

Sword and Pen

Official Newsletter of the International
Combat Martial Arts Federation (ICMAF)
and the Academy of Self-Defense

EDITORIAL

How to Handle Provocations

NOTICE AND DISCLAIMER: WE ARE NOT A LAWYER, AND NEITHER THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL NOR ANY OTHER ADVICE GIVEN IN THIS PUBLICATION SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS "LEGAL ADVICE". THIS IS STRICTLY PERSONAL OPINION AND PERSONAL ADVICE — NO MORE!

TROUBLEMAKERS come in all ages, sizes, and shapes. And they come in both genders. Decent, responsible, reasonable, non troublesome human beings are often inconvenienced, annoyed, harassed, threatened, insulted, taunted, bothered, and even attacked physically by these subhuman creatures.

It generally begins in childhood with bullies (who more often than not include one or more of those miserable excuses for "teachers" whom the public school system indifferently foists upon him, in addition to those inevitable scummy contemporaries, amongst whom — in the PRISON that is the public school system — the child finds himself obliged to remain until late adolescence). The burden of dealing with troublesome human garbage never really ends — although usually the problem of physical bullying gives way to socioeconomic predation, which — in the guise of "adults" — a wide variety of "human" debris continue to indulge gleefully, until or unless stopped cold, which, sadly, they rarely if ever are. Many forms of living filth actually gravitate to occupations (ie "super salespeople", lawyers, schoolteachers, office managers, politicians, rogue cops, bureaucrats, etc.) that encourage and reward the scummiest, most evil and despicably vile characteristics of which homo sapiens are capable.

Whoever you are, wherever you live, whatever you do for a living, and however reasonable, fair-minded, and peacefully directed in your daily behavior you may endeavor to be, it is almost a 100% certainty that, from time to time — if not frequently — you will be subject to the provocative belligerence and encroachments of others into your life; or at least you will be subjected to others' attempts to provoke you in countless ways. That's part of the human condition.

"Self-defense" is much more than being able to squash a mugger like a paper cup. It is that, to be sure; but it is much, much more, besides. And in our teaching we have always tried to arm and to equip our students with the necessary know-how to cope with the myriad pre-violent situations that arise daily. These are situations in which it is often (not always, but often) possible to diffuse the onset of hostilities by recognizing what is

happening, and by saying or doing just the thing that is necessary to avoid physical trouble.

Today's society consists of a large number of individuals who have been raised with all sorts of disgusting and irrational beliefs — from "if it feels good, do it", to "situational ethics". These organisms (one really cannot regard them as genuinely "human") FEEL. Having abandoned their minds long ago, they drift on each impulse and flicker of emotion that manifests at the moment — and if they feel like lashing out — verbally or physically — they simply do it. If they "want" to make a snide or derogatory or intrusive or sarcastic, or disrespectful or offensive comment, they make it. Responsibility? Well . . . for organisms that drift as these do, responsibility is simply refused. YOU are to blame. They never are. YOU did the wrong thing. They never do the wrong thing. And besides — "What difference does it make? Why are YOU making such a fuss?" Ad nauseum. "I can do what I feel like doing, dude!" sums up the creature's philosophy.

We suspect that you understand. And we are certain that you can relate.

Here's the thing: It is necessary and desirable to learn beforehand how to handle these obnoxiously repulsive swine, for your own sake. You do not want trouble — certainly not with today's legal system — and if you consider the matter of how to handle provocations and provocative members of our species before you find yourself suddenly in the sights of one of these worms, you may be able to make your own life a lot more trouble free, and a lot less exasperating, by managing your encounter with this scum in a manner that enables you to disengage. Then again, should your predicament ever prove to be one in which the provocation cannot be

diffused and avoided, but where the troublemaker insists upon physically violating you . . . well, you'll be fully prepared to do whatever you must.

Verbal provocations:

The law nowhere in the United States of America, as far as we are aware, allows a person to react with physical violence to mere words. Thus, while you very well might in your view (and perhaps in ours, too) be completely justified morally in beating some piece of foul-mouthed street dung into a coma for hurling obscenities at your wife or daughter, you will not (as far as we know) be legally justified in doing so. We therefore counsel that you NEVER permit yourself to become physical in such a situation, no matter how provocative the gutter monkey who taunts you may be. Personally, we would never, ever raise a hand against anyone over mere words, and we hope that we can persuade you to emulate our example.

