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This article should be read with companion article “waist work”.

Introduction

One important aspect of training is explosive power. We need to be able to explode into action without notice. This has several components:

1. Moving fast from stationary, without warm-up or getting ready.
2. Exert maximum effort from a stationary start.
3. Overclocking speed and acceleration.
4. Increasing strength the right way to increase force.
5. Short sharp movement, with hands and/or footwork.
6. Increasing coordination of the body to allow each component to contribute, without loss of energy.
 - a. Hands and wrists.
 - b. Elbow.
 - c. Triceps, shoulders and the lats.
 - d. Waist.
 - e. Stance and feet.
7. Accelerating movement rather than velocity, using $F=ma$ rather than $M=mv$.
8. Acceleration THROUGH the target with fist, elbow, body, stance/stepping – distancing etc. – without loss of energy.
9. Correct timing enhances power through coordinating movements and components of techniques, maximizes the power that has been generated, then maximizes the impact it has on the enemy by timing the moves with your enemy's movements, breathing and weaknesses.
10. Spring power. I am including recoveries in this section.
11. Alive power. This is hard to describe let alone train using only words. Jing in Chinese.
12. Relaxed power. This is easy to describe but hard to understand from words.

Doing the forms correctly is a good place to start. Each form and each formal component has ways of generating power.

- SLT – learning the positions to generate power from, especially the elbow and waist. Doing the movements in the right way will also develop explosive power.
- Stepping. Generating power from the ground upwards through the elbow to the enemy.
- Chi sau and alive power. And springy power. Through correct chi sau you can develop a “springiness” to your techniques, absorbing power from the enemy, and able to spring it back, to enable retaliation without thought. The chi sau training drills are a very good place to start training so you can develop alive power.
- Pivoting power and Chum Kiu. Using the waist for power, with the pivot and from the forwards snap of the waist. Especially important for explosive kicking.
- Dummy and power from coordination of the body. This will only be learned if you first ensure all the timing and footwork is very sharp. The energy of the “release” learned from practicing po pai on the dummy, for example, can be very effective on an enemy.
- Biu jee and whip power. More for advanced people. Using the whipping motions of biu jee and other techniques such as later in the dummy to generate a whirlwind type of energy. Also using limited structures and broken waist for power. I won't talk about this much. It is far better that people generate power in the other ways, and focus on the more important areas first, rather than what to do if you can't use normal power generation methods.

Use acceleration rather than strength for power. Use techniques rather than muscles. Use small sharp movements rather than big ones for most things. For big stepping, use explosive power, using as much of the body to power it as you can. Use everything you have rather than take it easy. But all of these are for when you already have the positions correct. You need that first. Then you need the right manner of movement.

There will be more drills for the waist in the waist work companion article, especially about developing power and technique, but the ones given here will focus on sharp

snaps and explosive power. The waist is key to explosive power for the whole body. All other forms of explosive power can be added to the waist, to recruit more of the body.

In the poems of VTK there are several references to “wolf-like” and “cat-like”. If you move like an old man you will not generate power, (until of course you can generate it from relaxation and alive power). You need to move like a predator. This is especially important for moving alive and with relaxed power, but any explosive power is going to be more predatory.

1. Moving fast from stationary.

Moving from a standing start is essential for fighting. It would be foolish to assume that you will have time to warm up and get ready to fight, and it would really be ludicrous to require having the time to get ready. Real fights are closer than you think, more sudden than you think, and more devastating than you think. Therefore, it is necessary to train so you can move explosively from cold, from a standing (or sitting) start.

After some time of training, a year or two, the student's body should be able to exert itself in this manner without injury, except perhaps a pulled muscle or two on occasion. Maximal exertion from a standing start does carry the risk of pulled muscles, but for people who train every day, it is a reduced risk. Those that train once per week, or train casually rather than seriously, can expect injuries if they try this.

