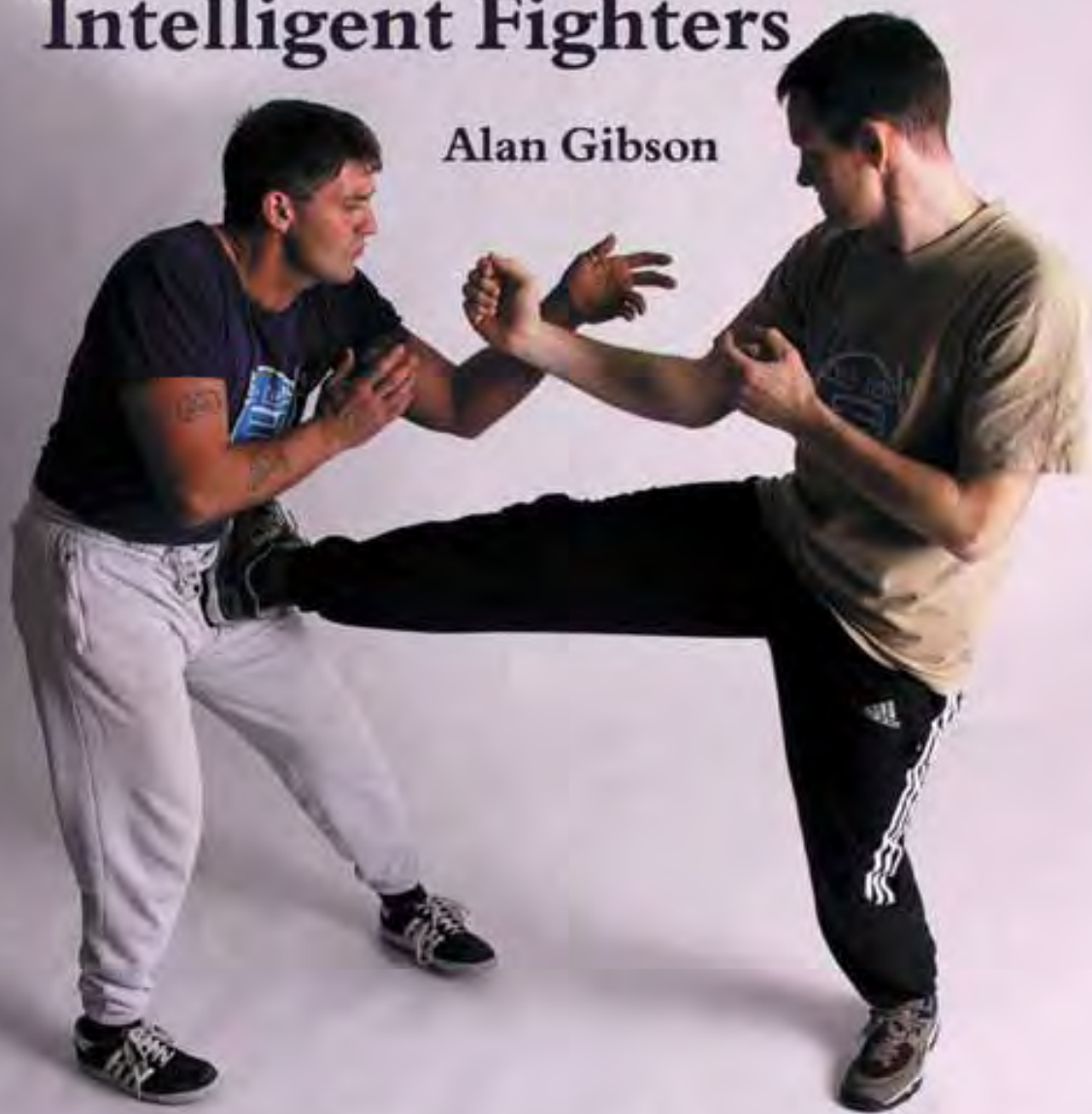


# Simple Thinking: Intelligent Fighters

Alan Gibson



## Why Wing Chun Works II

summersdale *martial arts*

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**Important note**

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

## **Dedication**

“If you want to develop your Ving Tsun you must keep one formula in mind. Does the idea you wish to develop make it more simple, more direct and more efficient?”

