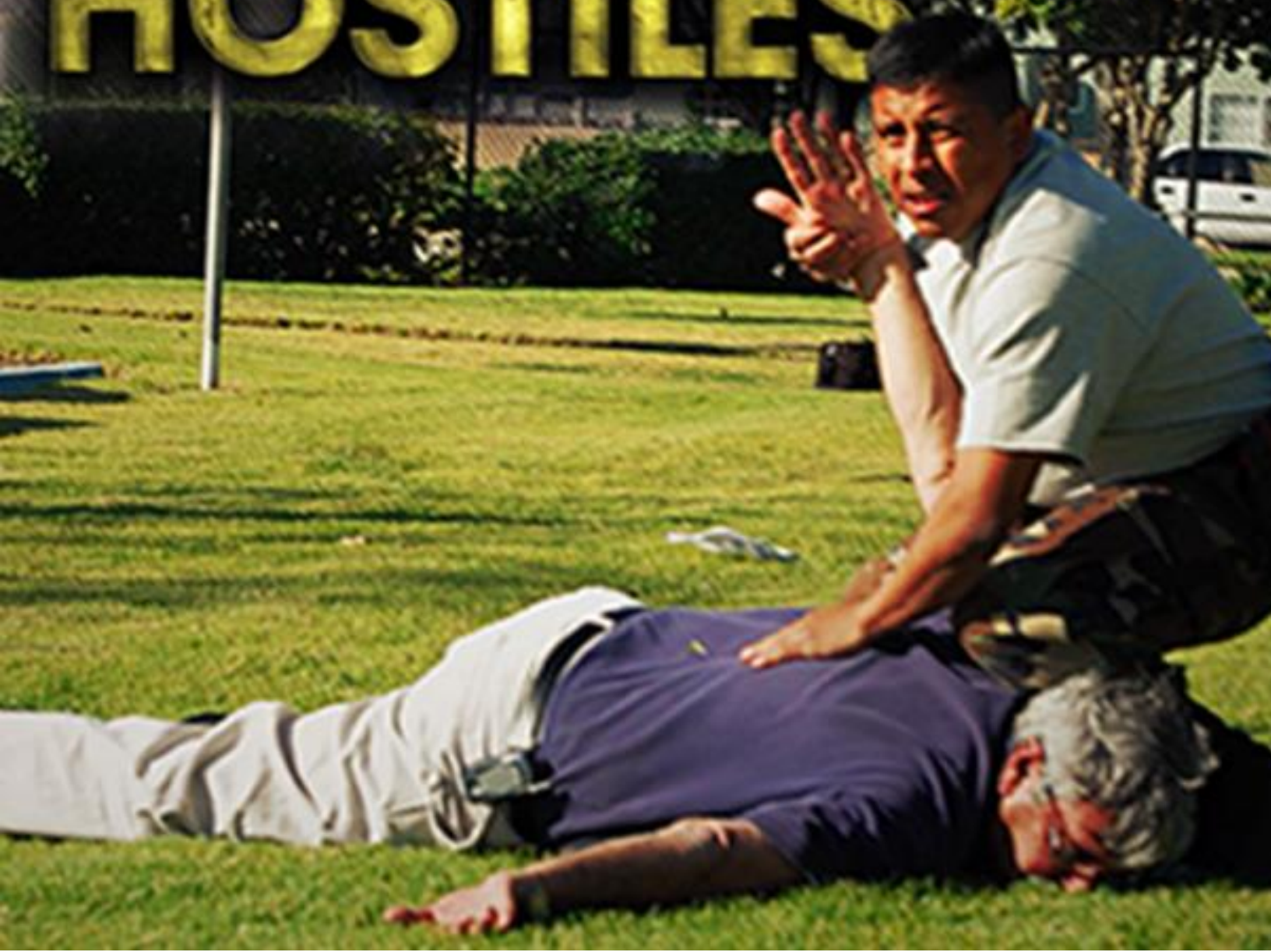


# THE HAND-TO-HAND "CHEAT" GUIDE FOR SUBDUING DANGEROUS HOSTILES



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**If you've ever seen a martial arts flick, you've probably seen men reduced to grimacing wrecks crumpled to their knees when some grey-bearded master simply - and calmly- strikes some vulnerable area on the younger opponent's body. It's just a tap but the old man is so skilled and his strike so precise that the opponent goes down instantly. In some cases the strike can even be lethal.**