The usual way of training this is simple. At random times and places, you just move fast and hard after being stationary for some time, after the person has cooled down from previous exertions such as walking etc. Except for after Siu Lim Tao, most of this training is done outside of class. Some examples:

- a. After a long (15 minutes or more) Siu Lim Tao form, for example, the student then begins Chum Kiu without moving or relaxing. Immediately start pivoting from a standing start at the end of SLT, without closing SLT, straight from the end of the final 3 punches, from exactly that position. When you do very long forms without moving, it is permitted to walk across the room, and start immediately there. The idea is to not give the body time to recover from stationary, so don't let the student recover from standing still. That's the whole point of the exercise.
- b. One can leap up from sitting, say while watching TV or sitting in the park for a while, and furiously step and punch across the room (preferably where there are no people watching your crazy behaviour.) As a student, Wong Shun Leung was famous for this, surprising family and friends with sudden explosive behaviour.
- c. Without any kind of preparation, see how many really hard punches you can throw in 30 seconds.
- d. After a long drive, get out and do something like stepping across the park or doing chum kiu, straight out of the car.

e. It doesn't have to be VTK. You can simply sprint across the yard or the park as fast as you can without getting ready, for example, or lifting weights or moving some boxes or digging a hole or gardening or.... I am sure you can think of more drills and situations yourself. Any physical exertion, go for it hard and fast without getting ready. Can be combined with the next kind of drills - Maximum exertion from rest.

2. Exert maximum effort from a stationary start.

This is similar to the previous one, and can be combined with it. However, the focus isn't on moving from cold, but instead it is about giving all the energy you have in the shortest time possible. Going from standing still to maximum speed sprint (first step or second, not 3-4 paces) or hard and fast punches. Absolutely giving everything in as short a time as possible. The distance can be shorter than in the previous exercises, even 3 metres or less. Go nuts. Scream if it helps, yell and punch or go for glory with the stepping.

Like the previous one, can be things other than pure VTK – short sprints, stepping across the room, gym work, bag work, anything that lends itself to short and furiously hard bursts of effort. From Whoa to Go instantly. E.g. some sprinting drills:

Sprints

1. If you go jogging or running, instead of jogging whole way, do short sprints. Running on the road, run as fast as you can for a short length, perhaps one front yard, or one telegraph pole distance. Walk for one or two of the same length until breathing back to normal. Then do it again. Alternate for the run.
2. Try to sprint for about 3 metres, absolute maximum output. Make sure you have lots of room at the end, so you can go through. The beginning shouldn't need much room because one part of this is to go from zero to hero in no time at all. However, if you have trouble getting going, leave a little room to try to build up to speed. One method is to crouch and lean into the direction of travel, and use the FRONT foot to push off, not the back. Make it maximum acceleration. Once you can do it well enough, try the same speed with normal VTK stepping. Naturally, the method is somewhat different, but you have a benchmark to compete against. Make your stepping as fast as the sprint, at least for those 3 metres. Then increase it again, by using the same method.
3. Sprint stepping across the room. Use VTK stepping, but since it is fast, don't worry too much about details, unless it's a total mess. Do relays with other students, making sure to leave enough time to recover breath between sprints. We are looking for maximal exertion, not fitness or endurance.
4. Combine any of the above with punching, other hand techniques or anything appropriate. Try it with kicks etc.

Try punching like a madman, as hard and as fast as you can. OK if it is sloppy (work on precision in a different drill). Punch hard as you can, fast as you can (yelling helps) for a time, e.g. 30 seconds. Do it with stepping as well.

If you have to do something like cut wood, move some bricks or dig a ditch or something similar that is physical, do it hard and fast. Put all you have into it, for short bursts. Take a break. Do it again.

3. Overclocking speed and acceleration

The previous drills can be part of the preparation for this, and then a follow up afterwards. The idea here is to try to go beyond your normal speed, teaching your nerves and muscles what it is like so they can do it on their own. The traditional way was to have someone faster than you simply push or pull your feet or hands faster than you can manage.

With footwork, it is simply that the person moving forward on you can always step faster than you can backwards. Therefore, if the person stepping forwards tries to make you fall over because you can't keep up your feet, this was practicing for this concept. It is naturally important that the student be already quite accomplished at stepping backwards before the forwards moving student tries to overclock them. Then just go faster each time until they start to stagger with the stepping, nearly falling over. That is the limit for this person. Now, just go a little faster, trying to catch the balance point. This way the person stepping forwards is practicing catching the man's balance, while the person stepping back is learning how to move faster than he can normally, and learning to deal with force. The footwork needs to be neat and precise or they will fall over. As they get better, you can go faster, until you are both going as fast as you can. Now you can vary it with short snaps, unexpected explosive steps, etc. See the list of progressions; it has some of the drills and variations for this. Both people can learn explosive movements from this.

