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# *Sword and Pen*

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

## EDITORIAL

### ***PERSISTENCE IS A CRITICAL KEY TO TRAINING SUCCESS***

**NONE** of us ever makes progress or gains quickly enough. Impatience and the desire to “have” that which we so ardently “want” *right away* is a shortcoming in just about every single one of us. *Our self*, included.

The problem is, this impatience and desire to “have it now” must be understood for that which it is, overcome, and not permitted to produce so great a degree of frustration within our psyches that would see us abandoning our most cherished aspirations for want of the discipline and persistence that is inevitably required to achieve them.

The drop out rate in martial arts is high. Every year millions of people enroll in a *karate, taekwondo, ju-jitsu, or “kung fu”* school — only to drop out within the first month or two, usually never to take up martial arts again; or if they do, to *repeat* the same self-defeating cycle of “enroll-and-soon-quit”.

It is often the same in the relatively more recently established “practical close combat” type schools, of which *American Combato (Jen•Do•Tao)*<sup>TM</sup> is both a pioneering force, and a preeminent, long-recognized and standing example. Students *want* to learn how to defend themselves, but they are not prepared to apply themselves tenaciously enough to get the job done; not to mention *stick with the training so as to retain a sharp and high level of real ability, throughout their lives.*

Short-term courses are fine, when long-term study and class participation is out of the question (for example, when a student lives in another country, and must rely upon intensive training in private lessons, at convenient intervals, to learn the methods that he wishes to acquire), but *it is always necessary to CONTINUE PRACTICING AND DEVELOPING the skills that have been taught during intensive, short-term programs.*

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There is no quick and final fix, when it come to preparing for self-defense emergencies. And precious few “get” this.

Consider what it is that you are endeavoring to accomplish in your training in close combat and personal defense. You want to be able to react to the onset of a violent attack by one or more possibly armed, *experienced, strong, dangerous, desperate* offenders who more than likely either ***intend*** to cripple or to kill you, or have not the slightest concern about whether they do so or not, so long as they achieve whatever criminal purpose their onslaught is motivated by. ***THIS TAKES REAL EFFORT, TRAINING, AND HARD, PERSISTENT WORK!*** Especially *because* you are *not* like such scum as those who perpetrate these actions, and it is your purpose to be able to handle what for yourself (and any other civilized, mentally healthy person) is **abnormal, dangerous**, and in most cases, ***very, very terrifying***.

It is a lot like preparing for war. When a private citizen whose personal background has included little more violence than a competitive sport or perhaps a scuffle as a kid, enlists in a military service, he must be **changed**, before he can be sent into battle. His body and his mind must be honed and conditioned so that he will be able to cope with the battlefield, so that he will not wilt, and so that he will — frankly — be capable of ***engaging*** and ***killing*** an enemy who is fully prepared to do the same to himself.

This is one reason why properly undertaken military training demands total immersion, and is forcefully vigorous, tolerating not the slightest deviance from the proper spirit and all-out effort required for battle. (We are well aware that this ideal may not in fact exist presently in the preparation of all recruits, but that does not gainsay the point that it ***SHOULD*** be the standard that is upheld).

The marine corps and the army have their recruits entirely under their control. The discipline is motivated from without. (Try telling your D.I. in the course of marine boot training that you’d rather skip P.T. that day because you wish to remain in your bunk and read, or that the bayonet or hand-to-hand training is too “aggressive” for your taste, and you’d prefer to do an hour of *t’ai ch’i!*) *There is nothing “voluntary” about the never-ending discipline and effort expected in proper military combat training.* You **WILL** do it!

The problem is that in individual preparation for close combat and self-defense, which people decide to undertake on their own, they are of course as free to quit as they were to enroll. The teacher has no authority (and wouldn’t want to have the authority) to force the student to continue in training, and to apply himself with his best efforts to both attain and retain the skills and self-confidence that he initially desired, and in hopes of acquiring, he had enrolled for training in the first place. ***The discipline must come from the student, himself. It is he, the student, who must reach within himself and find the WILL to train and to practice hard, and to exercise PERSISTENCE when the arduousness of the course causes a voice within himself to urge him to quit.***

*“A quitter never wins, and a winner never quits!”* Most things derived from sport do not apply to combat training. *That* particular admonition is a conspicuous exception — philosophically. If you lack the tenacity and grit to stay the course, you will ***not*** get what you enrolled in it to achieve. Those who are successful in their close combat and self-defense training did not acquire their success by quitting.