It seems too easy, too good to be true, and completely unbelievable that any simple tap anywhere on the body can lead to intense, crippling pain or death. Generally speaking, you're right to question the verity of such actions but to be completely fair, there are a few places on the human body where, should they be struck with enough force in just the right way, death can result. The part about some points causing crippling pain, well... that's true.

It should be understood that those who study and practice any of the various pressure point arts will also most likely tell you none of the knowledge should be used to kill only incapacitate, and they might also feel the need to instruct you on meridian lines, chi, energy flow and similar.

While you certainly may wish to pursue this knowledge it is beyond the scope of this article for obvious reasons. It also not recommended that you attempt to learn these skills through video tapes, DVDs, YouTube videos, or even a book. Perhaps these vehicles serve as an introduction, a whetting of appetite if you will, but true instruction should be sought from a real life instructor.

The techniques behind using pressure points are a discipline, they need to be studied. Conversely, some of these strikes might actually be useful 'out of the box', but should still be very carefully practiced. In a panic inducing actual combat or defense situation, without repetition to drive actions and steps into the head for instant execution, all understanding can fly out the window when it's called into service.

### **Parts of the Body**

For purposes of explaining pressure points, the body is divided into three sections: the easy-to-recall regions named high, medium and low. The **high section** is rather self-explanatory except maybe for where it truncates.

This area covers the head and neck only and harbors some of the more sensitive and dangerous points on the human body to strike. There are the obvious zones: ears, eyes, and nose. The temples are also in this region, along with the forehead, the back of the head, and top of the head.

The **middle section** includes the space from the shoulders to just above the hip. The majority of points here are not lethal but can cause crippling injury, possibly for life. The strikes here involve the spine, collarbone, armpit, and solar plexus. Finally the **low**

**section** pertains to the entire area from groin to feet. The strikes in the low section are generally quite painful and even debilitating like hits to the groin, or the large nerve running up the inner thigh, or the knee.

For many of these pressure points and sensitive areas, it will take a good amount of pressure for them to be effective; elderly, young, and some women may not be able to apply the force necessary for defense.

On the other hand the zones in the high section are usually quite vulnerable and the strikes take less physical strength to accomplish for effect. The biggest downside to any of these attacks is that in order to execute them you'll have to be within reach, meaning your attacker is already in close quarters. Your best possible option is to keep them out of grabbing or kicking distance.

Eighty percent of fights or attacks end up on the ground at some point; this is a very bad place to be especially if you don't know how to get out of a hold and your attacker is stronger or heavier than you are. Again, the best answer is not to let it get that far, but easier said than done. Some of the strikes highlighted in this article will help you in such a situation. (It is highly recommended that each female, especially, learn some form of self-defense or at the very least enrolls in a six-week program. Much of self-defense is common sense, something that can be severely lacking in anyone caught in a high-adrenalin or panic situation.)

### **The High Section**

Most of your possible 'kill shots' will be found in the high section; please realize that a 'kill shot' here is not necessarily instantaneous. Some injuries, if applied with enough force, can lead to death.

Despite what movies like us to believe, the human neck is not so easy to snap as a dry twig and the body is actually quite resilient. A lot of power and leverage goes into being able to break a bone or it seems whenever we turned to look out a window too fast we'd be at risk of severing our own spinal chords.

