

A HANDBOOK FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS



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TECHNIQUE AND USE OF THE POLICE BATON

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

I. INTRODUCTION

The police baton, in the hands of an officer who has been trained in its use, is a very formidable weapon for defense and counterattack. Many law enforcement officers share the opinion that the baton, under most circumstances, is a more versatile weapon than the officer's revolver. It is recognized that there are a great many situations in which a police officer would be justified in using the baton, whereas he would not be justified in using his revolver. The officer who is skilled and practiced in using the baton can adequately cope with most situations where physical force is necessary.

The officer who carries a baton as part of his equipment must be trained to use it properly. This will enable him to obtain the desired results when it is necessary to use it, and at the same time avoid bringing criticism upon himself or the agency he represents.

The purpose of this booklet is to present material on the technique and use of the baton which meets the needs of the police officer and yet is consistent with the ethical standards of modern law enforcement.

A great deal of the information contained in this manual is the result of consultations with numerous police officers who have attended the FBI National Academy.

II. TYPES, NOMENCLATURE, FITTING THE THONG

A. Types

The baton is made from hard wood or plastic. It is 1 to 1 1/2" in diameter, rounded at both ends, and will vary in length from 12 to 36".

1. Short baton (billy). -- This baton varies in length from 12 to 18".
2. Medium baton (nightstick). -- This baton ranges in length from 20 to 26", the most popular length being 24". This is the type of baton frequently carried by the officer on the beat.
3. Long baton (riot stick). -- This baton ranges in length from 28 to 36" and is used predominately in the control of mobs and riots.

Note: The techniques set forth in this booklet are intended for the medium and/or long baton; however, many will also apply to the short baton. Some of the techniques will not apply to the short baton because of its rather limited length.

B. Nomenclature (Medium Baton and/or Riot Stick)

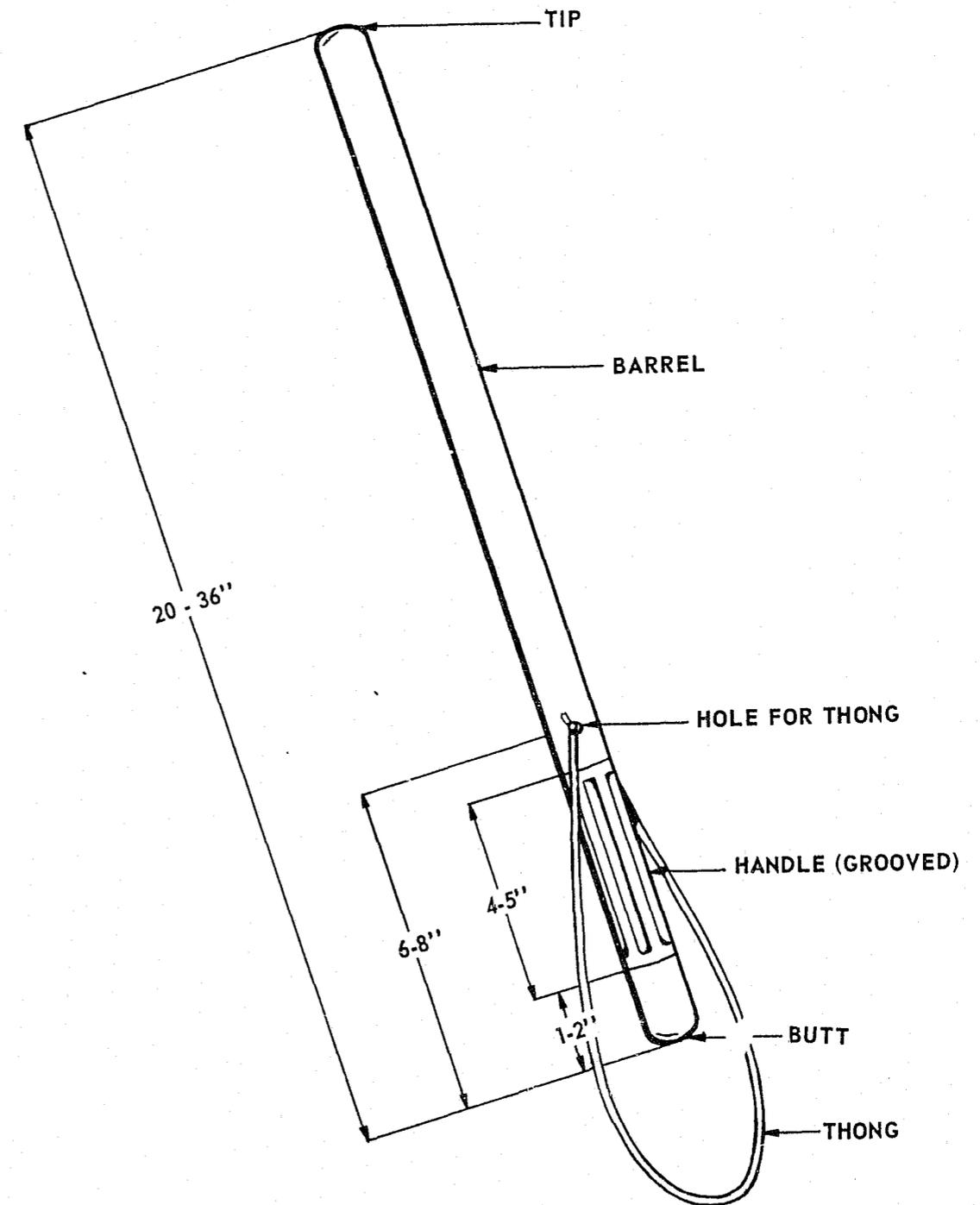


Figure 1

C. Fitting the Thong

1. There should be a hole in the baton located 6 to 8" from the butt. One end of a leather thong is threaded through the hole and secured with a strong knot.

(Figure 2).

2. The other end of the thong is then threaded through the same hole, but in the opposite direction to adjust the length of the thong to fit the officer's hand.

(Figure 3).

3. To adjust the thong to fit the hand, the loop is passed over the thumb and across the back of the hand with the baton hanging down. The thong is then shortened until the butt of the baton touches the bottom of the hand.

(Figure 4).

4. After marking the proper length of the thong, the free end of the thong is fastened with a knot and the remainder is cut off.

