

FOREWORD

This document is an attempt at a faithful transcription of the original document. Special effort has been made to ensure that original spelling (including apparent spelling error such as “bladly” on pp50), line-breaks, oddities of typesetting (such as inconsistent page number standards and paragraph centering), and vocabulary are left intact, and when possible, similar fonts have been used. However, it contains original formatting and image scans. All rights are reserved except those specifically granted herein.

You may distribute this document in whole, provided that you distribute the entire document including this disclaimer, attributions, transcriber forewords, etc., and also provided that you charge no money for the work excepting a nominal fee to cover the costs of the media on or in which it is distributed. You may not distribute this document in any for-pay or price-metered medium without permission.

DEDICATION

Special dedication to my lovely and understanding wife Mylinda, my energetic and enthusiastic son Christopher, and my stunningly beautiful daughter Allison.

-Kirk Lawson

How to Wrestle

INSTRUCTIONS

Based on the work of

FRANK A. GOTCH

World's Champion Wrestler

BY GEORGE ROBBINS

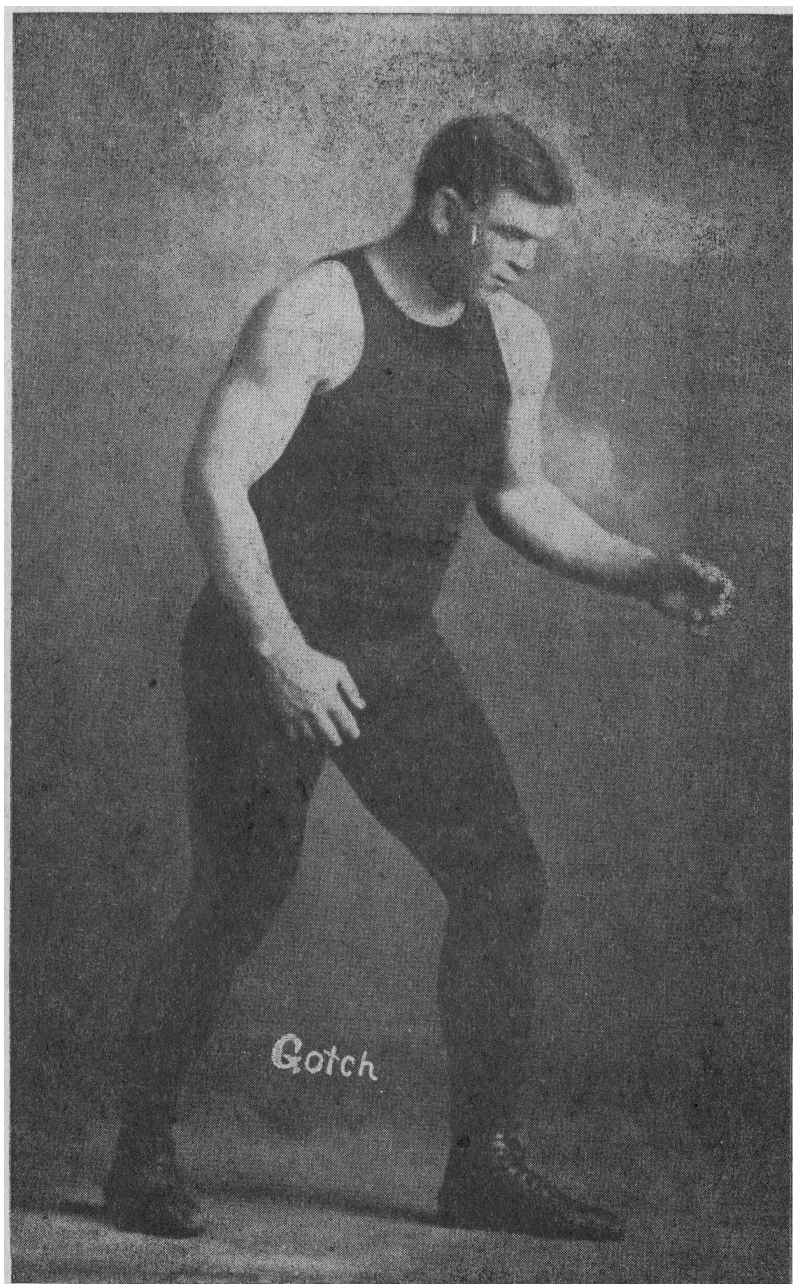
of the Sporting Staff, The Chicago Daily News



COPYRIGHTED 1934 BY F. L. STEIN



MAX STEIN PUBLISHING HOUSE
Chicago, Ill.



INTRODUCTION

All the world admires an honest battler. That is why baseball has continued to grow in popularity and draw immense crowds. The players are "on the square" and the "fans" know it. And that is why Frank A. Gotch attracted the largest wrestling crowds in modern times. Gotch has been "on the level" and endowed with "the goods." He has done more than any other influence to make wrestling popular in America. The good king of Sweden, gazing on James Thorpe at the Olympian games, declared him the world's greatest athlete, but the monarch had never seen Gotch. The like of Gotch for speed, the science of the holds and their counters, for strength and brain-work in action has never been seen in wrestling.

There are four requirements of a great wrestler who can keep a title for years without having his shoulders pinned to the padded canvas: Strength, endurance, speed and skill. Probably no man in all the annals of wrestling has had these elements so mingled in him in the proper proportions as Frank Gotch.

The dazzling white lights which have led so many athletes astray in the hours of their prom-

inence and prosperity failed to work their charm on the Iowa farm lad whose athletic prowess, early in his career, made him independently wealthy. The old homestead at Humboldt had a hold on his heart and life that never loosened. "Blood will tell" and so will the right home training. From the scenes of his triumphs Gotch always turned his face toward Humboldt. There he married and there he resided, esteemed not so much as world's champion wrestler as the genial neighbor, prosperously pursuing his vocations of farmer and business man. His 1,000-acre farm was worked on scientific principles and his automobile business, distributing its product far and wide.

Half Nelson and Crotch

The half nelson is the primal hold in wrestling. It is considered the simplest grip in the business, yet it is important, for an infinite number of combinations may be secured in conjunction with it. The most important of these is the crotch, a grip barred in Greco-Roman wrestling; but Greco-Roman is only half wrestling—it bars half the holds.

“In many of my hardest matches I have secured the crotch hold first by a ruse to get some other grip. Then I fastened on a half nelson and retained the combination until my opponent succumbed. I defeated Yussiff Mammout, the great Bulgarian wrestler, in this way in our match in Chicago several years ago.

“How the half nelson and crotch may be secured is illustrated by the way I got it on Mahmout.

“Mahmout had put up a game battle. He was beginning to worry me a bit, but I had figured out the proper method of overcoming his crotch. I put my hand back of his head and jerked him forward. This overbalanced him and, continued, enabled me to go behind him and wrestle him to the mat.

“There is one thing Mahmout had been cautioned to avoid—the toe hold—but that proved his downfall. When I made a motion to get this grip he turned on his side to protect his toe.

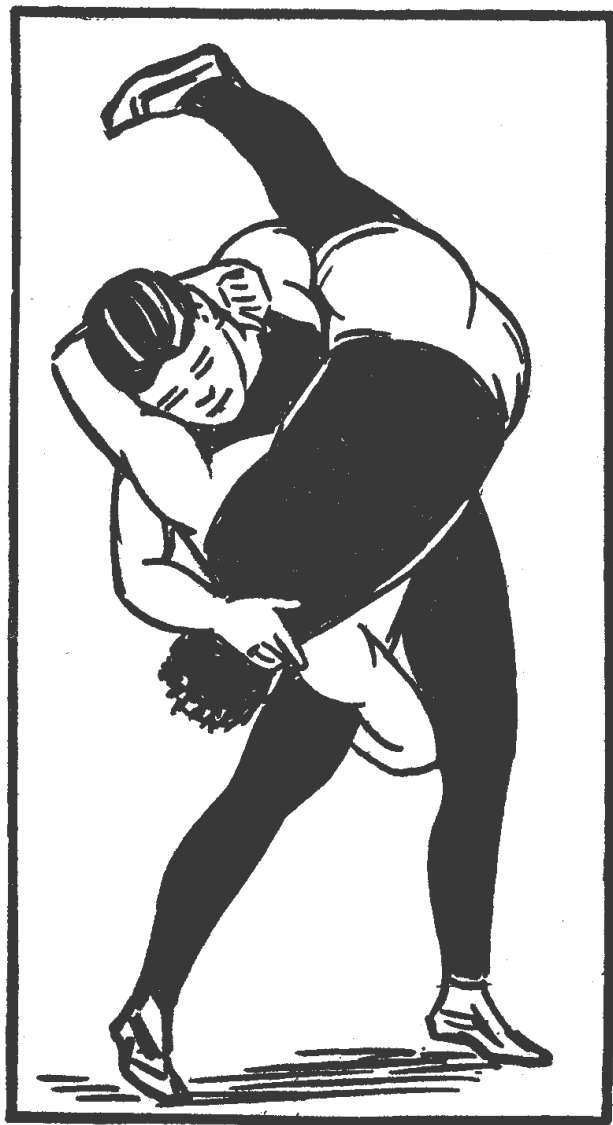
As he made this move I thrust my right arm through his legs for a crotch hold. He tried to spin out and as he did so, half turning around, I slipped my left hand under his left arm and completed the half nelson and crotch combination.