Thankfully this is not the case, but it also means the average person is simply not prepared for the actual amount of strength required to damage another. That's not a bad thing, but it can be surprising in a real fight for life. "Another" here indicates an adult male, possibly a female, in good physical condition; it takes less ability to harm an elderly human and considerably less than that to seriously injure a child. *Be careful.* What you are about to read is not for fun and games, it is to possibly save your life or the life of a loved one.

- **The Eyes.** Though not a pressure point exactly, this is an excellent place to start. When in doubt, or if your opponent is larger and stronger than you, this is a great place to gain leverage. A swift poke to the eyes, especially when done in surprise, almost always gains a beneficial effect: eyes will automatically close when movement is gauged, they will water when struck and if nothing else this reaction

will give you a few seconds to either get away or preferably get the attacker down. Use two fingers for this strike- the first and second. By using them together they act as a splint, each stabilizing the other and adding strength to the attack. Don't use the Three Stooges split-finger poke. An elbow strike to the back might put him to his knees and give you time to run. Now, if you're already on the ground and he is above you and one of your hands is free, then take your thumb and press it with all your might into the soft gelatin of his eyeball. That doesn't sound appetizing and it probably won't feel so great either, but when he has a hand around your throat and is choking you, it's a desirable option. Blind him and get away. Very few humans can continue an attack while their eye is being gouged out. If your fingers or thumb penetrate too far behind the thin orbital bone, you may cause death by damaging the brain.

- **The Ears.** Of themselves, ears aren't terribly sensitive but they aren't the most firmly attached as you might suspect either. You can actually rip an ear off a person with a good enough yank or hurt them in the attempt. It's an option to remember. Your best bet will be to try and damage the inner ear, the eardrum, or rupture it. Just one cupped hand to a single ear may damage the internal structure enough to cause loss of balance or vertigo, but two hands cupped and striking at the same time will render the greatest effect and probably burst the eardrum. This causes agony and impaired balance, giving you time to flee or further incapacitate the attacker. It doesn't take much to accomplish this strike and it's possible to concuss the brain in this manner.
- **The Temples.** This one gets used a bit in Hollywood and it's actually correct; the temples are one of the places where your skull bone is thinnest and weakest. A large nerve and an artery lie just under the skin which is why rubbing your temples can be effective in alleviating pain and stress. It takes some power, but a solid strike here -a genuine pressure point thanks to that nerve- can cause a concussion and unconsciousness. If you manage to sever the artery there, resulting hemorrhaging could eventually lead to coma and even death. If the strike is truly powerful enough, it can kill. Use a single knuckle strike.
- **The Nose.** The nose is often overlooked as the great strike zone it is when you need an advantage. Much like the eyes, being struck on the bridge of the nose, especially at the base of it between your eyes, will cause instant pain and weeping. The eyes automatically shut, squeezed together, giving you valuable seconds to get away. The nose bone/cartilage is thin and easily shattered. It doesn't take much force at all to cause tearing eyes and nasal bleeding. It's rumored that a strike to the nose can cause death; this can hold true if the strike is a powerful enough motion to cause facial bone fractures or shock trauma to the brain. This is not a guaranteed kill shot and is not caused by 'nose bone shards' as your nose is comprised of cartilage. Still, it will hurt like blazes and instantly starts swelling if not gushing blood. Nose hits are very effective because the nose has so many

nerves in it. The copious amounts of almost instant blood can often make an attacker pause and think again. This is the desired effect of a **headbutt**. Many people think a headbutt is forehead to forehead but try that and you'll knock yourself out. A headbutt (or reverse headbutt if your attacker is behind you, then you use the back of your own skull) is the idea of using the strong bone of your forehead to smash the weaker cartilage of an opponent's nose bridge. It will probably still cause you discomfort even executed correctly, but if both your arms are pinned and you can reach his head with yours, it's worth a shot. Your opponent will immediately react and you will wisely get away.

