

# TRAINING GUIDE

*"Control Holds and Takedowns"*  
Series I Video 2

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

*"Law enforcement officers must learn compliance holds...to handle situations that go beyond verbal control. Although compliance holds do not work on everyone, they provide an avenue for the escalation of force."*

Larry Smith, Retired Police Officer and Academy Instructor, 34 years with San Diego P.D.

Law Enforcement Officers may have to control the behavior of others by the very presence of their uniform:

- \* *by verbalizing through simple commands and directions and*
- \* *by, sometimes, turning to physical control.*

*POSITIONING, AWARENESS, and GOALS*  
are all components of successful compliance holds.

## CAUTION:

*These techniques can hurt or injure others if applied incorrectly or with excessive force.*

- \* *Practice techniques slowly, at half or three-fourths speed, and with gradual pressure. Do not jerk fingers or joints. By relaxing, the holds will hurt less.*
- \* *The person serving as the victim should use the tap-out system to signal that that person has reached their maximum tolerance of pain. Tap out on the shoulder, chest, thigh, or the floor. The person applying techniques should stop or release pressure on 'victim.'*
- \* *Watch body language (raising up on toes, grimacing, tightening of limbs, etc.) for excessive use of force.*

\* When practicing techniques, use mats to avoid serious injury.

Control Holds and Takedowns 2

## Maintain a **Center of Balance**

Maintain a center of gravity, a center of balance at all times.

By leaning out too far, an officer loses an advantage to the suspect.

Lower your center of gravity by bending your knees, and line up nose and crotch when practicing compliance techniques and in actual field applications.

This simple move will give you more power to perform techniques.

## **Push/Pull Theory**

If someone pulls you, don't fight or pull away. If a suspect grabs your arm and pulls, then you should move in the suspect's direction.

If a suspect pushes you, don't push back. If the suspect pushes against you, then you should "go with the flow" and allow the suspect push you.

Use the suspect's body and momentum to make the holds work more efficiently for you.

## **Physical Distraction**

By simply hitting with an open hand on the subject's chest or forehead, an officer can distract a subject and work on either releasing a hold on the officer or have enough time to apply a control hold on the subject.

Remember, *action is faster than reaction.*

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*Never use a compliance hold as punishment.* The purpose of these holds is to get the subjects to comply without the officers having to escalate to a higher level of force. If a hold is not working, officers must disengage and try another hold or escalate to a higher level of force to get compliance.

*Releasing the pressure of the hold is the subject's reward for compliance.*

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## PHYSIOLOGICAL FACTORS

The general health and physical fitness of a person plays an important role when applying control holds.

*Usually the better fit the individual is, the higher the pain tolerance.*

Sometimes the basic body structure of a person, such as a large-boned person, may act differently than a small-boned person when a control hold is applied. Some people have more of a natural high threshold of pain than others.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Psychological factors may be the most unpredictable element in compliance holds. The mind can trigger emotional responses that can affect how a subject will react:

- \* Anger and hostility creates an unpredictable response.
- \* Mental illness has some of the highest resistance to any attempt to gain compliance.
- \* **Passive and aggressive are two** kinds of personalities resistant to compliance holds. Use extreme caution when trying to control these subjects, and usually a higher level of force is necessary.
- \* Subjects who are goal-oriented and refuse to show pain outwardly is another group that is difficult to handle with compliance holds.
- \* The real problem subjects are drug and alcohol abusers, since drugs or alcohol affects their pain response.

- \* The size of the subject and officer influences compliance holds. A small officer who applies a control hold on a larger resisting person might have to use an alternate hold.
- \* Finally, officers' attitudes toward survival may be a direct relationship toward the outcome. Officers have been known to freeze in motion when involved in a high stress situation. Others have panicked and lost control of the incident through the lack of self-confidence. Worse yet, some officers have just given up.

Verbalization skill, proper technique, a survival attitude, and the ability to recognize when to escalate or de-escalate make a good combination for controlling a subject's behavior and getting compliance.

