

GEOFF THOMPSON'S GROUND FIGHTING SERIES

# THE ESCAPES

# GROUND



**GEOFF  
THOMPSON**

**SUMMERSDALE**

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### **Important note**

With ground fighting techniques the author recommends that you practice only under supervision to avoid accidents and always employ the 'tap system' in practice (if you want to submit or a technique is too painful or you wish to stop practice at any time tap the mat, tap yourself or your opponent with your hand or foot; if this is not possible just say to your opponent 'tap'). If an opponent taps out it is imperative that you release your hold immediately or suffer the consequence of what might be serious injury, and remember, what goes around comes around. If you do not release when he taps he may not release the next time you tap.

If you have or believe you may have a medical condition the techniques outlined in this book should not be attempted without first consulting your doctor. Some of the techniques in this book require a high level of fitness and suppleness and should not be attempted by someone lacking such fitness. The author and the publishers cannot accept any responsibility for any proceedings or prosecutions brought or instituted against any person or body as a result of the use or misuse of any techniques described in this book or any loss, injury or damage caused thereby.

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## About the author

Geoff Thompson has written over 20 published books and is known world wide for his autobiography *Watch My back*, about his nine years working as a night club doorman. He holds the rank of 6<sup>th</sup> Dan black belt in Japanese karate, 1<sup>st</sup> Dan in Judo and is also qualified to senior instructor level in various other forms of wrestling and martial arts. He has several scripts for stage, screen and TV in development with Destiny Films.

He has published several articles for GQ magazine, and has also been featured in *FHM*, *Maxim*, *Arena*, *Front* and *Loaded* magazines, and has been featured many times on mainstream TV.

Geoff is currently a contributing editor for *Men's Fitness* magazine.

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# Contents

Introduction	8
Review	12
Chapter One	
From scarf hold	18
Chapter Two	
From the Mount Position	38
Chapter Three	
From the side 4 1/4 hold down	55
Chapter Four	
From the Upper 4 1/4 hold down	66
Chapter Five	
Drilling the escapes	75
Conclusion	85

## Introduction

Welcome to Volume Two in the ground fighting series, *The Escapes*. Invariably when teaching pins and controlling an opponent on the floor people will ask, 'yeh, it's all right knowing how to hold someone down, but what if the opponent gets you in one of these holds, how do you get out of them?' In answer to these people I have written this second volume on how to escape from a bad position.

As with *Pins: The Bedrock*, these moves are useless unless they are drilled to reaction status; they need to be a part of you. Practice at first with a compliant partner to learn technique then cast compliancy away like a pair of redundant crutches and practice against an opponent who is trying, like his life depends upon it, to stop you escaping. If you let your partner escape, or he you, then you are both practising to lose in a real fight. If you end up being pinned on the floor by some maniac road digger with RSJ shoulders and ten pints of lager inside him you'd better be well practised in your escapes or you will be pinned and bludgeoned, no matter how many dans you have in vertical ranges.



Make your practice as close to the real thing as you dare, then when you make the step from the controlled environment to the street you will not suffer disorientation because that step is only a small one. This book on escapes is not comprehensive, I don't believe that any book really can be, but it is thorough and it is empirical, I could fill a thousand pages with bollocks techniques that look great but would not work against an un-compliant opponent, that's not my way, I'd rather fill less pages but give you something that I know works and that has worked for me.

In the other five volumes in this series there will also be escapes that might not be covered in this text: these will be mostly in the guise of finishing techniques such as strikes, bites, chokes, bars etc. To keep the books categorical I have deliberately left out certain techniques, that could quite easily slip into this text, and put them in a more appropriate volume.