Naturally be aware of walls etc. The person stepping forwards watches the walls and other people etc. In a fight he would throw the enemy into them, but in the class he is watching for safety. The person going backwards should focus only on the stepping, and let the person going forwards worry about objects.

For the hands, one way was for the teacher, who would naturally be faster than most of the students since he has undergone this training, to push the hands of the punching from behind. The punches would go faster, and the student would learn how to do it. Unfortunately in this day and age, not every teacher is faster than every student. I am certainly not. So, while this will work for the slower students, which is the most important anyway, the faster students perhaps can't benefit from this as much.

One way that they use for Olympic athletes, for example for sprinting, is to have someone hold onto a moving vehicle, such as a car, with a handle on it. The vehicle will go just slightly faster than the person can normally go, thus educating the muscles and coordination as to a faster speed. Then, with training, the person can go faster than they normally would be able to. Here in China, they sometimes use pushbikes. I am not sure how safe that would be, but you could try that as well, for running at least, and perhaps, if done carefully, with stepping. I haven't tried it for VTK but I have used it occasionally for running, and it works quite well. Make sure that the runner lets go long before the bike stops. You need a speedometer to ensure a constant rate of movement just a little faster than they can normally do, and the gearing needs to be a little lower so you can pull them along.

You could overclock stepping forwards by having someone push you from behind using normal footwork – like running – but you have to step VTK properly. You will learn to use your feet faster. I have tried this with some success.

One of my students (who has Level 4 accreditation for sports training from the Australian Institute of Sport, which is good enough for the Olympics) started using elastic bands to accelerate hands and feet, with success. He used leg ropes from surfboards. By attaching the Velcro strap to his wrists, elbows, knees or feet, he was able to use the rubber to practice punching, kicking and other things against a progressive resistance. You might like to try this.

Using weights strapped to the wrist and feet will do something similar, but has the unfortunate effect of causing the person to strike lighter, since the body gets used to the weight pulling forwards instead of using the muscles. Weights can be used on the ankles, though, for stepping, jumping, etc., and removing them makes the feet lighter. This is very useful for stepping. Precise light steps are vital for explosive power. Similar ideas were used traditionally in many kung fu styles, including VTK.

4. Increasing strength the right way to increase force

This usually involves exercises. The ones found in the normal warm-up we use has a number of exercises that can be used to do this, but you have to increase the effort used from surviving the exercises to doing them hard and fast, reducing the time to do them, then increasing the reps. Most of the exercises that use rebound energy can be useful for this aspect of training.

1. Jumping on the spot can be increased in time, and speed, and height. This will give the muscles to move in and out of a fight.
2. Increase the speed of knee lifts and squats for kicking power and speed.
3. Crunches and boxing crunches done very fast for the waist
4. Triceps dips done springing from the ground
5. Ballistic sun asanas, fast and hard and more of them.
6. Getting up exercise done into fast stepping and punching.
7. The back forwards back exercise with the arms, just increase to maximum speed for at least 10 of the 20 reps.
8. Arm circling very very fast, usually with just one arm at a time. Fingers should go completely red and get pins and needles.
9. Fast and hard stepping back and forth. 2 steps forwards 2 steps back is very good for this. Including punches makes for a good, short, fast, workout.
10. Explosive push-ups
11. Explosive triceps dips
12. Wall bag training – not just the normal punches, but some pivots, short punches, long punches, fast, slow etc. Occasionally step into the bag and punch, but this is risky, and difficult. Should be done to see how you are going rather than a regular training thing.
13. At the end of class, there should be a lot of punches being done. Try to do them all with pivots. One count, one pivot. So, for fifty light and loose punches, do fifty pivots. Try varying short (less than 10 degrees) forward pivots with longer 45 angle ones. Make them fast.
14. Any pivoting drill or exercise can be made explosive, simply making them short and sharp.

There are a variety of Gym exercises that are useful as well, but I do not feel qualified to teach them. At some future date, I will prevail upon a friend who is, to write an article if I can.

5. Short sharp movement.

Try to train using smaller, sharper movements for techniques. Get more power from smaller movements. This includes steps and footwork. Short sharp steps as well as long are important for explosive power. In fact, it is usually easier to explode for short distances than long.

