

Grappling in Eskrima – The Basic Principles of Dumog

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Pangamut (syn. *Pangamot*) is the term generally used to describe the unarmed combat element of Eskrima, and encompasses *Panantukan* (Filipino Boxing), *Pananjakman* or *Sikaran* (Filipino kicking methods), and *Dumog*.

Dumog includes methods of standing and ground grappling, which can be applied appropriately depending on the situation. The term *Buno* is also sometimes used to refer to the indigenous wrestling methods of the Philippines.

Mark Wiley, in his book “*Filipino Martial Culture*” (Charles E. Tuttle Publishing, 1996) acknowledges the existence of many indigenous Filipino grappling arts among the various tribal and ethnic groups in the Philippines. Tribal groups such as the Ifugao, Samal, Igorot, Ibanag, Manobo, Dumagat, and Maranao are said to practice grappling arts known respectively as *bultong*, *silaga*, *dama*, *garong*, *buteng*, *purgos*, and *kapulubod*; while ethnic groups such as the Tagalog, Ilokano, Cebuano, Bicolano, Pampanga, and Pangasinan, are said to practice grappling arts known as *gabbo*, *layung*, *lampugan*, *pantok*, *balsakan*, and *dumog* respectively.

It can be seen that there is a great diversity in the terms appended to these grappling arts, due to the diversity of the people and their languages throughout the 7107 islands which make up the Philippine Archipelago. However, for the purposes of this article the generic term “*Dumog*” will be used.

Filipino Martial Arts are continually evolving, and it is likely that *Dumog* was influenced to some degree by grappling methods from other arts (e.g. Western wrestling, Judo and Jujitsu) as many Eskrimadors in the post-World War II era cross-trained in other arts. Exponents of some Eskrima or Arnis systems refer to the unarmed grappling component of their arts as “*Combat Judo*”; although Mark Wiley states in “*Filipino Fighting Arts - Theory and Practice*” (Unique Publications, 2000) that there is “...no connection to Japanese Judo proper”.

Dumog utilises the concept of “**control points**” or “**choke points**” on the human body, which are manipulated – for example: by grabbing, pushing, pulling - in order to disrupt the opponent’s balance and to keep him off balance. This also creates opportunities for close quarter striking using head butts, knees, forearms and elbows.

Two of the main control points are the arm and the head. Two useful phrases to remember are: “*If you control the elbow, you control the arm*”, and “*If you control the head, you control the body*”. Dumog also contains methods of joint-locking and choking, as well as takedowns, throws and submission holds.

The application of a basic series of dumog techniques is shown in **Figures 1-7**.

As shown in the photo sequence, *Dumog* techniques can be assisted by the environment (e.g. wall/fence, telephone pole, vehicle) to help immobilise the opponent, or hurt him further by collision with the object. Similarly, *Dumog* techniques can be used to manipulate an opponent for use as a shield in a multiple attacker scenario, or to evict an unwanted person from an area using “come-along” type techniques.

Pain compliance is an important aspect of combat grappling. Hence, *Dumog* techniques can be complimented by nerve point attacks, as well as “*Kino-mutai* (syn. “*Kino-mutay*”) which is the term generally used to include pinching, biting, gouging, ripping/tearing methods, which are normally considered to be “dirty-fighting” by other martial arts systems.

As with any technique, becoming proficient in *Dumog* depends on the practitioner logging a lot of ‘flight time’ in an appropriate training environment. One way of achieving this is to practice *Dumog* using flow drills such as *Hubud Lubud*. The *Dumog* techniques can be inserted at various stages of the flow drill, and provide part of a useful ‘exit strategy’ for ending an exchange.

In conclusion, *Dumog* is an important arrow in the quiver of the Eskrimador’s skill set, and its integration with the other elements of *Pangamut*, will help to create a well-rounded martial artist.

For further information about the Institute of Filipino Martial Arts please go to the website: www.krishnagodhanian.org. Thank you for reading.

Readers should be aware of, and adhere to, the law as it relates to the use of reasonable force.

APPENDIX: Photo Sequence



Figs. 1-2. Interception of a backhand strike by grabbing the wrist and striking with the forearm to the elbow joint.



Fig. 3-4. Use of an ‘arm drag’ to pull the opponent off balance. The left forearm is rolled against the bend in the opponent’s elbow (ante-cubital fossa) and the arm is pulled toward you as you step backwards. A head butt or shoulder butt can be used to ‘tenderise’ the opponent at this point.



Fig. 5-7. The opponent resists by pulling backwards. Hence you “go with his force” (using it against him) and apply an armbar, pinning him to the wall, and facilitating further ‘tenderisation’.