As with the first book, pins, our aim here is not to use strength to escape, though sometimes you may have to, rather to use surprise, distraction, sensitivity and good technique. In practising isolated escapes with a partner it will be very hard

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## The Escapes

to escape when he knows exactly what you are trying to escape with because the element of surprise is lost to you. If, however, you practice the escapes during live ground fighting practice, all of the latter elements will be open to you: you could go for a poke and hook (to be detailed) escape from the scarf hold, if/when the opponent tenses and pushes forward to block the escape he leaves himself open to the climb over escape, in fact he is pulling you into it. So it is important in training not to lose heart if the opponent seems too strong and your escape fails, better to practice escaping from a pin without limiting yourself to one particular escape. What I have also found with many of the techniques that I teach, and people that I have taught, is that if they do not get the technique on the first or second go they abandon it saying that 'it don't work', sometimes it has taken me months and months of repeating and practising to get the feel for a technique, but when I have got it, I've got it for life. It may be that a technique does not suit you or feel right for you and, if that is the case, then there is little point in continuing its practice, but hey, you can't decide that after one session. I've lost count of the number of people that I have shown a technique and who have failed at the first attempt then said,

‘oh I’m just not supple enough for that technique’ or ‘it doesn’t suit my personality/build/style etc.’

When I first started practising triangular leg choke (to be detailed in *Chokes & Strangles*) I just could not make it work, my legs were too stiff and my calfs kept cramping with the effort of putting or holding the technique on. I felt like abandoning the technique, but rather than lose or abandon what turned out to be one of my strongest finishing techniques I persevered, I got my legs more supple by stretching, I looked into the histrionics of the techniques to find out if I was doing something wrong and, eventually, I was grappling one day and the technique just fell in and my opponent had to tap out very quickly. In fact I have knocked out two or three people with this technique, by mistake, just in demonstration. So persevere. Anyway, I’m going on a bit here so let’s get on to the techniques.

# Review

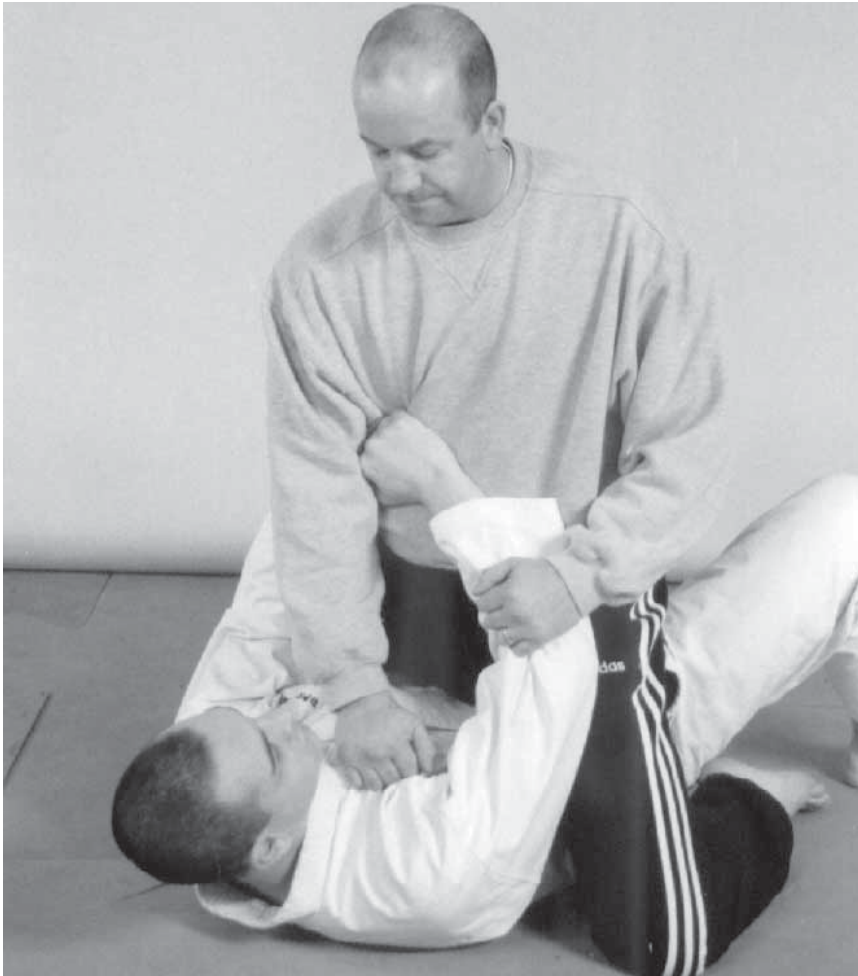
For those that have read the first volume of this series I apologise for repeating material that you have already read. I would like, before I start talking about escapes from the various positions, to review quickly the basic pins, because if you do not know them a lot of the speak throughout the text may seem like gobble-de-gook.