“When I secured the half nelson I did not place my hand on the Bulgarian’s neck as most wrestlers do. I rested it on the back of his head. The pump back on the old farm at Humboldt taught me the value of this. It is simply a problem in applied mathematics. The greatest lifting power is exerted with the hand on the back of the head. It gives one a better leverage. Mahmoud was forced to exert the same power with the muscles of his neck as with those of the neck and shoulders combined when the hand is placed on the neck. It was impossible for him to exert such power, for no living man can do that.

“Then there is another thing that should not be overlooked: When the crotch is secured along with the half nelson, one should ram the arm as far under his opponent’s legs as possible. This enables one to hold his opponent more securely and gives the attacker greater lifting power. More than double the weight can be lifted near the shoulders than at arm’s length.

“Sometimes the half nelson is secured first and when the defensive wrestler is in the act of spinning out the crotch is added. Many forms of the half nelson are employed. “Farmer” Burns says he knows seventeen. The grip is seldom

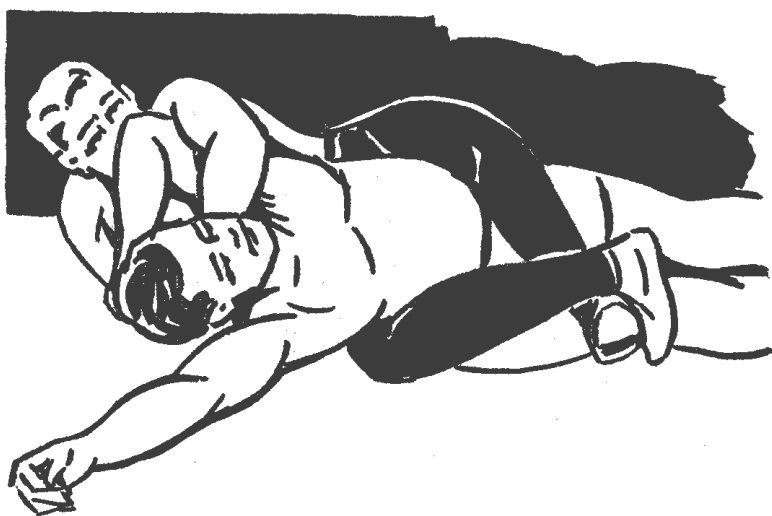
used, however, except in conjunction with other holds and for the purpose of forcing a wrestler into unguarded positions. I have won a majority of my matches with the half nelson as a partial weapon of offense.”



HALF NELSON AND CROTCH

Scissors on the Body

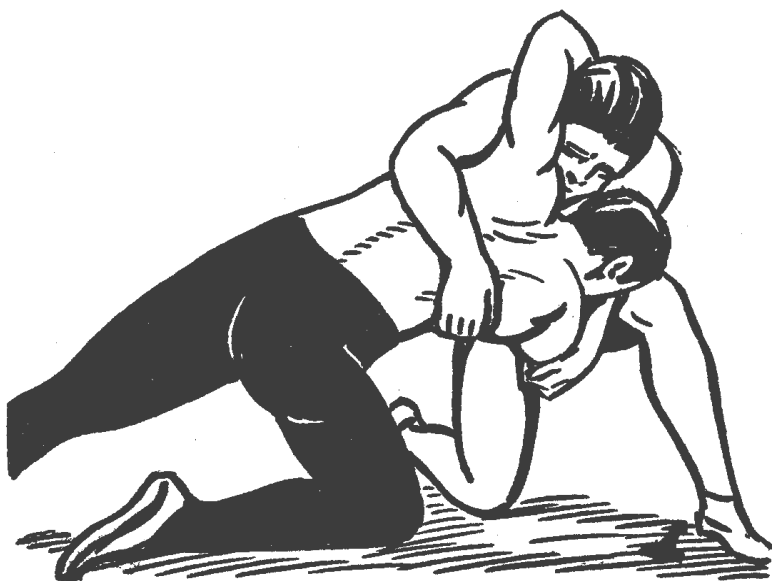
The scissors on the body is obtained on an opponent when down on the mat and is usually secured when in the act of rolling. If on the left side, suddenly push his head down and secure a half nelson with the left arm. While the defensive wrestler is in the act of resisting the hold jump in so that he will slip between your legs and roll over on his side as in the illustration. The feet may be grapevined and pressure brought to bear on the stomach and a fall is imminent.



SCISSORS ON THE BODY

Bar and Further Arm Hold

If on the left side of the opponent; shoot the left arm around and secure a further arm hold. Get the hold under the head. Almost simultaneously secure a bar hold under the left arm of the defensive wrestler with the right. Force upward with the bar hold and pull forward with the further arm grip. This will force the defensive wrestler to the mat where the weight can be brought to bear on his chest until he sinks in defeat or the grip may be shifted to some other hold and a fall secured.



BAR AND FURTHER ARM HOLD

Toe and Ankle Hold

This combination hold is secured when the wrestlers are on the mat. While working on the right side, the left foot of the defensive grappler is drawn up. The attacker slides under right leg of his opponent holding the toe grip. The defensive wrestler is raised off the mat, the attacker reaches under with his right hand and grasps the imprisoned left ankle completing the hold. In this position the least twist is painful and the defensive wrestler will gladly succumb.



TO AND ANKLE HOLD

Headlock

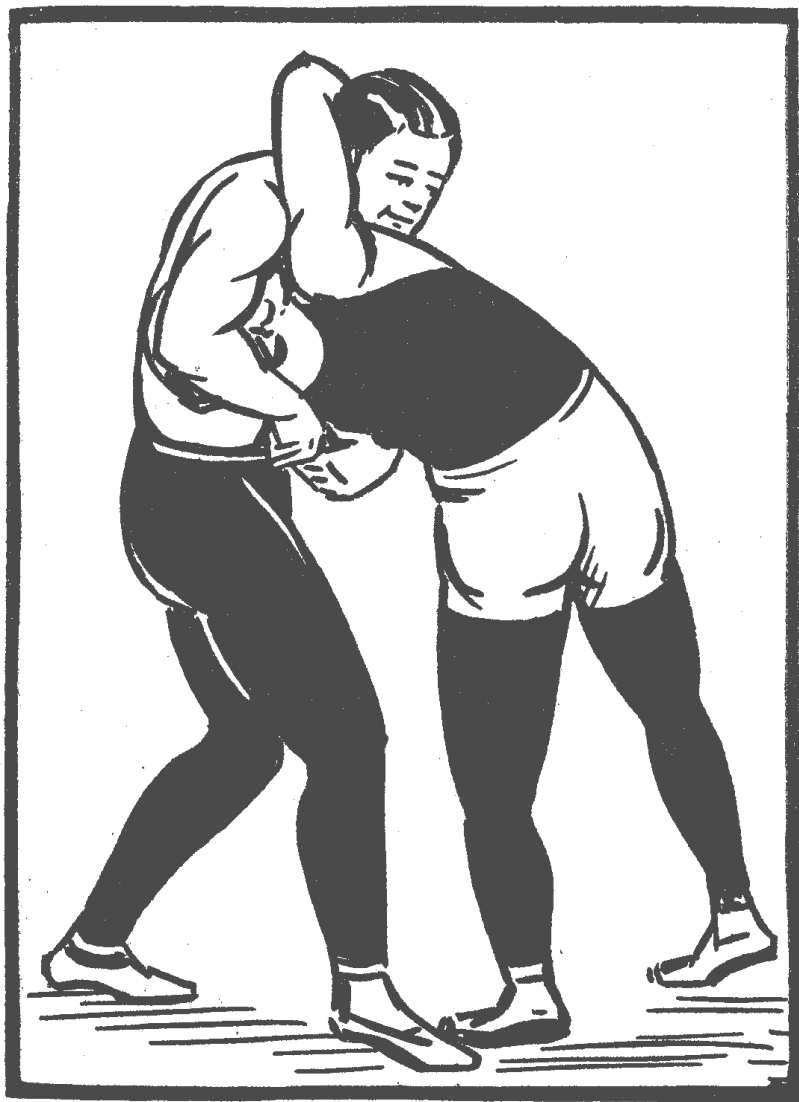
“Followers of wrestling believe that the toe hold is the most terrible grip in the game,” said Gotch, “but that is an erroneous idea. You cannot deprive an opponent of life with the toe hold. You can kill with a flying mare, a strangle hold or a headlock. The strangle hold is barred in professional wrestling, but the flying mare and headlock are permissible.