Because almost anyone would feel at least some urge to physically thrash a mouthy bastard who permitted himself free verbal reign, and who belched out profane or obscene or otherwise offensive epithets or insulting garbage — especially toward someone for whom one cared — one must exercise the effort to establish, ahead of any such incident, a clear and inviolate mandate NOT TO PERMIT ONESELF ANY PHYSICAL LATITUDE, should such an unpleasant event occur.

Ahead of time, understand?

Believe us: It will be too late to decide on the spot if and when you have never given the matter any prior thought. The sudden expression of an unprovoked insult can easily — in some cases — produce an almost

reflexive response from a person, directed toward the initiator of the remark. A hard and long day, hot weather, bills piling up, a recent fight at home or in the office, etc., could easily make the remark a "last straw" — and that last straw can prove very, very costly if it triggers what is later determined to be an illegal act of violence on your part.

Here is the rule for ANY AND ALL situations in which another individual directly or indirectly expresses anything verbally offensive, quite possibly to provoke you: Stay your hand! Never become physical. Never threaten to become physical. Go to mental condition "orange" (ie the alerted state, ready to take action immediately if the verbally offensive creature initiates actual violence). But, unless an attack becomes imminent, remain physically NON AGGRESSIVE!

We would also recommend, if you can do so under the circumstances prevailing at the time, leaving the area where the offensive creature is. Disengage! Even if you have a "right" to remain where you are, it is in our personal opinion wisest to leave. Sometimes this may not be possible (ie in your home, in your own office, etc.); but please — for your own and for your loved ones' sake, not for the sake of the swinish creature! — remove yourself physically from the vicinity if you can.

On no account get caught up in a verbal argument or in an insult-hurling match with some piece of garbage, since this could precipitate violence, and that's what you should be striving to avoid.

NOTE: We offer the following commentary regarding our own long-standing personal philosophy, with hopes that it will help our readers:

We have never regarded others as being in any sense truly "significant" to us, insofar as our opinion of ourself is concerned — ie our self-respect, or — if you prefer the modern buzzword — our "self-esteem". We are rooted and anchored in our self. We are genuinely, permanently, and completely indifferent to how any individuals, save our few good friends and our intimates, might feel or think about us. And no one who thinks poorly of us would, or ever could, become or remain a "friend" or an "intimate".

In those few instances when others might try to attack us verbally or (since we are a fairly well-known writer) in print, the ONLY thing that angers us or arouses our serious contempt toward the speaker/writer is our understanding of that creature's MOTIVE. His words are as bland as a dial tone, and have no force or meaning whatever. What we do note, and the thing for which we forever write off such an organism as being unforgivable, contaminated filth, is the fact that we appreciate and understand the malice behind the words. Thus we celebrate and take great satisfaction in coming to understand, in such instances, that here is one creature who has, as far as we are concerned, made his potential for toxicity known to us, and now we (figuratively speaking, of course!) flush him down the toilet.

Perhaps our view will help someone out there, and alleviate any unfortunate error that some reader may tend to make in personalizing any slime's verbal "slings and arrows".

It was one of our great teachers and friends, Dr. Albert Ellis, who would routinely tell people at his talks on psychology and personal development: "You have to learn how to take a lot of shit." Thanks to the good Dr. Ellis

we did learn how — in our late teens — and it has made us a happier, more relaxed, self-satisfied, and UNAFFECTABLE individual. So long as the s— is verbal, we couldn't care less. Our psychological state is such that we are simply non receptive to that which is said.

Minor physical annoyances:

This can get a little dicey.

Sometimes a serious attack can be initiated by the attacker's doing something that is, initially, hardly any danger or real physical threat, at all. (An example is an incident years ago, in Florida. A young girl was approached by a murderer/rapist at a carwash. (The surveillance camera picked up the incident, and readers may recall having seen this on the evening news at the time). The voices cannot be heard, but we see the killer merely walk calmly up to the girl, say something, and then gently take her arm. He then leads the poor girl away. The two walk in a relaxed manner, with only the most superficial "hold" on the child's arm in place. She was later raped and murdered. The scum who did it was caught and, if we remember correctly, sentenced to death. So it is NOT our intention here to say that you ought only react with great violence to that which is obviously and clearly at the moment of its occurrence a lethal threat, per se. We know quite enough about violence and about violent crime and troublemakers' modus operandi to understand that ANY physical act initiated against someone might be life-threatening, or at the very least, dangerous.

