

KEITH VITALI'S ANGULAR TECHNIQUES

Keith Vitali, the good-looking champion known for his boyish charm and unflinching good sportsmanship, began his karate career in 1971 as a student at the University of South Carolina. In 1975 he attended a Joe Lewis seminar that provided him with insights that were to change his fighting style, mostly by adding an analytical approach to footwork that few fighters have been

able to conceptualize and master.

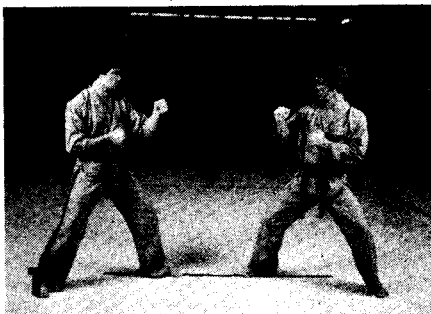
Vitali describes his system as "angular movement," a method of moving away from the force of a blow without moving beyond the range of an effective counter technique. According to Vitali, "A key to learning angular movement is to never be caught stationary. Keep on the balls of your feet and try to incorporate some type of circular move-

ment as you spar."

In the following photos, Vitali demonstrates some alternatives to the conventional blocks used in sparring, blocks that incorporate his principles of angular movement. He is assisted here by Russell Mountain. As you experiment with these techniques, Vitali advises, be sure to practice slowly at first. (Photos are by Dick Tirschel.)

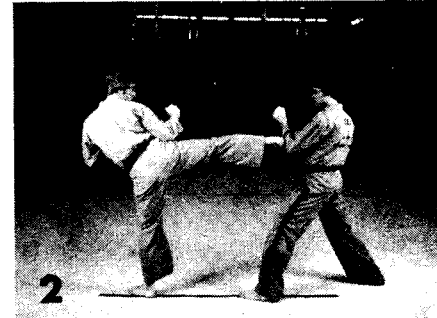
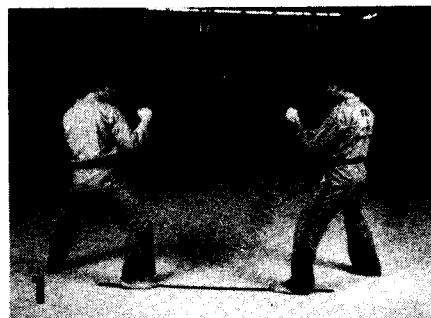
Angular Movement Against a Round Kick

In this sequence, Vitali squares off against his opponent. Note the position of the feet relative to the line on the mat (1). Forced into blocking a round kick (2), Vitali uses what he calls his "general block," a type of block that is most useful in point karate since it protects the groin, kidney area and the head in one blocking motion. Having blocked the kick, Vitali moves his rear leg clockwise (3), pivoting away from the direction and power of the round kick. [If he had stepped in the opposite direction, he would have moved directly into the force of the kick.] Now that Vitali has turned from the kick (4) he has complete use of his hands. In this case, he punishes his opponent with a backfist.



Angular Movement Against a Side Kick

From the ready position (1), Vitali demonstrates a simple and effective method of nullifying a side kick—letting the kick land against his arm (2). However, after a few strong side kicks, this method, as Vitali puts it, "tends to get old quickly" because of the punishment the arm is exposed to. An alternative is to move on an angle 45 degrees to the left of the center line (3) on the mat just as his opponent throws his side kick. Perfect timing is essential—late or premature movement would prove unsafe. By moving at the 45-degree angle, Vitali has actually closed the distance between himself and his opponent (4) and is now in a position to deliver a ridgehand.



Angular Jumping Side Kick Counter to a Reverse Punch

When Vitali's opponent (1) moves from the ready position and throws a reverse punch (2) the conventional parry helps the opponent to set up his next punch. As an alternative to exchanging blows with his attacker (3), Vitali jumps to the left at a 45-degree angle. Again, this is a complex move that requires perfect timing. Now that he is out of range of the reverse punch, Vitali is still within range for his jumping side kick, which he (4) lands to the head in retaliation.