In training there will be setbacks. Perhaps occasional injuries. Possibly an illness will necessitate a layoff, etc. But if you are serious about acquiring solid skills and retaining them, and enjoying the physical and psychological readiness to defend yourself and handle any threats of a physical nature to those you love, ***YOU***

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### **WILL STICK IT OUT, COME RIGHT BACK TO TRAINING, AND CONTINUE TO PRACTICE, WORKOUT, AND GO THE DISTANCE!**

There is no other way; no “easy” or “overnight” or “secret” way, regardless of the misleading crap that may be promised by some purveyor of “mysteries” and “methods the government doesn’t want you to know”, etc. *Don’t be a fool.* If you possess any sense at all you know intuitively that there could not possibly be any way that some overnight miracle or “easy” course can transform you without disciplined effort over time, into someone who can *really* handle a dangerous physical enemy in hand-to-hand combat.

Be real. Be honest with yourself. Exercise the discipline required to obtain that which you know you wish to possess. No one can do this for you.

Nothing in life that is truly worthwhile comes easily. The ability to physically defend yourself and to protect those you love is one very valuable — and important — skill. Living in any urban area today, virtually anywhere on earth, makes possession of this kind of ability, and confidence, a practical necessity. *Self-defense should be considered a critical component of every civilized person’s physical education.* And the *mental* benefits of this type of training are perhaps every bit as beneficial — possibly even more so — than most “intellectual” studies prove to be!

But you need persistence and discipline, and the realization that it takes **time** and **effort** to obtain this ability and accompanying self-confidence. Resist the temptation to quit; **you will only be quitting on YOURSELF.**

## Bradley J. Steiner

### **Just What Does “Training To Failure” Really Mean In Weight Training**

**THE** late Arthur Jones is the brilliant innovator who developed the Nautilus exercise machines. These machines, in our opinion, represent the only significant advance in progressive resistance physical training since the development of the plate loading barbell.

In Jones’ early writings (in one of the same publications — i.e. *IRON MAN MAGAZINE* — for which we wrote, on a monthly basis) he introduced the concept of “*training to failure*”. This approach to training is key to understanding how Nautilus machines are to be correctly utilized. Additionally, it is key to understanding how resistance training in *any* form, using plate-loaded dumbbells and barbells, cables, pulley devices, etc. ought ideally to be employed.

We have noted often that this idea of *training to failure* is incorrectly understood.

Many believe that training to failure means training to the point of actual exhaustion, strain, or collapse. Or, that it means working out until you have done so much exercise for each body part that further training is simply impossible

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None of that is true.

“Training to failure” is hardly the overburdening, endlessly time-consuming, grueling, all day affair in the gym that some have assumed it to be. To the contrary, training to failure (or, put in terms that had been used before that one came into use, by men like Peary Rader, simply means: “*Training very hard on a normal exercise program, but working each exercise sufficiently to achieve proper overload of the working muscle.*”)

Here’s an example of how it works:

Let’s take the two hands barbell curl, merely as an example. Select a weight that you feel will enable you to do a strict (but effortful) set of eight repetitions. Now try to do ten repetitions with that weight. *Do not* cheat. Simply struggle and work — as hard as you can — to get ten good reps. Perhaps you’ll find yourself almost able to complete the ninth rep; or possibly the tenth. *Try*. Continue your effort — **strict** and **correct** as you possibly can, performance-wise — until you find yourself genuinely unable to move the bar. The weight simply falls back to the starting position, and *that is it*.

You’ve just worked to “failure”. Do no more of that exercise for today. You’ve done plenty **IF** you truly pushed it to a genuinely and momentarily unpassable limit of repetitions.

Not really “straining” at all. Just **hard work**. Really, the same kind of work that — long before Arthur Jones invented the Nautilus machines — men like Peary Rader emphasized in their courses. Now, if you endeavored to train like that on a program of fifteen exercises, doing between four and six sets per exercise, **that** would not only be impossible — it would indeed be straining and overworking to an inordinate degree.

Is a single set really enough? Yes, **if** you do it as described. Personally, we do not always or even usually train that hard. We modify it. We push, but we require two or three sets in our workouts (of between six and ten exercises, only) that we push *hard*, but not always to failure. When we *do* go to failure we do it on the last set (which, we admit, probably results in our overtraining).