- **The Jaw or Chin.** These are two separate strike zones but they are so close that they'll be addressed together. Perhaps you've heard of a 'glass jaw' before; this is what's called a fighter's inability to handle a strike to the chin mainly but also the jaw, when he drops to the floor with one blow. Generally, this immediate unconsciousness is due to the many unpleasant things happening to the body in the space of a heartbeat. It's from the force of the blow striking the brain against the skull and bruising it, or the snap of the neck back (as in an uppercut) which pinches the nerves in the spinal chord as in whiplash. The jaw bone can act as a transmitter, transferring the force of the blow to the back of the brain where respiratory and cardiac functions are controlled. Paralysis, unconsciousness and concussion can be the end result. This one won't work on everybody but some are very susceptible. A very strong blow to the jaw (possibly with a knee or elbow) may dislocate or break it and if a facial nerve is damaged, there may be permanent paralysis.
- **The Throat.** This can be a kill shot if enough power strikes the front of the throat and crushes the windpipe. A crushed windpipe is also often the result of vigorous strangling too, and usually the cause of death not suffocation. In movies we witness someone who is being strangled stops moving quickly. They pass out from lack of air and if the attacker stopped there, consciousness would eventually be regained; but break the windpipe and breath can't be drawn again. The victim truly dies. It doesn't take huge amounts of pressure to crush a windpipe, making this an effective possible kill. However just a brutal strike to it can cause great pain, gasping, possible vomiting, and an inability to catch the breath, giving you time to escape.
- **The Base of the Skull and Back of the Ears.** These are tender, thin areas not well protected except by location; they aren't the easiest to get to. Still, a strong, sharp blow to these can jar the brain into the skull and cause unconsciousness. A powerful enough strike may cause death through brain hemorrhaging.
- **The Side and Back of the Neck.** The side of your neck holds some serious stuff needed for your survival: the jugular vein, the carotid artery, and the vagus nerve. A strong, sharp hit just slightly in front of and below the ear can cause unconsciousness and a less severe blow can induce spasming accompanied by

agony. It's a good way to drop your opponent and hightail it out of there. The back of the neck is a little more severe as it can cause concussion or whiplash, and if the strike is powerful enough, it could even cause death or spinal injury. This is best served with the knife edge of the hand. (Some might call it a karate chop.)

- **The Top of the Head.** When we are infants and our skull hasn't fused yet there is the soft spot on the tops of our heads. It remains a weaker part of our eventual bone helmet, that seam where bone plates fuse, and it's a good target for a solid strike. A powerful hit, as with an elbow or knee, can cause trauma and hemorrhaging, or unconsciousness. Strike sharply enough and it may result in death.
- **The Forehead.** This one is tricky because it's such a thick plate of bone. You don't want to hit it with your own forehead and even a knee or elbow may take too much damage. Striking with the heel of the palm or a hammerfist would yield the best results, allowing a possible concussion by jarring the brain into the skull for bruising. It would need to be a hard hit.

### The Middle Section

The vast majority of these strikes will not cause death due to location: they are excellent for inflicting debilitating pain and injury so your attacker goes down and stays down while you get away. Do not shy from breaking things in your opponent if it gets him off you and keeps him from getting back up to chase you. Bite, kick, agitate your arms, do whatever you can to not be easily held down or held at all. Thrashing is effective. In the middle, strike with the intention of damaging.

- **The Collarbone/Clavicle.** This is considered the most painful bone in the body to break. It's slender and usually easily seen under the skin. It's also not the strongest bone in the body though some force will still have to be generated to break or fracture it. You may wish to use a knee or even a kick here if possible if not an outside weapon or stomping action. This won't kill him but will keep arms from being used and severely hamper his abilities. Get away quickly.
- **Front of the Shoulder.** Right under the endings of the clavicle and in the indentation of where your shoulder starts is a large bundle of nerves passing in front of the joint. This one takes some practice to get right, but with the proper strike this pressure point can render an arm immobile for a short time and generate great pain.
- **Pectorals.** Especially near the nipples, the pectoral region is thick with nerves. While a strong hit here won't kill an attacker, it can cause severe pain and even hemorrhage the blood vessels under the skin.
- **Solar Plexus/Diaphragm.** Most people have heard of this one- getting struck hard here is also called 'getting the wind knocked out of you.' It is a very uncomfortable