What we wish to convey here is a strong recommendation not to take any physical action at all IF you know and understand that you are dealing

merely with some minor physical pest. We know all about "control holds", "pressure points", and all of the other methods of "putting a pest in his place". But in today's climate of flagrant irrationality and litigious insanity we urge that, if confronted by such a nuisance (at the office, at a social gathering, etc.) you simply shrug it off. Take every step to avoid the moron, of course. But do not take physical action unless you truly have a sense that you might be hurt by him.

Once, in junior high school, we applied a simple response (a ju-jitsu throw) to a fool whom we knew, who tried squeezing our hand powerfully when he shook it. The technique worked beautifully! It "cured" this acquaintance's nasty little urge to show off at our expense, but things were a lot different in the late 1950's. Also, things were and still are a lot different between young boys in middle school who horse around, and adults (who, today, routinely sue each other, and in general behave like out of control horse's asses). If someone squeezes your hand at a party or at the office, just tell him to stop. (If he doesn't, sue him! HAH!)

Seriously . . . especially in the case of a trained combative arts student, it is ridiculous and unnecessary to get physical with a pest. Remember, however, this does not mean that you restrain yourself if you are set upon by someone whose motives and character you do not know, and whose initial attack is — in and of itself — relatively mild (ie a clothing grab, wrist or arm grab, shove, etc.). Neither an expert in close combat nor anyone else in the world has any obligation to suffer anyone's hands on him (or her), and the proper response to the threat of serious bodily injury is — **OVERWHELMING VIOLENCE**, we hope applied skillfully, decisively, and well, the second it is needed!

Threats:

There is a big difference between someone simply calling you a "lousy mother—!" and someone actually threatening you by saying that he's going to beat you or kill you, etc., or possibly harm a member of your family, or damage your property, etc.

Any time anyone threatens you or someone you love with physical harm, **CALL THE POLICE AND MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT**. Often, due to sheer laziness or indifference, the police will try to persuade you simply to "call them if the person ever does anything" so that "they will then be able to take action". They may not encourage you to file a formal complaint (after all, they have to go to the trouble of writing it out). **FILE IT ANYWAY! INSIST!** Get the officer's name, number, and complaint file number, who fills out the complaint for you. This is important! (Also, make a record of the date and the time of the call. ALL 911 calls are recorded and may be used later in court, as evidence!).

If the scum that threatened you or yours ever actually undertakes to make good his threat and you — properly — crunch him out of fear for what he intends to do, you want that official police report on record, and a sworn officer's testimony that **PROVES** you had prior reason to **FEAR** the individual whom you defended yourself against!

Showing up at the scene where you have dropped some creature justifiably, the police who respond have no way of knowing who is and who is not the "victim" and/or the "attacker". **REFERRING TO YOUR PRIOR FORMAL COMPLAINT AND REPORT WILL GO A LONG**

WAY TOWARD ESTABLISHING YOUR "MANTLE OF INNOCENCE" IN THE EYES OF THE LAW. And this is important!

While it may be true that most threats amount, in the final analysis, to "mere noise", not all threats are empty and meaningless. The one directed against you or against someone you love may well be one of the exceptions. **REPORT IT TO THE POLICE!** Take no chances.

NOTE: For the record, we must say that there are many fine police officers who will gladly assist any decent citizen in taking whatever steps he lawfully is able to take to have the system on that decent citizen's side. Our perhaps "angry tone" earlier in speaking of the reluctance that is sometimes encountered when asking for help from the authorities is intended merely to assist readers in coping with such an eventuality IF such should ever occur, in any particular reader's case.

Physical assault:

We are not going to discuss the matter of "battery" (ie of direct force being applied by an offender) since, obviously, the only sensible way to deal with that form of "provocation" is to drop the batterer where he stands, using every ounce of decisive and merciless force you can generate! When someone initiates controlling or injurious violence it is time to ACT. Neither restraint nor avoidance is any longer appropriate to the circumstance. Now it is WAR!

The onset of apparent violence ("assault") must also, in our opinion, be met with decisive force, in all but the most obvious exceptional instances.

