the constant stream of punches, which immediately exceeds the defender's information-processing capabilities, making conscious or reflex reactions too slow to cope with the rapid sequence of attacks.

The chain-punches are usually combined with the WingTsun advancing step (which delivers a short knee to the

punches, but to strike a good balance between speed and power. Even more importantly, you must utilise chain-punching only in the right situation and from the right distance. If the chain-punches are employed too early or from too far away, they can be fairly easily avoided by a trained martial artist. The WingTsun motto is: preferably the first punch, but at the very least the second punch has to connect with the opponent.

*Sifu Stefan Fischer is the Chief Instructor of the Australian WingTsun Organisation. He runs their HQ school in Waterloo, NSW.*

## SEITO SHITO-RYU'S FRONT-PUNCH AND REVERSE-PUNCH

There are 11 punching techniques in the curriculum of Shito-Ryu Australia Karate-Do Kai, but the two most common punches taught from the beginning level are *seiken-tsuki* and *gyaku-tsuki*. These two strikes are more commonly known as the front-punch and the reverse-punch.

There are a number of factors that determine the correct execution of a punching technique. A step-by-step guide for practising the basic

requirements for a stationery technique is as follows.

**Forming a fist correctly:** With the palm facing up and the fingers straight, the first step in correctly forming a fist is to fold the fingers back towards the palm from the second knuckle. With the fingers folded in, close the hand to form a fist and finally move the thumb across the top of the fingers. The fist must be clenched tightly at the point of impact to reduce the risk of injury to the hand. The first two knuckles are used to impact the target, as they're the largest.

## The karate punch



**The position of the returning hand while practising the punch in a standing position for kihon (basics) training.**

**The position of the arm and fist at the completion of the reverse-punch or front-punch.**

## The Karate Fist



**1** First, wrap the fingers over tightly from the middle knuckle...

**2** ...then curl them into the centre of the palm...

**3** ...and stick the thumb down. The first two knuckles provide the striking surface.

### Chamber the punching arm:

Once the fist has been correctly formed, draw the arm back to the *hikite* position. This means that the arm should be parallel to the ground above the waist and pulled in close to the side of the body, with the elbow tucked in close to the ribs. The fist should be positioned with the palm facing up.

**Start the punch:** At the start of the punch, the body should be in an alert but relaxed state. Tension in the muscles of the back, shoulder or arms will prevent the punch being executed correctly and

will reduce the speed and effectiveness of the technique.

With the arm still close to the side, begin thrusting the punching arm towards the target with the palm of the punching hand still facing up. Ensure that the body is relaxed and that the punching arm brushes the side of your body as the technique begins. This will help with the alignment of the technique to ensure maximum effect and reduce the risk of injury to the punching hand or wrist.

**Finish the punch:** The punch must travel in a straight

line direct to the target and just before impact the arm and wrist must rotate, so the fist turns over with palm facing down. The elbow must be facing down until the rotation of the wrist, and as the wrist rotates the arm must be straight and the wrist must be in alignment with the arm so it doesn't buckle on impact.

The hips are also used as the punch starts, which puts bodyweight behind the punch.

In training, the non-punching arm pulls back to the chambered position on the opposite side as the punching arm thrusts towards its target. The combined action of the

hips and returning arm provides balance and momentum for the punch. This helps develop the push-pull power action. In sparring, however, the rear hand will return to guard.

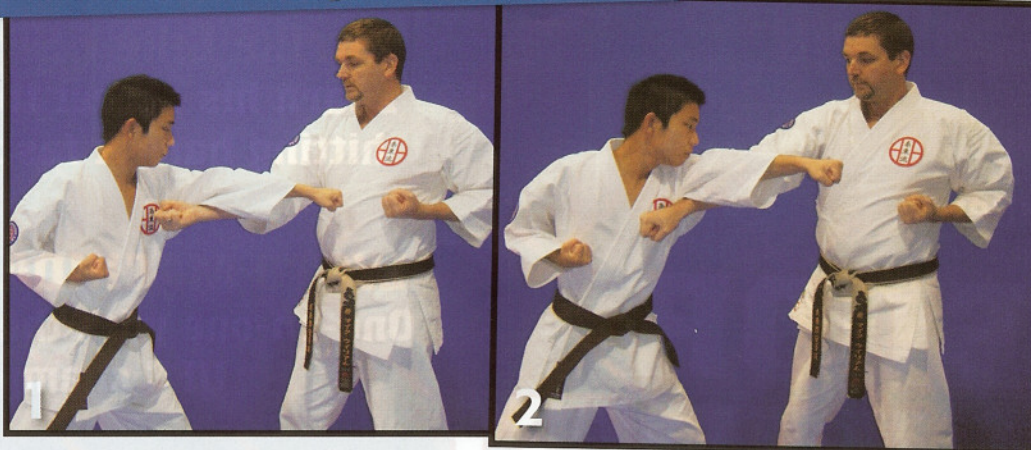
The primary target areas for the front-punch or reverse-punch are the chin or temple for the upper level (*jodan*) or solar plexus at mid-level (*chudan*). It's not often recognised that this style of punch can be used effectively as a block-and-counter by stepping off line as you fire it.

### Important points:

- Keep your back straight throughout the technique — do not lean forward.
- When stepping, timing is important. Ensure your feet are firmly on the ground when you finish the punch.
- Make sure that the elbow of the punching arm is not bent.
- Correct breathing is important. Breathe out at the time of impact, and tense.
- To achieve greater efficiency, the muscles of the arms, shoulders and back must be relaxed to allow maximum speed.

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## Counter-punching



**Williams (right)** shows the application of the front punch as a combined block and counter. First, he step off the line of the attack as he initiates the punch...

**...and completes the punch by twisting his arm and wrist as it drives forward, simultaneously deflecting his opponent's strike.**