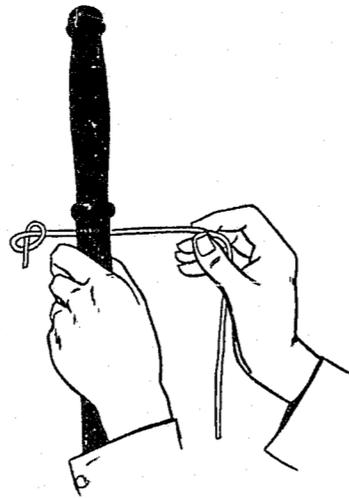


Figure 2

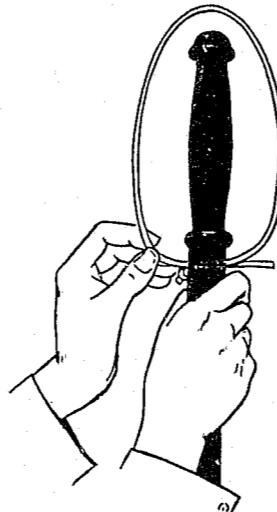


Figure 3

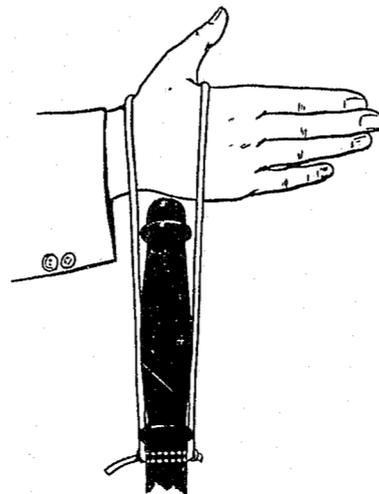


Figure 4

III. METHODS OF HOLDING, BLOCKING, AND STRIKING BLOWS

A. Control of Baton

1. Where to carry.--The baton should be carried where it is easily accessible to the strong hand. Many officers prefer to carry it on the same side as their revolver. The baton should not be used in the weak hand in order to reserve the strong hand for the revolver.
2. Control.--The officer must be continually alert and have the baton under control at all times. It should never be held in such a manner that could enable a person to gain control and use it against him. Alertness and proper use of the baton insure complete control.

B. The Long Grip

1. How to Hold. -- Place the thong over the thumb and across the back of the hand with the baton hanging downward. The hand is then turned downward and is closed on the handle to grip baton. (Figure 5).

The thumb can be extended parallel to the baton (Figure 6), or curled down over the index finger (Figure 7).

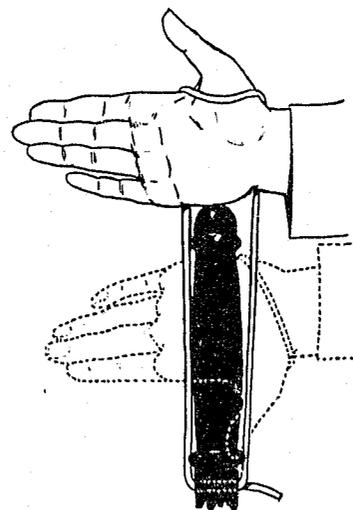


Figure 5



Figure 6

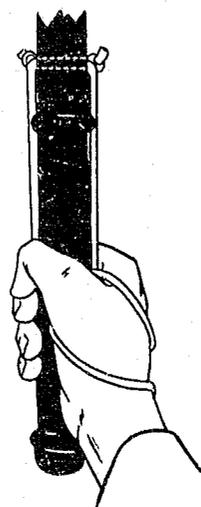


Figure 7

ALTERNATE METHOD.--Place the thong over the thumb and across the front of the hand with the baton hanging downward. (Figure 5a).

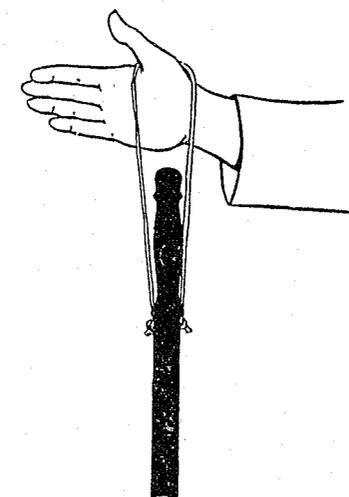


Figure 5a

With the left hand raise baton tip upward causing thong to pass around back of hand. (Figure 6a).

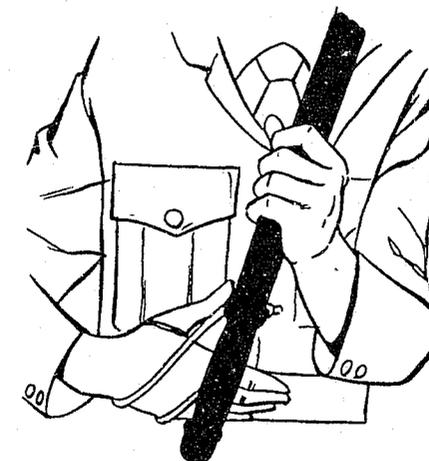


Figure 6a

Place the fingers between baton handle and thong and grasp handle. (Figure 7a).

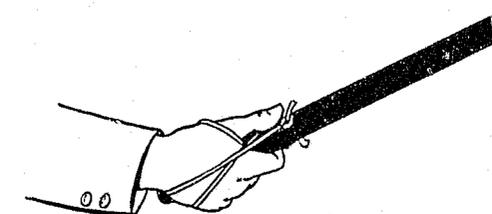


Figure 7a

If gripped in either manner, the thong aids the officer in maintaining his grip. However, if an opponent should seize the baton, the officer can free himself from the thong by merely relaxing the grip. (Figure 8).

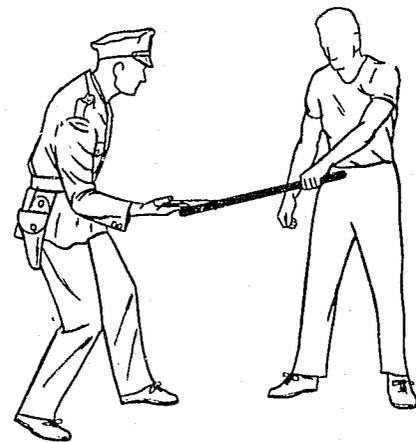


Figure 8

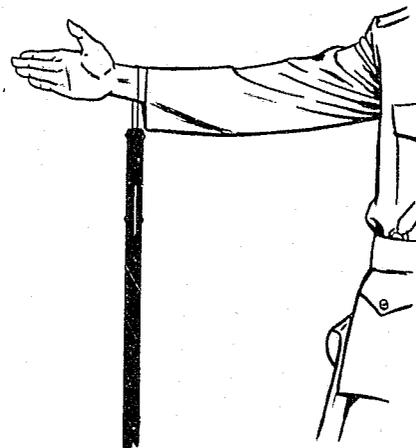


Figure 9

The thong should never be looped around the officer's wrist because it would be difficult to release the baton should the opponent succeed in grabbing it. (Figures 9 and 10).



Figure 10

2. The "On Guard" Position.--Advance the right foot approximately 12" and simultaneously pivot slightly on the ball of the left foot. The knees should be slightly bent with the weight equally distributed on the balls of the feet. The right elbow should be approximately 6" from the body; the right hand should be held "chest high"; and the baton should be pointed upward. (Figure 11).



Figure 11

NOTE: By reversing the feet and placing the left hand on baton barrel, the officer is "On Guard" for the Two-handed Grip. (Page 23, Figure 45).

3. Footwork.--The general rule concerning footwork is simply that the first foot to move should be the foot nearest the direction you wish to go.

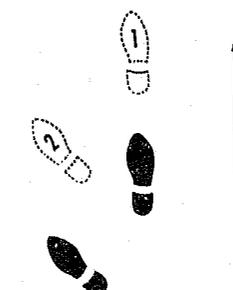


Figure 12

To advance from the "on guard" position, move the right foot forward first and then bring up the left. (Figure 12).