Violence in any form should not be taken lightly. When it appears clear to you that someone intends to hurt you and is capable of injuring you, and when he has the obvious opportunity to hurt you, **DROP HIM!**

Use no more force than is necessary to decisively render your assailant harmless, and by all means stop once you are in no more danger; but do not hesitate for a fraction of a second if or when someone makes it clear that he intends to injure you. You have the opportunity for a moment to pre-empt him, and to do so with the element of surprise in your favor. You will never get that opportunity again if you fail to act, or if your action is less than decisive.

Often, the matter of when the techniques of personal combat ought properly to be brought into play is not dealt with adequately (if at all) in a martial arts program. Beyond the legalities (which **ONLY** a lawyer can address with authority and reliability) we feel that there is the matter of common sense and plain good judgment.

We hope that we have encouraged our readers to exercise both.

Bradley J. Steiner

Practical Fingertip Jabbing

READERS whose background includes considerable training in any of the classical/traditional karate type systems of Asian martial art are doubtless familiar with the "spearhand" thrust. This is an attack using the tips of the extended middle three fingers when the hand is held open, in a position

similar to when the side-of-the-hand ("shuto" or "sudo") strike is to be executed. Legend has it that great kung fu or karate masters could drive their extended fingers through a man's chest and rip his heart out. (If you believe this, then you are well advised to search out other more spectacular web sites to explore. The truth is that this "legend" is pure, unadulterated bullshitsu).

However, the fingertips thrust ("spearhand") is not entirely without merit. If the individual who employs it has the requisite strong, thick fingers, and if he has devoted the necessary months to conditioning the blow, then he might well be able to employ it with good effect against targets other than the eyes and throat. The late karate master Mas Oyama did. In a scheduled fight with a boxer by the name of Becker, Oyama used a spearhand thrust to the boxer's solar plexus to drop the man that he later acknowledged was "the toughest man I ever fought".

But unless you've got the hereditary gift of physical prowess that Oyama possessed, forget about thrusting your extended fingers into any opponent's target areas — save his eyes or his throat.

Many years ago, when in our 20's, we followed the classical/traditional "spearhand" training regimen: Starting with rice in a large bucket, we trained daily in thrusting our spearhand repeatedly into the rice. We progressed to sand. Then to gravel. After a year and a half the result was that our spearhand thrust was not one bit more capable of being employed against any but the opponent's softest target areas than it was prior to our training regimen. Yes, our thrust was significantly improved. There is no denying that. However, the fact that we do not possess a heavy bone structure, and that our hands and fingers have never been particularly

strong by nature, precluded our advancing the capabilities of this natural weapon beyond its formidability when employed against the eyes or the throat.

We still train in the straight fingertips thrust, and we regard it as exclusively for sudden attacks to the eyes and throat. We have for decades given up all "spearhand thrust training" along classical Chinese and Okinawan lines, and while we shall always remember Oyama's feat with awe (and the rip-the-heart-out legends with amusement), our advocacy of this method of attack will remain much less ambitious.

In the late 1970's, through training with Maury Geier and association with Fairbairn's "opposite number in America" during the WWII years (ie our late colleague and friend, Col. Rex Applegate), we learned of William Ewart Fairbairn's brilliant method of fingertips jabbing, and we enthusiastically adopted it in the American Combato (Jen•Do•Tao)TM curriculum. We shall describe it here, and hope that our readers will experiment with it, and enjoy the inclusion of a most formidable "natural weapon" in their personal repertoire of skills:—

Fairbairn's method of fingertips jabbing compensates for the inherent weakness of the extended fingers as weapons by forming the weapon in a manner that strengthens and supports them on impact with the enemy's target area. Formation of the weapon is simple. Cup the hand in exactly the same manner that is utilized when employing the earbox strike. Referred to by Fairbairn and others as the "thunderclap" the double hand earbox is described and illustrated in *All-In Fighting/Get Tough!* and should be a priority blow for all students of unarmed close combat. Remember that the earbox may be employed to excellent effect using one

hand. When doing so it results, upon impact with the enemy's head, in a natural cocking action that facilitates a handaxe ("edge-of-the-hand blow") chop to his neck or throat. Great stuff!