“It is possible for a strong wrestler to break his opponent’s neck by a quick wrench of the head with a punishing headlock. Probably more wrestlers have been killed by the flying mare than any other hold, and this leads to the assertion that few men of the mat are killed in professional matches. A wrestler of small stature may become a giant in relative wrestling ability after perfecting a headlock or some form of this grip.

“I have used the headlock in few of my matches; although it is a splendid means of winning when pitted against a dangerous opponent. I defeated Jenkins at Cleveland, with a form of the headlock.

“The headlock is secured in two ways. It may be placed on a wrestler when he is on his hands and knees on the mat, and in this position an arm is usually locked with the head. If the attacker is on the right side, he may push down the head of his opponent, resting his left arm heavily on the head. He reaches under his oppo-

ment's right arm and grabs his own left hand just below the wrist. In this way the head may be drawn toward the arm with which it is securely locked against the attacker. The right arm of the defensive wrestler is helpless and he may be drawn to the side and easily forced to the mat.



HEAD HOLD

“Beell’s headlock, however, does not include an arm. This is a form of the headlock I have used at times, but have relinquished it when it might injure an opponent. It is secured when the opponent is in a standing position.

“The attacker may pull down his opponent’s head, reaching over his head with his left hand. With his right hand he reaches under the head of his opponent and grasps his own left hand just below the wrist. The attacker’s left hand fits into the jaw of the defensive wrestler on the right side. The head is drawn in and locked. Then the twist may be applied and the defensive wrestler drawn to the mat. Beell’s short arm and great strength in his arms and shoulders make him peculiarly constructed- by nature to apply this grip.

“Tom Jenkins defeated me with Beell’s form of the headlock in one of the toughest matches of my life later at Cleveland. Some could not understand why I lost to Jenkins. The headlock defeated me. It will defeat any man when secured by a wrestler as strong as Jenkins. He secured this jaw lock on me while we were standing. I tried in vain to extricate myself. Jenkins applied the twist, and I began to think of all the mean things I had ever done. I wanted my head for future use, so I dropped to the mat. Jenkins retained the hold, and when he pinned me with it, I determined he would never get that grip on me again.”

Grapvine Hold

Of the many weapons of attack in the mat repertory of the world's champion, the grapevine hold deserves special mention. Gotch has pinned few dangerous opponents with this hold for deciding falls, but it is among the foremost of the subordinate holds used by him in leading up to the effective combinations with which he won the majority of his hard matches. The lightning like rapidity with which the champion shifted from one hold to another bewildered his less alert opponents and enabled him to trick them into dangerous positions.

The grapevine as used by Gotch is one of the shifts whereby he secured his half nelson and crotch.

Gotch made the grapevine shift when over his opponent on the mat. When the defensive wrestler was on his hands and knees, Gotch held him down by working back and well to the side, grasping his victim's near leg near the crotch. The world's champion feinted for a further leg or arm hold or some other grip to distract his opponent's attention. As the latter was looking away from the real point of attack, Gotch suddenly raised his opponent's near leg and, if working on the left side, jumped in with his right leg under the leg of his opponent, which had been raised. With his right leg he grapevined the victim's far leg. With this leverage the champion turned his oppo-

nent easily. The imprisoned leg of the defensive wrestler was thus rendered powerless. As the opponent turned Gotch suddenly reversed the hold into a half nelson with a crotch.

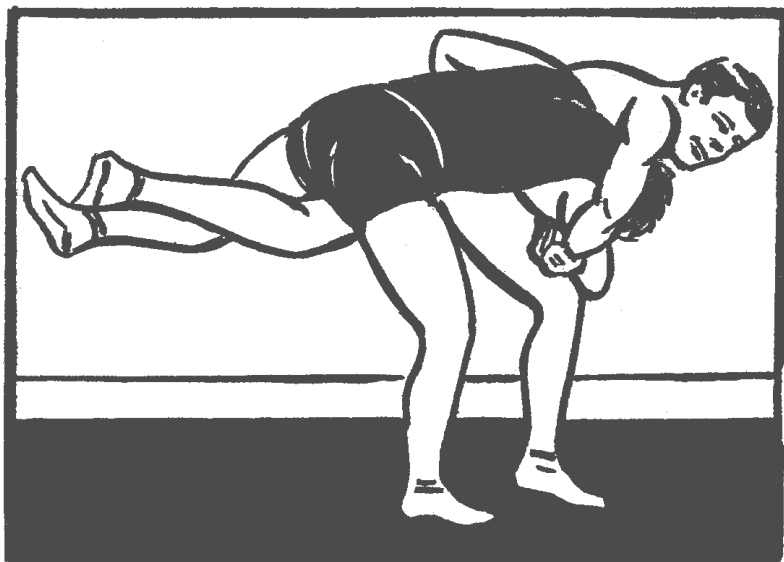
It was told Gotch in 1911 that an American wrestler who wished to see him defeated had been tutoring Hackenschmidt against the grapevine hold leading to the half nelson and crotch.

The world's champion laughed at the story. He said the Russian Lion was privileged to practice the maneuver all he pleased, but he would defeat him in one fall by this same ruse.

This remarkable prediction actually came to pass. When Hackenschmidt met Gotch for the second time in Chicago he was coached to the minute to avoid this rapid-fire attack of Gotch. It was the means of his downfall in the first bout. Gotch put Hack off his guard, raised his near leg, grapevined his far one and then reversed it into a half nelson and crotch, with which the "Lion" was pinned for the first fall in the bitterest defeat of his career.

The grapevine may be secured on the arm, and with the aid of a cross buttock an opponent may be hurled heavily to the canvas. Gotch has seldom used this grip, however. He has avoided holds whereby an opponent might be killed in flying falls, but has used his quick brain to advantage in crushing his opponents by rapid maneuvering in straight wrestling.

Gotch has seldom used the grapevine in pinning an opponent. His defeat of Policeman John J. Rooney in Chicago with a grapevine and hammerlock was an exception.

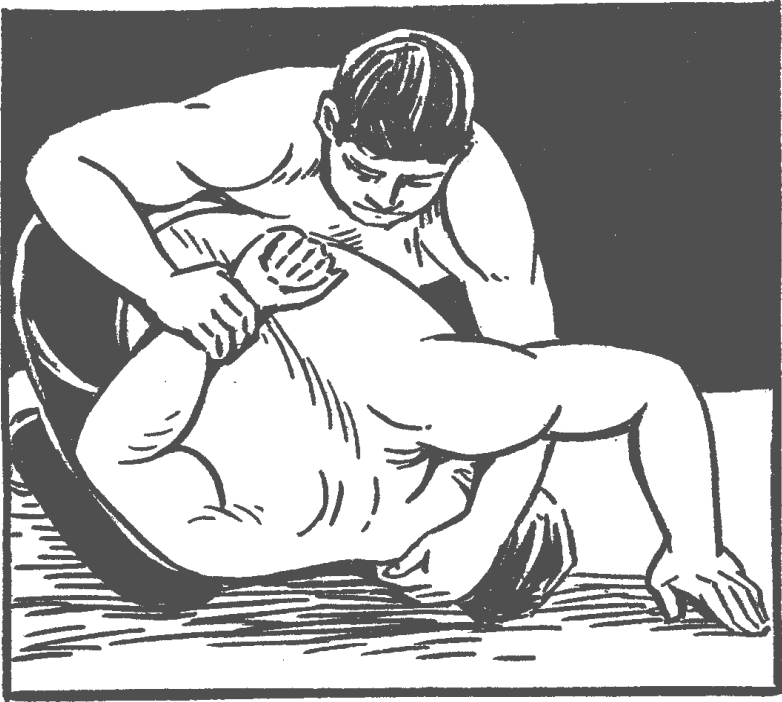


GRAPEVINE AND HEAD LOCK

Half Nelson

The half nelson is the commonest grip in the business and may be secured from either side. Most wrestlers prefer the left side for the simple reason that "southpaws" are a scarcity. A wrestler likes his right hand, which he can use more adeptly, to be free for attacking purposes. If the attacker is on the left side he inserts his left hand under the left arm of his opponent. "I shove my left hand over my opponent's head," says Gotch, "giving me a stronger leverage than can be obtained on the neck." It is best to work well to the side to prevent an opponent countering with an arm lock for a side roll or some other grip. When the leverage has been secured, the attacker pushes against opponent's side with an upward motion applying the leverage until his man is turned over, when other grips must be applied.