The essentials of short explosive movements are these:

- a. Do not pull back or telegraph or other wasted movements. Don't shake the hands etc. prior to moving.
- b. Strike as hard and as fast as you can from as short as you can. Limit the distance. Do not limit the power. This snap is essential for nearly all techniques. Even the feet should snap into place, when moving.
- c. Fully lock the elbow through the target, as if the target wasn't there. Do not slow down at impact, but use the wrist to add power at that point, if possible.
- d. For many techniques, the wrist can add power at impact; especially palm strikes (easily learned) or the punch (harder). You can add the wrist to jum, jut, and others as well, once you can do these techniques well enough. Adding the wrist can make the techniques too "wristy" and can subtract from the elbow power, if done incorrectly. Be careful about applying the wrist to certain elbow powered techniques.

This kind of exercise is started with Siu Lim Tao in the third section, especially the edge of palm strikes after the huen sau. It is used everywhere through the system.

We can do similar things with the waist and pivoting.

- e. Snap with the waist too. Whether forwards with the stepping, or circular with the pivot, short sharp snaps are essential. (I will write an article later on pivoting with more information about different kinds and applications of pivoting. I hope to include it in the waist work one, but that might be a bit ambitious. I thought to include it in this one, but it's already too long.)
- f. Snapping the angle and waist. Do the solo drills for angle stepping, forwards and backwards. However, do them with a snap of the waist. Bring the waist into the right direction really fast. Use the forward jum movement instead of

the punch, with the 'off' leg. This helps gain power. The punch will, instead, help people who are not able to get the waist into play fast enough, such as beginners. Ensure the angle is 45 and not some other angle especially not straight back. Measure, angle and step, go back, measure and angle step the other hand, alternating. Do lots.

- g. One way to practice this with pivoting is to take a punching bag and hold your hands at about floating rib height. Using predominantly the waist, not the hands, do two punches with the left hand, then two with the right. Each one pivots. Do them as fast as you can, until exhausted, which won't be long if you do it right. Two pivots each side, each powering a circling (like the ones from biu jee) punch. Don't use the arm to power it, try to isolate the power from the waist, almost entirely.

Feet. Similarly, can practice with the feet.

- h. Snapping the feet. Any time you use your feet in solo work you can work on snapping the feet into place. You can do it up and down the hall, snap each step. Or, at a line on the floor, with a partner holding a pad in each hand about a step away. You can start in the training stance. He will randomly hold up one pad, and you angle step sharply up to the pad, hit it (once with the offhand or 3 times, starting with the offhand) and then snap back to the line you were originally at. Really try to snap hard and fast, and accurately back across line, not onto it or too far away from it.
- i. Snapping with the kick is harder. First needs to be done with the turn of the leg, not with the extension of the knee. Next, needs to have the waist snap powering the kick. Finally, if you can do all that, then the full extension of the knee can be added.

6. Increasing coordination of the body to allow each component to contribute, without loss of energy

- i. Hands and wrists**
- ii. Elbow**
- iii. Triceps, shoulders and lats**
- iv. Waist and facing**
- v. Stance and feet**

This is mostly accomplished through slow work, to ensure everything is in the right place so that the energy is not lost. All the forms, formal training, drills and the wall bag contribute to this. If everything is in the right place, then the explosive power will come more easily, with less effort. So will all the relaxed power. The power has nowhere to go except where you want it to. As the techniques are in place, then the other drills have value. Until then, the value is limited, and extra training is largely a waste of time. All the extra power you develop will be lost through inefficiency. Spend the time getting it right, instead. Don't let energy go to waste through sloppy techniques. If, on the other hand, all the techniques are too sloppy, no amount of power is going to be enough, since the more you try, the more is lost.

Slow work is invaluable. Check every detail of every movement, to ensure nothing is lost, everything is perfect. Once you put it under stress, errors will appear. Examine it carefully, fix everything until you are doing it right nearly all the time. Speed it up, and examine it again. Fix any issue, no matter how small, then try again. Once it is as perfect as possible, you can try a little faster, harder, and examine it again. Stress the techniques in different ways – under more power, crowded conditions, too far away, faster, out of place, etc. Each stressor will reveal more errors to fix, refining the techniques until it is as humanly perfect as you can make it.

There are also other exercises for coordinating the body, other than slow work. Some are given here.

The idea of these exercises is to isolate each component, focus on it, and then use it in the assembled technique. You can apply the general concept to anything. It is especially valuable for stepping, and the punch, as given here.

