

# **Consistency - the Stepping Stone to a Strong Throwing Technique**

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## **Introduction**

Consistency in performing the individual steps, which combine to make a single jujitsu throwing technique, will provide greater long-term success than using strength to compensate for inconsistent performance.

To illustrate this point, performing Tai Otoshi (Body Drop) is compared to achieving consistent accuracy in archery. To simplify the illustration, the archery example is made as if the player is using a bare bow without sights or mechanical aids. Both archery and jujitsu techniques are described for a right handed participant.

## **Strength in Archery**

In archery as in jujitsu, a base level of strength is required to participate in the sport. In archery, this strength allows a player to pull the bow and hold it at full draw prior to taking a shot. Once this level of strength is achieved, additional strength does not aid in hitting the bullseye for an individual shot. Additional strength allows more shots to be taken before the muscles become tired, or a heavier bow to be drawn. Using a heavier bow in turn allows a choice of heavier arrows or lighter arrows, and a quicker flatter trajectory for the shaft, but neither of these aid in consistent accuracy.

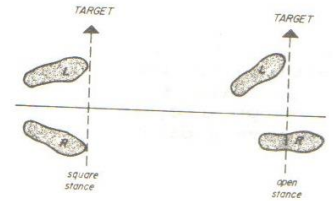
## **Making that Shot Count**

Accuracy in archery is achieved by two factors - continual practice and consistent technique. Continual practice is obviously also required in jujitsu and any other sport or activity requiring physical skill. Consistent technique is achieved by breaking down the act of shooting the bow into three major stages and then further actions (or micro stages) within each major stage. The three major stages in archery can be considered equivalent to Kuzushi (breaking uke's balance), Tsukuri (entry and positioning for the throw) & Kake (actual execution of the throw) in jujitsu. The major stages and micro stages of archery are listed below. There are further micro stages and refinements which could be listed but do not aid in the comparison between the sports.

## Stage 1 – (Kuzushi) Drawing and Holding the Bow.

Stand with feet approximately 90 degrees to the target and shoulder width apart. Left side of body to be closest to the target.

Hold the bow in the left hand.



Stand with the back straight and no twist to the hips or torso.

Arrow at correct location on the string (nocking point)

Fingers on string using correct method and placement.

Extend left arm and push the bow away with the fingers of the left hand open while pulling the string with the right arm to bring the bow to full draw. Left arm should extend towards the target.



Place right hand at the selected anchor point with arm straight from the elbow to the first joint of the fingers.

Right elbow at shoulder height or slightly above shoulder height.

## **Stage 2 (Tsukuri) – The Aim and Release.**

To aim the bow, look at the desired location on the target.

Do NOT look along the arrow.

Gently exhale and release the string by pulling the right hand backwards.

Do NOT deliberately open the fingers. The act of pulling the right hand backwards will open the fingers smoothly without pulling the string sideways.



## **Stage 3 (Kake) – The Loose and Follow Through.**

The moment at which the finger tips have moved sufficiently for the bowstring to leap forward and propel the arrow into flight is the 'Loose'. During the period where the arrow is leaving the bow, the stance needs to be maintained so that the shaft is not kicked sideways by moving the bow. Once the arrow has left the bow, the fingers of the left hand can be closed to grip and hold the bow before it falls and hits the ground.



Once these steps are mastered and can be performed consistently, accuracy will result. Accuracy is demonstrated by a small group of arrows in the target face. Once a small grouping (accuracy) is achieved at each training session (consistency), there are simple methods which can be used by the player. Move the group of arrows up, down, left or right around the target face to be centred on the desired location, the bullseye. These methods are to vary each of the micro steps one at a time to move the group. Experience has taught the coach which micro step to change to move the group in the desired location. For any given shot, additional strength does not improve accuracy, and the application of excess strength can ruin accuracy by the player over drawing the bow. Accuracy and a strong archery performance are achieved by consistency, not by the over application of strength, and strength cannot compensate for poor consistency.

## Jujitsu Application

In exactly the same way, a jujitsu throwing technique consists of the three major steps - Kuzushi, Tsukuri & Kake - and within each of these micro stages or steps, which make up the total technique and a strong throw. As an example, we will examine the hand throw, Tai Otoshi (Body Drop).

### **Kuzushi (Stage 1) - The process of unbalancing Uke for entry into a throw.**

Assuming Tori and Uke have taken a standard right-handed grip on sleeve and lapel, Tori breaks uke's balance forward by pulling with the left hand.

Tori must ensure that their left elbow is raised and they pull forward, not down.



### **Tsukuri (Stage 2) – The entry movement and positioning of Tori's body in order to execute the throw.**

Tori steps forward with the right foot and places it just inside of uke's left foot.

From the 'standard' grip, tori's right elbow is raised to go under uke's armpit.

Tori spins on their right foot and places their left foot outside of uke's left foot.

Place weight on left foot and extend right leg across in front of both of uke's legs so that toes are alive and right knee slightly bent.

Tori continues to pull uke forward (not down) with the left hand and lifts right elbow.



### **Kake ( Stage 3) – Actual execution or moment of the throw.**

Tori spins at the waist and to face their own left shoulder. Pull out and around with left hand not down.

As uke falls over tori's right leg, tori 'springs' their right knee to add slight lift to uke's fall. Tori turns their head to the left rear in the action of the throw.

Maintain balance and stand up straight after the throw.

Retain grip on uke's right arm for follow up technique.



## **Conclusion**

Learning to perform each of the micro stages consistently every time a throw is performed will lead to accuracy of the total technique. Application of additional strength above the base level required to perform the throw can hide poor or inconsistent technique. Brute strength can compensate for inconsistent technique when foot placement or body positioning etc is not correct.

However, for older players or those with a lighter less muscular frame, using brute strength to compensate may not be an option. These players can develop consistency in the micro stages, which combine to form a throwing technique and produce a strong throw on every application. Further consistently performing the micro stages allows for them to be smoothly combined to produce what is best described as a quick, strong and devastating throw.

“Practise makes perfect”! The more times that a player practises the throw and focuses on each micro stage, the more likely that the mind and body will become accustomed to the movements. Behind every good technique is 10,000 practices!

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