With one hand formed for an earbox it is properly held as though you wished to scoop up water; the fingers are pressed firmly together, and the thumb solidly braces the side of the index finger. Held in this manner the hand roughly resembles a cobra's head.

If the reader will form this weapon now and then notice how the tips of his fingers are solidly positioned and braced, he will understand how the weapon may be trained. By jabbing forcefully into his opposite palm with the fingertips held thusly, the reader will appreciate how powerful a jab he is capable of executing against an adversary. He will not hurt his fingers!

At this point, say a silent word of gratitude to W.E. Fairbairn!

How — and against what targets — is the fingertips jab used? We train to employ this blow against: the bridge-of-the-nose/eyes, base of the throat (jugular notch), throat, solar plexus, and testicles. Primarily this blow is for use against the eyes and testicles.

How to deliver the fingertips jab (NOTE: We distinguish the "jab", which is our designation for Fairbairn's blow, with the "thrust", which is our designation for the extended fingertips thrust. As we already stated, we relegate the thrust exclusively to the eyes and to the throat — much the same as Pat O'Neill did.):—

When delivering the fingertips jab to the eyes and bridge of the nose or throat target area, the blow is driven in an ARC from the ready position "arcing" upward into the eyes or throat. When driven to the testicles or to the solar plexus (see note at end of this section regarding solar plexus blows) the blow is driven in an underhanded ARC (roughly analogous to how a bowling ball is thrown). DO NOT TELEGRAPH!

It's that simple. A little practice will permit this powerful jab to be executed instantly and well, and with zero warning to the recipient. We recommend practice on a dummy or heavy bag (not recommended for extended fingertips thrusting!).

The reciprocally beneficial effect of training the hand for both the earbox and the fingertips jab whenever this hand formation is employed should not be overlooked, as both blows are great unarmed combat actions!

We hope that readers enjoy working this attack method into their training.

NOTE: Our personal feeling about use of this blow against the solar plexus is unenthusiastic. However, per one of our teachers — i.e. Geier, who was a former FBI instructor and counterintelligence man during WWII, and who had learned under Fairbairn and Sykes, personally — this is a terrific "death blow". Okay, we take his word for it, and we can see how it could be lethal IF perfectly landed by a trained, fast hand.

However, this blow is awkward for us, personally, when delivered to the solar plexus, and we include mention of this application here only because we respect the genuine expert who had taught us this application of the technique.

Best Weapon For Home Defense

IN an emergency anything can and should be employed as a weapon. However, when one prepares for an emergency beforehand, one has the luxury of selecting a weapon that is as close to being perfect for the task at hand as possible.

Handguns are wonderful weapons of self-defense. Their use should be encouraged, and in a rational society it would be a virtual characteristic of all fully educated persons that they would go armed, and that they would be fully prepared to defend themselves in any situation. For individual emergency self-defense when out and about, at work, at school, at home, at recreational activities, etc., nothing beats a powerful pistol in trained hands. However, for home defense, despite the insistence in many of the gun magazines to the contrary, the handgun is often not the best choice as a weapon for self and family defense.

The 12-gauge shotgun is.

Our personal favorite is the Remington Model 870 "Marine Magnum"; but in fact not only any police length (ie lawfully shortened) 12-gauge shotgun in the Remington 870 family will do, so will similar configurations manufactured by Winchester and by Mossberg (to name two other first-rate arms manufacturers). We prefer the ruggedness and reliability of the pump action weapon, although there are some semiautomatic shotguns that are fully reliable. It is not our purpose here to get into one of those stupid fits of nit-picking that so many "gun nuts" just love to enjoy, whenever they can find anyone or any group stupid enough to listen to them! Just purchase a suitably powerful, well-made, and conveniently

sized 12-gauge shotgun, master it, and keep it by your bedside to protect home and hearth!

Question: "Are you saying that handguns are unreliable for home defense?"

Answer: No! We are saying that, on balance, a 12-gauge shotgun that one fully understands how to employ is superior to a handgun for home defense. A quality, powerful handgun will often do just fine, in trained hands — but a shotgun is the premier choice for home defense. For daily wear and carry, the handgun is King.

It is time to prepare for an emergency before one occurs. If the reader wishes to be optimally prepared for self and family defense — for handling personal emergencies away from home and at home — then he will avail himself of a handgun for the possibility of encountering the former type of predicament, and a 12-gauge shotgun for the latter.