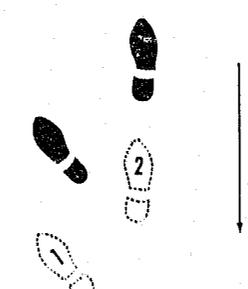


Figure 13

To retreat, move the left foot to the rear first and then bring back the right. (Figure 13).

To circle to the right, move the right foot to the right as you pivot on the ball of the left foot. (Figure 14).



Figure 14

To circle to the left, move the right foot to the left as you pivot on the ball of the left foot. (Figure 15).



Figure 15

When necessary to move sideward to the right, first move the right foot to the right, and then move the left. (Figure 16).



Figure 16

To move sideward to the left, first move the left foot to the left, and then move the right. (Figure 17).

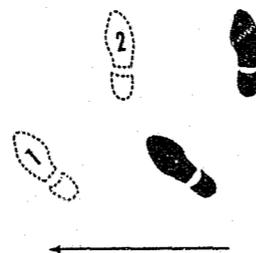


Figure 17

4. How To Block Blows and Kicks. --

a. Against swinging right - inside block. (Figure 18).



Figure 18

b. Against swinging right - outside block or parry. (Figure 19).

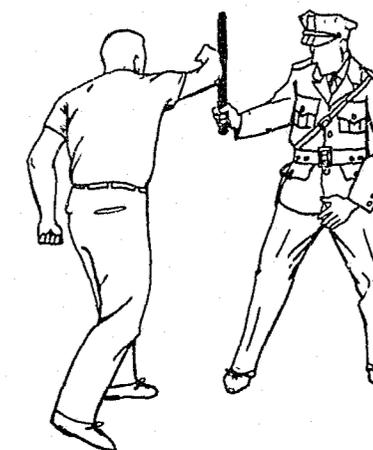


Figure 19

c. Against swinging left - inside block. (Figure 20).

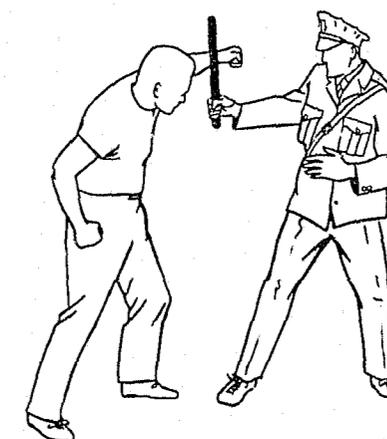


Figure 20

- d. Against swinging left - outside block or parry. (Figure 21).



Figure 21

- e. Against straight left or right - downward block or parry. (Figure 22).



Figure 22

- f. Against right-foot kick-downward block. (Figure 23).



Figure 23

- g. Against left-foot kick - downward block. (Figure 24).



Figure 24

5. How to Strike Blows--With the exception of the jab, all blows should be short and snappy, utilizing the strength of the wrist and forearm. Short, snappy blows can be delivered quickly and accurately and are difficult to block or parry. Also, the force of the blow can be more easily regulated than full-swinging "roundhouse" blows.

"Roundhouse" blows, which use the entire arm, should be avoided, because they are slow, inaccurate, easily blocked, and make it practically impossible to regulate the force of the blow.

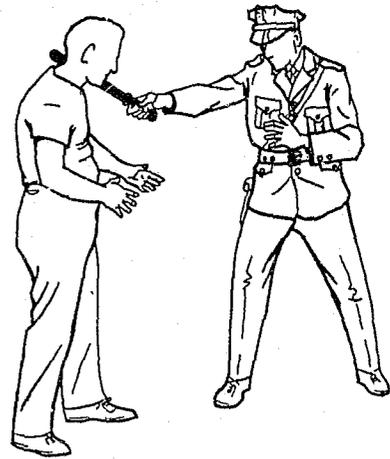


Figure 25

a. The Short Swing.--

This is a forehand blow delivered sideward or downward in a short, snappy manner. (Figures 25, 26, 27).



Figure 26

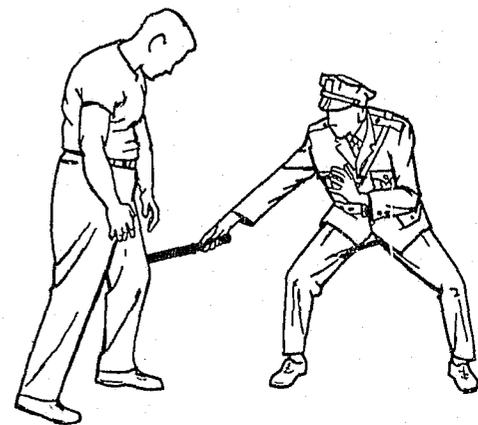


Figure 27

b. The Backswing.--

This blow is similar to and delivered in much the same manner as the short swing except it is a backhand blow. (Figures 28 and 29).



Figure 28

An excellent procedure for using this type blow would be to feint a short swing to the opponent's head and strike a backswing blow to his left or right knee. (Figure 30).

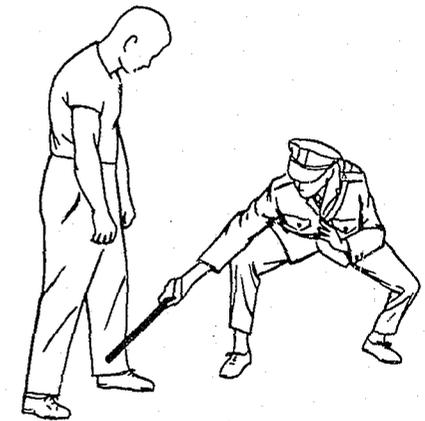


Figure 29

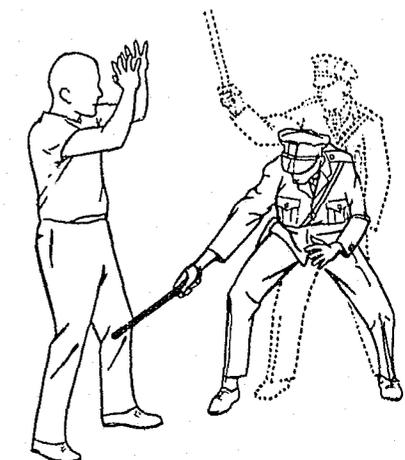


Figure 30

- c. The Jab.--This blow is delivered by quickly extending the baton forward striking the opponent with the tip. (Figure 31).

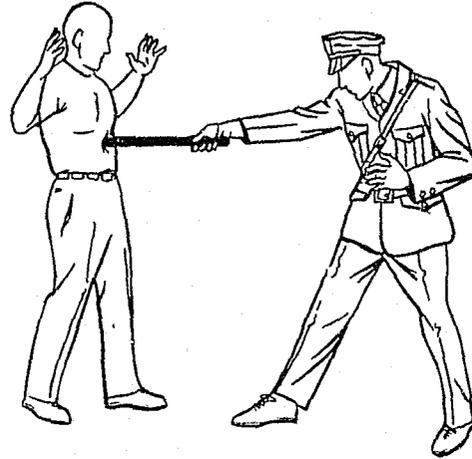


Figure 31

The baton should be extended and returned quickly to the "on guard" position. This permits the officer to strike additional blows and makes it difficult for the opponent to seize the baton.