You can practice the coordination of the wrist with the punch by using a phone book against a friend's chest. For a description of the 'phone book' see the next part of the article. Put the fist right up firmly against the book. Using only the wrist, without using any power from the elbow except locking it in place, snap it into the book. Do not move the elbow. If you do it right, it will exert quite a lot of power. Isolate the wrist movement.

You can do similarly with the elbow and wrist, doing little popping punches and looking carefully to see they are coordinated in timing. Generally needs 3 people, one to hold the phone book (he can report if the power is working) one to watch carefully from the side, and one to try.

With short sharp punches you can practice acceleration on the phone book as well. Start the punch slowly and go faster, but in a continuous manner. Do not go slowly and then go as fast as you can halfway through the punch. This is also useful to practice with the previous section.

You can use the distancing phone book drill, the one used in the next section, to check coordination of feet with distance and hands. An observer is needed here too.

For stepping, going through the list of advancements as given in the 'checklist' will do the same thing.

7. Accelerating movement rather than velocity, using $F=ma$ rather than $M=mv$.

$F=ma$. $M=mv$. This is basic physics but which is better, and how can we apply this to fighting?

Firstly, m is mass. We cannot change our mass. However, we can change how effective that mass is by having better stances, better waist to hold the body together into a unit, and have better ways of stepping and structures of our techniques, so effectively, our body has a higher mass due to being unified, instead of just using our arms etc., with their lower mass.

" v " is velocity. It is basically how fast something is going in a particular direction. The direction is important when later, we consider how the force will penetrate the target more efficiently.

“a” is acceleration. It is the rate of change of velocity. It doesn't matter how fast something is going, but how much faster it is changing how fast it is going. It too matters in which direction it is going.

Momentum is how hard something hits. It depends on the mass of the object, and how fast it is going. Therefore the heavier something is, and the faster it is going, the more energy is in it when it hits something. This is the normal way in which people hit things.

All well and good if you are big and fast, preferably bigger and faster than your opponent. However, you cannot select your opponent, therefore it is wise to assume that your opponent is bigger and faster than you are, in order to assume worst case scenario to prepare yourself for the unknown.

Force, on the other hand, depends partly on mass, but partly on the rate of change of velocity.

Vector is the direction something is going. Inertia is the resistance of mass to change in velocity. For us, the main point is that if our strike hits square, less of the force is deflected or bounces off, or is lost glancing from curved surfaces. The other side of this is that it is hard to accelerate an object, ourselves with stepping or our fists etc. while striking, and mass resists this. It also means that a heavier object will impart more energy when it strikes. So, if you hit square, the mass of the object holds it in place, and the mass of the moving object imparts a certain amount of energy. If you are accelerating at the time, this inertia enables you to transfer more energy into the target, because as the target moves it moves in the same vector as the strike, so the next lot of energy from the acceleration strikes the object as well, which is still resisting movement. Basically the inertia holds it in place as you continue to put more energy into it, causing more destruction. Momentum only hits once, if you like, and expends it's energy, while Force continues to do so for as long as the acceleration of the striking force is greater than the acceleration of the target. This is important for the next part, 8. Accelerating through the target without energy loss.

What all of this means is that it is important to be continually increasing velocity in a smooth manner throughout the strike, and not simply hit maximum velocity as soon

as you can and maintain it. This is quite difficult to do, but causes a lot more damage.

The first thing you need to do is to see it. Try this:

First start the punch as slowly as you can, and as the fist extends, increase the velocity at a constant rate. Most people do it discontinuously, starting slowly, then speeding up suddenly about half way through and hitting maximum velocity at that point, then keeping that velocity going. This is only accelerating during the CHANGE of speed. You want to be constantly changing so it doesn't matter when you hit the guy. For more on this, see my article on the punch.

Anyway, keep practicing this until you can do it, then keep going until it becomes a habit.

8. Acceleration THROUGH the target with fist, elbow, body, stance/stepping – distancing etc. – without loss of energy

The physics is described in the previous section. This section will concentrate on drills to improve it.

The wall bag is good for building the strength for this, but for practicing the follow through, you need a target that is not so rigid. In fact, it may cause injury if you try to go through properly with a step, since it's on a wall, and the bones or wrist will give a long time before the wall comes down. I have found that one good way is using a phone book with a partner. If you don't have a suitable phone book (6 or 8 cm thick – take the shiny covers off first), a suitable pad can be made by taking a lot of newspapers and taping them together. I usually make a permanent one with a thin layer of close cell foam over the top, and putting a cover over them, such as a cloth shopping bag. Ensure that the tape isn't anywhere the student will punch.