“Is training to failure dangerous?” No, absolutely not, *if* done as we described — which is how we understand Jones and those who have followed his training advocates teach. It isn’t dangerous because you do only that which you are capable of doing, and then, after trying hard to do a little more, you simply stop when the muscles being worked tell you that presently they have done all that are able to do.

Training to failure is really the most efficient and reliable way to employ the proven overload method of training, which is the heart and soul of **all** progressive resistance exercise, and always has been.

“Will this enable me to build a magazine cover physique?” Only if you have the proper genetics for such a physique. Then, yes it will. Otherwise, if you are in the same category that just about 99.5% of the world is in, you’ll simply be able to attain your own genetic limit in strength and muscular development.

Not a bad deal, eh?

Over the years we have found that, unquestionably, for **building up**, and assuming an attitude that is sufficiently amenable to training to failure, that is indeed the best approach. It saves tons of time, requires relatively few

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exercises, and produces the greatest all round benefits. You do ***NOT*** need Nautilus machines to train this way. Nautilus simply provides the most efficient approach to employing the method with several conventional exercises that — juxtaposed to the Nautilus machines that duplicate their basic action — are not quite as effective in working the muscles being trained.

Once you are advanced and have built up, we personally favor a three day-a-week lifetime program in which a **light, medium**, and (when you're up to it) **heavy** training day each week is undertaken. On days when you are not up to a heavy day, do another medium day.

The real and healthy activity of ***“bodybuilding”*** as it was practiced during the 1920's, 30's, 40's, 50's, and 60's has vanished. It has, sadly, gone underground. The *mainstream* activity that passes itself off as “bodybuilding” today is so unhealthy, ridiculous, and immersed in perversion and nonsense, that it sickens everyone who truly loves that which we used to refer to as the *“Iron Game”*.

But real bodybuilding is nonetheless alive and well, if not in the mainstream. We remain ardently in support of that wonderful activity, and we hope that by explaining relevant aspects of it to those who read our material, we can contribute to their appreciation of what it offers, and to their benefit in following on the path that it provides.

***There is nothing else that you can do to supplement your training in combatives and self-defense that is more valuable, important, relevant, and rewarding that properly done, systematic, progressive resistance barbell physical training!***

If you dislike the term “training to failure” then substitute “training hard” — for in essence it really means the same thing, when the terms are properly understood.

Have no reluctance to train hard; hard muscles will be the result.

## Lessons From The Pest Exterminator

**WE** think that those who are concerned about ridding our society of predatory, violent types might benefit from taking a long and careful look at how pest exterminators go about ridding apartments and homes of vermin. These service providers seem to be much more efficient and effective in carrying out their job of eliminating the homeowner's problems than the rest of us seem to be in taking care of what is a national social infestation.

Unlike the bureaucrats who pretend to be concerned about violence and predation in our society, vermin exterminators must do that which they are hired to do, or unlike the *protected elite* — i.e. the bureaucrats — the vermin exterminators go out of business!

Consider that pest exterminators —

- Never attempt to make terms with or have a dialog with, the mice, rats, and roaches whom they have been engaged to eradicate
- Never expect the vermin to be “educated” or persuaded to alter their behavior

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- Never politely “ask” the vermin to go elsewhere and to stop occupying the particular home which they (the exterminators) have been called in to clear of the vermin’s presence
- Never sit down with members of the community (homeowners) and try to get them to “understand” how the vermin “feel”, think, etc., and why they conduct their infestations as they do.
- Never give the vermin’s “grievances” any consideration or respect
- Never, ever conduct a job of ridding a dwelling place of vermin *partially* — but rather approach the task as an all-or-nothing deal, and simply proceed to completely eliminate the vermin, killing the young, the eggs (in the case of roaches, etc.) and *all*. They will even frankly advise the person who has hired them that *the job has not been done until 100% of the infestation has been eradicated.*
- Never waste time endeavoring to “catch” (apprehend or imprison) the vermin that infest a dwelling. They simply ***KILL THEM***. The homeowner is never left with the expense of feeding, supporting, housing, and caring for the vermin who had infested his home. Once the pest exterminator has concluded the job for which he was hired, the problem is ***gone***.

We urge that there is a wise lesson for those of us who care about the presence of predatory individuals victimizing the innocent, in the pest exterminator’s occupational practices, and in his manner of solving the problem of vermin infestations!

