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Shime-Waza

The Art of Strangling



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Page of Contents

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Page 2 – *Page of Contents*

Page 3 – *Introduction*

Page 3 – *Strangles in Jujitsu*

Page 4 – *Strangling and Choking Explained*

Page 7 – *Basic strangles in the Jujitsu Syllabus*

Page 10 – *Strangling Safety*

Page 11 – *Conclusion*

Page 12 - *Bibliography*

Introduction

It is said that the art of jujitsu began in Japan in 1532 when Takenouchi Hisamori, a military tactician and lord from Mimasaka Province in Japan formed jujitsu by combining various Japanese martial arts which were used on the battlefield for close combat in situations where weapons were ineffective. These techniques were revolutionary in the way martial arts is portrayed today as it was the first documented martial art of its kind. Neighbouring nations, China and Korea had martial arts which focused only on striking. This is what made jujitsu unique. There are many techniques throughout the art of jujitsu, all of which involve using different parts of the body. A strangle is regarded as one of the strongest and most effective techniques in martial arts, due to the fact that if applied correctly, there is no way to defend, stop or escape the technique.

Strangles in Jujitsu

The strangle has been one of the many techniques available to the jujitsuan for many centuries, and it is still to this day one of the most effective techniques throughout all martial arts.

Techniques like joint-locks can be defended by people who are able to endure a higher pain threshold, whereas a strangle requires minimal strength and can lead to unconsciousness in a matter of seconds, no matter how big or strong the opponent. This is why strangles are very effective. They ensure maximum efficiency and require minimal effort.

Strangling and Choking Explained

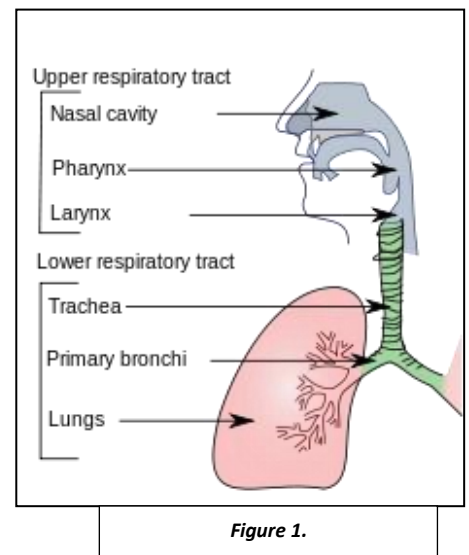
To the general public, choking and strangling are considered to be the same technique. This is not correct. The differing methodology of strangling and choking have different effects on a person when they are applied.

Choking

The aim of the application of choking is to obstruct or constrict the airway causing a lack of air. The method of choking involves preventing oxygen from reaching the lungs.

There are three main ways in which choking can occur

1. Mechanical obstruction (choking on food etc.)
2. Tissue swelling (allergic reactions)
3. Crushing the trachea (pressure to the windpipe)



From a martial arts perspective, choking usually occurs with the crushing of the trachea (see Figure 1.) In most cases this is done with the hand or forearm.

If the pressure on the trachea is not released, asphyxiation, and possibly hypoxia will occur. Asphyxiation can be referred to as suffocation - or being deprived of oxygen, and hypoxia is a deficiency of oxygen reaching the tissues. Both conditions can be fatal.

It takes approximately 2.32 kg/cm² of pressure to crush/break the trachea and approximately 0.77 kg/cm² will collapse it. To provide some comparison, the force required to crush an empty aluminium can is approximately 1 – 2 kg/cm².

It takes a number of minutes for a choke to result in asphyxiation or hypoxia, which also allows longer for a person to defend against the attack.

In a training situation, the consequences of choking techniques are quite hazardous and should be avoided, especially when teaching children.

Strangling

The definition of strangling is “To squeeze or constrict the neck of (a person or animal), especially so as to cause death.” (Obtained from the Oxford English Dictionary)

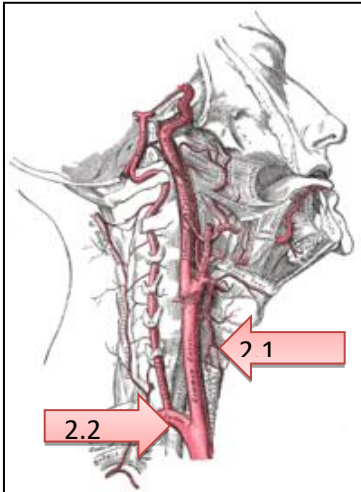


Figure 2.

Strangles are most commonly applied in jujitsu with the of the legs, arms or opponent's jacket. They are applied by compressing the carotid artery (see 2.1) and/or the jugular veins (see 2.2) found on both sides of the neck (See Figure 2).

Being held in a strangle for too long will cause the person to fall asleep. Continued pressure will lead to cerebral ischemia - a condition which there is insufficient blood flow to the brain. The resulting consequences include the killing of brain tissue and risk of an ischemic stroke, cardiac arrest, irreversible brain damage or death.