feeling as you gasp for air and can debilitate for a few moments allowing you precious time to either follow up or get away. Very powerful blows can cause unconsciousness as it shocks the nerve center that sits here. Internal organs can even be damaged by a penetrating strike. While these two are separate, they are situated very close together and hitting either one gets the job done.

- **Below the Belt.** In this case, directly below the belt- that area of the abdomen under the naval and above the genitals. It's a soft area and vulnerable to a good kick, punch or knee. A good enough strike can cause internal bleeding and shock.
- **Kidney Shot.** Not a nerve but an organ; a good hit here almost always causes pain and immediate concern. A very powerful hit can cause damage and internal bleeding.
- **The Bicep.** A sensitive muscle, the bicep can be quite painful if struck especially in the striated muscle layers. Punch with a protruding knuckle to dig in deep. This is not a lethal hit.
- **Back of the Hand.** The back of your hand is actually covered in nerves and very sensitive. Using your knuckles to smartly and sharply rap the back of your opponent's hand, especially if he's grabbing you, is a great way to force a release and generate some pain. It's something like a reflexive action, when the doctor hits your knee and your leg bounces. Definitely not a killing blow, but those little bones are easily broken and the entire ordeal can be surprisingly painful.
- **The Forearm/Elbow.** Over your forearm bone, from the inside of your arm at the elbow and branching out, is the radial nerve. The largest concentration of this nerve bundle is just inside the elbow which makes it a great place to grab and really dig in your thumb hard. The rest of your fingers will be holding the back of the elbow to give you leverage. This can cause deep agony and render the arm useless for a short while. Alternatively, you can strike down across the forearm with a hard blow of knuckles of the edge of your hand to hit the branching nerve. It isn't fatal and may take practice.
- **Ribs/Floating Ribs.** The floating ribs are situated at the very bottom of the rib cage and are attached to the spine but not the sternum. Not all people have these but most do; some have one pair, some two and even some have three pairs. The fact that they are out there 'floating' (though anchored with muscle and tendons) makes them easier to break and dislodge. A very strong kick or knee to the bottom of the rib cage can fracture or break these ribs; there is the potential for these broken bones to move and puncture lungs or organs. This could possibly cause death.

### **The Low Section**

Everything between the groin and the feet is considered the low section. Again, these are not fatal blows but they can incapacitate an attacker. Many of them deal

with bone breakage rather than being purely pressure points but they are effective for freeing oneself from an attacker.

- **Testicles/Groin.** The vast majority of males wince as soon as this subject even comes up; just a glancing or gentle strike to this area can cause the nerves to double a man over in stark pain. A moderate strike can create a feeling of nausea or even shock. It's worthwhile to consider twisting or brutally yanking this area as well. You are not concerned with his reproductive future at the moment- you are concerned with your life. This is a very vulnerable area and should not be overlooked. Women will also double over when kicked or kneed in this region.
- **The Hamstring.** Located in the back of the leg, the hamstring is a group of tendons contracted by a trio of thigh muscles. Any damage to this area can cripple the leg, at least temporarily. A sharp strike, as with a knee or the knuckles can drop your attacker.
- **Interior Thigh.** A nerve runs on the inside of your leg back towards the rear. Grabbing this in a pinching and twisting motion causes great pain in an attacker. Don't be stingy, grab a good amount. This is especially good for getting out of a rear hold. Some have named this the Pinch of Death though it does not offer a lethal outcome.
- **Exterior Thigh.** About four inches up from the knee is a tender area between muscle that, when struck, causes great pain and can debilitate an attacker. This is also called a Charley Horse and can be induced with a swift, strong blow by a kick, a knee, or even a punch.
- **The Lower Leg.** In general, the lower leg is fraught with weak points that can be exploited. While not necessarily pressure points, they are nonetheless important to know for self-defense. Applying great force to the **knee** in the form of a kick, aiming to break it, is a very good way of putting an attacker down and getting out of danger. The **shin** is very sensitive though you don't want to use your own knee or elbow to strike it if it can be avoided; a kick or a weapon is your best bet and will greatly agonize your pursuer. Attack the **ankles** with a kick or a weapon, to smash the small bones. Stomp on the **top of** an attacker's **foot** to or **instep** of his foot. This is a powerful deterrent. Strike at the **Achilles' tendon** at the back of the ankle to take your attacker's legs out of the picture. A powerful hit here can sprain the ankle, dislocate the foot or fully render him unable to walk if the tendon is severed.

