

Unbalancing the Center of Gravity of an Opponent:

An Exploration of Sweeping Techniques and Their Application



Sweeping Technique (De Ashi Barai)

by David Gómez

Mark Groenewold, Editor

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David Gómez
P.O. Box 1545
Watkinsville, Georgia, 30677

*e-mail: gka.ajka@i.am
Phone: 706-769-3730*

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David Gómez
Georgia Karate Academy
3-dan, American JKA Karate Association

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David Gómez performs a sweeping technique (de ashi barai) during a basic one step sparring drill.

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Michael Ehrenreich stands with his center of gravity properly positioned over a strong base in an open "get-ready" (yoi) position . Understanding the importance of the center of gravity in the human body aids greatly in all karate movement/techniques.

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Notes:

stances because it places the center of gravity at just the right 'balance point'. However, I will deal with posture and the center of gravity relative to stance in greater depth shortly. First I would like to address what good basic posture is.

Illustration 1 depicts 3 views of proper posture, relative for karate purposes, from an open standing "ready position". A "ready position" differs from a simple standing position. A "ready position" places the center of gravity as far forward as possible with an "intention" of "forward momentum" while keeping the center of gravity firmly over a stable base. A simple standing position places the center of gravity in a neutral state, over the pelvis with no such "intention".

Illustration 1: Posture



Proper Posture Key Points: Relax the shoulders, pull the chin in and roll your hips forward by slightly tensing the lower buttocks to align the upper and lower back.

Proper posture engages the head and torso as one unit. To accomplish this, first, relax the neck and shoulders. The shoulders should be lowered, not raised. Pull the chin in to align the back part of the neck with the upper back. The eyes should be level, as if looking about 20 feet into the distance. Slightly tense the lower buttocks and stomach muscles which will roll your hips underneath you and slightly forward. The upper torso of the body should "feel" like one unit. The buttocks should not stick out and the chest or shoulders should not lean forward. This position, or posture, will allow the most central part of your body, your center of gravity, to have a forward feeling momentum yet will sit firmly above your feet for maximum stability.