### Setting Your Tripwire

**IT** is too late to make a decision about when to act once you are physically attacked. Hopefully, if an attack catches you completely off guard (such as one that comes from behind, etc.) you will have programmed a vicious retaliatory response that will have been set a long time ago, and that will see you reacting to the action with minimum delay. That ***counterattacking*** function is important, and your self-defense preparation is dangerously lacking if you fail to train assiduously in reactive moves against onslaughts that take you unaware.

But most attacks do *not* catch the intended victim unaware. People say that they were “attacked by surprise” very often, because they ***were not ready for the onslaught that came*** — not because the aggressor’s presence was undetected, and not because the aggressor’s approach (even, often, verbal threats!) were not evident. The vast majority of people who are victimized by violent criminal offenders realize, before the actual attack takes place, that they are being watched, or followed, or they find themselves approached in an obvious way; ***THEY SIMPLY FAIL TO READ WHAT IS OCCURRING CORRECTLY, AND/OR THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT IS REALLY HAPPENING.***

Once again, **mental conditioning of the right kind** is required.

Preemption is the finest of all ways (short of avoidance) to deal with a violent attack. What preemption requires is that you *anticipate* violence correctly — that you see and acknowledge the warning signs of an approach, and that you be a step ahead of the attacker when he finally makes his first physical move against you.

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In other words, you must have the proper *tripwire* set — in advance.

When can you assume that you would be justified in actually neutralizing someone, physically? More accurately, when is it clear enough that the individual whom you are facing ***IS IN FACT AN ASSAILANT***, to permit you to legally and morally ***preempt*** his presumed attack, or — in short — defend yourself?

Well, we are not a lawyer, and so we are able only to provide **PERSONAL** (not legal) advice. As for “morality”, we assume that our readers have their own ideas on this matter. Not being their pastor or father, we shall leave morality up to them. We will say this, however: *In our opinion it is only reasonable and proper to value your life and the lives of your loved ones over the life and well-being of anyone who initiates force against you or against them.* We see no further qualifier needed — from our perspective — to morally justify the decisive neutralization of another person (or of other people).

As we understand the law (speaking from a layman’s, **NOT** a lawyer’s perspective) three conditions must be met in order to legally justify the taking of physical action (using force) against another individual:

- 1. The individual against whom one uses force must possess the apparent capability of inflicting real harm.**
- 2. The individual against whom one takes physical action must clearly have the opportunity to inflict injury upon the defender.**
- 3. The individual whom one neutralizes with preemptive, decisive force must have obvious intent — i.e. it needs to be clear that he is in fact intending to inflict harm upon the defender.**

We urge all readers to verify that with a lawyer before taking it as being descriptive of what the law in fact says. **We** are in fact guided by those three principles, and we would never raise a hand against anyone — or advocate that our students raise a hand against anyone — unless those three conditions were met. However, we also personally urge that anyone go into decisive action the very moment they believe that they are being targeted by a violent offender — **PERIOD**. *Staying alive and not being maimed* is, we believe, a tad more important than “the law”.

To be able to do the necessary thing — i.e. preempt the aggressor decisively — you need to “*set the tripwire*” ahead of time. This mean to decide, before anything happens, the specific thing or things that will set you into immediate action.

The following are, we suggest, excellent examples of potential events that in our personal opinion would necessitate immediate, decisive, preemptive force:

- Being stopped by one or more strangers (or by persons known to be violent) and having your exit from the area blocked off and prevented, physically — **OR** — feeling certain that the purpose of the stop is to inflict injury upon you and/or a companion
- Observing someone raise a hand — to hit, grab, or violently shove you — after approaching you

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- Being verbally threatened, and then perceiving ANY physical movement (other than the threatener retreating from the area) on the part of the one who just issued the threat
- Having someone within range of you suddenly assume a “fighting stance” of any kind
- Becoming aware of an apparently aggressive and angry approach by someone who has something (anything) in his hand which poses a threat as being a potential weapon
- Being seized suddenly in any manner (by your clothing, limb, or in any hostile fashion or in an encumbering manner that traps your body)
- Witnessing anything that you or another reasonable person would identify as being harmful, directed against a loved one or a friend, by someone who is clearly an aggressor.

Those examples do not exhaust all possibilities, but they should serve as sensible guidelines.

