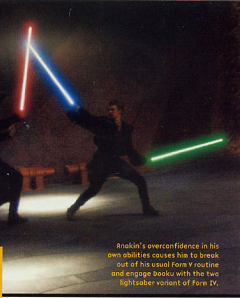
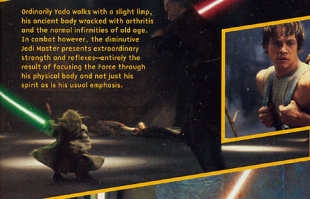




Ordinarily Yoda walks with a slight limp, his ancient body wracked with arthritis and the normal infirmities of old age. In combat however, the diminutive Jedi Master presents extraordinary strength and reflexes—entirely the result of focusing the Force through his physical body and not just his spirit as is his usual emphasis.



Anakin's overconfidence in his own abilities causes him to break out of his usual Form V routine and engage Booku with the two lightsaber variant of Form IV.

Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi's excellent use of Form IV's acrobatic maneuvers are little more than delaying tactics against the Form VII skills of Darth Maul.



## The Phantom Menace

By the time of the Battle of Naboo, Darth Maul is the product of many years of intense training in physical combat skills, and considers himself a master of a corrupt Sith version of Form VII. Maul's utter devotion to Form VII's physical focus is telling: he remains silent during his battle with the Jedi on Tatooine and Naboo, desiring a purely physical victory instead of pursuing the "higher" Sith tradition of *dun möch*—domination of his opponent's spirit, which Sith typically achieve through taunts that expose inner doubts and weakness.

## Attack of the Clones

Yoda ever focuses first on philosophy, his centuries-long lifespan giving him the luxury of great patience even for a Jedi. One result of his deep communion with the Force and exceedingly clear inner focus is his transcendent mastery of the lightsaber. Through the Force, Yoda takes Form IV to its highest level.

Yoda's astonishing moves in his epic duel against Count Dooku may be revealed on close examination to be a masterful demonstration of the standard components of Form IV. Yoda's moves flow from one to another in the smooth transitions character-

istic of this Form. Three kinds of rotation, or *su ma*, figure prominently in Yoda's style. They are *jung su ma* (spinning), *ton su ma* (somersaults), and *en su ma* (cartwheels). These three moves represent the three possible axes of rotation in three-dimensional space. Together with flying Force-enhanced jumps, the rotational *su ma* moves compose most of Yoda's lightsaber fighting technique, making him the ultimate example of Form IV.

With knowledge of the Seven Forms, we can more clearly perceive the lightsaber action and the dueling philosophies throughout the rich tapestry of the *Star Wars* saga. We can see how characters' natures, and cultures, are reflected in their styles of combat. In all such actions are expressions of identity, and learning to read them for the messages they hold is a worthwhile goal in any universe.

In the words of the Jedi Masters, *solah*, or "it is enough." 🙏

Author Dr. David West Reynolds and fencer Jack "Stelen" Boba derived the "in universe" principles of lightsaber combat based on the action that appears in all five *Star Wars* films to date. An important notice to our readers: these Jedi histories are not stunt choreographies nor instructions from Episodes I and II Stunt Coordinator Nick Gillard, who developed the exciting sequences we see on screen. Do not attempt fencing without proper safety precautions and training.