# Martial arts

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| **Bawt Jaam Do ("*Eight technique knife*"):** The emphasis is on muscle conditioning by applying the techniques (with a rather heavy set of steel blades shown to the right).  I've found that using the blades isn't hard but *applying the knife techniques with the proper control* is a pretty fair workout on the forearms. |
| **Bui Gi ("*Spearing fingers*"):** Focuses heavily on defense through offensive techniques such as the right hand finger jab shown in the thumbnail. |
| **Chum Kui ("*Sinking bridges*"):** Learning how to absorb an opposing force by yielding to it (sinking).  Also it focuses on learning how to apply the rotary power from the hips in order to supplement the techniques from the previous form.  While the sinking motion can be straight forward like the low block that I've executed with my left arm in the thumbnail to the right it can be a more subtle yet complex technique involving a combination of absorbing the attack while apparently moving yourself directly into the attack. |
| **Lok Dim Boon Gwun ("*Six and half point staff*"):**  This form consists of six and a half techniques that are practiced repeatedly on the Wing Chun Staff.  Although the original benefit of the training was self-defense, now it's practiced more for the strength building and control that the practice provides (now-a-days very few people would carry around an eight foot staff for self-defense). |
| **Sil Nim Tao ("*The Little Idea*"):** Focuses on the fundamental hand techniques and moving on side of the body independently of the other as well as in tandem. |

# Video games

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| **Drakkhen: Draconian**.  Although primitive by today's standards, at the time the graphics and sound were absolutely amazing.  It was the first game that I would stop every so often just to listen to the music in the pub or watch the sun set. |
| **Dungeon Master** (and the sequel: Chaos Strikes Back). It was the first game that every really made you feel like it was actually you rather than some computer generated character that was exploring the dungeon. Hearing the sound of the party as it fell down a pit would raise the hackles on the back of my neck. |
| **Hired Guns**: One of the first games that allowed for multiple players to cooperatively or individually explore the world.  The truly amazing thing was this was done without a network and without an Internet connection, just one computer, one monitor and up to four simultaneous players. |
| **MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries**. I actually knew very little about FASA's futuristic universe until I started playing the game but almost immediately I was hooked.  One of the most memorable missions was the first time that my lance tangled with the Omni mechs of the clans.   (The mission not over???!!!..not by a long shot merc.). |
| **Silent Hill 3**.  Silent Hill has a surprising amount of substance for a just video game, the designers admit to being inspired by a diverse number of sources that include: movies such as: 'Jacob's Ladder' and 'The Cell', the works of Stephen King and David Cronenberg, the mythology and beliefs of native Americans, Edvard Munch’s 'The Scream' and astoundingly even the theories of Freud, Jung and Francis Bacon.  Until playing this game I never truly understood when people said that they were more afraid of the monsters that you couldn't see.  The game designers managed to do this without relying extensively on obvious cliques such as the "Oh-no-a-monster-suddenly-popped-out from-no-where".  Instead it gets under your skin in a deeper and more subtle fashion that manages to stay with you for a long time afterwards.  I think that one of the contributors at horrorwatch.com put it best put it when they described Silent Hill in the following fashion "The game plays to and exploits nearly every base instinct and fear there is, fear of the dark, fear of what hides just beyond the light, fear of what cannot be seen, fear of enclosed spaces, fear of being buried alive and yes, even fear of fear. " - Unknown author |
| **The Birth of the Federation**.  It's the only Trek game that really captures the feel of large scale fleet combat and the strategic management of an empire or federation. |
| **The Pool of Radiance**. (I am referring to the original version by SSI and not the remake - which I've haven't tried yet).  Even though it's technical capabilities are quite dated by today's standards it's one of the games in my collection with the most replay value.  I'll never forget the time that the skeletal hands come out of the ground in the Valhingen Graveyard. |
| **The Rise of the Dragon**.  I found the comic book style graphics were very good at immersing you in this gritty view of a future Los Angeles. |
| **The Wing Commander Series (I - V)**.  Throughout its life the series underwent more changes than any other.  The first game was drawn using VGA graphics and only 256 colors but was often cited as one of the strongest motivators for the sales of 80386 processors.  The third, fourth and fifth in the series were among the best of its kind in utilizing video sequences of the quality found in big budget Hollywood movies (it was amazing that they managed to get Mark Hamill from Star Wars to play the lead role in two of the games). |