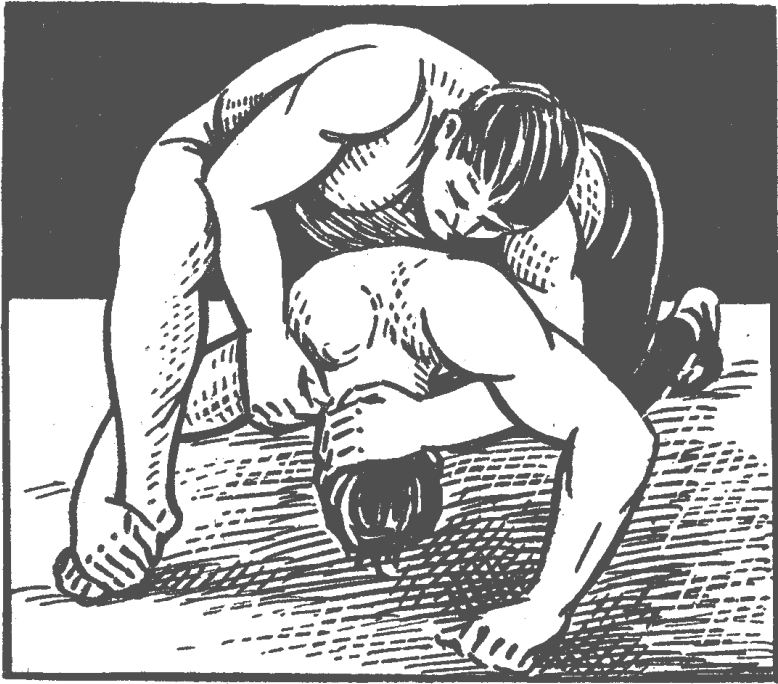
Counters for the half nelson seen in almost every match are the head spin, the side roll and coming to a sitting posture.



HALF NELSON

Quarter Nelson

The quarter nelson is not used much by professional wrestlers except in shifting to other grips. If on the right side of the opponent, the aggressor thrusts his left hand under the right arm pit of the defensive grappler. This move is made simultaneously with the placing of the right hand of the aggressor on the back of the head of the opponent, palm down. The aggressor grasps his own right wrist with his left hand. The pressure may then be applied and the opponent worried into other holds like the chancery, half nelson, etc.



QUARTER NELSON

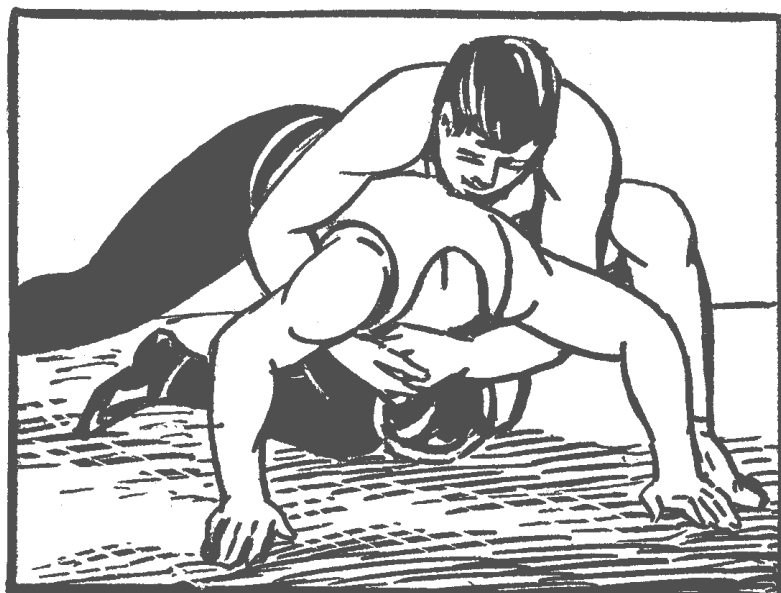
Three-Quarter Nelson

The attacker, if on the right side, first gets a half nelson with his right arm under the right arm of his opponent and over the back of the head to secure the most powerful leverage. With his left hand the aggressor reaches under the chest of his opponent and locks the fingers of his hands as seen in the accompanying picture, or he may grasp his right wrist with his left hand. With this leverage or pull, the defensive wrestler is drawn down and compelled to roll when the aggressor may pounce on him and secure some other hold.

Double Nelson

The full nelson is a punishing hold and is used little in championship matches. If on the left side, push opponent's head down with the right hand, secure the half nelson with the left hand—that is the near nelson first. As the attacker applies the leverage with his left hand he almost simultaneously reaches over and secures the further nelson with his right. The left wrist of his own hand may be grasped with the right or the fingers may be interlaced and the opponent's head drawn down in such a position that he is practically helpless.

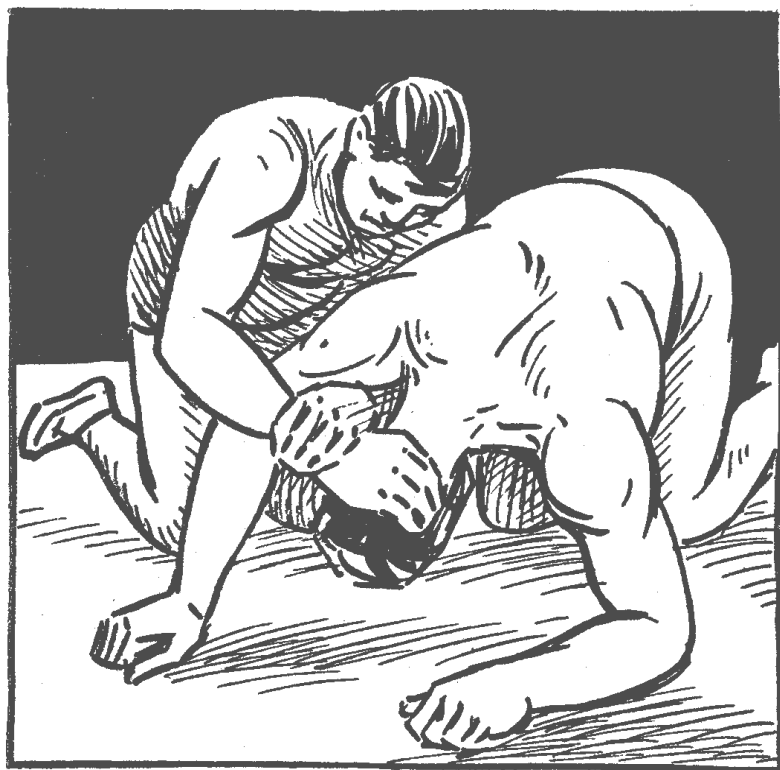
This is a dangerous hold that is difficult to retain on an opponent whose neck muscles are highly developed. Several wrestlers have been killed with this hold, having their necks broken.



DOUBLE NELSON

Further Nelson

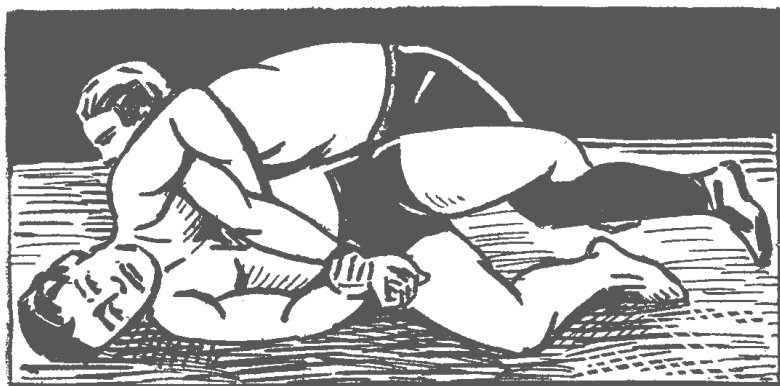
If on the right side of the defensive wrestler, the aggressor reaches over with his own left hand and secures a half nelson as in the accompanying illustration. The aggressor places his hand, palm down on the back of the defensive wrestler's head. The leverage may then be applied and the head of the defensive wrestler pulled under. One may escape from a further nelson by the head spin—or by bridging and throwing the feet back over the body of the aggressor and spinning out.