Joint locking techniques can be resisted through strength and pain threshold. It takes between 4 and 7 seconds for one to enter an unconscious state from strangulation, no matter the size, strength or pain threshold of the person. This makes strangulation techniques convenient and effective options in self-defense situations.

The Difference between Strangulation and Choking

As identified above, strangling and choking are two entirely different techniques. They are both applied differently and cause damage to different parts of the body. A choke applies pressure to the trachea which controls the air supply to the brain; however a strangle applies pressure to the carotid artery and/or jugular vein, each controlling the blood supply to and from the brain respectively.



In the photos above, Tori is attempting a *Naked Strangle (Hadaka Jime)*, using incorrect technique. Tori is using his forearm to apply pressure to the **front** of uke's throat, thereby making it a choke. In a training situation this is dangerous to uke, and in a competition situation it can be defended through pain threshold.

To apply a naked strangle using the correct technique, the arm must be positioned as far around the neck as possible. A good way to teach this is to prompt Tori to put his arm around so his elbow points straight downwards, as in the photos below.



In the pictures above, Tori is squeezing **both sides** of uke's neck using his radius bone and bicep, thereby making this a strangle. This is the correct way to apply *Hadaka Jime (naked strangle)*. *Hadaka Jime* is one of the simplest strangles in the jujitsu syllabus, when applied using the correct technique.

Basic Strangles in the Jujitsu Syllabus

Hadaka Jime (Naked Strangle) – Tori starts by kneeling behind uke on his left knee. He places his right arm around uke's neck and ensures his elbow is pointing straight down. Tori's hands are clasped with the right hand on top. (If one has trouble remembering, a good way to help them remember is to remind them that on any right handed strangling technique, the right hand is on top). Pressure is applied by pulling up and twisting to the right.



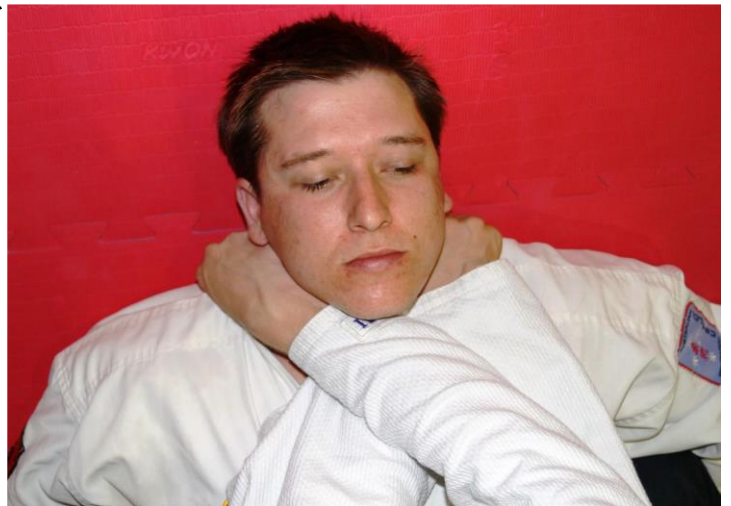
Ushiro Jime (Rear Strangle) – Tori kneels behind uke on his left knee, putting their right arm around ukes' neck ensuring their elbow is pointing down at the ground. Tori clasps his left bicep with his right hand, then places his left hand behind uke's head applying pressure with the back of the left hand. Pressure is applied by the pushing of the left hand and twisting around to the right.

Okuri Eri Jime (Sliding Lapel Strangle) – Tori starts in the normal position behind uke. He reaches around uke's neck with his right arm but this time gripping the lapel with his right thumb deep inside uke's lapel, as far around as possible, Tori's left arm reaches under uke's left arm and grips the lapel on the further side. To apply pressure, Tori pulls down with his left arm and pulls across the neck with the right arm, applying pressure to the left side of uke's neck.

