

*Pressure Point Fighting: A Guide to the Secret Heart of Asian Martial Arts*

Ever wondered if all that ‘Jedi’ pressure point stuff really *does* have any substance? Here, marital arts instructor and former police officer Rick Clark discusses the science behind it all.

Pressure points ‘are not magic’ (p.44). Oh, that’s a shame. Still, sorting truth from ‘exaggeration’ is not necessarily a bad thing; after all, we’ve all seen those marital arts movies where some old master-type chap uses just a finger to squidge some young scamp who went and had the temerity to disturb the peace of his idyllic hill-top retreat... (pew, what a mouthful). This being the case, then, the question that needs addressing is a simple one: is ‘it’ *really* real, or just a smoke and mirror show for the credulous?

Shockingly, this book addresses that very subject. Clark examines the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ before moving on to clarify just why it is that some modern practitioners are so dubious as to the full potential of pressure points, after all, according the author, their predecessors *knew* them not only to be ‘on-the-level’, but extremely effective too. With such content, the initial theory section of the book is larger than in many others of this type; yet this is no bad thing. For one thing it allows the author, who has been a practitioner and instructor of multiple disciplines for several decades, to be inclusive and explain how various popular styles of martial art actually work in this context. Perhaps more importantly, though, he also explains how they work with each other, and as a consequence students of all styles will be able to relate to the impressive section on practical techniques that follows. Here examples of strikes from many styles are included, and ultimately illustrates just how we’ve been using pressure points pretty much from day one even if we didn’t know it!

Overall, then, *Pressure Point Fighting* has a lot going for it, not least of all an explanation as to why myths have grown up over the subject in the first place, i.e. that in turning into sports, the martial arts have lost something of their very essence, the often lethal pressure point techniques *having* to be removed for safety’s sake. Ho-hum. Still, it’s a relief really. I train at a dojo where some of the techniques in this book are still practiced, and it *is* a relief that my Sensei isn’t actually a Jedi after all; at least I think he isn’t...

9 sausages out of 10

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