

## The Human, Wooden-Dummy Drill

by Keith Pascal

Would you be willing to try an unorthodox drill, if it meant honing your martial-arts skills? How would you like to create a wooden dummy (not a mook jong) for free, in under five minutes?

I'm about to share a proprietary exercise; this is a drill that I have never seen anyone else perform, yet every time I have tried it, there have been noticeable improvements.

This drill helps you refine your distance and angles, avoid certain attacks, and take control of your opponent's attacking limbs. It's not an end-all exercise, but it does offer some definite skill-refining benefits.

You'll definitely move differently after just one session with your "human" wooden dummy.

Here's what you'll need for this exercise:

- 2 dowels (or pieces of PVC tubing), arm length or a little less

- 6 - 8 pieces of cord, rope, or velcro ties, at least eight inches each

- 1 practice partner, with any desired *protective gear* (recommended)

This really is a simple idea that will help your training immensely; I promise.

### Dummy Attacks, You Defend

The drill involves tying some sort of dowel (like a broom stick or mop stick) to each of your practice partner's arms. I use my Filipino fighting sticks. Why? They are available.

You could try an unused piece of PVS tubing, extra wood for a doorframe, or anything rigid and narrow that will prevent your partner's arms from bending at the elbow.

I like to use three ties per dowel, sometimes four.

Tie each dowel along the arm, tight enough that the stick doesn't slip out, but loose enough that you don't cut off circulation.

Once your partner's arms are motion limited, you are ready to begin ... the game.

You are trying for a Frankenstein monster effect -- his or her arms extend straight forward. The hands extend past the dowels.

Have your "opponent" chase you around the training area. His or her goal is to touch you with the palms of either hand. (The palms are "poison.")

Your goal is to practice defending yourself.

Warning: Your partner's motion really is limited, so be careful when training. Don't actually hurt your peer. Respond with controlled techniques. Remember, new training partners are hard to find. Also, make sure your partner doesn't trip and impale himself with a dowel.

Now, you could run away and make this a game of cat and mouse, but this is the time for you to practice timing, distance, and combination techniques. In this first phase of the drill, prohibit kicking from both parties. Make it a "hands only" game, at first.

Also, start slowly, and work up to speed. At first, your opponent moves slowly, like the mummy chasing innocents. Later, the speed of the chase should quicken.

After you are comfortable working your way around your partner advancing, you can kick as a response, but the Frankenstein monster still only attacks by walking into you with arms stiff, extended forward. No creature kicks allowed, right now.

In your next phase, you could allow kicks, but now you have to be extra careful. You don't want your partner falling and breaking an arm. You also don't want to drive your buddy to the emergency room, jabbed by a stick. So, do be extra careful, if you decide to incorporate this phase.

If you don't want to have your partner kick at you, because of the training risk, I have another idea, that still increases your difficulty in responding.

In the first phase of the drill, your partner tried to touch you with the palm of his or her hand. Now, have your partner increase the distance by trying to touch you with his or her fingertips.

It will make the game just a little harder as you try to reach your opponent's torso or face.

If you'd like to up the ante just a little more ... stick a rubber practice knife in your partner's hand. Maybe even two -- one in each. This increases your opponent's reach and makes it even harder for you to close the distance.

Believe me; this will be great for you.

Actually go out and try this various phases of this training drill. You'll give yourself a lesson in finding efficient angles, countering with direct hits to openings, and finding just the right distance for your counterattacks.

Try this exercise for just twenty minutes. Oh ... and don't forget to give your partner a turn; you have to wear the dowels, too.

#### Bonus Training Drill

This one is for people who normally use a wing chun, wooden dummy ... a mook jong. Imagine what it would be like to have a wooden dummy chasing you around the room, instead of statically mounted in a corner or your training room or garage.

Why not have your partner set his or her arms at a fixed angle, still with the dowels attached, forcing rigid arms.

Simulate the dummy.

Then you go to work on the dummy, just the way you'd practice individual moves on an immobile dummy. Again, be careful not to hurt your partner, but imagine the possibilities of having a more dynamic way to practice your precise hits and checks ... with the "give" of a real person.

Good training!

Are you looking for more training ideas?

**100 Practical Martial Arts Articles** will definitely get you thinking in the right direction. And there are some useful drills to be found. Important principles and considerations, too. <http://advantagemartialarts.com/100-articles/>

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