P.S. Yes, a .410 shotgun is an acceptable substitute for someone who for whatever reason finds managing the 12-gauge to be too much. And yes, we believe in training children to use firearms to defend themselves when home alone. Obviously, teaching them carefully and well is a serious responsibility and we want every reader to appreciate that fact. But a responsible child who is old enough and intelligent enough to be taught to handle a 12-gauge shotgun (or a .410) should be taught, in our opinion. (We wouldn't suggest sending the kid to any school today for a "show and tell" with the family's fowling piece, however. Smile and chuckle).

Emergency Driving Tip From Counterambush Training Given Bodyguards And Intelligence Professionals

REMEMBER the L.A. riots? Caught suddenly in the midst of rampaging savages, there were innocent motorists who didn't have a clue what to do or how to react to their predicament. What should you do if you are driving and find yourself suddenly caught in an urban riot? What would you do?

What about a situation that occurred some years back in Southern California when a man was out driving with his family and, after taking a wrong turn off the highway found himself ambushed by a collection of gang savages? How would you handle such a terrifying predicament? Could you? The incident in Southern California resulted in one of the gang swine firing a pistol into the abruptly halted vehicle and killing a small child, who happened to be the driver's daughter.

It takes serious training to become a fully qualified protective services driver, but in reality you don't need a great deal of training or experience in order to acquire a few key pointers that can save your life in a dangerous situation. The truth of the matter is that what needs to be done requires more mindset than it does driving skill, per se.

We can skip roadblock ramming, reverse outs, and bootlegger turns. Not that learning these techniques isn't great fun (or that they couldn't be genuinely useful), but the primary rule of protective and counterambush (or counterterrorist) vehicle management is what can be imparted briefly

in this Newsletter, and it constitutes the Primary Rule that is pounded into the heads of all who take professional-level courses in special driving technique:

Never stop your vehicle! Keep driving — away from, around, or (if necessary) through whoever or whatever is in your path or threatening to attack you.

Sane people have a serious aversion to ramming into other vehicles when they are driving. While hardly surprising, their reluctance must either be completely overcome in a training course, or they cannot qualify as capable for the responsibility of counterambush vehicle management. Compared to the reluctance that sane people have for ramming vehicles, their mental block against driving right into and through human beings is a hundred times greater! Still, that's precisely what must be acquired.

Look — if you're ever caught in a riot, or if some members of a street gang block your vehicle's path on some lonely, isolated side street one night, it's you or it's them. And by "you" we mean your loved ones, in addition to yourself. Drop Mr. Nice Guy and Mr. Responsible Caring Citizen. You're now on a kind of battlefield, and the enemy has already decided to attack.

Don't be like those who flunk a professional driving course for lack of sufficient viciousness and ruthlessness. Sometimes, you need those things.

If, God forbid, you ever find yourself facing the prospect of a murderous, rioting mob's storming your vehicle (and turning it over, more than likely also killing you), or a marauding collection of street savages attempting to

ambush you on a deserted road, **DRIVE! DRIVE THE HELL THROUGH 'EM, AND DON'T SPARE THE TIRES!**

Don't drive slowly. Ram the ambushers. Full speed ahead! If one or more should jump on top of the vehicle, fine. Take 'em for a ride — at top speed, with lots of turns, sudden, abrupt stops, and (hopefully) some fast passes near obstacles that might mangle or impale them, or precipices they might slip off the vehicle and drop down! This is no game, brother!

If you think that our advocacy here is too brutal or vicious, then you obviously have no idea of the subhuman monsters that presume to prey upon what tiny remnant of civilized society is left to us in this country. Ignore our advice at your peril. And if you do, we'll doubtless be watching news videos of your vehicle being overturned and you and your family being trampled at the next urban riot — should you be so unfortunate as to be caught up in it.

Tongue-in-cheek suggestion:—

If you really want to get good at vehicle management under adverse conditions (and practice the cute stuff — bootlegger turns, reverse-outs, ramming, etc.) try an approach that we found cost effective: Rent cars and take out the insurance on them, covering you for damages. Then have at it! You may have a problem trying to rent your vehicles from the same rental agency more than once, however. Expect raised eyebrows when the vehicles are returned after a brisk afternoon of practicing roadblock ramming! Tee Hee!