FURTHER NELSON

Wrist Look and Arm and Leg Grapevine Hold

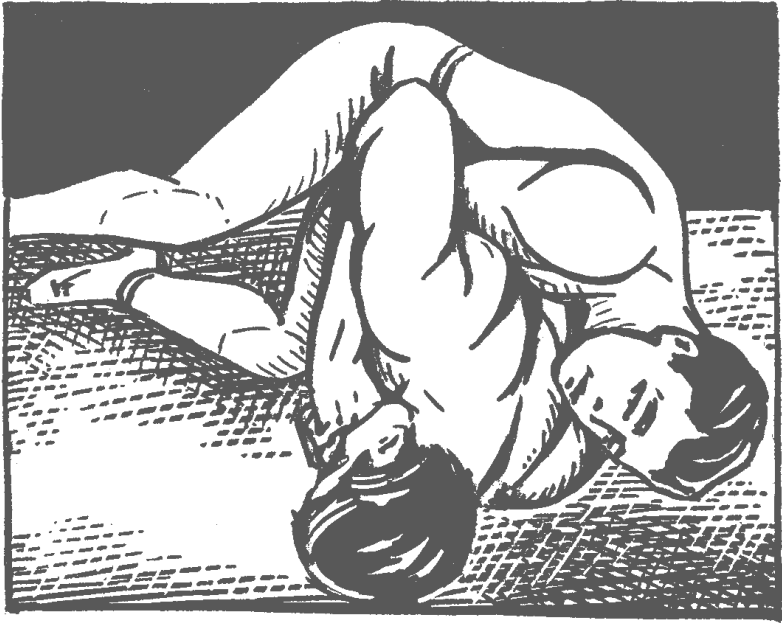
This hold is secured by the under wrestler when his opponent is working over him. The defensive or under wrestler grasps the left wrist of his opponent with his right hand. He encircles his left arm with his own left for the arm grapevine as in the picture. At the same time he grapevines the left leg of the aggressor with his own left leg as in the illustration. He then bridges, applying the combined wrist lock and grapevine twist, drawing his opponent under him for a fall.



WRIST LOCK AND ARM AND LEG GRAPEVINE HOLD

Double Arm Lock

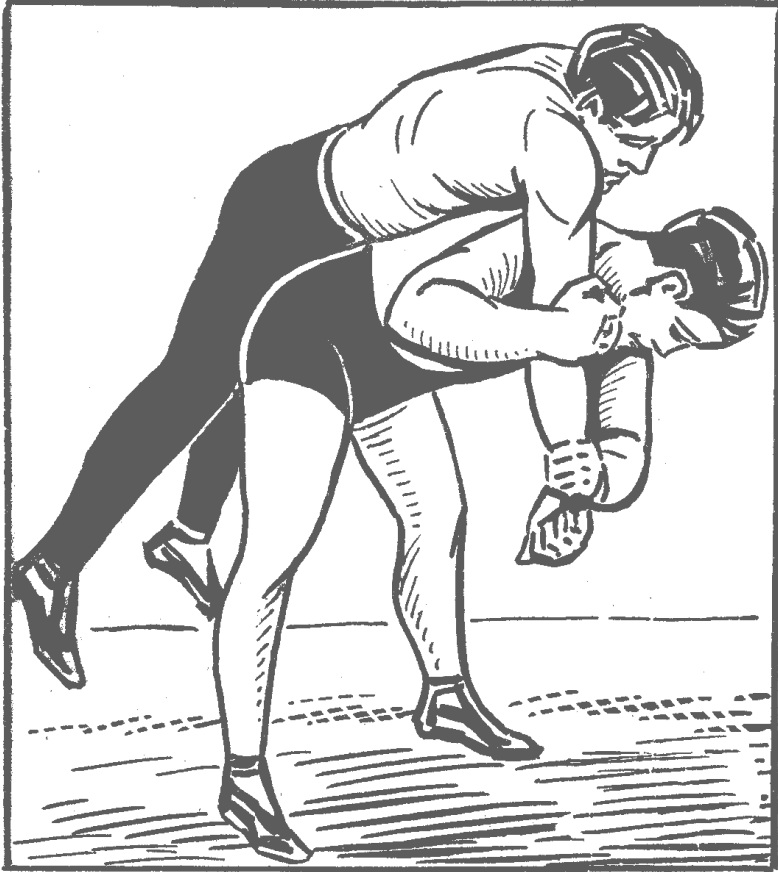
This hold is a counter for the double nelson and is secured by the defensive wrestler when under his opponent on the mat. It is one of the advantages of being the under dog. It is often secured when the aggressor has become careless and dangles his arms under the arm pits of the defensive wrestler. To execute the double arm lock for a side roll, the defensive wrestler bides his time until the attacker becomes careless in going after further grips. The wrists of the attacker may be caught almost simultaneously and drawn down. The defensive wrestler should draw his opponent down until he can clamp his arms above the elbows. and if on the left side close in and pull opponent to the right. The defensive wrestler should brace his feet, pull his opponent under him and shift well to the side. In this way the defensive man has become the aggressor and put the attacker in a bad way.



DOUBLE ARM LOCK FOR SIDE ROLL

Flying Mare

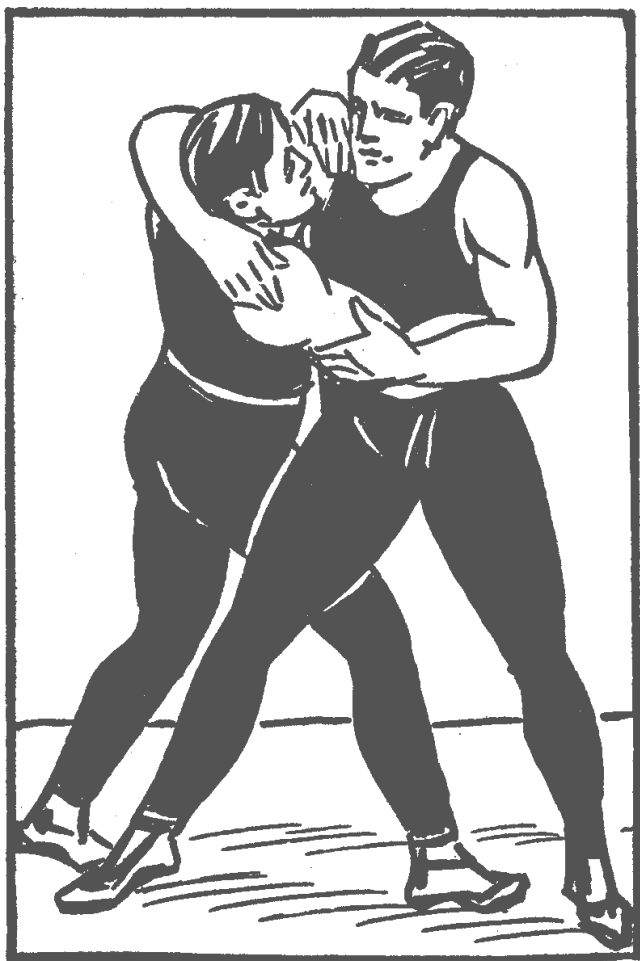
The flying mare is a dangerous hold that may result fatally, as it causes the opponent to be hurled violently over the head of the aggressor. If the aggressor seizes his opponent's wrist with both hands, steps in with his back to his opponent, draws the arm over his right shoulder, stepping to the right, the defensive wrestler is thus helpless. With the arm as lever the aggressor suddenly bends forward, gives his own hips an upward twitch and pulls forward on the imprisoned arm. The defensive wrestler will be plunged headlong over the shoulder of the aggressor and fall heavily to the mat.



FLYING MARE

Chancery, Arm Lock and Cross Buttock

This hold is secured when the wrestlers are on their feet. The attacker grasps the right wrist of his opponent with both hands, pulls him in and steps outside and behind the defensive wrestler's near leg as in the accompanying picture. Almost simultaneously the aggressor encircle the head of his opponent with his right arm, retaining the grip on his opponent's right member with his left hand as in the picture. The defensive wrestler is then thrown forward over the hip of the aggressor when the holds may be retained or other combinations secured.

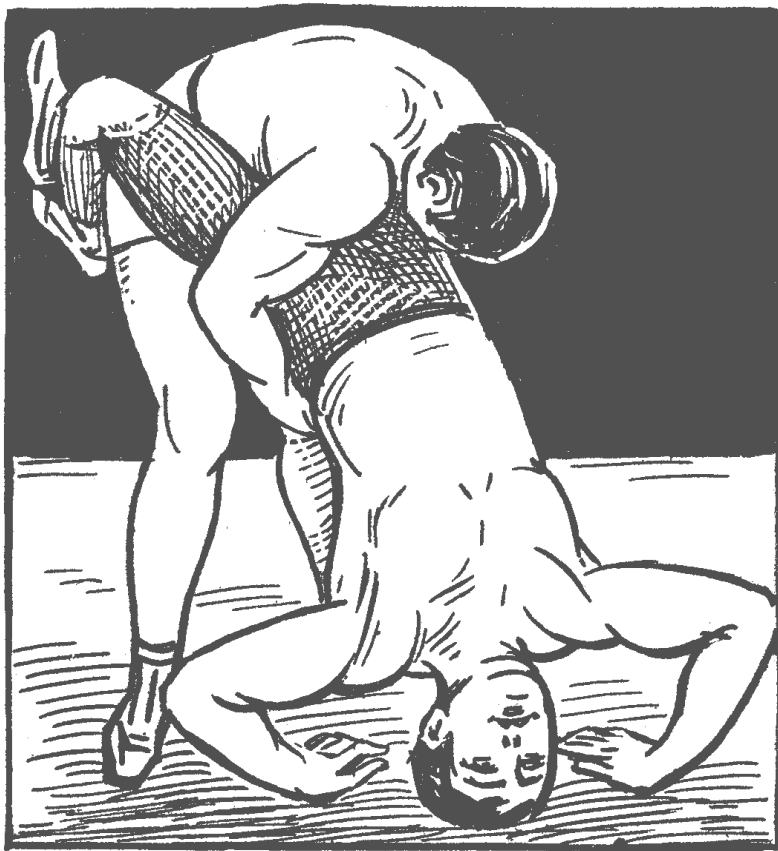


CHANCERY, ARM LOCK AND CROSS BUTTOCK

Crotch Lift and Force Down by the Double Leg Hold

When on the mat, reach over with both hands, lift opponent by his far leg, raise him and bear down weight on head and shoulder. The opponent's legs are thus swung over the shoulder. Shift the hold so that the opponent is caught between the legs with a reverse waist hold. In this position the full weight of the attacker is born down on the opponent until he is gradually forced from a bridge to the mat.