When defending your own life or the life of another, it should be remembered that everything is fair game; there's no such thing as 'foul'. If someone is trying to hurt or kill you, they've shown flagrant disregard for the safety and respect of others, infringing

on their rights. In such a case, they have then willingly given up their own rights and you are answering in kind.

No need to go crazy though: it's not a drop-down drag-out fight if you can at all help it. Disable or subdue your attacker and get out of danger. Flee the area and call the authorities to deal with the bad guys. Use whatever you can to obtain your objective, which is life and freedom.

Teeth, nails, elbows, knees, and anything else you can pick up and defend yourself with. Keeping the semblance of a level head is the hard part but if you can at all think rationally, do it. Try not blindly panic as it gives the attacker an advantage. "All is fair in love and war"... and self defense.

### **Disarming a Villain with a Gun**

Having a gun pointed at you in any capacity is terrifying and many people will give you some solid advice about trying to take a gun away from an attacker: *don't*. Some will even say you can't.

You most certainly can do it, even successfully, but there's always the possibility the attempt will go south and you or someone else will end up shot. This is a skill that can be done several ways and truly requires a lot of practice and a live instructor. Just reading about it is not enough; you must attempt it over and over again with a dummy gun, of course. (Be careful not to break fingers.) Not fighting back is often the safest route, especially with a nervous gunman, but if you do choose to attempt a disarming, don't be cocky about it.

The element of surprise is one of your greatest weapons in this venture and the generally slow reaction time of human beings: you have about 1/4th of a second lead on the person you're moving against before they will or can react. Some are faster, especially when startled or on edge.

Having determined there is no other course of action, gauging you are actually close enough to reach your gunman, and making sure he doesn't have any buddies around who can either interfere or shoot you, disarm your attacker and do it *without hesitation*. You don't have time for hesitation and there's no place for it in this kind of action.

In different situations (i.e. how the attacker is standing to you) you may react in different ways; you may have to because the first thing you want to do is clear the gun. That is, get it out of line of fire to you. In order to accomplish this as safely as possible, you will want to disengage his brain from his trigger finger.

Generally speaking a person holding a gun on you is not calm and collected, he is a full of adrenalin and looking for reaction. He may be quite focused on your body language because of this. His mind is on the trigger and firing the gun and even if you move very quickly he could flinch, firing.

You want to try and take advantage of his distraction which will come when he talks or you do. This is called a 'break state' and it's a psychological response to needing to focus on speech or someone talking in response.

It's not flawless but there are two times this occurs. The first time is when he talks to you, as in giving you orders to move or even shut up. He may be moving his gun at that time in gesture or indication.

This is not the ideal time to spring forward because if he is active, his weapon may not be in the same place you expect it to be when you lunge forward; he could have moved it, your actions crossed, and he shoots you.

The better choice is when you are actually moving to accommodate his command because he is expecting movement. Speak to him as well when you do move so he's focusing on your words, such as asking the command again as though to make sure you have it clear. Keeping your hands up in compliance is wise because it give you a better point from which to move and less distance to cover than if your hands were down at their sides. Get him into the break state, move when he directs it, restate his command as a question, then make your move as you are already in motion to comply.

