

# Thrusting Kicks of Chung Do Kwan Tae Kwon Do

Adapted from *Chung Do Kwan: The Power of Tae Kwon Do*  
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*The wind moves,  
but the mind  
shakes the tree.*

*Korean Zen master, Chinul*

Chung Do Kwan is a Tae Kwon Do style known for its tremendous power. Along with intense strength and focus comes a profound ability for self-control. Controlled force has many benefits not only for martial arts practice but also for living a strong, well-focused life. People who sincerely study this art can enhance their power and focus while remaining balanced and centered.

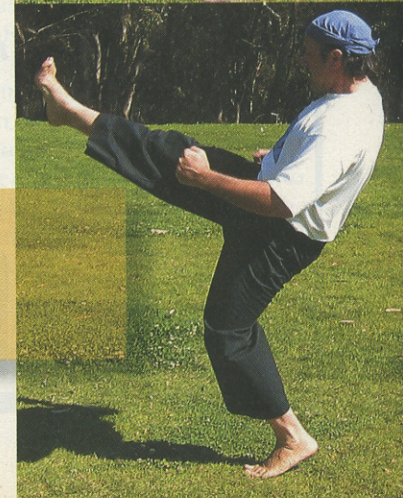
Chung Do Kwan also has historical interest. Because Chung Do Kwan was the first of the Tae Kwon Do kwans (schools) to form in Korea, traditional Chung Do Kwan practice sheds light on the early traditions of Tae Kwon Do. Many modern Korean martial arts practitioners can trace part of their roots back to Chung Do Kwan. Innovations and changes have been made over the years but there is much to be gained by practicing these traditional methods.

## **Thrusting-Kicks**

Chung Do Kwan is famous for its forceful thrusting-kicks. These techniques radiate penetrating, unstoppable power. This story illustrates: Grandmaster Duk Sung Son, one of the founding fathers of Chung Do Kwan, worked out early in the morning every day at Central Park in New York City. He usually wore street clothes so that he would not arouse attention. On a particular day, Son had just finished his workout and was starting to walk home. Four hoodlums saw this modest, unassuming man and thought he looked like an easy "mark." They surrounded him and said threateningly, "Give us your money!"

Grandmaster Son looked at them calmly and smiled. "Oh, you are bad boys! Watch this," he said as he walked over to a

To execute a front-kick, begin in front-stance, bring your knee up and then thrust your leg straight out. Keep your toes pulled back to strike with the ball of your foot.





huge oak tree. Without hesitation he kicked it with a powerful side-kick. The whole tree shook from the force. Realizing what the likely outcome would be, the four attackers turned and ran away as fast as they could, leaving Son to continue his quiet walk home.

Practitioners begin learning all the basic kicks early and continue to perfect them throughout the years. An excellent way to improve your kicks is to carefully and forcefully repeat them over and over. If you practice in this way, you will develop powerful techniques that are ready to use when you need them. Good form will bring about good function.

### Front-Kick

The front-kick is the most straightforward kick to perform because it comes out directly from the front without any twists or turns. A front-kick is usually practiced as a thrust in order to strengthen technique. A well-executed front-kick is quick, balanced and powerful. You can use this kick for lower, middle and upper target attacks.

One positive byproduct of the front-kick is that as you work on raising your kick, you will become more flexible. We have had several students who began kicking only at knee height. With time and practice, much to their surprise, they were able to kick head height and higher! Properly performed, the back gets a good stretch, and the legs become more limber.

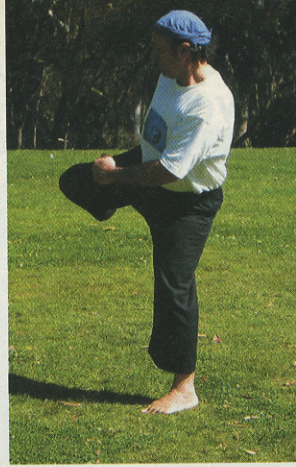
### Executing the Front-Kick

The front-kick flows most naturally from a front-stance. Your body faces front, with hips straight ahead. The striking point is the ball of the foot. You will find that a roundhouse-kick also uses the ball of the foot as the striking point. The ball of the foot is hard with a small surface area that penetrates the target. To position your foot correctly, first point your toes and push your foot down, then pull your toes back. Notice how the ball of your foot tightens, making this part of your foot strong for striking. It is important to keep your toes pulled back to protect them from an opponent's block or from hitting them against the target accidentally.