This 'phone book' pad is very useful because it transmits enough force so the partner can feel if it's right or wrong, but it is hard for most people to hurt someone through it.

Get a partner to hold a phone book against their chest and stand in a training stance. It is important that this is not a fighting stance. The student can practice their training stance, keeping their feet at 45 and the same distance from the partner, and maintain facing. In a fighting stance, you are too stable, and you need the partner to be able to be forced back. It is important that they hold it against the centre of the chest, so the power is absorbed and felt by the opponent, and the student can practice hitting the centre line. The pad should be held by the edges so as not to obscure the 'target' and risk getting hit in the hands or arms. The normal human tendency to hold the pad on the shoulder and to brace themselves with one leg back should be resisted.

Now try these drills:

1. Stand with your back to the wall, the partner standing in front of you, within punching range or just a little closer. Measure it, like with the wall bag – fist firmly against the bag, with the elbow a fist or a fist and a thumb from your centre. You also stand in the training stance (not the fighting stance). Now, punch the phone book, driving through. Make sure you do not telegraph the punch. Push him back as far as you can. Yes, make the punch a push, punching quite slowly, but with continuous acceleration. This is to develop the muscles and the motion for the

later exercises, and get used to the right way to accelerate to move a human bodyweight. He will then stagger back, then stop. He should now correct his stance to square again, and stand where he is now. You walk up and do it again with the other hand. Do it, alternating hands, until you reach the far wall. Then it's his turn.

2. For the next drill, you start at a distance, at least a metre away. You can start further if you want, to practice moving in, but at first you want to simply be a single step away. Now step into the guy holding the phone book. You are to try to hit in such a way that your hand reaches him at 75% extension, and does not compress the arm (elbow doesn't bend, but continues to straighten) on impact. Keep trying that, alternating arms. Timing is crucial. You may want someone to watch from the side. They watch to ensure that the elbow doesn't bend in the slightest, but instead continues to straighten through the impact without pause.
3. Next, try to do the same thing, only with him moving in instead of you. Intercept his movement at the right time (as he is landing on his front foot) at the right distance (75%) without compressing the arm, but managing to extend the arm through him, stopping his movement cold. Timing is crucial, and once more an observer is helpful.
4. You can try this moving backwards or forwards into him as well, with the partner moving in different ways. The key is to ensure that the elbow does not bend on impact, but continues to straighten, just like he wasn't there at all.

9. Correct Timing.

This enhances power through coordinating movements and components of techniques, maximizes the power that has been generated, then maximizes the impact it has on the enemy by timing the moves with your enemy's movements, breathing and weaknesses.

To unify the body, stepping and punching in the air is good, getting everything from the feet to the fist moving together.

For the step itself, practice trying to throw someone off their feet in seung ma tui ma using only the waist. Try to step into a heavy bag and strike through with acceleration.

For the hands, chi sau is best for most of this. Move WITH your partner, learning to time your movements with his for maximum impact, or maximum deflection or throwing. Lap sau so as to throw your opponent etc.

Focus balls are good also, to try to time strikes with the movement of the ball. Pad up someone and try to hit them as they move in different ways, making your hits solid. Try to impact people as they move in various ways.

10. Spring Power

This is most usually achieved in chi sau, but some drills help. What I mean by spring power is the ability to simply use the forwardness of your stance, waist, hands etc. to spring into place when pushed, shoved, blocked etc. One key idea is to snap the back hand into place immediately, so you have something that can be brought into place instantly it is needed.

Two kinds, passive springiness, and active. Here are some examples for both. There are more but space is limited

a. Passive.