There are several schools of thought on disarming a person with a gun which is why practicing is so very important, not just to make sure you know what you're doing but finding your personal preference, too.

1. With the hand closest to the gun, push the gun away from you while stepping back and to the side in the opposite direction. Step back quickly as you shove forward. You want the gun as far from you as possible and your body out of line of fire. Do not complete this action if you put someone else in the line of fire, especially if you're trying to save that person. If the gun goes off, you should be well clear of it. Your first concern is the gun, not the person holding it.

1a. Your thumb can be used to prevent the hammer from striking, thus preventing the gun from firing at all even if the trigger is pulled. To accomplish this, grip the gun with your dominant hand. It's possible you're gripping the wrist of the attacker instead. As long as he can't train the gun back on you, and he will try, you're more or less okay to proceed.

2. You want to control the weapon. If you managed to wedge your thumb or finger between hammer and gun, good. Not all are so fortunate and some will tell you not to bother with such minute precision. Do not let go of the wrist if that is your control. You can also secure your attacker by a joint lock on the thumb, the wrist, the elbow or the arm. Some methods go straight from step 1 into step 3, grabbing the gun barrel and turning the gun away from you toward the attacker.
3. Now you want to disarm the villain and remove his weapon. Maintain your sideways stance- this makes you a smaller target and keeps you out of gun fire. If

you've gripped the wrist, it's with the hand closest to the gun because otherwise you'll have to cross over yourself to disarm him. In this case you will keep your hold on the wrist and use the other hand to turn the gun parallel to your attacker, which swivels the muzzle toward him. Now if he fires, he shoots himself. This action is always the one you are working toward- getting the gun to face in to the attacker's body, not outward. There are several ways to accomplish it but it's the goal whether you stop the hammer with your thumb or not.

- 3a. In Krav Maga, an Israeli military martial arts form, you will be instructed to strike the attacker once the gun is pointing away. Punch him in the face, throat, palm strike his nose, or poke him in the eyes. With the gun turned toward him, he dare not fire and you gain extra footing. He is distracted by pain and damage and a sudden turn of events.
4. Grab the barrel with your hand and roll the barrel and gun against the attacker's thumb if possible, to break the hold. The thumb is always where the grip is weakest: this is true of a choke hold and this is true of a hold on a gun.
- 4a. You'll use the same hand you struck the gunman with to grab the handle of the weapon. If the gunman's finger is still in the trigger guard you can use this action to break it by twisting the gun around. You can also strike the gunman with a knee or a kick if he's trying to still attack while you have both hands on the gun.
5. Strike your opponent as hard as you can in the head or in the side of the throat to confuse and disorientate them. Bring up the handle of the weapon as you do this, then back away quickly. Disarm the weapon- empty the firing chamber, drop the ammo clip out of the gun and throw the gun away so it can't be used against you, then run.
- 5a. Now that you have the gun, get back quickly and keep the gun on your former attacker as you move away and get to safety.

*Special tips:*

- It may be that the gunman tries to pull the gun away from you. Don't fight the action, but keep your grip on the gun and push your weight forward. Stay in control.
- Get out of reach as soon as possible. You don't want to get into a prolonged fight over the weapon and you don't want to invite another fight by staying in too close.
- If engagement with the gun holder is avoidable, then avoid it. Even many years of training in disarming an attacked who has a gun can still see something go wrong.

- Again, do not hesitate! These maneuvers require dedication to action. Hesitation can definitely get you shot in such cases.
- Practice makes perfect. Practice with different 'gunmen' for different scenarios.

Resources: <http://www.wisegeek.org/what-is-a-floating-rib.htm> <http://www.netterimages.com/image/4452.htm>

<http://www.essortment.com/martial-arts-strikes-nose-43530.html>

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