

# *The Ping Pong*

## *by sick*

So you just finished your Drop, and the target isn't dead. You're ready to start a deadly combination maneuver, the Ping Pong. Done right, you bleed every last ounce of energy from the target and shoot him so full of lead he'll think he's a Roman Aquaduct. Done wrong, you'll need a boat.

The Ping Pong is a series of partial attack runs, each setup much like a Drop, that are intended to force the target to take only ineffective action. The time to initiate a Ping Pong is when you are above a target, at stall speeds, pointed up, and your target is below you, low on energy, but not low enough to leave you a significant advantage. There is a fine line here: if your energy state is too close, you will have to disengage, a Ping Pong won't work. If you have too much of an energy advantage, the length of time it will take to reverse each attack run will give the target ample opportunity to gain energy or disengage himself.

A Ping Pong is intended to accomplish the following:

- Build on a slight energy advantage. By faking gun passes, you commit proportionally less energy than the defender, who must assume you will come all the way in.
- Keep you safe. By not committing to low percentage (especially head on) attacks, the Ping Pong keeps you out of danger until you are ready to make an attack on your own terms.
- Frustrate the enemy. By never quite engaging, never quite giving up a shot at you, you drive the bastard crazy.

The general idea behind the Ping Pong is to begin a dive on the target from a fairly steep angle, but not straight down like a Drop. Instead, come in from somewhere between 45 and 60 degrees. But, instead of going all the way in for a guns pass, pull gently into a zoom climb when the target is still d10 to d12 in front of you. The target, having an energy deficit, will be unable to follow you up and around, and will either dive away (you can now convert to a much safer Swoop attack) or will struggle to keep up with you, but remain slow and below you. Even better, he may have committed to a defensive move that burns even more energy, and may even cause him to lose sight of you.

These partial attack runs can continue as long as is necessary. It's important to know when the conversion should occur; convert too late, and you are wasting time, giving the target a chance to possibly disengage, or, worse yet, summon help. Convert too soon, and you will blow your energy advantage and be forced to disengage yourself.

The right time to convert is when the defender gives up. This can come in a number of forms. He may dive away, trying to get out of your reach. He may commit to a defensive maneuver that leaves him stalled out. He may lose sight of you. Or he may try to force his nose up towards you for a very low percentage (or zero percentage) shot, and leave himself stalled out and helpless. When the time is right, the Ping Pong converts easily to a Drop or, should he try to disengage, a Swoop.