

Ancient Arts: Kenpo Masters

A card game by Cullam Bruce-Lockhart

Ancient Arts is a game that simulates a two person fight in a ring. **Kenpo Masters** is the first set of cards for the game, representing the fighting style of Jean-Guy Angell Kenpo. Each player takes a deck of cards, and places their fighter card in the ring. The cards represent various martial arts techniques and movements, allowing the fighters to move around the ring, and score points on each other. Whether a move is worth any points, and how many it is worth depends on the cards played, the fighters' relative positions, and how they've moved.

On each player's turn, they play a card, move their fighter in a way that card allows, possibly play additional cards as a combo, then resolve the cards that their opponent played on the previous turn, scoring whatever points they give. The opponent then plays their card(s) and moves their fighter, allowing the first player's cards to resolve and score points. Players may "rest" by skipping their turn to draw new cards, and the first player to 20 points wins the game.

Game Components: two decks of 26 action/effect cards, two fighter cards, rule sheet.

Cards

Each player has a deck of 26 cards. The two decks have the same card backs, but one deck displays the Kenpo Masters logo in yellow, and the other displays it in red, and each have their own set of photos. Separate these two decks from each other before beginning the game. Each player starts by shuffling their deck, and drawing a hand of 8 cards. Randomly choose a starting player.

Cards come in two basic varieties: Action cards, and Effect cards. Action cards affect a fighter's movement, and allow them to deal or prevent damage. They have yellow arrows to describe the movement they allow, and red arrows to describe the attacks and defenses they perform. Effect cards have various abilities to affect the other cards being used, or the fighters they are used on. They do not affect the movement of the fighter cards. These will be explained in greater detail in the sections titled Qualifiers, and Combos.

Ring

The Ring is the space that the fighters are allowed to move in. A fighter can never step outside the Ring. The size of the Ring is a three by three card grid, so there are only nine places a fighter can be. The Fighters start on opposite ends, in the middle. Place the fighter cards here, each facing inward. This means that from the starting placement, both fighters can move left or right, either fighter can move forward, and neither fighter can move back. Fighters may never occupy the same space. Before beginning the game, mark the size of the ring, using four coins, a sheet of paper, or any other means you have lying around.

Movement

Movement is a key aspect of Ancient Arts. On each player's turn, they are allowed to move their fighter once. Action cards have a symbol in the middle that shows how a player may move when using that card. Forward/back/left/right/none are the only options - there is no diagonal motion. Choosing not to move is also considered a movement, so it is possible for a card to not allow you to stand still while playing it (the Blitz card is an example of this).

Movement directions can have bonuses/penalties associated with them. Some cards will have +/- numbers next to some movement arrows, or the central circle (which represents not moving). If the player chooses to move in that way while playing the card, that bonus/penalty is applied to any damage their card would deal, and therefore the number of points they will receive. Players may not move without playing a card with that movement shown on it.

Effect cards do not have the movement symbols, and do not affect a player's movement. They do not allow the player to move, without the use of Action cards, nor do they prevent the player from moving. The player makes their movement for the turn the first time they play an action card (how players are allowed to play multiple cards in a single turn is explained in the section titled Combos).

Resolution

When you move and play attack cards, they do not resolve on your turn. They resolve on your opponent's turn, after they have moved and played their cards. This allows them to move in a way to protect themselves, or use defense cards to lessen the effect of the cards you played. The cards they played in response to yours are still on the table, and will not resolve until you have made your movement and action(s). When a card is resolved, remove it from the play area.

Points

The points that a card is worth depends on where the opponent's fighter is in relation to yours. Attack cards have arrows pointing in various directions, indicating how many points they will score. If two fighters are not adjacent, no damage will be done. Defence cards have the same style of arrows, but with negative numbers. They prevent an amount of damage from a single attack (so if there are two attacks waiting to resolve, you must choose which one you are blocking). They are also directional, so the amount of damage prevented will depend on where the opponent is attacking from. Defense cards apply to the attacks that your opponent already has out, waiting to resolve, not the attacks they will play in future. Every time you do damage to an opponent, you receive that many points.

Resting

When a player begins their turn, they may choose to rest instead of playing a card. When they do this, they get to draw 2 cards from their deck, and may not move. Whatever cards their opponent has in play will then resolve as normal. A player is not allowed to rest for two turns in a row, and they are not allowed to rest on the first turn of the game, or the first turn after a Break (explained below). If a player has no cards in their hand when they start their turn, they are forced to rest. It is crucial to time your rests so that you aren't stuck resting while a powerful shot is coming at you. If there are no remaining cards in your deck, shuffle your discards and use them to replace your deck.

