

Author Interview: Wim Demeere Pad Man

Paladin Press: Your newest video is called Pad Man. What is it about?

Wim Demeere: The video covers how to hold focus mitts, hand pads and kicking shields in both an effective and versatile manner. We filmed a lot of aspects: striking with all limbs, stand-up, striking a downed opponent, striking from the ground, and lots more. I tried to get as much information as possible into the videos. But what's probably even more important is the section on the most common mistakes and how to avoid them. I've seen some nasty injuries happen to both pad holders and the practitioners striking them, simply because they held the equipment in a bad way. After watching this video, they should have sufficient knowledge on how to avoid that.

PP: Tell us about the evolution of this idea – have you had a lot of experience training with people who don't know how to hold pads properly?

WD: That's exactly where the idea came from. I'm a heavyweight and working on the pads is one of the few times I can cut loose on a partner. But many of my training partners either didn't know how to hold the pads and kicking shields correctly or they thought they were doing a good job but really weren't. I vividly remember throwing a full power shin kick only to hit my partner's elbow instead of the shield because he turned the wrong way at the last instant. When I talked to some friends about this, they all had similar tales so I figured there was a need for an instructional video. When I did the research, I found a handful of products that covered this topic a little bit but nothing really in depth. And so the project was born.

PP: Is this video for hard-style martial artists, or can anyone benefit from it?

WD: It doesn't matter what style you do, if you use striking techniques, you can use the information in the video for your training. I made it in such a way that you can adapt the holding techniques for not only MMA-type training but also self-defense and traditional arts. It all works.

PP: What makes you qualified to teach a video on this subject?

WD: At the risk of coming off as an arrogant know-it-all, I do have a lot of experience with that equipment. For over 15 years, I've used it with clients and athletes alike to advance their physical and technical skills. In many cases, working with the equipment was the main component of their training. As a result, I've had to experiment a lot to see what works, why it works, and who benefits most from it.

Also, I talked to a numerous coaches and trainers to pick their brains on how they used the equipment. Invariably, we came to the same conclusions and techniques. It was only in rare instances that we disagreed on a specific way to use the focus mitts or kicking shields. However, I still incorporated their information in the video: I tell the viewers the different options and explicitly say which one has my preference. It's up to them to see which way they like best. I'd be doing them a disservice if I were to withhold anything, so I didn't.

PP: What are your future plans for new projects with Paladin Press?

WD: We have a couple of projects in preparation and I'm pretty excited about them. The first one is the advanced pad work video. In *Pad Man* I tried to show all the possibilities there are with the equipment. In the advanced video, we go into *how* you can use it to get the most out of your training. How you can make all sorts of drills and tweak them so your training partner always has a new challenge on his hands.

The next two projects are a follow up on the *Combat Sanshou* videos we made a few years ago. I've received a lot of emails asking for more so I decided to expand on the material. But instead of adding techniques, the new videos will focus on how to get more out of them. I'm also working on an instructor's program for *Combat Sanshou* and all these videos will be an integral part in learning the curriculum.

The first one, tentatively called *Tiger and Snake* will explain how to use the *Combat Sanshou* techniques with good strategy and tactics.

The second video is about developing good body mechanics so you can strike and throw with more power. And then show you the conditioning exercises and drills to not only increase your power but also get you in fighting shape.

PP: You have a significant on-line presence, between social networking sites, your personal website, and your blog. Tell us about that, and how successful it's been.

WD: This won't sound very macho but I'm a bit of a computer nerd. I started playing around with personal computers over thirty years ago and never stopped. Then the internet came along and things really got interesting. I started my first website (book and video reviews) over ten years ago and just transferred it to my blog, which is where I spend most of my time now. The blog's really picking up: more and more visitors seem to enjoy what I put on there as traffic increases every month. The next project I'm preparing is a membership site that should go live in the short to medium turn, depending on how fast I can sort out some technical aspects. Yup, definitely a computer geek...

The social media are just an extension of my interest in the internet. They're a great way to get in touch with the people who buy my books and videos and get feedback from them. At the same time, I get to "meet" fellow practitioners of the arts, self-defense enthusiasts, professional fighters and talk shop with them. Besides that, I use these media to keep in touch with friends from all over the world. That's really the common denominator for all my internet activities: they allow me to get in touch with people I otherwise wouldn't get to meet because we live continents away. I've struck up some great friendships along the way, so I'd say it's all been a great success.