6. Where to Strike Blows.--As a general rule, short-swing and backswing blows should be directed to those places on the body where bone is close to the skin, excluding the head and face. Shortswing and backswing blows can also be directed to the thick muscle groups of the buttocks, thigh, and calf.

When jabbing with the baton, blows are delivered to the soft tissue areas of the trunk and back.

Blows to the head and face should be avoided for the following reasons:

- a. The opponent could be killed instead of merely being brought under control. The officer has no way of determining the thickness of his opponent's skull. A blow to the head of one opponent might kill him, whereas the same blow to the head of another could have little or no effect.
- b. The head is an elusive target and difficult to hit. Without moving his feet the opponent can duck, bob, or slip the head causing the baton to miss completely or to hit only a glancing blow.
- c. Most individuals believe the blows will be aimed at the head; therefore, they will usually raise the hands and arms in an effort to protect the head.

d. Blows delivered to the head place the baton in a position which is vulnerable to counterattack or a disarming movement. The opponent could very well seize the baton.

The police officer should have a thorough knowledge of the vulnerable areas of the body and avoid striking those blows which produce death or permanent injury.

Figures 32, 33, and 34 show vulnerable areas of the body and possible fatal points of impact.

7. When to use.--The long grip is best employed when defending against an opponent armed with a knife, club, bottle, etc. This grip should not be used in the control of crowds or mobs.

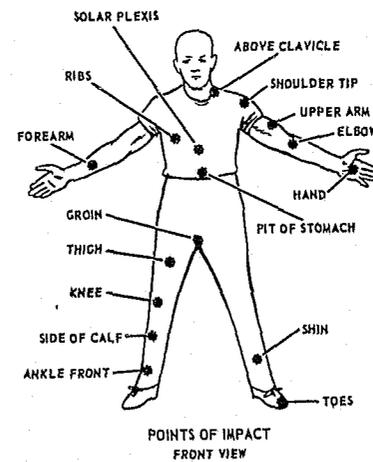


Figure 32

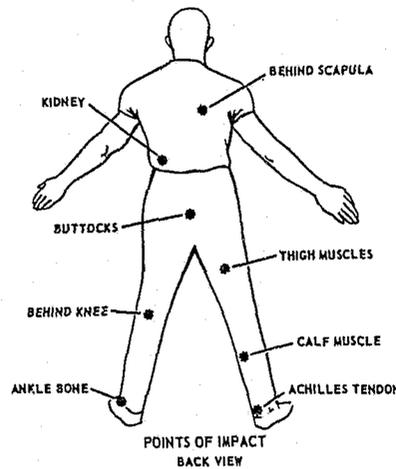


Figure 33

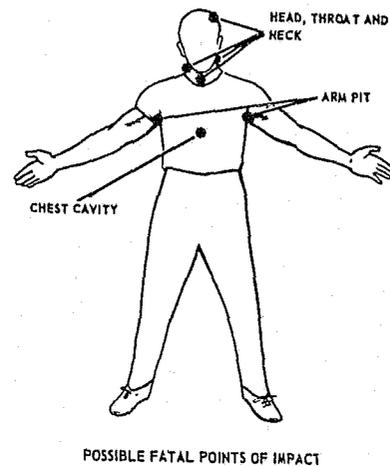


Figure 34

C. The Short Grip

1. How to hold.--Place the thong over the thumb and across the front of the hand and then up and across the back of the hand as depicted in Figures 5a and 6a on page 7. Rotate the baton counterclockwise with the left hand and place it beneath and parallel to the right hand with the handle pointing toward the fingers. (Figure 35). Grasp the baton by the upper portion of the handle with your index finger extended downward on the handle. Approximately 2 inches of the butt end should extend beyond the index finger. (Figure 36). The baton barrel should be held firmly against the underside of the forearm. (Figure 37).

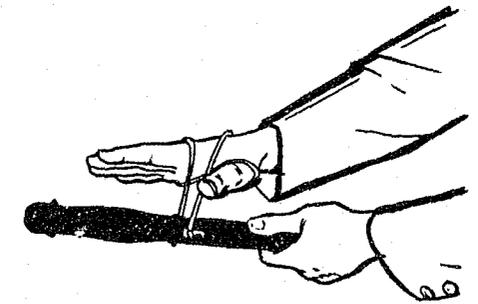


Figure 35

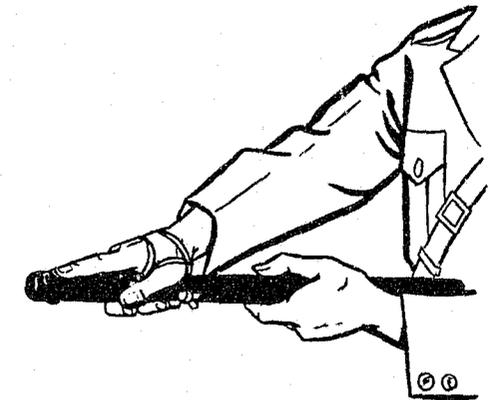


Figure 36



Figure 37

2. The "On Guard" Position.--This position is practically the same as the "on guard" position for the long grip. (See item B-2, page 9).



Figure 38

3. Footwork.--When using the short grip the footwork is the same as for the long grip. (See item B-3, pages 9-10).



Figure 39

4. How to Parry and Block.--
When using the short grip, the baton should be considered to be "an extension of the forearm."

- a. Against swinging right inside block. (Figure 38).
- b. Against swinging left inside block. (Figure 39).
- c. Against straight right downward block. (Figure 40).



Figure 40

5. How to strike blows

a. The Jab.--Step forward with the right foot as you extend the right arm forward striking the opponent with the butt end. (Figure 41). After striking the blow, return quickly to the "on guard" position.



Figure 41

b. The Short Swing.--Step forward with the right foot; the extended right index finger is placed around the handle of the baton and the right elbow is raised and pointed in the direction of the opponent. The blow is delivered by using the wrist to flip the baton in a forward-sideward arc. (Figure 42). Return the baton to the "on guard" position for the short grip.



Figure 42

The short-swing blow can also be delivered upward. (Figure 43).

The power for the short-swing blow is derived primarily from the wrist.



Figure 43

6. When to use.--The short grip can be used while the officer is questioning a person, such as a witness at the scene of a crime or an individual who appears suspicious. This grip can also be used when the officer is working in a congested area or moving through a crowd. The baton is protected better with the short grip than the long grip.

D. The Two-Handed Grip

1. How to hold.--The baton is gripped in the right hand in the same manner as in the long grip. (See Figures 5-10, pages 6-8.) The left hand grips the barrel of the baton approximately 2 to 3" from the tip (or close enough to prevent a person from grasping it) with the knuckles of the left hand turned downward. (Figure 44).