This peculiar hold also may be secured by plunging forward and getting a double leg hold and lifting the defensive wrestler from the mat. The reverse waist hold is secured and the opponent falls back with his face upturned. It is difficult to escape from this hold.

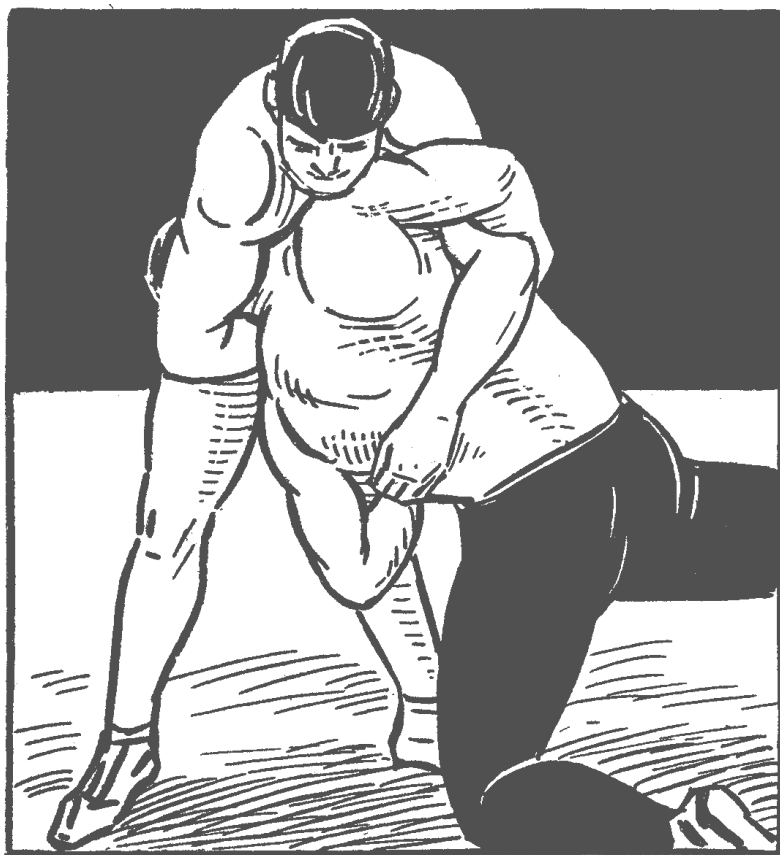


CROTCH LIFT AND FORCE-DOWN BY DOUBLE LEG HOLD

Chancery and Bar Arm

This hold may be obtained from a standing position. When sparring for holds, the attacker may work his opponent into a forward chancery by encircling the head with his right hand. Chancery means having the head caught and securely held under the arm of an opponent.

Then the bar arm may be added almost simultaneously by thrusting the left hand under the right arm of the opponent and applying the leverage. The opponent in this position is in a helpless condition, and may be drawn to the mat. Step back, draw opponent's head in close and apply the leverage until he falls to the mat.

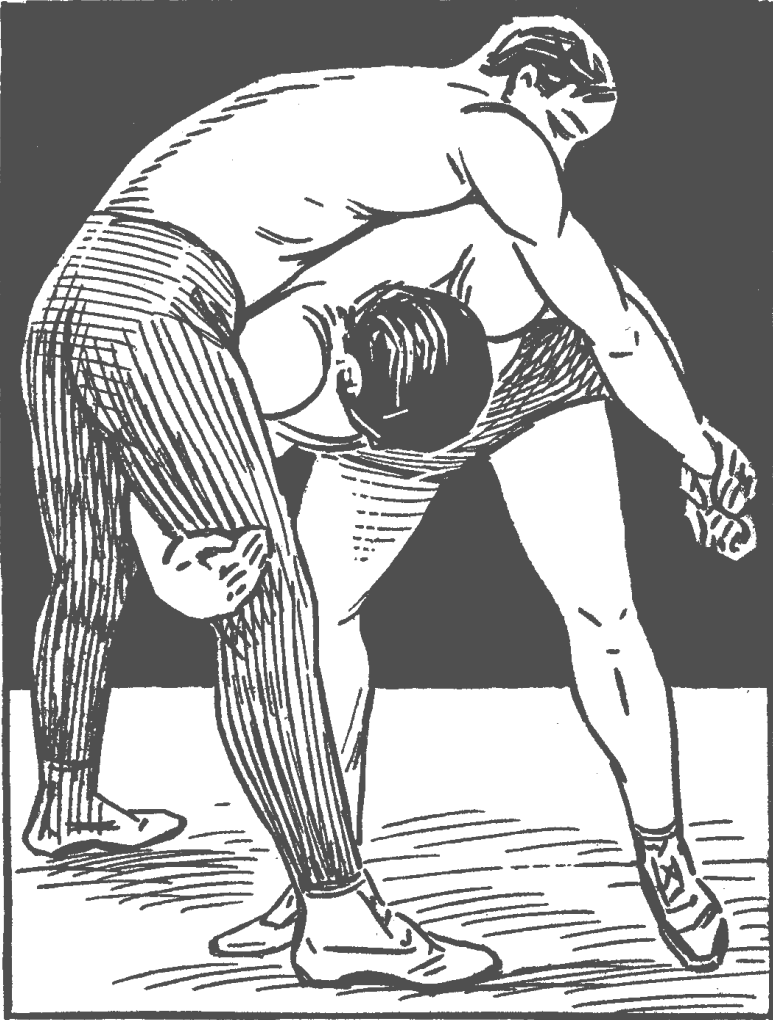


CHANCER AND BAR ARM

Crotch and Arm Lift

This is a common shift in wrestling and has been brought to perfection by Americus, one of the fastest of all light heavy-weight wrestlers. It is secured when standing and sparring for holds. Grab opponent's right wrist, pull it in, drop to right knee.

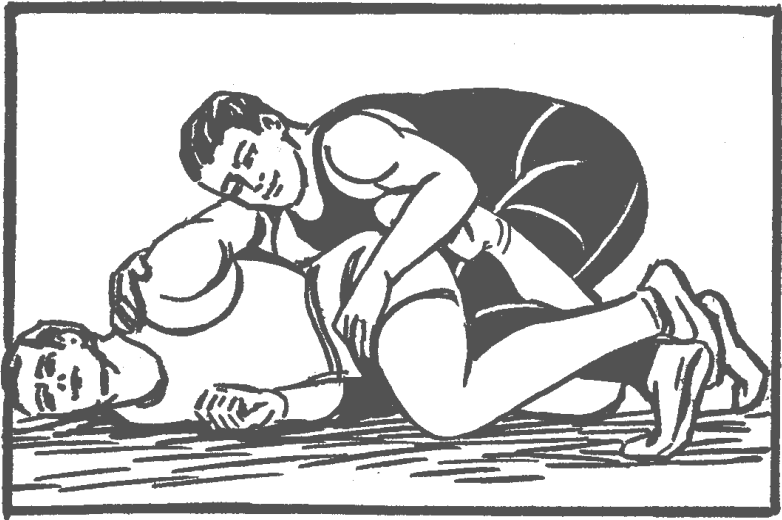
Thrust head under right arm pit and at the same time secure a leg grip with the right hand, pitching opponent forward. A fall may not be secured as a result of a tumble from this combination, but it may be reversed into other grips—sometimes the half nelson and crotch.



CROTCH AND ARM LIFT

Bar and Toe Lock

In this combination the attacker proceeds as in getting the toe hold over the leg. When this, hold has been secured, the aggressor suddenly shifts the imprisoned foot from the left hand, if working that way, to the joint of the left arm, at the same time crawling forward and applying the bar hold with the right hand as in the illustration.