Wong Shun Leung (1935 - 1997)

## **Without whom**

Clive Potter & David Peterson for technical advice, Lee Morrison for modelling and reality training section, photography by Ben Ingoldby ([www.stilsaw.com](http://www.stilsaw.com)), additional photos by Ross Mathews. Cover design Clive Kent, Dr. Mark Curtis for health section, Matt Jarvis, John McFarlane, Simon Hayes for proofing and advice, Sarah Brothwell for support.

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# Foreword I

I first met Alan Gibson in Hong Kong when we were both attending and presenting at the '1st World Ving Tsun Conference' in November of 1999. Later on, we began to correspond via e-mail and I was made aware of Alan's first book, 'Why Wing Chun Works'. We eventually traded copies of each others work, and I was most impressed with the clarity of Alan's explanation of Wing Chun concepts, structure and application. In short, it was a bloody good read!

Alan has now greatly honoured me by inviting me to write this foreword for the follow-up volume that you now hold in your hands. As with the first volume, 'Why Wing Chun Works II' presents clear and precise information that expands on what was presented in his original work, providing the reader with clear guidelines on how to develop the techniques and concepts of the system. Once again, it is written so as to be easy to read and absorb, with illustrations that accurately demonstrate all the drills and concepts described. I thoroughly recommend this book to all devotees of the Wing Chun system, regardless of lineage or experience, and congratulate

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Alan on once again producing a book that makes a worthy addition to any martial arts library.

### **David Peterson** 'Melbourne Chinese Martial Arts Club'

David Peterson is the author of the excellent book

*'Look Beyond the Pointing Finger...*

*The Combat Philosophy of Wong Shun Leung'*

## Foreword 2

I have known Alan for some years now. He has always shown himself to have a very open mind with regards his approach to Ving Tsun. This is reflected in the various Ving Tsun practitioners who have been invited to his school to give seminars. Alan has always been searching for “the truth” for his Ving Tsun and has eagerly listened to and analysed everything the various people have put forward. Alan’s Ving Tsun has therefore evolved throughout the years and is still doing so even now, this evolution is reflected in this, his latest book.

I was kindly invited to oversee the photography of this latest book to give advice on stances and positioning when showing techniques. Alan has also showed a great ability to teach with his friendly, open approach and the ability to articulate the concepts of Ving Tsun in a way that is easily understandable by his students.

I first met Alan when I was invited to his school to give a seminar on the Wong Shun Leung method of Ving Tsun. The concepts behind such an approach were readily accepted by

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both Alan and his students, as they made good practical sense as a way to express Ving Tsun. Since that time I have had the pleasure of being invited to give seminars at Alan's school a few times every year and recently Alan has expressed a wish that he be recognised as part of the Wong Shun Leung Ving Tsun Kung Fu Association UK.

At times Alan visits the Wong Shun Leung Ving Tsun Kung Fu Association UK in St. Albans bringing with him a group of his students to share training with my already established class. In fact a number of Alan's students are accompanying myself and my students to Hong Kong in November 2002 to visit Wong's schools over there. I hope that anyone reading this book will find it of value to them in their training and I give my best wishes to Alan Gibson whom I see not just as a student but also as a good friend."

# Introduction

This book is intended to act as a progression from my first book *Why Wing Chun Works*. That book systematically explains the principles that the Wing Chun system is based around and the drills that are designed to internalise them. In this book I will explain how individual techniques and positions evolve, as a result of the underlying concepts and the forces we are likely to meet in combat. I would advise you to read *Why Wing Chun Works* first unless you are familiar with the basic principles.

Wing Chun is a simple system based on common sense, directness, practicality and self-development and it will be devastatingly effective if you keep it that way. Paradoxically keeping things simple can be difficult, unless you constantly check back to the basic principles. For this reason I will always refer to the central Wing Chun adages:

1. Hand comes - detain. Hand goes - follow. Hand free – Hit (only don't hit if you can't). The famous saying in Hong Kong concerning this is "Meet what comes, follow what goes, attack when the hands are free".