Lift your back leg forward, bending your knee until your upper leg is beyond horizontal with the ground. Then, thrust your leg outward to strike with the ball of your foot. Allow your upper body to come forward slightly as you kick, tightening your stomach muscles to unify your upper and lower body. Beginners often make the mistake of leaning back, away from their kick. But this puts them off-balance. An observant opponent will take advantage of this mistake and throw the kicker over.

You can add extra power and extension to your front kick by thrusting your hips slightly

**Side-kick begins in back or horse-stance. Cross step in front, then raise your knee. Then thrust your leg out sideways, using the heel as the target.**



**The circular-roundhouse-kick can be performed from front-stance. Raise your back leg, knee bent, and swing it around in an arc. As it comes around, straighten your leg and kick with the ball of your foot.**



**Back-kick begins by cross stepping behind. Then bend your knee and kick directly behind you. Look over your shoulder so that you can watch where you kick.**

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Kicks can be used in self-defense to prevent an attacker from grabbing. When an attacker reaches in for a hold, the defender grabs his lapels and then pulls him into front knee-kick, adding power to the defense. Side-kick can also be used very effectively in self-defense to prevent an opponent from grabbing you.

forward as you kick. Beginners sometimes make the mistake of dropping the hips back as they kick causing them to lose power and shorten the kick. Pushing your hips forward as the kick comes out adds an inch or two of reach and will also accelerate the speed and force of your kick.

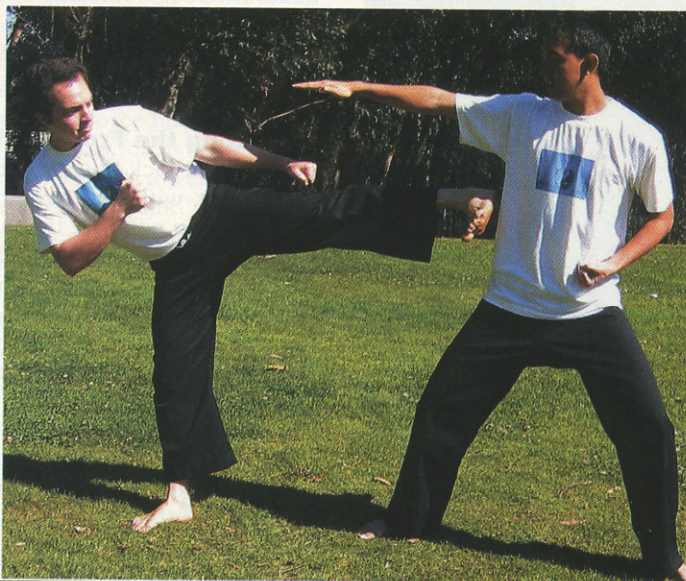
Front-kicks can be placed around defender's blocks. You can also use your front-kick as a push-kick at a middle target to stop an opponent from coming in too close or to push the opponent away. Front-kicks also work well in combination with other kicks. A front-kick followed by a turning side-kick is one of the basic combinations practiced at every workout in Chung Do Kwan.

## Side-Kick

The side-kick is one of Chung Do Kwan's most forceful and versatile kicks. Once you master this kick's thrusting power, you will be able to defend yourself with a single blow. With such a powerful kick, no second technique is necessary. One well-placed side-kick overpowers the opponent, ending the encounter.

## Executing a Side-Kick

The side-kick comes out from the side so you will execute this kick by turning your side to face the target. Begin in a good horse-stance, although you can



Reverse-roundhouse is a variation of the roundhouse-kick. Bring your leg up and then kick outward, striking with the ball of your foot.

perform the kick from other stances as well.

As you prepare to deliver the kick, draw your knee up toward your rib cage. The higher you draw your knee up, the straighter and deeper the thrust of the kick will be, and correspondingly, the more difficult to block. The supporting leg should be slightly bent. The heel of the supporting leg's foot lifts off the floor then drops to permit a slight pivot as you kick.

After your knee has been retracted, the kicking leg is extended rapidly out to the side. Because of the force that your foot must be able to endure when a target is contacted, the striking point is the heel or bottom of the foot, not the turned edge as in some lighter snap side-kicks. Keep your foot parallel to the ground and flexed so that the heel strikes first, not the toes. A slight leaning of your upper body away from the target will take place naturally. Try not to lean back beyond approximately forty-five degrees.

