

Eye Gouging 101

Attacking the eyes of an opponent can be a very effective means of gaining an advantage during a confrontation. Because of the relative fragility of the eye, the amount of damage that may be inflicted by a small amount of "power" is tremendous.

In this series, we will look at several different methods of attacking the eyes. Note that certain methods may suit specific attack scenarios better than others!

I will state that even an effective blow to the eye MAY NOT STOP AN ATTACKER, and should not be relied upon as the only blow. Rather, you should consider the eye attack as a means to create the opportunity to strike again or produce a weapon in the moment the strike might gain you. In some situations, the eye attack may simply force the opponent to move somewhat or loosen a grip on you, etc. There are many applications for this weapon, so do not be limited by only that which we discuss.

Now, let's look at various methods of striking the eye:

Extended Eye Jab

The extended eye jab affords you the greatest reach possible with your arm.

The blow is delivered either as a snapping/whipping blow (snake strike) with a more relaxed wrist, or as a "spear-like" strike with a rigid wrist. In either method, the hand/finger configuration is identical.

The relaxed wrist method is what I personally prefer, since it is faster and requires less "preparation" to deliver. This blow can be delivered with virtually no wind-up, entrainment of bodyweight, or distance to generate power. It relies on the flicking of the wrist, similar to flicking something sticky off of your fingertips.

The spear-like strike resembles a punch, in that it is delivered with more bodyweight behind it. The rigidity of the arm allows you to place more of a traditional punching lunge behind the blow. I consider this to be a secondary application of this blow, since the eye is a vulnerable target and does not require a tremendously powerful blow to cause the desired disruption.

The hand/finger position is constructed by supporting all four fingers together laterally. The fingers themselves are curved slightly, so that landing the blow does not "jam" your fingers upon impact. You may test your finger structure by jabbing into the open palm of your other hand. You will quickly figure out that the curved "beak" configuration allows you to strike quite hard without damage to your fingers or hand.

Here is the desired hand/finger configuration:



Supported Thumb Gouge

The supported thumb gouge is useful when reach is not a critical factor. The thumb can be supported at the first joint, making it very rigid. The four fingers curl tightly into a fist-like ball and the thumb is pressed down on top to effectively make the entire hand a single unit.

This method is useful in clinching and other close-range situations. The supported thumb gouge may be delivered either as a strike or as a direct pressure blow.

Here's the hand/finger configuration for the supported thumb gouge:



Landmarking and Gouging

The next three photos demonstrate that the human head has palpable "landmarks" which make it possible to determine the location of the eye by simply touching the opponent's head in various areas.

Since human anatomy is similar among the species (OK, no jokes please), we can use the features of the head to determine the location of the eye target WITHOUT SEEING THE TARGET. This method can be extremely useful in the dark, or during attacks in which the opponent is behind you, etc.

You may find the landmarks by touching one area of your head and learning how your fingers or thumb may then be directed into the eye.

Begin by touching your ear with your fingers (right hand to right side of head to start, little finger closest to ceiling). Note how your thumb reaches precisely into your right eye. The same thing happens when it is your thumb touching the ear.... the fingers reach the eye quite nicely. Remember, you will touch to find the landmark, and grab tightly as you gouge into the eye. By holding onto the landmark also, you may apply far more pressure to the eye, and it becomes more difficult for the opponent to release himself from the attack.

Next, touch your chin with your thumb. Note how your fingers are directed quite precisely into your eye. This is another valuable "yardstick", the second of the 90 degree landmarks in the "tour" around the eye. Remember, the fingers touching the chin also positions your thumb to attack the eye! 🤖 You may "hook" under the jaw to produce a pretty good hold on the opponent's face, thus amplifying the pressure you can deliver to the eye.

Finally, if the opponent has hair (!), you may landmark with the forehead/hairline by using a hair grasp. This method can produce very intense pressure on the eye, and produce bonus pain via the hair pull.

The three landmarking eye attack/gouges are shown in the following pictures.

1. Ear landmarking eye gouge



2. Chin landmarking eye gouge



3. Hair grasping eye gouge



Two-handed "Bowling Ball" Gouge



A future TIPS will demonstrate realistic application of these strikes and gouges.

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