I have no intention of actually going into the histrionics of the holds, how to defend them and how to attack from them and the real intricacies, etc. That, as I said, is a volume on its own. I will repeat, though, that the pins are the bedrock of ground fighting and to go on to finishing techniques of a complex nature before learning the imperative basics is a quick way to failing at everything that you attempt.

Master the standing and walking before you try the running and sprinting. The control of the opponent on the floor, via the pinning techniques, is so very, very, VERY important that to miss is like diving in the water before you have learned to swim.

All I will list in this chapter is the holds themselves with one accompanying illustration so that, if you haven't read the other books and have no knowledge of the 'ground', you'll at least understand the 'speak'.

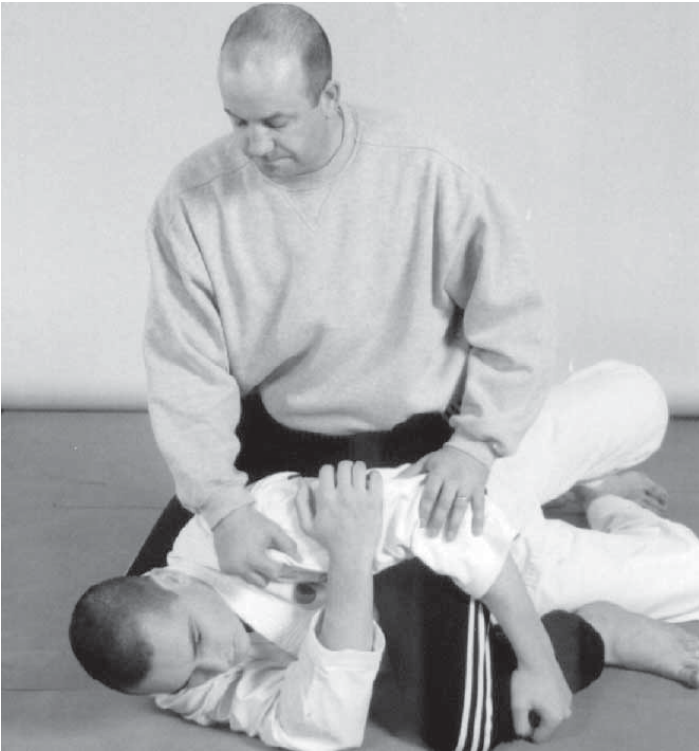
### **The Mount Position: Side Mount, Reverse Mount**