Breaks

If at any point, both players end up on the same horizontal line (side by side, or with a space between), a "Break" is called. No additional cards may be played, all attacks are resolved immediately, points are awarded, and both fighters go back to their start position. Each player draws one card. Players are not allowed to rest on the first move after calling a break. Whichever player would have had the next turn still goes next.

Movement technically happens at the same time as your first attack being played, so it is not possible to combo additional action cards when moving to a position that would cause a

Break. Some cards (like the Side Kick) can cause a Break without players being side by side. This still means that no additional cards may be played in the combination, damage resolves immediately, players each draw a card, and go back to their starting location. (*Clarification on the Side Kick card - to cause a break after an opponent moved forward, it must be the FIRST, and therefore only, card played. If you add it on later in a combo, it does NOT cause a break!*)

As all damage is resolved immediately when a break is called, it is possible for both players to reach 20 points at the same time. In this case, the match is a draw. The total number of points is taken into account, so a score of 21 to 20 will be a victory for the player with 21 points.

Qualifiers

There are descriptive terms, known as qualifiers on the cards, right below the card title. These define what kind of techniques are described by the card. These are generally used for card interactions like combos (explained in the next section), or having a card prevent or do extra damage with certain kinds of attacks. Effect cards only ever have the qualifier "Effect", and do not have any damage or movement arrows (because they don't deal damage, or affect movement). Many Action cards have multiple qualifiers. The currently included qualifiers of action cards are "Hard", "Fast", "Spinning", "Rushing", "High", "Block", "Punch", "Kick", and "Movement". Action cards with the qualifier "Movement", only show movement arrows, not attack/defense arrows (currently Fast Footwork is the only card like this).

Combos

By default, you may only play one card per turn. However, many cards have additional text on them, which allows them to be used on top of other cards, or to use certain types of cards on top of them, in a more effective combination. Two or more cards played in succession form a combo. When putting together combos, each card is comboed on the previous card, not on the first card. For example, if playing a three card combo, the second card would have to be allowed to be played on the first card, and the third card would have to be allowed to be played on top of the second, regardless of what the first card permits. All combo options are described in the text of cards, using the qualifiers to describe the types of cards that may be used in a combo.

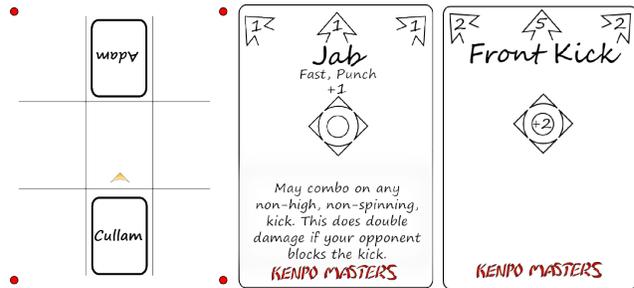
When using combos, there is still only one movement allowed! The movement is made when the player plays their first Action card (as Effect cards don't affect movement). All cards played in a combo must be allowed by this movement, and they all receive their movement/bonus penalties based on it. If you choose not to move on the first Action card, that still counts as your movement, so you cannot move on a later card in the combination. Thus all attacks and defenses will be resolved from the one location of your fighter. The only exception to this is the movement card, Fast Footwork. This card allows the player to move with it, then combo another card, to move again. Since it specifies that it must be the first card in a combo, all attacks in that combo will still have to happen from the last place your fighter ended up.

Turn sequence

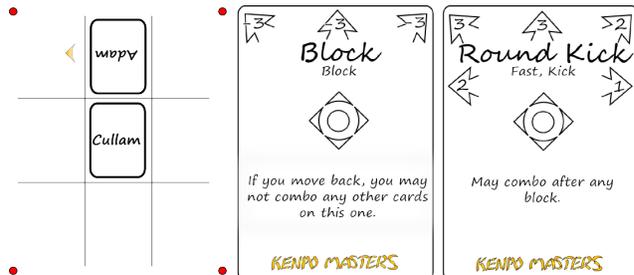
- Declare that you're resting, or playing.
- If resting, draw two cards, and skip to the resolution without moving or playing any cards.
- Play your card, or combo.
- Move when you first play an Action card. (all played cards must allow this movement)
- Resolve your opponent's card(s) from last turn.

Play Example

Cullam is randomly selected to take the first turn. He plays the card Front Kick, and steps forward. He also has a Jab in his hand, which says it may be comboed onto any non-high, non-spinning kick. He decides to play the Jab, as a combo onto the Front Kick. Only one movement is allowed, so both actions are affected by the same movement. The Front Kick does not receive its +2 bonus, because Cullam moved. The Jab does receive its +1 bonus. The turn passes to Adam.