***If something doesn't work, try something else.***

***DON'T GIVE UP!***

## COMPLIANCE TECHNIQUES

### *FOCUSING*

*Use small circles in moves and apply toward the center of subject's body.*

### FINGERLOCK

When applying, grab subject's four fingers.  
Then place your hand under subject's palm  
to provide a base to gain more control, to exert more pain, and  
to create less movement from subject.  
Bend fingers back to subject's center of body.

### REVERSE WRIST LOCK

To apply a Reverse Wrist Lock, start at the escort position.  
Place your elbow tightly in the middle of the your stomach.  
Grab the subject's hands with your outside hand, palm down.  
Bend their wrists in the same direction they normally bend  
with their fingers pointing to the rear as their arms are placed behind their backs.  
Your outside hand grabs the subjects' hands while stabilizing their elbows  
with your outside hand.  
The palm cups the back of the subjects' hands.  
Apply pressure to the back of the subjects' hands and  
using a pushing motion with your stomach, apply additional pressure to their wrists.

### WRIST TWIST

The Wrist Twist is an excellent control technique.  
It can be used to deliver instant pain to even the biggest subjects.  
Once control is maintained, the hand can be brought behind the subject's backs  
to apply handcuffs from a Reverse Wrist Lock.  
The Wrist Twist is an excellent hold to extract subjects from chairs or vehicles.

### WRIST TWIST (cont.)

The theory of application is an important ingredient of applying successful holds. Pressure must be applied in a lateral rotating fashion with an upward spiraling movement using your entire body, similar to a baseball swing.

The positioning of subjects' elbows and wrists are at 90 degree angles. Both of your hands twist their fingers and upper parts of their hands toward their body. Your hand around their fingers must be below their fingertips to avoid them curling their fingers to relieve pressure.

The first indication of success is when subjects rise onto their toes. It is important to apply pressure, then release it when the subject reaches compliance. But still maintain constant pressure to keep the hold in place.

Once control is established, turn toward the subjects. Place your hand that held their fingers underneath their arms to keep the subjects from turning.

Drop their arms to the middle of your stomach while still maintaining a twisting motion on their wrists.

Next, reverse their wrists and bend them in the same direction they normally bend and place their arms behind their backs.

It is time for you to change your hands and grab the back of the subjects' hands with pressure.

Meanwhile, your elbow must be placed in the middle of your stomach for a backup and to hold their arms rigid. From this position, handcuff subjects.

***THE MOST IMPORTANT FACET OF COMPLIANCE HOLDS  
IS GETTING SUBJECTS INTO A POSITION  
WHERE THEY CAN BE RESTRAINED WITH HANDCUFFS.***

### Z WRIST LOCK

Make arm and wrist in a "Z" shape by raising the elbow straight out with one hand, grabbing four fingers with your other hand.

You can now apply pressure by rotating the wrist to your stomach and pushing it up toward the head and twisting toward the center of the body.

Rotate elbow in circular motion to get opponent into a prone position.

***NOTE: This move is probably one of the most painful compliance holds you will use.***

## **Z LOCK ESCAPE**

**If subjects grab your wrist with their same side wrist,  
lower your center of gravity by bending your knees  
and keep your nose and waist straight up and down and  
lock the subjects' wrists with you opposite hand..  
Rotate your wrist around and grab your subjects' wrists  
and bring back around in a "Z" formation.**

**You can now control the subject into a prone position by rotating elbow  
in a circular motion,**

## **Z WRIST LOCK CROSS GRAB**

**If subjects grab your wrist by crossing in front of your body with their wrists,  
then lower your center of gravity, lock their wrists with yours,  
and with your grabbed wrist rotate under theirs and bring it down  
on top of their wrist with the focus toward the center of the body (where the pain is).  
If subjects stand up, drop your arm down—not your body.**

## **Z WRIST LOCK TWO-FINGER GRAB**

**Grab subjects' little fingers (pinkie) and the finger next to it with your hand.  
Hold the subjects' elbows with your other hand and  
rotate the grabbed hand in a clockwise manner.  
Use your finger as a pointer to find the center of the subjects' bodies.**

**This move works well with smaller officers or those with lesser strength,  
because it gives the officers more control**

## **TWO-HAND GRAB**

**If subjects' grab both of your wrists, you can rotate under either of theirs  
and grab one your own wrist,  
then you peel the thumb off and push the wrists toward the subjects.  
You can take subjects down to a prone position.**

## HAMMER LOCK

If subjects stand in a defiant manner  
with their hands on their hips (a non-verbal body sign of hostility),  
then step in and put your arm inbetween their bodies and elbow folds  
and up the back and over the top of their arms.