G E O F F   T H O M P S O N ' S   G R O U N D   F I G H T I N G   S E R I E S

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## The Escapes

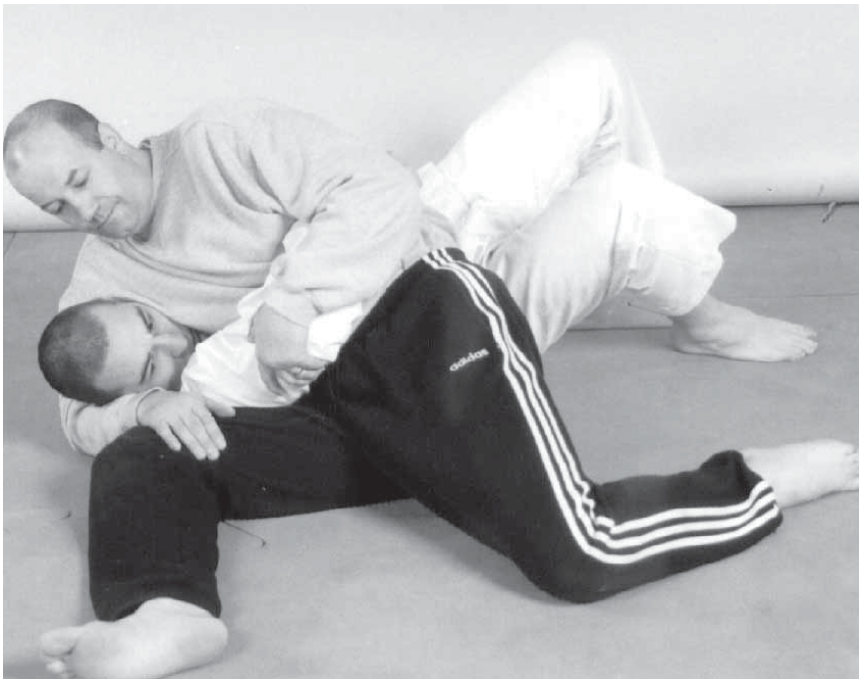


G E O F F   T H O M P S O N ' S   G R O U N D   F I G H T I N G   S E R I E S

## The Side Four Quarter



## The Scarf Hold



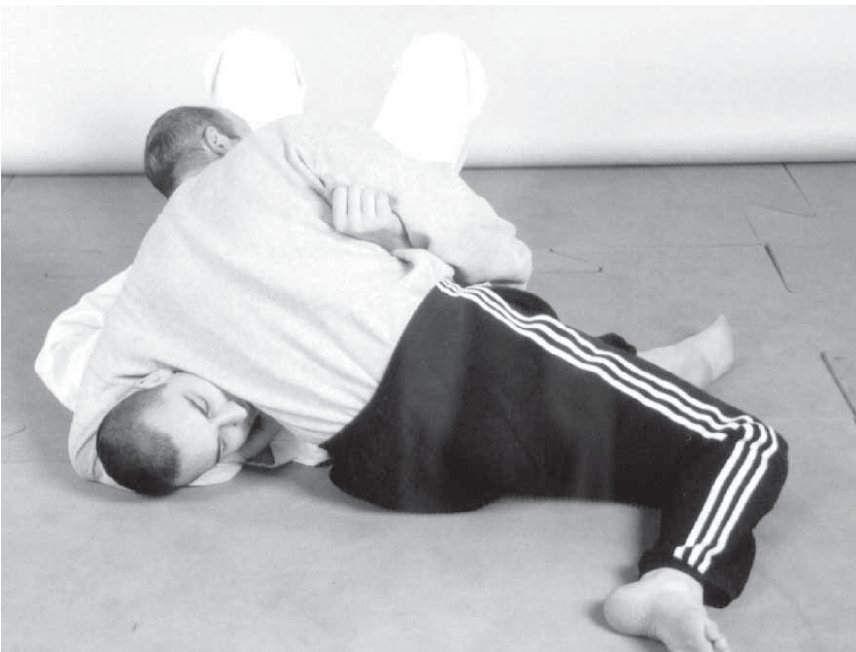
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## The Escapes

### The Jack-Knife



### Reverse Scarf Hold



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## Upper 4/14 Pin



# Chapter One

## *Escapes from the scarf hold*

Although someone in the street might not grab and pin you in a text book hold down they will innately grab you in something that closely resembles them. If someone holds you down in a head lock it will very closely resemble a scarf hold and if some one holds you down in a bastardised version of one or two of the conventional pins an abridged version of the appropriate escapes will work just as well.

To start with, and this concerns all of the escapes and is a very important thing to remember, the very best time to escape is the very second that you are pinned, before the opponent has a chance actually to base the pin. That's when he is the most vulnerable, and, because he will probably be falling into the pin, it is very easy to use the momentum of the fall to roll/bridge/turn and escape.

The next best time to escape is when the opponent initiates a finishing move, that is, again, when he's not guarding the

pin and so is a good time to escape: when his mind is on a finishing move it will not be on defending his pin. With the experienced ground fighter, who are few and far between and are unlikely to be encountered on the street, that finish may be a technical move like a bar or a turn and strangle (to be detailed in later volumes), with the street fighter that finish is more likely to be a striking finish like a punch/bite/head butt etc.

Between the pin and the finish, if you have not yet found an escape, it is important not to panic because if you do you'll likely tire your self out and lose as a consequence. In fact if you are experienced on the ground (hopefully you will be after reading this six volume series) this is an ideal time to take a rest and let the opponent tire himself out.