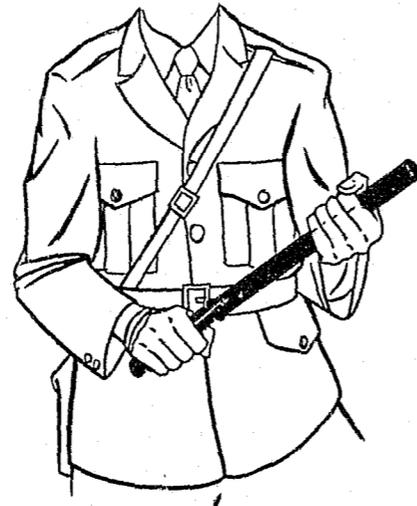


Figure 44

An alternate method of gripping the baton is to have the knuckles of the left hand turned upward. This is a particularly effective grasp in crowd control when it is necessary to hold a crowd from surging forward or to push them back.

2. The "On Guard" Position.-- Advance the left foot approximately 12" and simultaneously pivot slightly on the ball of the right foot. The knees should be slightly bent with the weight equally distributed on the balls of the feet. The baton is held approximately 6" in front of the body at a 45-degree angle with the long axis of the body. (Figure 45).



Figure 45

3. Footwork.--To advance from the "on guard" position, move the left foot forward and then bring up the right foot. (Figure 46).



Figure 46

To retreat, move the right foot to the rear and then bring back the left. (Figure 47).



Figure 47

To circle to the left, move the left foot to the left as you pivot on the right foot. (Figure 48).

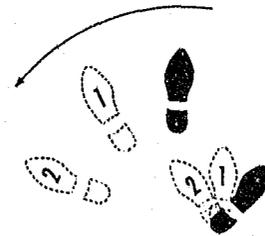


Figure 48

To circle to the right, move the left foot to the right as you pivot on the right foot. (Figure 49).



Figure 49

When necessary to move sideward to the left, move the left foot to the left and then move the right. (Figure 50).

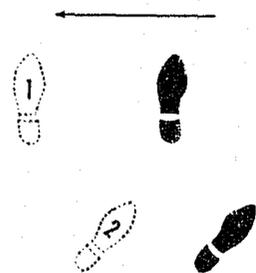


Figure 50

To move sideward to the right, move the right foot to the right and then move the left. (Figure 51).

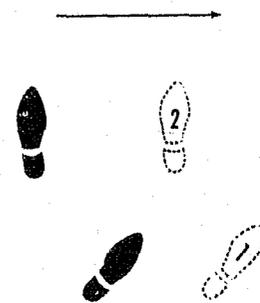


Figure 51

4. How to Parry and Block.--By releasing the left hand, the baton is held in the long grip and blows and kicks can be blocked and parried as depicted in Figures 18 to 24.

- a. Against swinging right (Figure 52).
- b. Against straight right (Figure 53).
- c. Against right uppercut (Figure 54).



Figure 52

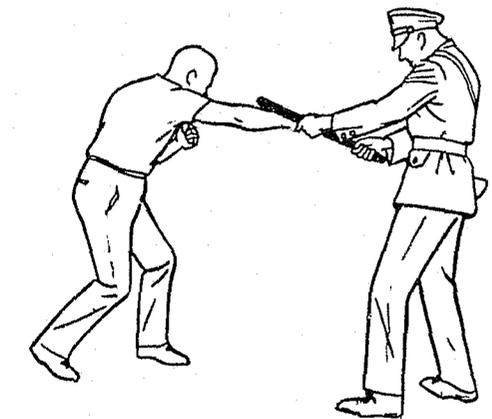


Figure 53



Figure 54

d. Against kick (Figure 55).--

5. How to Strike Blows.--By releasing the left hand, the baton is held in the long grip and blows can be delivered as depicted in Figures 25 to 31.

The following blows can be struck using the two-handed grip:

a. The Jab.--This is very similar to the movements used in the thrust of a bayonet. Step forward with the left foot as you thrust the baton forward, striking the opponent with the tip of the baton. (Figure 56).

Step back quickly to the "on guard" position to be ready to strike another blow and to prevent the opponent from seizing the baton.

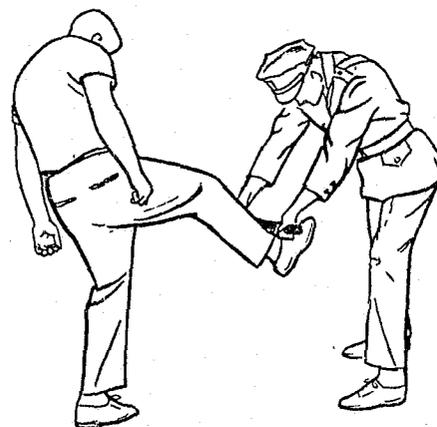


Figure 55



Figure 56

b. The Short Swing.--This is a short, snappy blow delivered either downward or sideward, in which that portion of the baton barrel above the left hand is used to strike opponent. (Figure 57).

c. The Butt Stroke.--This blow is generally delivered upward or sideward using that portion of the handle below the right hand or the butt of the baton, to strike the opponent. (Figures 58 and 59).

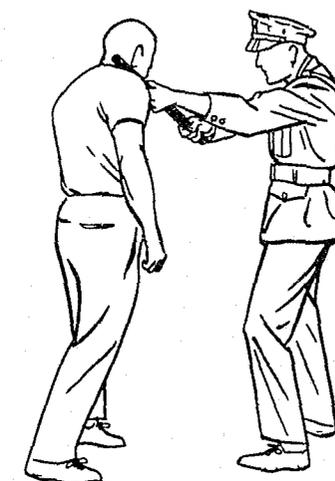


Figure 57

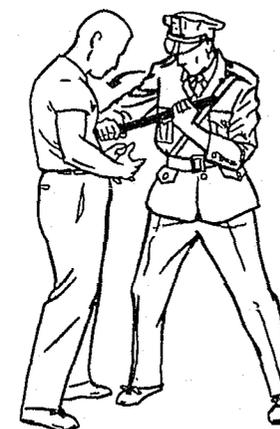


Figure 58



Figure 59

d. The Push.--This is not a blow as such, but a technique which can be used to push or hold back an individual. Several officers employing this technique can push or hold back a crowd.

(Figure 60).

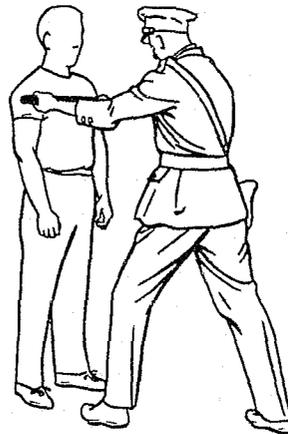


Figure 60

6. When to Use.--This is the grip which should be used for mob and riot control work. It should also be used whenever the officer is working in crowded conditions or is confronted by more than one opponent. The two-handed grip makes it extremely difficult for a person to seize the baton and take it from the officer; therefore, it is strongly recommended that this grip be used whenever possible.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS TECHNIQUES

A. Move-Along Techniques.

These are techniques which can be used to move an individual a short distance while maintaining a certain amount of control over him.

