

enchmade Bali-Song, Blackhawk Base-Layer²¹

ed by the people of the Philippines and ever after considered their design.

This knife, of course, like all Benchmade-labeled knives, is made in the USA.

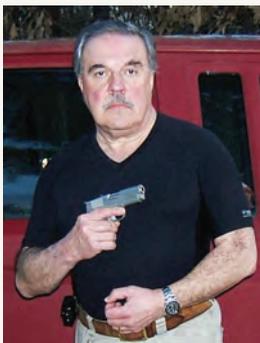
Bali-Song knives are illegal in some states and possibly in some municipalities.

The key thing to remember if you are new to a butterfly-style knife is that only an expert should try using a double-edged Bali-Song; and, for all the rest of us, single edged only. With a single-edged Bali-Song, one can open the knife in such a fashion that the edge will never cut into your hand. A typical opening sequence for a well-designed Bali-Song is as follows and begins with holding the knife in your master hand, between your thumb and your first three fingers. The opening stud for the latch should contact the rearmost portion of the tip of your third finger. Pop the latch open with the tip of your third finger as you drop your thumb to the lower of the two handle slabs. Snap your hand forward as you let the upper handle slab flip loose. For a split second, the four fingers should be between the two handle sections and the thumb atop the only handle slab that you are actually holding. The spine of the blade should be up. Rotate the hand slightly away from the body so the four fingers are no longer between the handle sections. As you do this, draw the knife ever so slightly rearward, so momentum carries the second handle piece to where it butts against the piece you are already holding. If you have done this right, you'll have a solid grip on the knife, the spine of the blade will be up, the edge will be down and the flip lock will be dangling downward and possibly touching your little finger. If you really want to know how to do this right, buy Jeff Imada's books (amazon.com), *The Bali-Song Manual* and *The Advanced Bali-Song Manual*.

If you buy the books or don't, when you practice this opening or any opening, carefully apply thin tape over the edge so you don't cut yourself if you flip the knife the wrong way. When you want to close the knife after the opening I described, grasp the upper handle section between the thumb and first finger and make a circular motion with your hand, away from your body, as you release the lower handle section and roll the upper handle section one hundred eighty degrees between your thumb and first finger. If you do this the right way, the handle slabs will be closed with the blade

between them and you won't have cut off any body parts. Bali-Songs from Benchmade are among the finest folding knives to be had and I could not recommend them more highly, this one no exception.

Not too long ago, I profiled Protective Products (body-armor.com) concealable body armor in



Ahern with a V-neck short sleeve Blackhawk! Products compression fit base layer which proved very comfortable. The pistol is a natural stainless finish, Pendergrass Detonics CombatMaster.

these pages. A "base-layer" is particularly useful under body armor, of course, but is practical in other applications as well. Recently, I've tried two different versions of Blackhawk! (blackhawk.com) Products ThermoStatic Base-Layer and found both garments to be comfortable and effective. Now, you may be saying to yourself, "This is underwear, right?" It is underwear only in the sense that it is worn under other clothing. The difference is that a base-layer, whether from Blackhawk! Products or whoever, is not a general-purpose item, but is task specific. The Blackhawk! Products ThermoStatic Base-Layer is specifically designed to be smooth and wrinkle free underneath equipment. Get it one size below what you might normally wear and you'll have

what's called a "compression fit," wherein the tighter fit eliminates friction and provides muscle support, essentially becoming like a second skin.

For a guy, it's necessary to get over the initial shock of wearing something that fits that closely. Women are used to closer-fitting clothing, but men usually are not. If you go for the compression fit – which is the most practical – next time you watch a superhero movie, you'll feel more empathy for the costumed crime fighter. Once the novelty is passed, if you're like me, you will find that what you're wearing is quite comfortable. I experimented with two different variations, the first an ordinary seeming V-neck short sleeve T-shirt style, the other a quarter-zipper model with long sleeves.

The ThermoStatic Base-Layers are uniquely constructed. Using 92 percent Jersey Nylon and eight percent Spandex for the body with stretchable side panels of 95 percent Polyester and five percent Lycra, the result is something that fits your body as if it were made to your measurements.

As I've said before in these pages and I'll say again, this is a time to equip yourself to the best of your financial limitations. Remember, "It pays to plan ahead."

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