The power center of the side-kick is the waist and abdomen. Tense your abdomen in coordination with the kick and exhale at the moment of focus. Your kicking leg should tense at the point of final extension, in coordination with your whole body, which sends force rebounding down to the ground and back up and out through your foot. Acceleration builds from the time the knee is raised until the final dynamic thrust outward of the leg. Let the same arm as the kicking leg swing back to counterbalance the kick, but try to keep the other hand up in front for blocking.

### Moving with the Side-Kick

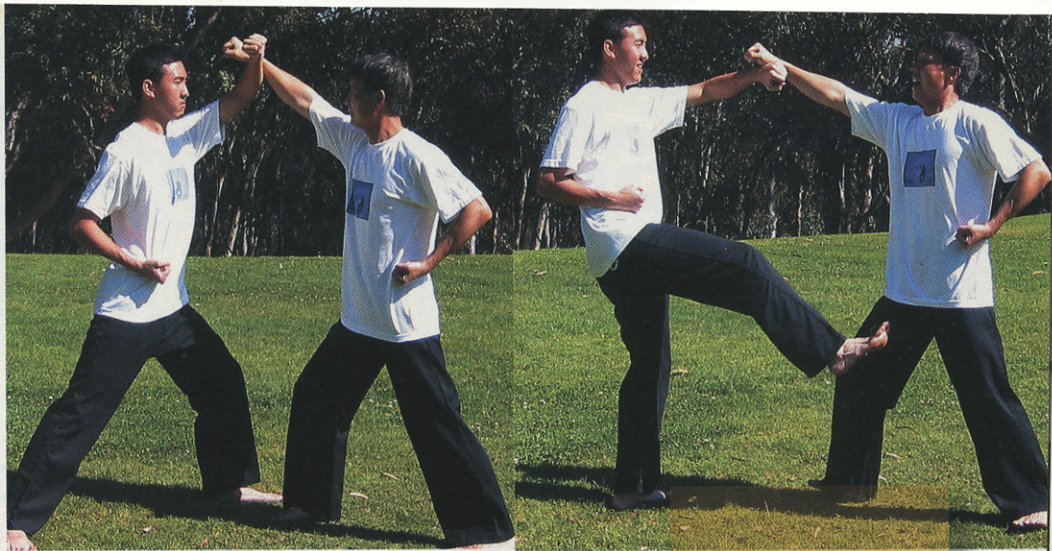
You can extend the reach of your side-kick by cross-stepping toward the target. Begin in a horse-stance. Cross-step with the left foot in front of your right, then raise your right knee outward and extend the kick out sideways.

You can also perform the side-kick from a front or back-stance as a turning kick. Begin in front-stance position; raise your back leg with the knee coming up in front, as you would for the front kick. But as you come up, pivot forty-five degrees. With your body now turned sideways, you can thrust your side-kick out toward a target in front of you.

**Knee-kick is just like a roundhouse-kick without any extension. Use it for close in applications.**

### Points to Remember

Several typical mistakes can easily be avoided with attention to certain details. Tense your foot and



**In sparring, when an opponent punches, you can block upwards and throw a low front-kick as an immediate counter.**

ankle at the point of focus. If your foot or ankle is loose, the force of the kick can hurt you!

Another common mistake made by beginners is to kick forward rather than sideways. This error can result from forward placement of the kick or misplacement of the hips. Do not drop your hip back. Your hips should line up directly with the kick and be aimed straight at the target.

Do not arch your back or crumple forward. Good posture with a twisting lean toward the target from the waist is best, tensing the abdomen.

### Advantages of the Side-Kick

Most people find it difficult to block a good side-kick. The trajectory of the kick is a thrust straight in. This requires that the kick be evaded or deflected in order for it to be blocked successfully. Simply pushing it down won't work. The kick penetrates through a downward block.

The tremendous amount of force this kick can generate has many advantages. Competitors can use side kicks in tournaments to break through the opponent's defense for a point. In self-defense situations, most assailants are not prepared to successfully block this kick. If the opponent attempts to deflect the kick without being set firmly in a stance, or tries to take it on an arm, the side kick is likely to throw him over—end of encounter!

### Roundhouse-Kick

The principle of the circle has profound meaning in Eastern philosophy. The idea of infinite flow, ever-changing yet the same, gives it an elusive meaning. The roundhouse-kick utilizes this principle. Unlike the side-kick and front-kick, which are both straight line attacks, the roundhouse-kick is performed in a circle to sweep elusively around obstacles. A thrusting motion combined with circular momentum makes this a very powerful kick.

### Executing Roundhouse-Kicks

A roundhouse-kick can be performed with the back leg or the front leg. A roundhouse-kick from the back