The two cards Cullam has played would get him 7 points, if Adam were to stand still, without blocking. He has a Block card, so he chooses to play that. However, the Jab card says that it does double damage when comboed on a kick that gets blocked. So blocking the kick would make the kick only get 2 points, but the Jab would get 4! Instead, Adam chooses to step to his right while blocking. On this angle, the Front Kick is only worth 2 points, so Adam blocks the Jab. Since the kick didn't get blocked, the Jab doesn't do double damage, and is only worth 2 points. The block reduces that to 0. Cullam scores 2 points for the front Kick. Adam also has a Round Kick in his hand, which may be comboed on any Block. He chooses to play it as a combo, on top of his Block. He also has a Jab, which can be comboed on top of his Round Kick, but he chooses to save it for later. It would only be worth 1 extra point in this situation, and he doesn't want to run low on cards too quickly. He passes the turn to Cullam.



Adam's Block has already resolved, but his Round Kick is still on the table. In their current position, it would score 3 points. If Cullam moves to his right, the kick will miss entirely. If he moves to his left, the kick will still be worth 3 points (assuming he doesn't block). Cullam chooses to play the Effect card, Hand Fake. This doesn't cause him to move, yet, but he may combo any other card on top of it. He wants to move forward with a hard shot, directly to the side, causing a Break, and resolving all the damage immediately. A kick would be best, as Hand Fake has a better bonus for kicks, but he doesn't have one that will score him any points on that angle. So he plays Spinning Backfist, and steps forward.



Both fighters are now on the same horizontal line, so a Break is called, and all cards are resolved immediately. Adam receives two points for his Round Kick, and Cullam receives 4 points for his Spinning Backfist, because of the bonus 2 form the Hand Fake. Both fighters go back to their start position, and each draw a card. Adam has the next turn. Because of the Break, he is not allowed to choose to rest, and must play an Action Card.

FAQ

This card says "Combo any card on this", and that one says "May not combo this card on anything". How do they work together?

If a card says that it can never be comboed on top of another, then that takes priority.

How do you resolve attacks that happen from two different angles?

That should never legally come up, as you are only allowed to make one movement for your whole turn. Deciding not to move is still a movement, so all attack cards in a combo will happen from the same place. In the special case of Fast Footwork, which allows you to move again after playing it, you aren't allowed to combo it on anything else (ever), which means it HAS to be the first card you play in your turn. Therefore, all your attacks will still happen from the same place: the last place you ended up.

If my opponent throws some massive combo at me, what happens if I just step back?

Assuming that your back isn't against the wall (seeing as the ring is only 3 by 3, at least one of you always has your back against the wall), and you have an action card that allows you to step back (most do), then you can step back, and avoid all the damage. That's why it's important to keep your opponent's options in mind when you make your moves.

I have to waste an Action card to back up? Can't I just move?

You can't move without using an Action card. However, since your attacks don't resolve until your opponent's turn, backing up with one means that if they want to step forward and press their attack, they have to walk into it. Since you already played it, it would resolve on their turn, before any of their moves got to resolve.

If you step next to your opponent with a Back Round Kick, you can combo a Jab and a Reverse Punch on it, right?

No. Stepping next to your opponent would cause a break. Movement technically happens at the same time as when you play your first attack/defense card (Effect cards don't affect movement), so you are able to play one card that causes a break, but then nothing else can go on it. So, assuming that they're on your right side, you would immediately deal 2 damage to them, and they wouldn't have any chance to react. But you also wouldn't have any chance to combo something else on it. Fair is fair.

Does that mean I can't do a Hand Fake, then step forward with a Round Kick into an opponent's side?

Actually, you can. Movement officially happens while playing your first attack/defense card, as Effect cards don't affect/involve movement at all. So you could play the Hand Fake, and you still wouldn't have officially made your movement. You then step forward with the Round Kick, and get to do your bonus 3 damage from the fake.

How is a draw possible?

Let's look at the Back Round Kick again. It does 2 damage to the right side. (the actual side, not the angle). Let's say that you were at 18 points, and your opponent was at 19 points, and you played your Back Round Kick while they were to your front-right. If they stepped forward with a reverse punch, a break would be called, and both cards would resolve immediately. The Reverse Punch would do 1 damage to you, giving them 1 point, and the Back Round Kick would do 2 damage to them, giving you 2 points. The game ends in a draw, with both of your scores at 20. If you had both been at 19 points, then you would win, as you would now have 21 points to their 20.

Is Fast Footwork an Effect card, or an Action card?

It is an Action card, that doesn't deal any damage. The only qualifier on it is "Moving".

How does Hard Block work?

