

Strikes and Blocks

by Delia LoPorto ©York Karate-do

“Every strike is a block and every block is a strike.” This statement greatly depends on one’s interpretation. Can I deflect a block? Why would I even try? Maybe only a punch, a kick, or even open hands are the only offensive moves in karate. So a punch is blocked with a chudan and a kick is blocked with a gaedan. For the average karate student this may be true but why put an arm up against someone’s leg? Legs are made to hold the entire body weight of a person. What can an arm do on its own? The correct answer...Anything you want it to do if you know how. Every block is a strike. By looking at a couple “blocks” we can see this statement is true. In a cross hand grab a chudan “block” is used to “strike” lung 6 to obtain a release. But this is not all. Speaking anatomically and using two-way action a jodan can be used against a person’s neck to obtain a release from a same hand grab or lapel grab. A soto uke can be used as an attack to the back of the arm. The list can go on and on.

Can a strike also be a block? Looking at the surface, the answer seems to be no. But let’s look a little closer. A mae geri can be used to hit the back of the leg on the bladder meridian to stop an opponents kick. A shuto “strike” can be used to “block” (deflect) a punch. A taisho “strike” can be used to shunt energy flow to an injured limb.

Looking at the whole picture we can see that every strike is a block and every block is a strike.