Don't spend money on the purchase of old vehicles; let some rental agency put you in the driver's seat. (They don't need to be No. 1, either).
Note: THIS IS A JOKE. Don't actually do it.

Keep Your Distance!

"FIGHTING stances" are nearly always idiotic. Going into one telegraphs everything and makes the possibility of a surprise attack impossible. In any situation you will either be taken by surprise (and find yourself obliged to counterattack the assailant's action, if you can do so), or you will be aware of your adversary's approach. Going into a stance after you've been attacked is superfluous. Going into a fighting stance before an approaching felon initiates violence is absurd.

What is needed is that which we have been teaching since around 1969: A Relaxed-Ready Stance. Stand off-angled to anyone who is not known personally to you, and whom you find yourself obliged to face. Stand with your rear foot slightly to the front of your rear shoulder for frontal/rear and lateral stability. Keep your eyes on his face. Say and do nothing aggressive. Remain in mental condition "yellow" (ready and aware), or shift to "orange" (primed to attack if the individual you are facing initiates an attack), depending upon the person's demeanor, whom you are confronting. Keep both hands relaxed (fingers not interlaced) at sternum level. And . . . ESTABLISH A DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND THE PERSON YOU FACE THAT MAKES IT IMPERATIVE FOR HIM TO TAKE A PHYSICAL STEP TOWARD YOU, SHOULD HE INITIATE AN ATTACK. NEVER stand close in, where all a potential attacker need do is shoot a kick or punch, etc. at you, which — because of your proximity — will connect.

When you distance yourself in this simple manner you will, assuming that you are looking at the person in front of you, and assuming that you are at least in condition "yellow", be completely aware of any aggressive gesture the person makes **IN TIME TO PREEMPT HIM.**

Forget about the "cat stance", the "crane stance", the "horse stance", the "sanchin stance", and the "back stance", etc. You want and need **NONE** of these positions for real world hand-to-hand combat. Keep feet approximately shoulder-width apart, and bodyweight evenly distributed over both feet.

Footwork? Same as a good Western boxer's: Step forward with the lead foot, letting the rear foot follow. Step backward with the rear foot, letting the lead foot follow. Step left with the left foot, letting the right foot follow. Step right with the right foot, letting the left foot follow. Pivot off of your lead foot. That's it. No "ninja drills", no walking on rice paper, etc. And one final point: Whenever you do step, avoid sliding. If there is ice or debris on the ground you could slip and fall. Lift your foot up and plant it. Step — do not slide.

Law enforcement, including the FBI, adopted versions of this stance (our Relaxed-Ready Stance) which generally is introduced to academy recruits as the "Interview Stance". It works. It is realistic and it is practical. It does not provoke trouble, but it sets the user in a position where he is as ready to go into action as he would be in any conceivable "fighting stance". This places him a step ahead of any character who approaches him and whose plan it is to attack.

One thing that is crucial is the concept of distancing. ALWAYS KEEP YOUR DISTANCE FROM ANY UNKNOWN PERSON WITH WHOM YOU INTERACT. NEVER DROP YOUR GUARD. ADJUST AND RE-ESTABLISH PROPER (OUTSIDE ARM'S LENGTH) DISTANCE IMMEDIATELY, SHOULD THE INDIVIDUAL YOU ARE FACING TAKE A STEP TOWARD YOU NON AGGRESSIVELY. NEVER ALLOW ANYONE TO MOVE BEHIND OR DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF YOU.

We're sure that you will see the importance and value of this technique of standing, positioning, and distancing if you've never tried it or been exposed to its employment, previously.

How Much Time Does Physical Training Require?

ANYONE who follows our writing and teaching knows how strongly we advocate weight training as the primary supplementary physical training for close combat and self-defense.

Many students, and even some teachers, are confused about how a good, balanced weight training program ought to be coordinated with their combat arts work. "How," the question is sometimes put to us, "can I possibly devote all of those hours to weight lifting and bodybuilding, when I spend three or more days a week training in martial arts? I've got to go to school (or to work), and my time is limited."

