

# TECHNICAL NOTE

Self-defense is not an emotional reaction. It is a conditioned and measured response to a threat.

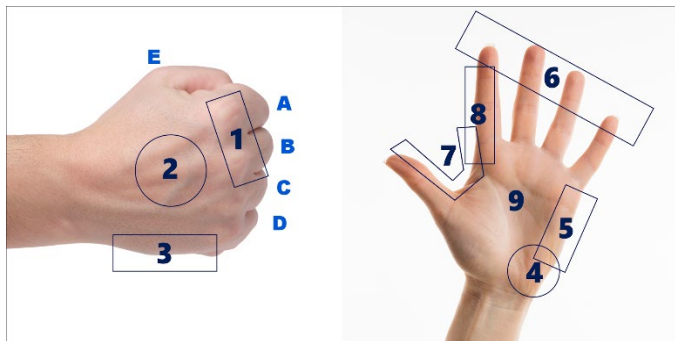
## 9 Striking Surfaces of the Hand (Ossa Metacarpalia)

by Don Adams

### That Dominant Hand

Some of us are blessed with the ability to use either hand equally well. We call that ambidexterity. For most of us, however, we have one hand that is more versatile and refined than the other. Eighty-five to ninety percent of us are right-handed while the rest rely on their left hand. Regardless, the hand is the lead appendage in self-defense.

As we examine the hand, we count 9 striking edges: 4 primary and 5 secondary. Generally, hard surfaces of the hand are used to strike soft surfaces and vice versa.



### The 9 Surfaces

1. **Fist Knuckles (A-E)** – Knuckles A & B are primary striking surfaces and are probably the most used on the hand. Knuckles A & B, when used in alignment with the arm, is the point where the transfer of force begins as it travels from the hand to the wrist, along the Radius, through the elbow, and up the Humerus to the shoulder. The combination of the alignment helps to dissipate the force and amplify the impact. However, a strike using knuckles C&D will redirect the hand off-center, rendering the strike ineffective and could cause significant injury to the hand.

2. **Back of the Fist (Dorsal side)** – This area of the hand is primarily used in the Back Hand Strike. It is a secondary opportunity strike.
3. **Bottom of the Fist (Ulnar side)** – This side of the hand is used as a primary strike overhead from the top but also effective from the side.
4. **Hypothenar Eminence** – The fleshy mound located on the palmar side at the bottom of the hand is used as the impact point of the Palm Thrust strike. It is used in a secondary strike.
5. **The Back Edge of the Hand (Ulnar side)** – Is used as a secondary strike edge initiated from the opposite side of the body.
6. **Digit Tips** – Used to jab extremely soft areas of the body such as the eyes. A strike applied against hard or moderately hard surfaces could result in significant injury to the hand.
7. **The Thumb-Finger Valley (the Purlicue)** – This area of the hand has limited versatility as it is primarily used as a strike against very soft areas that might align with the shape of the valley such as the throat.
8. **The Leading Edge of Fore-Finger (Radial side)** – This area has limited application but is available for context driven strikes.
9. **Open Palm (Palmer side)** – This is useful in the execution of a face slap which can be a tremendous distractor.