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2. Fight the person not the hands.
3. Do not strike until you are within one step of the enemy.
4. Attack and defend simultaneously.
5. Do not meet force with force.

The Wing Chun forms are also important cross-reference points. The forms demonstrate the correct positions and movements, as well as illustrating possible scenarios and broad concepts. Mechanical efficiency and economy of movement are the cornerstones of the Wing Chun system; attention to these details must be paid at all times during training.

In the midst of conflict there is barely time to react appropriately, even if you perform your Wing Chun perfectly. Every time you don't do the most simple, and correct technique, you run the risk of being hit. Every time you get hit, you run the risk of being knocked down or out. It is unrealistic to expect to come away from a fight without being hit, but we must try to minimise the chance of this happening. One of the best ways to do this is to follow the rules of Wing Chun and train for maximum effect, with the minimum of effort.

## Introduction

Sometimes, the simplest actions are easy to miss, and often they are not the most natural or instinctive movements. The stress of a conflict situation will also diminish your ability to reproduce fine motor skills. This is why we use drills like *Chi Sau*, *Lap sau* and *Single Sticking Hands* to programme in refined responses to attacks that threaten our centre or structure. Sensible application of these training methods and principles will create intelligent fighters, who are able to learn how to fight more efficiently.

Practising Wing Chun purely as an art form will not diminish its effectiveness in confrontation. It is however, necessary to understand and train for, the psychological and physiological responses that the body will produce in these stressful situations.

Whilst actual fighting (pitting one individual against another) is one way of demonstrating how effective a system is, we can also train with other people and talk about our different interpretations. If we look at individual skills and personalities we are probably missing the point. Other people will not be able to fight for you. If we look purely at the *system* in terms

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of the rules and simplicity, we will be able to determine the real benefits of doing one thing or another. Through exploring different avenues we will find the shortest route and access our art to the highest level.

Learning Wing Chun is not a process of collecting techniques, it is a process of stripping away the unnecessary. This is can be seen as being like a sculptor, chipping away at a rough stone until the true beauty of form is revealed.

Some of the ideas or techniques in this book may be slightly different from your own, or that which you have been taught. However, I learned all my skills from people who were prepared to share ideas with me. Wing Chun tells us to enquire, and attempt to improve our thinking and actions. It is a self-development of concepts and ideas.



# **Chapter I**

## **Conditioning and ancillary training for Wing Chun**

The best form of conditioning for Wing Chun skills will always be regular, correct practice (perfect practice makes perfect), especially with the forms. This is because they are specifically designed to systematically train the correct muscles and habits. Attention to detail is very important here, as the first form Siu Lim Tau tells us; small things matter.

However, there are several other practical exercises you can do which will help condition the body. A sensible warm up and stretching regime (found in any sports manual) is always a good place to start before training. Here are some other training drills that I like to use.

In terms of exercises, traditionally Wing Chun in Hong Kong advocates flexibility in the upper body, especially the shoulders, as well as power training. But, for the lower half, cardiovascular exercises are best such as running, skipping etc., to develop lightness on the feet and mobility (both Bruce Lee and Wong Shun Leung were good dancers!).

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### Leg Conditioning

Stand in a forward leg stance and get a partner to apply pressure with their hands, just above your lead knee. Step forward pushing powerfully with your rear leg, causing your partner to be forced back across the room. This will train leg and stance power.



**Pic 001** *Stance power training*

## Conditioning and ancillary training for Wing Chun

*The rickshaw.* Lift your leg as if kicking. Get a partner to support the leg, at waist height, behind the knee and heel. Your partner should then slowly drag you forward. You will need to hop forward whilst trying to push your foot back down to the ground, (you can chain punch at the same time). When you reach the end of the room, your partner can then push you backwards while you do the same thing. This will train the legs and stance for stability and power.



**Pic 002** *The rickshaw*

## Simple Thinking: Intelligent Fighters

In a forward stance, get a partner to apply pressure, into to a lead or rear hand punch. Hold the punch in position, and pushing with the legs, force your partner back across the room step by step. This will train the whole stance and power chain, enabling you to understand the link between the feet and hands.



**Pic 003** *Understanding the links in the power-chain*