1. Between the Legs.--There are two variations of this technique and both are effective in moving an individual a short distance.

a. Grab opponent's left elbow with your left hand as you push the barrel of the baton between his legs. Baton handle should be outside opponent's left leg. Tilt the tip of the baton upward, propel him forward by pushing the baton handle forward with your right hand as you shove his left arm forward with your left hand. (Figure 61).

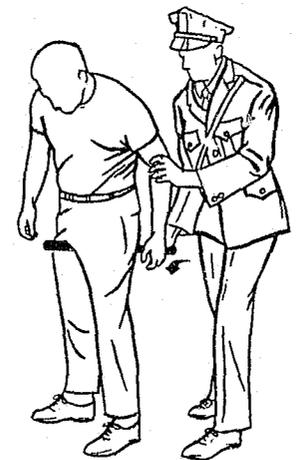


Figure 61

NOTE: Stay to the left of the opponent to avoid being struck by his right elbow. The officer's left hand and arm can be used to protect against opponent's left elbow.

b. Grasp the middle of the baton with your right hand, using thong in same manner as for the long grip. Insert the baton between opponent's legs as you grab his clothing at the neck with your left hand. Move the opponent forward by raising your right arm against his groin as you lift and push him by the neck. (Figure 62).

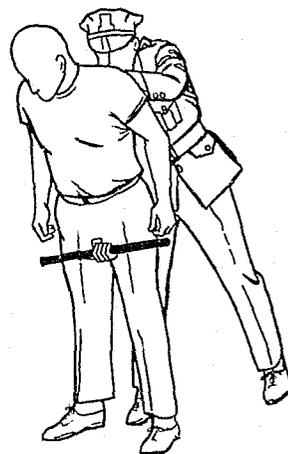


Figure 62

NOTE: When the baton is inserted between opponent's legs the knuckles of the right hand should be pointed down. The arm is in a stronger position when the knuckles are pointed down and this position minimizes the risk of injury to the officer's arm should the subject suddenly sit down.

2. Hand and Armpit.--Grasp opponent's left hand with your left hand as if shaking hands. Immediately turn his palm upward, raising his arm shoulder high. Place the baton tip into his left armpit and move him forward-sideward by keeping his left arm high as you shove the baton tip into his armpit. (Figure 63).

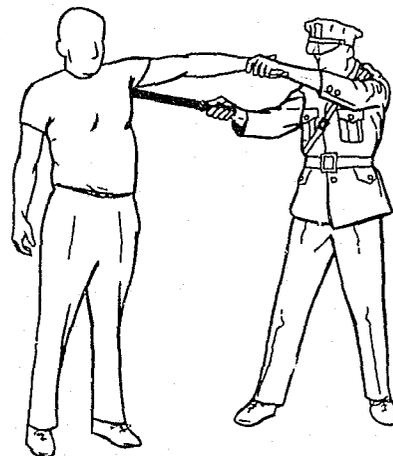


Figure 63

NOTE: The armpit is a vulnerable area and caution should be used in placing the tip of the baton in the armpit.

3. Short-Grip - Shoulder Push.-- Grasp the baton in your right hand, using the short grip. Approach opponent from rear and jab him in the kidney area with the butt. (Figure 64). Immediately push him on the back of the left shoulder with your left hand. (Figure 65). Continue moving him forward with a fast series of baton jabs and pushes on the shoulder, alternating jab - push, jab - push, etc.

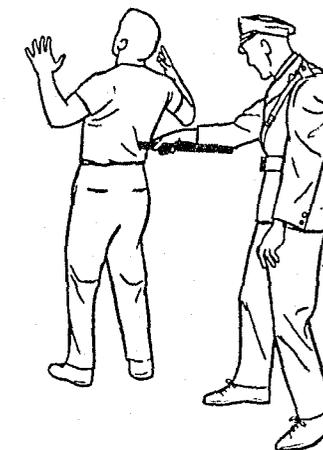


Figure 64

4. Neck and Back Push.--Grasp the back of opponent's collar with your left hand, keeping your left arm fully extended as you place the tip of the baton into his kidney area. You are able to move him forward and keep him off balance to a certain degree by pulling him slightly backward with your left hand as you push him forward with the tip of the baton. (Figure 66).

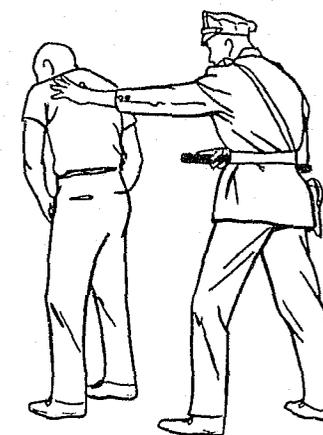


Figure 65

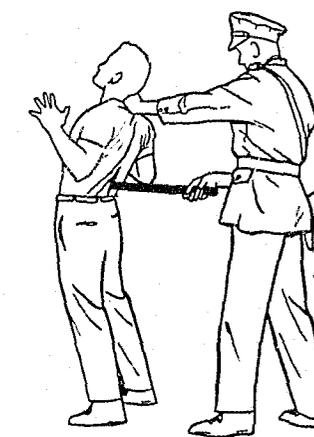


Figure 66

NOTE: You strengthen your right-arm position by holding the right elbow close to your body.

B. Come-Along Techniques

These are techniques designed to move an opponent a short distance and to enable the officer to exercise more control over the opponent than is possible with the move-along techniques.

1. **Armlock.**--Approach opponent from his right side with the baton in your right hand. Strike opponent inside his right elbow with the baton barrel, moving his right arm to the rear. (Figure 67). Push the baton barrel through as you move to the side of opponent, placing your left arm over the baton barrel. (Figure 68). Slide your left arm under opponent's right arm and grasp baton handle with your left hand just above the right hand. (Figure 69). Keep opponent's right arm snug to your body and bring him under control by forcing the baton handle downward, thus applying pressure on the radial bone of the forearm with the baton barrel.

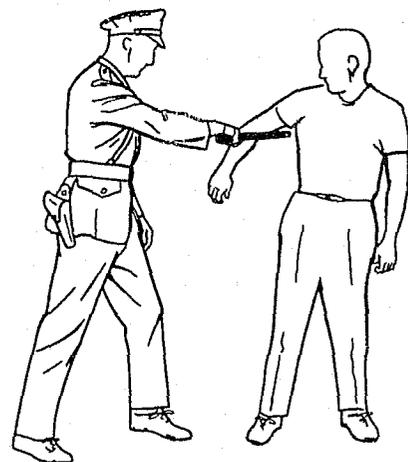


Figure 67

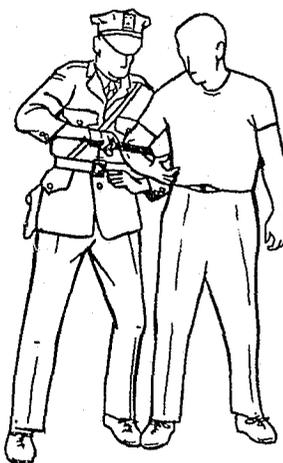


Figure 68

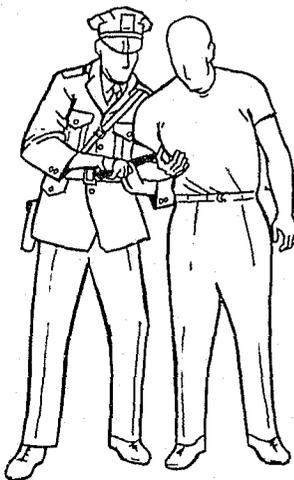


Figure 69

NOTE: This technique can be made more effective if the opponent's right hand is positioned so that the knuckles are turned up. The officer can release his right hand from the baton and use it to turn opponent's right hand to a knuckles-up position. This brings the baton barrel in direct contact with opponent's radial bone. (Figure 70).