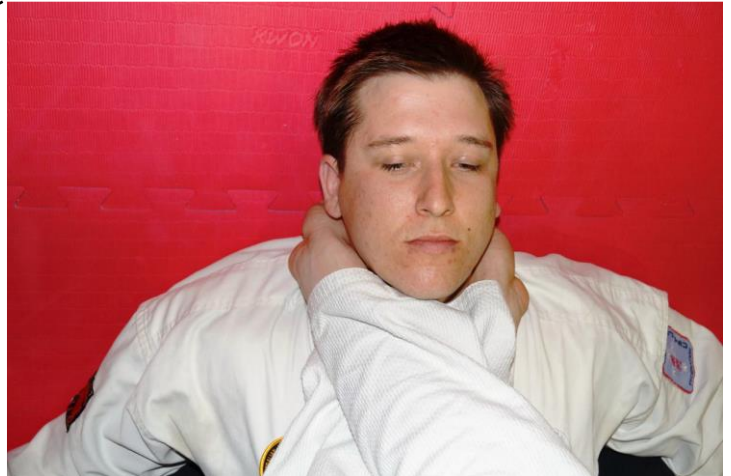




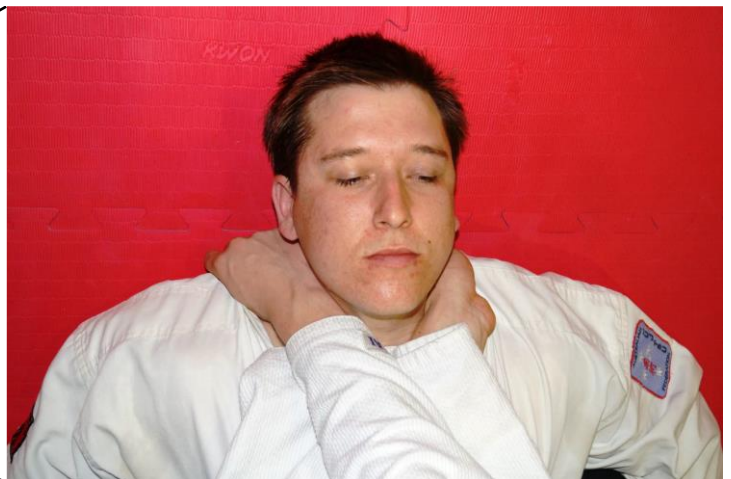
Kataha Jime (Broken-Wing Strangle) – Tori kneels in the normal position behind uke, placing the right thumb in the back of ukes' lapel (same as *Okuri Eri Jime*). Tori's left hand scoops uke's left arm up and places the back of his left hand on the back of uke's head. If applied correctly, this not only applies a strangle, but a shoulder-lock as well. Pressure is applied when Tori rotates around to the right side, pushing on the back of uke's head with the back of his left hand.



Nami Juji Jime (Natural Cross Strangle) – Tori starts in front or kneeling across Uke. Tori positions his right thumb inside of Ukes' right lapel, reaching around as far as possible. Tori then puts his left thumb in Uke's left lapel. Tori's arms end up crossed. Ensure that Tori's left arm is under his/her right arm. Pressure is applied by sitting up straight, bending the arms and leaning vertically downwards until Uke submits.



Gyaku Juji Jime (Reverse Cross Strangle) – Tori starts by kneeling on top of Uke, one knee each side. Tori inserts the fingers on his right hand inside the right side of Uke's lapel, palm facing upwards. Tori then slides his left hand on the inside of Uke's left lapel, with the palm also facing upwards. Pressure is applied by the down-turning of Tori's wrists and bending of the elbows until Uke submits.



Kata Juji Jime (Shoulder Cross Strangle) – Tori starts kneeling on top of Uke, one knee each side. There are two different ways to position the hands for this particular strangle. Tori can put either the fingers of his right hand or his right thumb in Uke's right lapel. Whichever Tori inserts, he must ensure he positions the opposite in the other side. For example, in the photos above, Tori has inserted his right thumb in Uke's right lapel, on the left side he has inserted his fingers. Pressure is applied by the bending of the elbows and leaning vertically downwards.

Important note: The bending of the arms when applying the three cross strangles (natural, reverse and shoulder) results in pulling Uke's collar around the sides of his neck to apply the strangle.

Strangling Safety

Learning when to tap out is an important part of training to avoid the risk of unnecessary periods of unconsciousness. It is important when practising strangles that Uke knows the situation and the methods of surrender in an appropriate fashion. When seated, Uke must have his right leg straight and left leg bent at the knee (see Figure 3). The reason for this is that in the unlikely event of Uke being strangled to a point of unconsciousness, his left leg will then relax or drop to the ground (see Figure 4), giving Tori warning that Uke is in a state of unconsciousness. The way jujitsuans are taught to surrender is to tap their partner two or more times. It is important that Tori releases pressure immediately after Uke submits. Care should be taken when teaching strangles to children (aged 14 and under) whose physiology is different and less developed than adults.

Strangling techniques must be taught and supervised by an experienced coach. Jujitsu is well known for strangles but many other martial arts are now teaching strangling without the variety of experience most Jujitsu specialists have acquired. Strangles are potentially fatal or could cause serious damage and should be treated with caution. Since the Jujitsu syllabus has always contained more sophisticated strangling techniques than any other martial art and they are practised in a competition manner, Jujitsu instructors must have proper understanding in the correct application of a strangle. Poor strangling techniques often end up as chokes, which can lead to injury.



Figure 3



Figure 4

Conclusion

The strangle is one of the most utilized techniques available to the jujitsuan. It is also the hardest technique to resist, making it the most effective. Techniques such as joint-locks or strikes can be resisted through high pain tolerance and strength. If a strangle is applied properly, the person being strangled may feel no pain, and will be unconscious in 4-7 seconds. Strangles are the simplest weakness to the human body; every person has an easily-exposed carotid artery and jugular vein. Factors like these make strangles convenient in self-defense situations.

Strangles are also useful in competition. They require minimal strength, and are the most effective and efficient attacks which require minimal strength.

It is important that strangles are taught properly and by an experienced coach. If they are not taught properly or by an experienced coach, preventable injury may be caused and the student may not be able to utilize them in competition. Strangles also have a variety of different positions and application methods.

Overall, these factors ensure that the strangle is one of the most utilized techniques available to the jujitsuan.

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