BAR ARM AND TOE LOCK

Strangle Hold

The strangle hold is a discarded relic of the early ages of wrestling. It is rightfully barred from championship matches, but still may be an effective means of defense in handling a bully or saving one's life in a personal encounter with a robber or murderer.

"It is the most dangerous grip in wrestling, and yet the old timers used to employ it quite often. In my match with Tom Jenkins at Bellingham, Wash., when I won the American championship, he put a strangle hold on me after I had won the first fall. His powerful arms and great strength made it difficult for me to extricate myself.

"Maddened over the loss of the first fall and the peril of losing the championship, which he had held for six years, Jenkins charged at me furiously in the second bout and in a mix-up worked himself behind me. He slipped his left forearm under my chin and bore the weight of his right arm against the top of my head, tightening his grip and completing a strangle hold, from which it would have been impossible for a weak man to escape.

"There is only one way in which to break this hold, and one cannot linger, as delay may prove fatal. That is to employ both hands in grasping the aggressor's left member below the elbow, and thus lessening the heavy pressure on

the Adam's apple. If one possesses great strength it is possible to break the hold. I, employed this method in escaping from Jenkins.

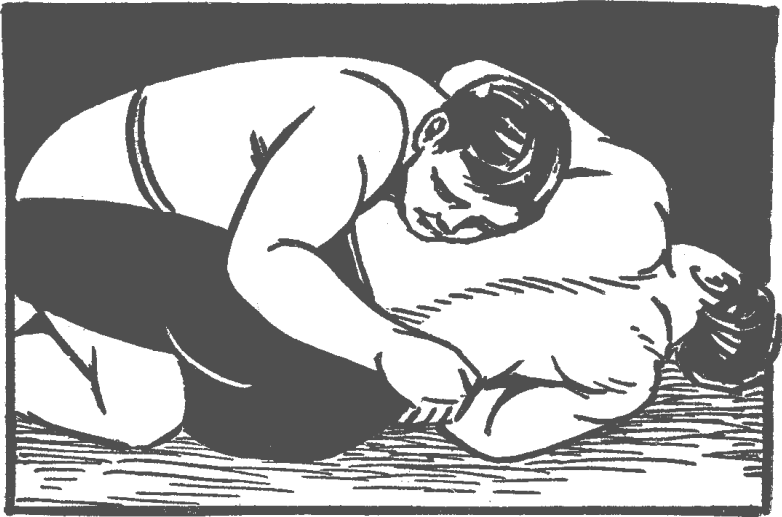
“Although the strangle hold is barred nowadays, it is used more or less in many matches. Wrestlers get it when attempting to obtain other holds, sometimes by mistake. It weakens an opponent, and if continued might prove fatal.



FARMER BURNS ILLUSTRATING STRANGLE HOLD

Inside Crotch Shift

This hold is secured by the defensive wrestler when going after the _toe hold or making a feint for an ankle hold. In almost every match when the wrestlers are down on the mat and one is working on the side, the defensive wrestler is seen to straighten out his near leg when attacked. If the aggressor is on the right side when his opponent straightens out in this fashion, he retains his hold on the ankle and raise this leg. He grasps his opponent's left thigh underneath his body with his right hand, pulling him in close and at the same time stepping inside the crotch with his left leg, he shifts both hands to encircle his opponent's body, reversing his leg grips into a double body hold. The defensive wrestler in this position is forced to turn slightly to the right when the hold may be quickly reversed into a crotch and half nelson and a fall secured.



INSIDE CROTCH SHIFT

Back Hammer and Half Nelson

Secure a half nelson first. If on the left side, the nelson is secured with the left hand of the attacker. Reach over and grasp the opponent's right wrist with the right hand and draw it up the back. This is a punishing combination that may weaken the arm and render it powerless. With the leverage and wrist hold both arms of the opponent are out of commission.

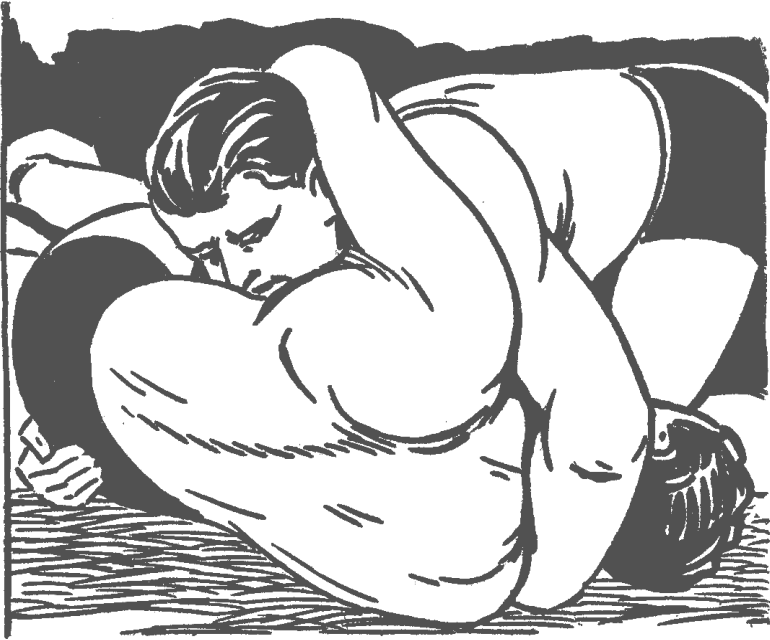


HAMMERLOCK AND HALF NELSON

Chancery and Crotch

This results from a half nelson and crotch and is one way of holding a wrestler with this combination.

When an opponent has been worked to the mat, if on the right side get a half nelson and with the leverage turn him over far enough to get a crotch. The wrestler has tried to spin out, but has been halted by the combined force of the half nelson and crotch. As the defensive wrestler raises his head the attacker may encircle his head and retain the crotch hold, completing the chancery and crotch. It prevents the under wrestler from bridging. The attacker is in a position to bear his full weight on the defensive wrestler's, shoulders. He may rest on his elbows, but the aggressor can pull him forward with the crotch hold until he gladly submits.



CHANCERY AND CROTCH

Reverse Nelson and Bar Lock

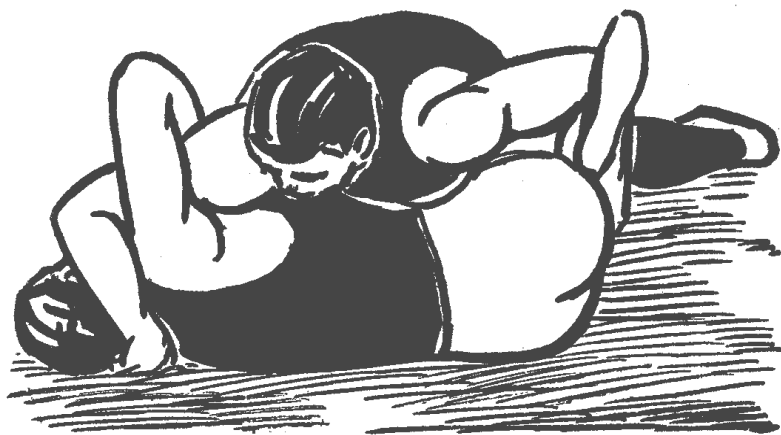
This hold is started the way the hammerlock is usually worked. Get inside arm and work it up with leverage, using both hands. When the double leverage is secured let go suddenly and as the defensive wrestler turns on side to resist it, shoot the right hand around the head of the opponent for the reverse nelson and bar lock.



REVERSE NELSON AND BARK LOCK

Half Nelson and Toe Lock

When the defensive wrestler is down on the mat, the aggressor gets a half nelson and tips his man to the side. If working on the right side, as in the illustration, the half nelson is secured with the right arm. With the left hand the aggressor A reaches over and pulls up the far foot of the opponent and tips him over with the combination. The left hand encircles the right thigh of the opponent, making the grip doubly effective.