2. **Elbow Lock.**--Approach opponent from his left side and grasp his left hand as if to shake hands. If you cannot grasp his hand, grab him by the inner side of the wrist. Raise his left arm about shoulder high as you turn his palm up. (Figure 71). Step in beside him and place the baton barrel beneath his left elbow as you rest the tip end of the baton in the bend of your left elbow, (Figure 72). Bring opponent under control by twisting his left hand to the outside and down as you raise the baton barrel upward, applying pressure to the back of opponent's elbow.



Figure 70

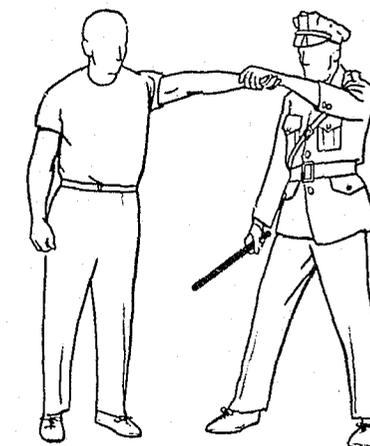


Figure 71

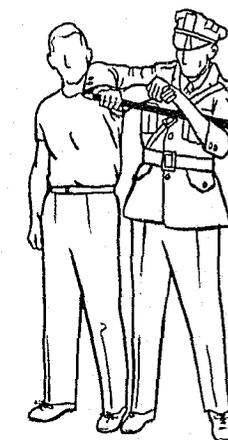


Figure 72

NOTE: When using this come-along hold, stay to the side and rear of the opponent to minimize the effectiveness of a right-hand blow. (Figure 73).

3. Behind Neck and Elbow Lock.--Approach opponent from his left side and grasp his left hand or inner left wrist with your left hand. Turn his palm up as you raise his arm shoulder high. Insert the baton underneath opponent's left arm and place baton barrel behind his neck.(Figure 74). The back of opponent's elbow should rest on the baton barrel. Bring opponent under control by twisting his left hand or wrist to the outside and downward, applying pressure with the baton to the back of his elbow. (Figure 75).

NOTE: This technique can best be used with a baton which is 24" in length or longer. A shorter baton prohibits the effectiveness of this technique.

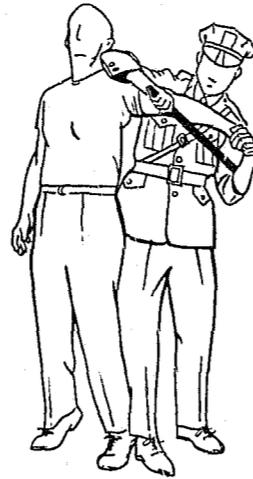


Figure 73

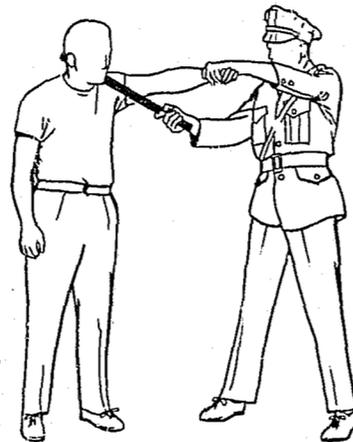


Figure 74

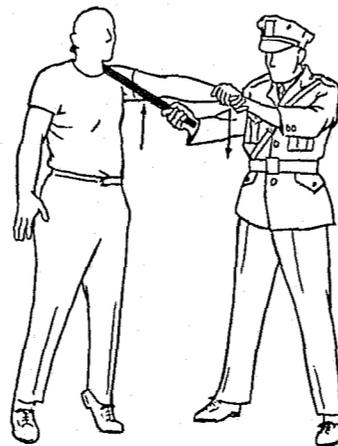


Figure 75

C. Using Thong as Handcuffs

The thong can be used as a temporary restraining device, if handcuffs are not available. With opponent's hands placed behind him, pass the leather thong around both wrists (Figure 76). Tighten the thong either by twisting it with the baton (Figure 77), or by rolling the thong onto the baton handle (Figure 78). Place the baton handle in the small of opponent's back, grasping the barrel of the baton with your right or left hand. The opponent can be temporarily held in this position or he can be moved by exerting pressure into the small of his back with the



Figure 76

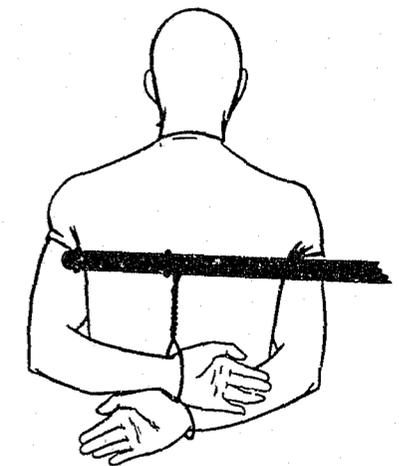


Figure 77

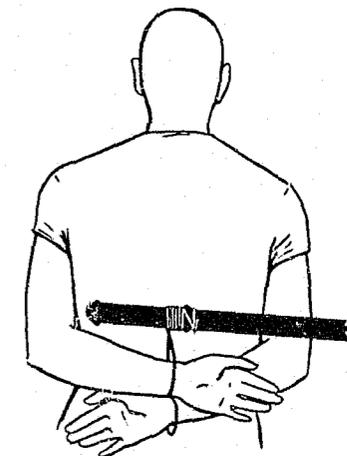


Figure 78

butt end as you grab the clothing at the back of his neck and pull him slightly backward.

(Figure 79).



Figure 79

ALTERNATE METHOD.--With baton hanging downward, have subject insert hands into the loops which are separated by the baton handle. (Figure 76a).

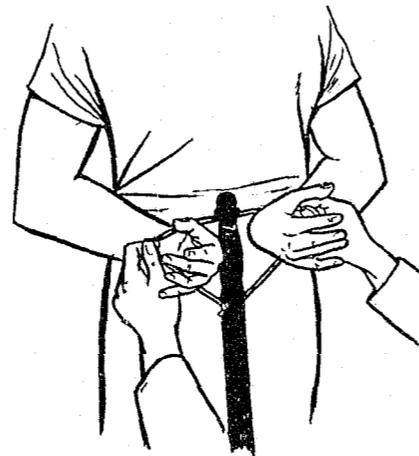


Figure 76a

Tighten the thong by pulling opponent's hands backward as you raise baton tip upward in a circular path and bring baton tip between opponent's hands and his back. (Figure 77a).

