Blocking a blow to the head with a circular shield and a Scutum.

Maximum Reach

Shoulder stays in the same Place

As lift your scutum, your elbow hits the edge of the scutum. Remember the Scutum is curved, so, eventually your elbow hits the wall of the shield.

Furthermore, your wrists starts to bend in a terrible angle. There is a limit on how far your wrist will go.

Shoulder LIne

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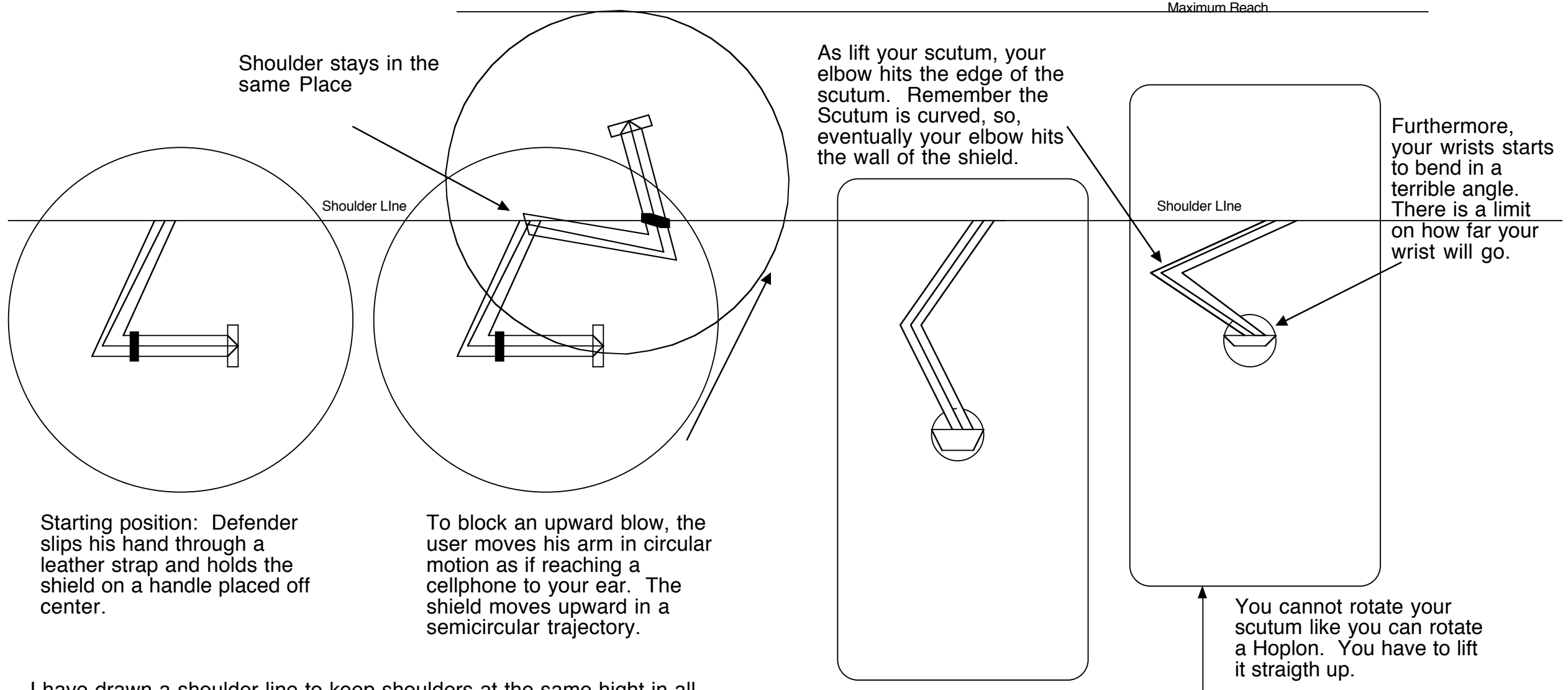
Starting position: Defender slips his hand through a leather strap and holds the shield on a handle placed off center.

To block an upward blow, the user moves his arm in circular motion as if reaching a cellphone to your ear. The shield moves upward in a semicircular trajectory.

You cannot rotate your scutum like you can rotate a Hoplon. You have to lift it straigth up.

I have drawn a shoulder line to keep shoulders at the same hight in all four representations. Notice how the user of a hoplon can make a better/higher upward block than the user of a scutum. It is not a matter of strength or physical fitness. It is a matter of ergonomics: the way you move your body and bend your joints.

The scutum was not a good tool to make an upward block. It was a lot easier (and faster) to duck behind the shield instead of trying to lift the shield.