HALF NELSON AND TOE LOCK

Hammerlock and Bar Hammerlock

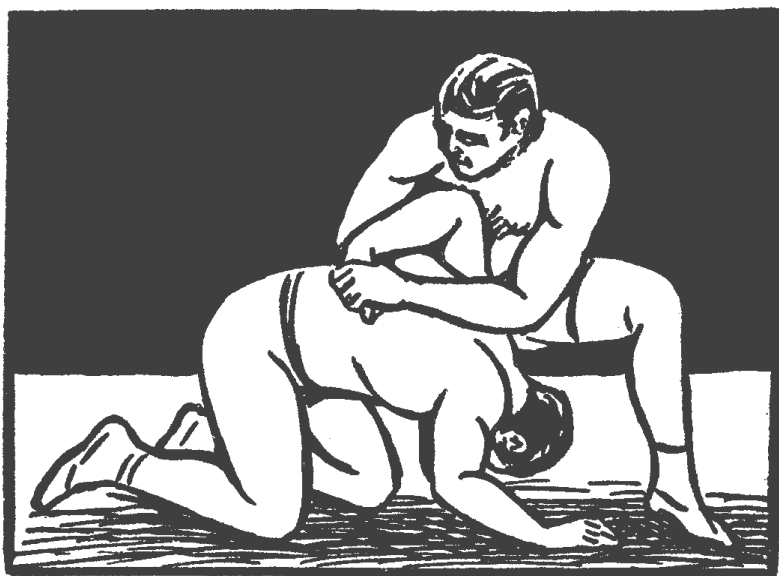
“There are several varieties of the hammerlock,” said Gotch. “The hold is usually secured when working over an opponent on the mat. The aggressor reaches inside the left arm of his opponent and grasps his hand with his own right hand if working on the left side. The attacker also grasps his opponent’s fingers with his left hand. He works the imprisoned hand up and back, using the leverage thus obtained to accomplish his purpose. When the imprisoned member is pulled back, the grip may be retained with one of the attacker’s hands and a waistlock added to force back the hand toward the shoulder blades.

“I defeated John J. Rooney, a Chicago policeman, with the hammerlock, using Farmer Burns’ method of getting the back hammerlock. I grasped Rooney’s right hand and pushed my head into his right arm pit. Suddenly I jerked his right back, caught his arm above the elbow and threw my weight forward, forcing his right shoulder to the mat. His arm in this way was imprisoned. It was only necessary then to change my position and force the imprisoned arm back for the hammerlock. The arm may be shoved back to the shoulder blades, when the defensive wrestler will gladly submit, turning over on his back.

“The hammerlock is usually secured in conjunction with some other hold. A hammerlock and grapevine or a hammerlock and crotch are

very effective combinations, but not easy to secure on strong opponents.”

To get the bar hammerlock on the opponent's left side work the hammerlock hold, applying the double leverage with both hands. Retain the hammerlock with the left hand. Release the right and shoot it under the arm resting it on the left shoulder of the defensive wrestler as in the illustration. This completes the bar hammerlock—a punishing grip. The opponent will gladly roll on his back.



BAR HAMMERLOCK

Toe Hold Over the Leg

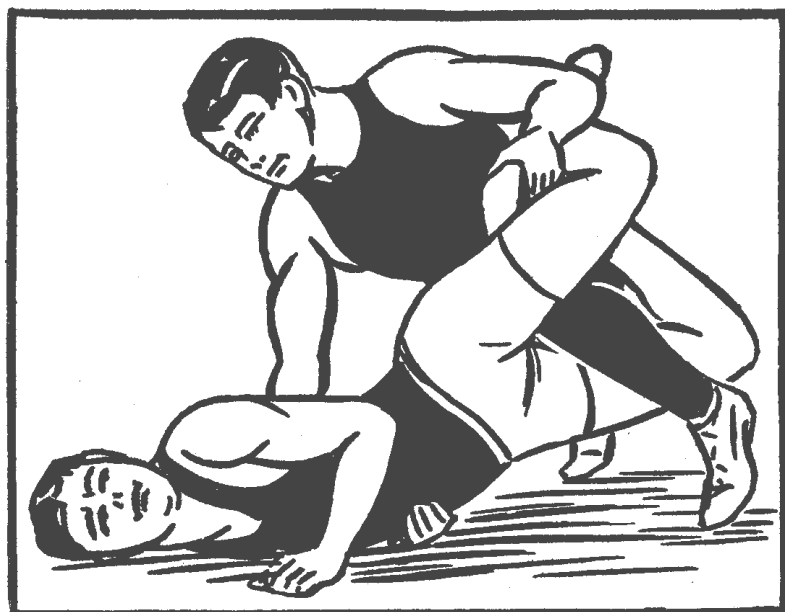
“When I was in England trying to force Hackenschmidt out of his shell, I was asked quite often to explain the toe hold,” related Gotch.

“A sporting writer asked me whether I thought it right to use such a painful grip. He said it was against the rules to twist a wrestlers finger and it was certainly just as unfair to twist one of his toes. To have answered that question would have spoiled a good joke, but it expresses the general idea of the toe hold, which is an erroneous one.

“One day when I had been wrestling in Cincinnati a newspaper man wanted me to show him how I secured the toe hold. I told him to get down on the floor and I would show him a touch of real life.

“‘Gotch bent over me,’ said this writer, ‘toyed a while with one of my feet, then quickly grabbed the other and gave it a twist. I looked for a nice clean spot on which to put my shoulders to keep my leg from snapping off. I wanted the leg for future use. It felt as though Gotch wanted to take it along with him. At that he exerted only a few pounds pressure.’

“This writer had caught the principal idea of the toe hold—the idea of leverage. I made a study of mechanics and it was there that I learned the true value of leverage in wrestling.



TOE HOLD OVER THE LEG

The plan of this and other such holds is to make one's opponent use many times more power to resist one than the attacker exerts in his aggressive moves. I have wrestled stronger men than I am, but in every move I try to make my opponent use more strength than I do. In this way he tires much quicker. He is fighting himself and his opponent much of the time.

"The defensive wrestler must be on his hands and knees on the mat in order to work the toe hold over the leg. An opponent may lie flat on the mat of his own accord and if he refuses to take this means of resting up, he may be forced down by superior strength or by suddenly raising him by the near leg and lunging him forward.

"In this position the attacker straddles and sits on the near leg of the defensive wrestler above the knee. He feints for the further foot of his opponent. When the defensive wrestler shifts to protect his foot, the near one may be grasped quickly and raised up over the attacker's leg.

"This plunges the head of the defensive wrestler forward on his face. It brings his weight to bear on his own imprisoned leg in such a way as to make him share in the leverage that is exerted by the completed hold.

"The imprisoned leg should be drawn up as

high as possible to give the longest leverage, in which position it is possible for a small man to hold a giant. This works on the same principle as the handle of a pump. A small child may grasp the end of a pump handle and make it work, but it would take a strong man to grasp the handle near the top and bring a flow of aqua pura.

“There seems a movement in some quarters to bar the toe hold in championship matches. Well, I won’t mourn its loss if the grip has to go but I think it has a rightful place just as certainly as the headlock, hammerlock and several forms of the wrist lock. I probably would have won every match that went to my credit if the toe hold had been barred. With the toe hold over the leg, to which the principal objection is made, I have won a small portion of my matches. Donelson, Rooney, Raoul De Rouen, Harrington and Grant are a few on whom I have affixed toe holds and won. I defeated most of my opponents, however, with other grips.

“In grasping the foot to pull it over the leg, the attacker should catch it just below the toes. The attacker usually discovers that the muscles of the leg are relaxed, showing the defensive wrestler was off his guard.

Gotch's Famous Toe Hold

“I have often been asked,” said Gotch, “how and when I discovered the toe hold. That is a pretty hard question to answer. Farmer Burns and I worked out the problem of the toe hold wrestling in Iowa. I think I used it first on Scott Miller. I pulled the foot over the leg and applied the leverage. The other toe hold, and the one I employ the most, was worked out later.

“There are several varieties of toe holds and locks, but the one I use most and the one which writers call ‘the famous toe hold,’ consists of getting the opponent’s foot in a vise in which the toes and ankle are the points of attack. It is often confused with the toe hold over the leg, but the two grips are distinct.

“It is important first of all to have one’s opponent in the proper position to begin the preliminary moves for the toe hold. When an opponent is on the mat, suppose the attacker is on the right side. The wrestler who is the “under dog” must be on his hands and knees for the attacker to make the shift that traps his opponent’s further foot.



FAMOUS TOE HOLD

“The attacker from this position holds his opponent to the mat by grasping the right leg high up with both hands, working well to the side. With his right hand the attacker reaches inside the crotch from the front, grasping his opponent’s left ankle. With the left hand he grasps his opponent’s foot near the toes, almost simultaneously straddling the near leg of his opponent and pulling up on the imprisoned foot. The opponent’s right leg in this way is trapped and his left foot is “out of commission.” When the left leg has been imprisoned in this way for a few seconds, the muscles relax and the member becomes powerless. The attacker then pulls up and may apply the twist to the toe hold. His head may be used as an instrument of attack in forcing an opponent’s shoulders to the mat.

“Since the left leg of the defensive wrestler has become ineffective by being imprisoned in this way, the ankle hold may be released and the toe hold easily retained. The free right hand of the attacker then may be used in forcing the shoulders of the defensive wrestler to the mat. Since the under wrestler has turned on his side, the half nelson may be affixed and the opponent pinned with the half nelson and the toe hold or the toe hold released and the crotch and nelson applied. The toe hold may be used alone.”