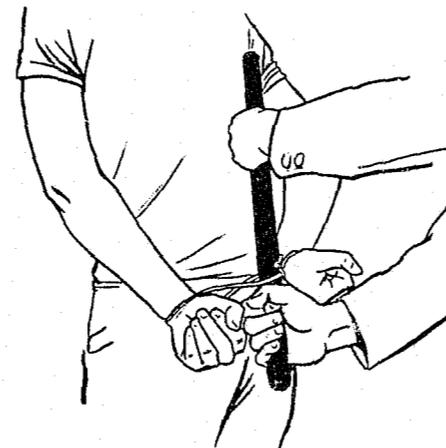


Figure 77a

Bring baton tip downward and continue circular path until thong is tight. (Figure 78a).

Place baton tip between opponent's shoulder blades as you grasp baton handle in left hand. Opponent can be moved under control by raising baton handle as you push him in the back with the tip of the baton. (Figure 79a).

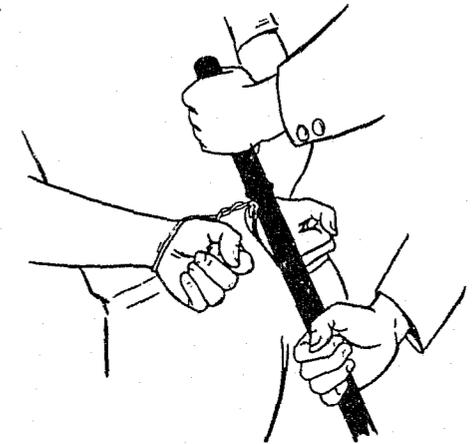


Figure 78a

D. Strangles

The baton can be used quite effectively in strangling an opponent who has either gone berserk or is extremely violent.

1. Approach opponent from the rear as you grasp baton in your right hand using the long grip. Place baton barrel across opponent's throat and the tip of the baton in the crotch of your left elbow. (Figure 80).

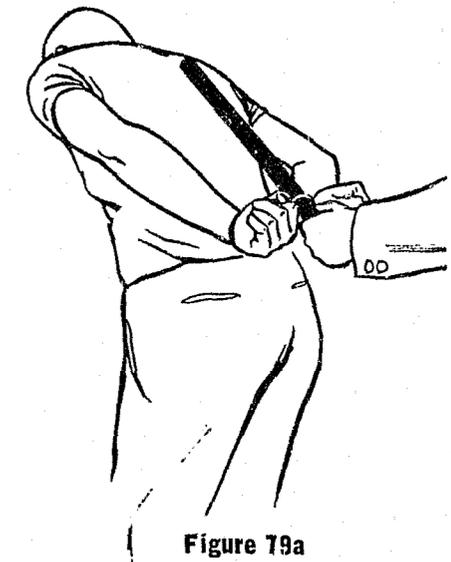


Figure 79a

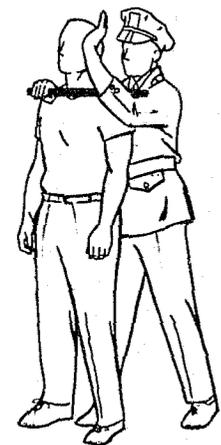


Figure 80

Place your left hand on the back of opponent's head and bring him under control by pushing his head downward with your left hand as you pull the baton back with the right hand. (Figure 81).

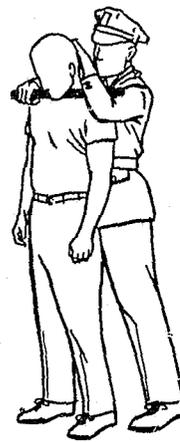


Figure 81

2. Grasp baton with the right hand, using the long grip. Approach opponent from the rear and reach across with your right hand, placing the baton barrel against his throat. The knuckles of your right hand are turned down and the right hand is held just outside opponent's left ear. (Figure 82). Reach across opponent's back and grasp baton tip with your left hand, with knuckles turned up. Control opponent by flexing both arms, thereby applying pressure to his throat with the barrel of the baton. (Figure 83).

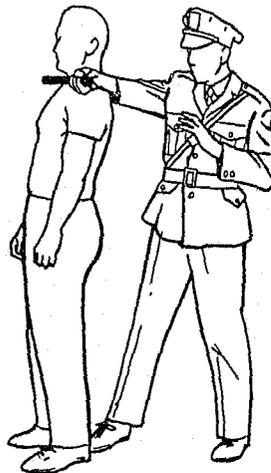


Figure 82



Figure 83

NOTE: Strangles are dangerous and should be used as a last resort in controlling a violent opponent. An officer must exercise good judgment in utilizing techniques which strangle an opponent.

E. How to Free the Baton When Seized by Opponent

1. From the Long Grip.--As opponent grabs baton barrel with either one or both hands, step toward him quickly with your right foot and grasp baton barrel with your left hand. (Figure 84). Pull baton barrel upward with your left hand as you drive baton butt downward, then upward, with your right hand. (Figure 85). Step back quickly with your left foot, twisting your body to the left as you drive baton butt to the outside with your right hand. Free the baton by jerking it toward you as you drive butt of baton forcefully to your left. (Figure 86).



Figure 84



Figure 85



Figure 86

NOTE: The officer should be prepared to strike a butt stroke should the opponent attempt to seize the officer's revolver.

2. From the Two-Handed Grip.--

Opponent would be forced to grab the center of the baton barrel, due to position of officer's hands on the baton. Step forward with your left foot as you raise baton tip with your left hand. (Figure 87).

Drive baton tip toward opponent's left shoulder as you twist your body to the right. (Figure 88).

Free the baton by ripping it downward, raising the butt end with the right hand as you lower the baton tip with the left hand. (Figure 89).

NOTE: By driving baton tip to the outside of opponent, you cause his arms to cross, thereby placing him in a weak position.



Figure 87



Figure 88

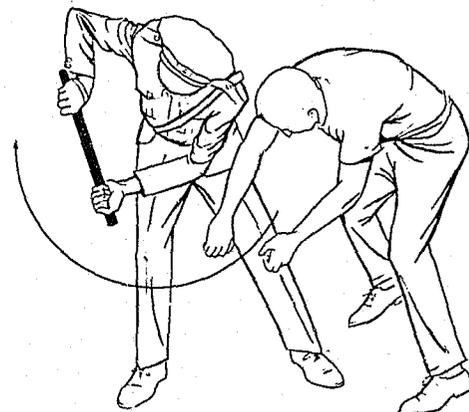


Figure 89

3. Free Baton by Kicking.--Whether the officer is using the long grip or the two-handed grip, if opponent grabs the baton, the officer can free it with a well-executed kick.

a. Snap Kick.--Place both hands on the baton handle and pull it toward you. Bend your right knee slightly to assist in maintaining balance as you deliver snap kick to opponent's knee. (Figure 90).

b. Thrust or Side Kick.--Place both hands on baton handle and pull it toward you as you pivot to the right on your right foot. Bend the right knee and lean to your right as you deliver a thrust or side kick to opponent's knee. (Figure 91).

NOTE: The snap kick and the thrust or side kick must be executed quickly so the officer is not pulled off balance.



Figure 90



Figure 91

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