Easy to say, I hear you cry, well, let me tell you, with experience you will learn to find resting places on the ground and out wait a hasty, inexperienced opponent. Also, this coolness on the ground will often un-nerve an inexperienced ground fighter, but it only comes with much flight time.

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## The Escapes

It is also important to realise that this is not a 3 second affair and the ego has to be cast to one side. It may take many minutes, even with an inexperienced, but strong, opponent, to beat him, but when you do it will be a conclusive finish leaving, usually, the opponent unconscious. What tends to happen on the floor is that people rush to finish an opponent because they don't, or their egos don't, want to be seen to be struggling with some guy that has never trained a day in his life.

Often the contemporary martial artist has been indoctrinated into believing that, if a fight takes a while to conclude against an untrained opponent, they have lost face and people will say, 'I thought he was supposed to be good, it took him ages to beat that guy and he hasn't done a day's training, other than in the pub, in his whole life'.

To be honest, if given the choice, I'd rather fight a trained fighter in the street every day of the week than an untrained one, and not because trained fighters are not good, there are some absolute monsters around that's for sure, rather because I know what a trained fighter is thinking and therefore

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## Escapes from the scarf hold

how he is likely to react to certain stimuli because I am a trained fighter myself. He is the devil you know, whereas the untrained fighter is the devil that you don't know, he is so unpredictable, even he doesn't know what he is going to do so how on earth are we going to be able to predict it?

So don't be in too much of a hurry, it may take time, but, as long as you win that is all that matters; there is no room for egos in the world of real. If you are unsure of the technicalities of the pins that we are covering please refer to Volume One in the series, The Pins.

### **Note:**

Reverse the instructions in the following techniques to practice from the opposite side.

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## The Escapes

### Escapes from scarf hold

1) Immediate turn out and Mount. As already stated the best time to escape is the instant that the hold is going on, as the opponent falls into the scarf hold and tries to place his right arm around your head push it, at the elbow, in front of your face, slip from underneath him and mount him from the back (as per illustration).



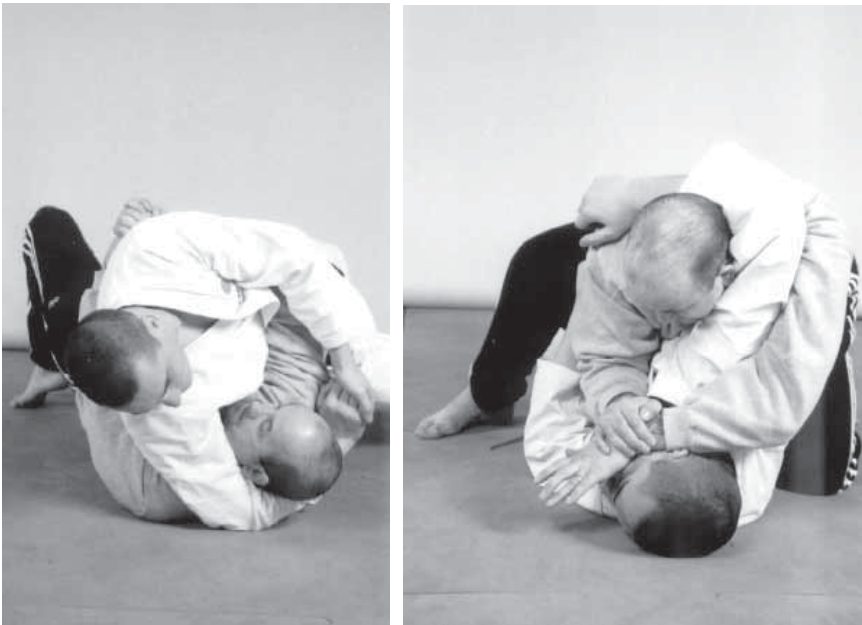
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## Escapes from the scarf hold



### 2) Immediate bridge and roll

Using the downward momentum of the opponent as he falls into the scarf hold simply place your arms around his torso and roll him over your chest before he has a chance to base the pin. From here go into a side mount from where you can punch him in the head or face, or poke him in the eye/neck to release the arm from around your head. The opponent is now perfectly positioned for several arm bar techniques, a turn and choke, or a punch out.





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