As the only movement icon is the central dot, you can't play it while moving (which means you can't use it to block a Blitz, as that card doesn't allow you to defend without moving). Aside from reducing a lot of damage from your opponent's attack, it deals one damage to them, at the same time they deal or would deal damage to you (immediately). You can combo additional cards that work on a block, but you still can't move (you've already made your "move", by not moving). The cards you comboed on would resolve at the normal time (on your opponent's turn, after they play their cards).

Is there a limit on how large a combo can get?

The limits are the cards you have in your hand, and the legal ways you can combine cards. It is possible to dump almost your entire hand into one combo. It often isn't very wise...

How does Burst of Speed work?

It's basically a way of combining any random two cards together, even if it normally wouldn't be possible (this still doesn't override any text that says "may never combo").

Does Change Sides apply to everything on the card?

Yes. It mirror images all the movement, damage, and bonus/penalties on the card. As well as any future cards added to a this combo (it doesn't affect the cards you've already played).

What happens if I have no cards in my hand, but I'm not allowed to rest?

In that case, you get to rest. Have to, in fact!

Do I get points for a Hand Fake?

No, it makes your next attack worth bonus points.

(Email additional questions to cullam@paperplasticwood.com to clarify rules. An updated FAQ, and more examples are posted at www.AncientArtsCards.com)

Credits

Game design: Cullam Bruce-Lockhart.
Published by: Paper and Plastic and Wood.
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Special Thanks to Sensei Dave Jackman, and Sensei Robbie Wiseman, and the team at Rock Athletics!

About the ancient art of Kenpo

I started studying Kenpo in 1992, when I was 9 years old, still hopped up on the Ninja Turtles craze. They offered a class at my school, and most of us wanted to learn to be a ninja. I fell in love with it, and I alone out of my school stuck with it after the brief program ended. I got my black belt when I was 15, which remains one of the proudest achievements of my life. In 2013, while adding the final touches to this game, I was promoted to the rank of 5th Degree Black Belt, by Chief Jean-Guy Angell. It has been a pleasure integrating my knowledge and understanding of this art into a game.

This game really does have a connection with its theme: the values on all the cards were largely determined by me going over the moves, to determine how they worked in this context; and the card artwork is literally just a colleague and I wailing on each other. To give a better background, I have included this section about Kenpo itself, written by my instructor, Sensei Dave Jackman:

Kenpo, by most popular accounts, traces its origins back to the Shaolin Temple in China, approximately 1,000 years ago. As Legend has it, an Indian Monk, Bodhidharma, the original Buddha, traveled from India to China to teach his philosophy. When he arrived at the temple, he found the monks to be in poor shape in regards to being able to forget their physical limitations in order to meditate on the higher goals of spiritual enlightenment. Bodhidharma began training the monks in physical fitness, and also in methods of self defense, as the temple and the monks were the objects of attacks from marauding bands of outlaws.

This program evolved into the Martial Art of "Shaolin Ch'uan Fa". Ch'uan Fa means "law of the fist". Although many countries had their own fighting techniques, Bodhidharma and the Shaolin temple are credited with being the origins of the "art" form of fighting, where a complete method of training the body, emotion, mind, and spirit were incorporated into one system for the overall development and spiritual growth of the individual.

Approximately 500 years ago a Chinese monk from the Shaolin temple traveled to Japan to teach the Mitose family. This family was already adept in fighting methods, and combined the Shaolin philosophy with their own to form Ko Sho Ryu Kenpo – "The old pine tree way of Kenpo". At this point it should be mentioned that "Ch'uan Fa" in Japanese is pronounced as "Kenpo".

Dr. James Mitose introduced Kenpo to Hawaii in the 1920s. This particular method of Kenpo spread to the USA and eventually Canada. As with most martial arts, there are many twists and turns in the road that leads us to where we are today.

Some of the attributes of Kenpo involve economy of motion, 360 degree awareness, knowledge to defend against other martial arts, and using your skills of compassion to avoid hitting if possible. Kenpo utilizes punching, striking, kicking, blocking/locking and sweeps/takedowns as its methods of self-defense. Kenpo combines these principles into a "hard" and "soft" style. Powerful punches and kicks compose the "hard" aspect while circular and evasive defensive movements comprise the "soft" element.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the term "law" in "law of the fist" means that there are both physical and spiritual laws to be followed in the learning of Kenpo. Physical laws are needed for the training of the body to be effective in self defense and spiritual laws are to be followed for the benefit of the student and all those with whom he/she has contact. The motto of Kenpo is "man liberates himself by his will".

- Sensei Dave Jackman, 8th degree Black Belt, Jean-Guy Angell Kenpo