Your thumb is up and over the upper portion of their arms,  
and then point the thumb downward.

With your other hand, push their shoulders back to you,  
thus creating a painful empty hand control.

Many officers use a baton instead of the arm with this control hold.

## HORN COME-ALONG

This hold *bends and twists* the wrist.

It is generally applied from the escort position.

Bring the arms back perpendicular from the subjects' body, making sure  
they keep their heads down.

Apply pressure down their arms by bending their wrists to a right angle.  
Grab their thumbs with your inside hand and slide your outside hand  
just past the their elbows.

Pressure must be kept constant at their wrists to make it work.

Rotate subjects' fingers clockwise and forward as their arms pass under their arm pits.

With their elbows locked in your lower abdomen and pressure at their wrists.

begin twisting their wrists to the outside to increase the pain.

A Reverse Wrist Lock can be applied from this position to finish the hold.

## WRIST FLEX TAKEDOWN

Reach down and grab subjects' same side wrist.

Push the hand back and down,  
putting subjects in a prone position.

Then you can move into a chicken wing compliance hold.



## **REMEMBER:**

- 1. When applying holds, give verbalizations (preferably one-word commands); tell them your expectations.**
- 2. De-escalate with compliance.**
- 3. Have some empathy for subjects. These control holds and takedowns hurt some people more than others.**
- 4. If a technique doesn't work, move on to a higher level of force.**
- 5. Practice perfect techniques.**
- 6. Control your subjects; don't punish them.**

**ALERT compiled this training guide in association with Larry Smith and used, in part, information from his lesson plan, "Joint Locks, Takedowns & Escapes," and from his article, "Compliance Holds," from the book, TOTAL SURVIVAL ( Performance Dimensions Publishing, 1993), Ed Nowicki, editor.**

**TEST QUESTIONS**  
*"Control Holds and Takedowns"*

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1. b
2. False
3. d
4. True
5. False
6. a. Positioning
  - b. Awareness
  - c. Goals
7. Stop or decrease pressure
8. False
9. try / higher
10. handcuffing
11. False
12. True
13. Reaction
14. True
15. empathy
16. True

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1. If subjects stand with hands on their hip, that could be a non-verbal sign of

- a. relaxation
- b. hostility
- c. powerlessness

2. The better fit the individual is, the lower the pain tolerance.

True

False

3. The following are body signs a subject might show for excessive use of force:

- a. grimacing
- b. crying
- c. raising up on toes
- d. all of the above

4. A simple verbalization or command should be short and direct.

True

False

5. Focus moves toward the center of the subject's body and move in large circles.

True

False

6. Name the three components of successful compliance holds:

a.

b.

c.

7. Define de-escalate:

8. Mental patients and drug abusers are the easiest subjects to subdue.

True

False

9. If a technique doesn't work, \_\_\_\_\_ something else or move to a \_\_\_\_\_ level of force.

10. Control holds and takedowns are simply compliance techniques that would eventually position subjects so that they could be restrained with \_\_\_\_\_.

11. The Push/Pull Theory says that if someone pulls on you, pull back against them.

True

False

12. Create more power for yourself by maintaining your center of gravity by bending your knees and dropping down.

True

False

13. Action is faster than \_\_\_\_\_.

14. The Z Wrist Lock is one of the most painful compliance holds an officer will use.

True

False

15. Since these holds could hurt, have \_\_\_\_\_ for subjects.

16. An officer can distract a subject by hitting with an open hand on the chest or a loud verbalization.

True

False

**Test Answers**