



Understanding this principle is critical to successfully using the sabaki technique. When you control your opponent's closer elbow, you must take advantage of the naturally existing balance weakness by pulling and then pushing that elbow.

Sometimes in a fight you may be lucky enough to gain your opponent's blind spot without moving yourself much, but this results only if he moves himself into such a vulnerable posi-

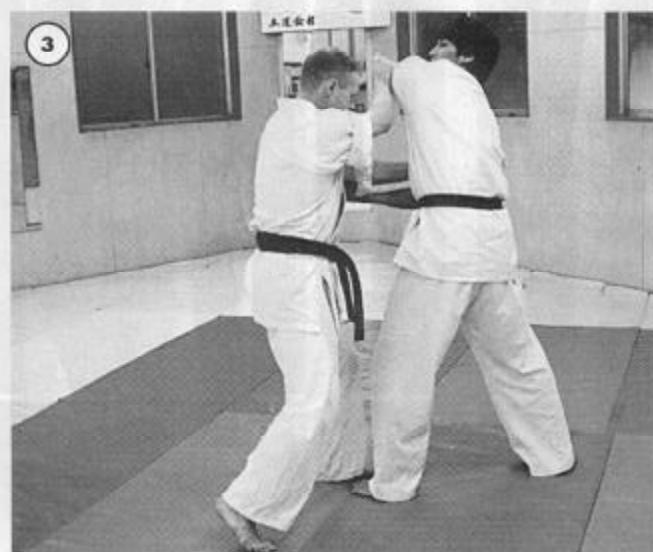
tion. By all means take advantage of it if he does. However, the usual pattern requires you to move yourself into an advantageous position relative to your opponent.

#### Distancing

The main thing you need to be aware of regarding distancing is that you must apply the sabaki technique from as close to your opponent's center of gravity as possible. In some cases you may even bump him with your hip and forearm as you effect the maneuver.

A common mistake involves trying the sabaki technique on your opponent while he is still at arm's length. Although this may work if he is moving and you have the chance to step around him, it will not work if he is stationary. To really master the technique, you should practice on a stationary opponent. Once you get the hang of that, you can practice on a moving opponent.

It is important to realize that you cannot pull your opponent around your body. You have to use your own body weight as



*As effective as the sabaki technique is, with the right knowledge it can be easily countered. Once Nakasako Tsuyoshi (right) grabs Arne Soldwedel's elbow and neck (1), Soldwedel pushes upward on his opponent's left elbow (2). When Nakasako's arms are under control and his balance is broken (3), Soldwedel circles behind him (4) and delivers a knee thrust to the head (5).*