The problem here is that enormous misconceptions exist regarding what correct physical training is, and how best to employ and to apply the

principles of weight training for best results. No one in the world needs to spend many hours each week in weight training in order to achieve optimum results. If you will devote but three one hour periods each week to weight training, you will benefit enormously; and in fact you need never devote more time than that in order to enjoy the fullest measure of gains in strength and development. Unless you become a serious bodybuilder, there is just no need to spend more than one hour on a workout, or to workout more than three times a week. And if, by dint of your enjoyment of training, and of your individual opportunity — and interest/energy — to "do more" than three hours a week, you wanted to spend more time, we'd caution you that going over two hours on a single workout, no matter who you are, and no matter what degree of natural potential or personal ambition you possess, is unnecessary and would almost certainly be a waste of time and effort.

Really? Yes, really.

Most of those who train in the fighting arts can achieve what they want by including but two weight training sessions weekly, in their schedule. Workouts of as little as 20 minutes duration can produce marvelous results, believe it or not . . . and we again wish to emphasize that **NO ONE** need ever spend more than one to two hours on any single total body workout — ever. And **NO ONE** need ever workout more than three times a week — ever.

Between 60 minutes and six hours **PER WEEK** is all that you'll ever require in order to reap every possible benefit from weight training.

Training schedules can and should be adjusted to accommodate changes in training and in work schedules. Thus, if you workout four or five days a week — hard! — in martial arts, do not exceed two weekly supplementary weight training sessions. And keep each session to between 30 and 45 minutes. If you attend only two weekly classes in martial arts, you can and should not only supplement them with additional home training, but also go ahead and workout three times a week on alternate days to those classes, using good, basic weight training exercises. Etcetra.

Be sensible. Be flexible. Be persistent.

The exercises you need are simple and proven. Use the squat, standing presses, rowing, dead lifting, curling, and bench pressing. Pullovers are excellent. Chinning with weight resistance is excellent (as is dipping), and many individuals find exercises like calf raises and lateral raises to be valuable, too — but be careful not to load a schedule down with too many exercises. If time is short, just do squats and standing presses. If you have the time otherwise, use about six to ten exercises, and work one between one and three sets of each one for between about six and ten repetitions per set. Abdominal exercising (via leg raises, situps, crunches, etc.) should be included in a workout, time permitting.

That's it. Stay away from outrageous and protracted routines, extreme diets, steroids, and all forms of "split" routines, and atypical modern "bodybuilding" programs. These are impractical and ridiculous, and are neither desirable nor necessary for anyone simply looking for optimum all round gains in strength, physical ability, and muscular development and fitness. The combat arts/self-defense student can and should avail himself of this fantastic, proven medium of personal development.

And, if he does so sensibly and correctly, he **WILL** have the time in his daily schedule to do so!

Note:

Not everyone can become "super strong" or develop a "magazine cover" physique. Those who possess the genetics for such development will find that a simple, basic program will enable them to forge ahead to this level of physical development.

When proper weight training is followed it is genetics that determines the eventual results and nothing else. Do not be deceived by commercial claims for "programs", "diets", "supplements", or what have you. Live and train properly, and you'll attain whatever your inherent potential allows. And — you'll keep your sanity!

About Sword and Pen

THIS Newsletter is made available to you for free. You may download it, make copies of it, and give it out if you wish, with the only **LEGAL CONDITION** being that you never fail to give due credit for its authorship, and that you never quote from it out of context. Our legal counsel has advised that violation of either of these simple and completely reasonable and fair requirements would place us in a position to level a substantial suit for damages — and win.

All we ask is fairness. Enjoy this monthly publication. Please tell others to visit this site and read Sword & Pen, too. Our passion for the armed and unarmed combat arts and physical training has been unrelenting for more than 50 years, and we wish to share as much as possible of the truths that we have acquired — and are still acquiring — with other serious, respectful, and responsible individuals.

We are not interested in mudslinging, one-upmanship, debates, or any of the other typical infantilism that pervades the martial arts field, and that is epidemic on the internet. Many have taken (and continue to take) the freedom of speech and opportunity for expression that the internet provides and utilize it for sick and twisted mean-spirited purposes. We refuse to participate in that.

Yes, we are commercially focused. Like everyone else we must earn a living. However, as our track record of decades past will bear out 100%, we deal honorably and honestly with all who treat us in kind, and our only purpose is to earn our living by selling QUALITY and that which works.

We thank you once again for visiting our site, and we hope you'll return next month for the December edition of SWORD & PEN.

CORDIALLY,

Prof. Bradley J. Steiner

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