**Stage Combat Moves/Holds**

1. *The Wrist Grab with Release*

Don’t use “real” force to grab the wrist, but isolate the tension isometric ally to create the illusion of force. To break the hold, the victim simply pulls sharply toward the thumb of the attacker, twisting to the right or left. The attacker allows the grip to be broken. Be careful that the victim doesn’t hit themselves in the face with his or her own hand when breaking the grip.

1. *The Arm Lock Behind the Back*

This is a controlling move. The attacker grabs the right wrist with the right hand. The victim “locks” the hand into his or her own wrist with the left hand. The victim prepares slightly to the right, and then sweeps 360° to the left.The attacker (not the victim of the arm lock) turns 180° to the left and puts the arm behind their own back. Don’t pull the arm too high up the back, or put pressure on any joints. The victim must control the speed and “force” of the turn and the arm lock. The attacker puts the left hand on the victim’s left shoulder for support, and to help prevent the victim’s head from banging into the attacker’s face. Practice alone by turning and putting your own arm behind your back as you do, then add the attacker.

1. *The Push Away (From the Arm Lock)*

The victim controls this move by stepping slightly backward as a cue. The attacker gives way, supporting the weight. The victim actually throws himself or herself away. The attacker “acts” the throw, releasing the grip and extending the arms forward at a 45° angle, being careful not to give any extra momentum to the victim.

1. *The Clothes Grab with Release*

Begin by grabbing the lapels of the partner’s clothes. It helps if your partner is wearing loose, heavy clothing such as a sweatshirt. Victims should grab both of the attacker’s wrists, and pull down to stabilize the partners, and prevent the attacker’s hands from impacting the victim’s neck area. This can also be performed with a one hand grab, the victim using one, or two hands on the attacker’s wrist. Make sure the victim controls any shaking motion, or changing of ground once the grip is established. Be careful not to bang heads together. Movement should be side to side for safety, not forward and back as this threatens the head and face. To break the hold, the victim releases the wrists and brings both arms through the middle. The attacker must give way to complete the illusion. Don’t strike the partner with the fist on the chin as you break the hold. Don’t lean together as the “break” occurs, as this threatens the head and face.

1. *The Duck and “Action – Reaction – Action”*

Action – reaction – action means giving permission for a move to continue, for example:

Partner A. Cues by winding up (action)

Partner B. Begins duck (reaction/permission)

Partner A. Follows through (action)

In this example, Partner B gives permission for the punch to proceed by beginning the duck.

Helpful tips about ducking:

* When ducking, bend the knees and keep eye contact with the attacker.
* Never bend from the waist, as this will bring you dangerously into close distance.
* Never duck towards the incoming attack.
* Never close your eyes when ducking.
* Re-establish eye contact with your partner, after rising from the duck and before moving on to any other technique.
* When performed correctly, the attacker’s arm should miss the head by 8 to 12 inches, but never closer.

*6. The Non-contact Stomach Punch*

This punch never touches the victim at all. Line up with your right shoulders in line, the attacker facing downstage and the victim facing upstage. Make sure that your heads aren’t exactly lined up, so the audience can see the attacker’s face. This is a safety precaution so that the victim may react without threatening the attacker’s head.

This punch is performed in a 1, 2, 3 rhythm

1. Establish eye contact and check distance.
2. Cue by winding the arm back, down, and sideways.
3. The arm comes forward, stopping 6 – 8 inches from the victim’s stomach, coupled with a strong vocal reaction and a doubling over from the victim.

Helpful tips on the non-contact stomach punch:

* Keep the hands clear of the target.
* The victim must remember to give a big exhalation of breath to the reaction, and to never threaten the attacker’s head by bending toward them during the reaction to the punch.

*7. The Uppercut Punch (Non-contact)*

This punch is designed to look as if the fist is meeting the point of the chin, forcing the head upward. It is always a non-contact punch. This punch is performed with increased fighting distance. A safe distance from fist to face is 10 to 12 inches or more, depending on the maturity of the performers in question, and the power of the punch. The Uppercut is performed in a 1, 2, 3 rhythm:

1. Establish eye contact, and check fighting distance.
2. Cue by winding up, with the arm moving down, backward, and to the side.
3. Follow through on the diagonal, with a simultaneous clap knap, and head/body reaction. Never snap the head back too forcefully on the reaction, this may injure you.

Line up upstage/downstage to perform this punch. The audience should see the attacker over the victim’s left shoulder when performing a right uppercut punch. Keep the arm bent at the elbow and don’t perform any punch with a rigidly straight arm. Always hide the knap. The knap used here is the clap knap.

**All** punches are non-contact. Choose the spot on or near the shoulder of your partner to punch. Always punch upstage.

*8. The Hair Pull*

This illusion is designed to look as if the attacker is controlling the victim by pulling their hair. The attacker places one hand on the head. The victim grabs the wrist, and will control any movement from this point. Don’t actually pull the hair!

This is performed in a 1, 2, 3 rhythm:

1. Reach in and place the hand on the head.
2. Victim grabs wrist of the attacker.
3. Victim may react by moving the head, or changing position on stage.

*9. The Drop to the Knees*

This technique will safely allow the combatant to go to the floor without damaging the knees. Let the body relax. Open up the stance. Bend the knees, at the same time counter-balancing the upper body backward. Controlling your weight, place one knee to the floor (either one) followed by the other one. Don’t hit the floor with any speed or energy. Exhale when you “hit” the floor. Practice with kneepads, or on a mat until this technique is consistently controlled.