- i. The Guard. When the guard is held correctly, sweeping the front hand away will simply find that it is not only hard to sweep away, but will instantly return to position. Someone pak sau and step in, made famous by Bruce Lee, will simply walk into a fist. If the slap is sufficiently hard, and the hand is forced away, then the back hand will punch, as in the first of the active spring power drills. The correctly held position of the guard is a long article in itself, but basically, this is with the elbow of the front hand close to centre, the fingers pointing to the target (or just slightly below), the back hand about where the elbow is, with the fingers pointing directly at the target. The fingers must be straight, and the wrist and palm as well and there should be a straight line from elbow through wrist and fingers to the target. The fingers should be relaxed, but not too relaxed, and the whole guard fairly relaxed except for the elbow which should be quite firm, but very importantly, none of the structure should be too rigid either, otherwise the body will turn when the hand is slapped hard.
- ii. Wu sau. This should be canted and forced forwards so that when something encounters it, it will simply bounce back into position. The practitioner can also add to it by forcing the cant of the wrist even more, with a short sharp movement.
- iii. Bong sau. This should also be under springiness, so that anything heavy coming in will simply give a little, then move back

- iv. In chi sau, both hands act like shock absorbers, moving in and out with the pressure, keeping the pressure and thus the distance constant. This is especially true in stepping but is also true in all chi sau.

b. Active

- i. Fast retaliation after blocks. The best and easiest two drills for this involve blocking the punches. One person punches the other one slaps the punch away. In the first version, the hand is slapped hard randomly, and the practitioner punches forward instantly with the back hand the instant the front hand is out of line, and snaps the front hand into place at the back.
- ii. Fast retaliation after strikes. In chi sau, when someone hits you, instantly hit back, almost at the same moment.
- iii. Recovering from pushes and pulls and facing. One extremely useful form of explosive power is to come back instantly with an attack after being shoved or pulled. This is best practiced with plenty of room. First, you can use lap sau or double handed pulls, where the person cannot resist losing their facing. They should snap back into facing, trying to control any stumbling, and come back punching. This can be practiced with pushes from behind or at angles, and the student recovers, and comes back fighting. You can combine pushing and pulling, and once the student can do it, you should do it randomly, when the student isn't ready. That is, shove him hard from behind when he is least expecting it. Naturally, this is for more advanced people who are very proficient at stepping, and probably pivoting, otherwise they just stumble and fall.
- iv. Dummy po pai movement. This should be practiced with a released power push, hard to describe, but is most successfully practiced, naturally, on the dummy. Once you can do it there, try it on people.

11. Moving with 'alive' power. Jing.

This is quite hard to train, and actually, you need someone who knows what it looks like to make it work. This type of power, like the next one, is very deceptive. Alive hands for traps are vital, and the best way to train this effect. Use the training drills for the various traps; especially jut sau and the bong defence for it.

This is aimed at the jut sau trap and defence, but could be used with any technique.

First, hardwire the technique, first slowly and accurately, carefully. Precise. You can't get this through strength, nor can you force the speed. Relax. Do it correctly then increase speed. Power comes from the technique not the muscles. Make them light and loose. Feel the springiness of the moves. Don't use main strength, but the technique. Snap, but a relaxed snap. If you have done all the previous training for this, then you should be able to get relaxed power, after some additional training. If, on the other hand, there are things missing in the preliminary training, then it will be much harder for most people. If you can't do it light and loose, something is wrong. Don't try too hard. It's actually easy when you know how. Trying too hard will in fact inhibit you.

Move like a predator, a wolf or a cat. Pounce or leap with your techniques, rather than drive them thunderously.

One simple way to practice the hand movements is to try multiple punching such as doubles or better triples so they sound like a single punch. Then, all techniques, pa-pow, one-two without pause. Or one-two-three, without any space between them. Relaxed and light, trying for smooth easy movement, rather than trying for massive power. It must still very correct – without the structures being very good, relaxed won't penetrate enough. Without relaxation, the power will be a clubbing force.

12. Relaxed power

This is one of the hardest things to train. Relaxed power essential, not muscular power. Relaxed and alive vs. dead strength.

You will know when you do it because it felt like nothing to do it, no effort at all, but the other person complains a lot no matter how light you make it.

One way that works well is to practice for it initially when you are totally exhausted, because you will have no more energy to contribute, and your body will try to find a way to do it without any extra effort. However, it will only do that if the proper structures are still there when exhausted too.

Just take it easy, and don't worry about your techniques. If you have made them precise, neat, light and loose, then the relaxed power will come by itself, because the structures will be there for you and you only have to worry about being relaxed.

Once you can do it while exhausted, this power will come more and more regularly through normal training. For example, when you pay attention to something else, but your hands do it perfectly without thought. And when you are having fun, such as when doing chi sau.

The way to do this is to have accomplished the other training, and then simply let it go.