We who train in combatives and self-defense do not and should not look for, agree to, or in any manner encourage or derive any satisfaction from, putting the skills that we acquire into actual use against living persons. However, we all would be foolish to acquire those skills without also establishing — in a manner that will be practically useful to us — the *tripwire* that will see us bringing those skills into decisive play when and where necessary and justifiable.

### Injuries In Training (Beware The “Teacher” Who Causes Injuries And Pain Whenever Demonstrating A Technique!)

**FOR** all of his virtues the late Col. Anthony J. Drexel Biddle had certain personal quirks that caused some of what he taught to amount to wholly impractical, utterly ridiculous, hopelessly useless nonsense. The late Colonel Biddle was a most devoted and enthusiastic fencer. This led him, unfortunately, to utilize **sporting doctrine** when instructing in **combat methods**. For example, he advocated (and WWII Fleet Marine Force training films show this!) bayonet dueling. In other words, two combatants actually “crossed bayonets” as it were, and proceeded to “*fence*” with their bayoneted rifles! Ahem.

Not surprisingly, until the USMC excised this nonsense from its training program and instituted its more practical bayonet methods (based upon *boxing* moves) it was quite possible for marines to train by “dueling” with each other! **THIS NONSENSE WAS EASILY PRACTICED WITH PARTNERS AT FULL FORCE, BECAUSE IT WAS ESSENTIALLY HARMLESS.** Just like sporting/competitive skills of the **unarmed** variety. You can play and compete full force with skills unintended and not developed to maim and kill.

When the Corps switched to realistic, practical bayonet doctrine (i.e. “**ATTACK AND KILL!**”) no bayonet training with partners was possible any longer. Target dummies were set up so that the lethally effective (with the **M1 Garand**, please note — not with the breakomatic M16 that latterly replaced it!) actions would not cause deaths amongst marines who were learning them.



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With or without weapons, combat and self-defense techniques that are not dangerous are not practical. Period.

Many students of the martial arts (we were one, many years ago) have had the unpleasant and often very painful experience of working with incompetent sadists (they have no right to the designation “teacher”) who delight in cranking on the wrist-turning, arm-locking, and other holds with plenty of force. Their excuse? “It’s teaching you to be tough.” ***BULLSHIT! That nonsense cannot even be done in real, serious, fast-paced deadly combat!*** Only within the parameters of the sanitized training environment does the use of such crap make one a “bad dude” — and able to slam others around — ON A MAT.

Injuring students is a sign of sadistic incompetence, not of any ability to adequately toughen and condition them for combat. Like good physical training, training hard in effective close combat skills requires great effort, and you need to push yourself from time to time until the effort (NOT the skills) “hurt”. But good quality training — in physical conditioning/fitness work **OR** in combatives — will never “hurt you”.

If techniques are REAL then they cannot be safely carried to conclusion with a student or with a training partner. They need to be practiced safely on dummies, posts, and other training aids.

Fully 95% of **real world, practical close combat and self-defense training** consists of the use of *blows*. The remaining five per cent (a few throws and some strangulation methods) are — ***IF THEY ARE COMBATIVELY WORTHY*** — not practicable in the training environment, unless done with extreme caution, and only the most restrained application of force. When and if you find yourself being slammed around like a dummy by some “teacher” or by one of his “assistants” ***get the hell out of that school, and get out, pronto!*** First, because you are being mistreated by a sadistic lout — not a professional. Second, because what this incompetent is “teaching” you (or abusing you with) is of practically **zero value** in actual close combat and self-defense! You are getting injured for nothing; and what you are learning is useless! All you are doing is helping a cruel egotist to keep his ego aloft.

We have been fortunate to have had **three** outstandingly excellent teachers of close combat and self-defense in our life — besides and in addition to those who taught us the classical/traditional stuff. These teachers are: **REX APPLGATE, CHARLIE NELSON, and MAURICE GEIER**. *None of those three ever caused us so much as mild discomfort during the course of training and learning!* The truth is that we can cite only instances in *ju-jutsu, taekwon-do, and karate* when teachers have been physically abusive and unnecessarily aggressive — **and practically none of that which these individuals taught amounted to anything of even partial practical value for serious hand-to-hand combat!**

**Applegate, Nelson, and Geier** *all* had had combat experience, themselves. Each had killed in combat, and *two* (Applegate and Geier) had learned directly from William E. Fairbairn — a man whose personal *real combat experiences* are unparalleled. Those two who had learned from Fairbairn attested to the “*Shanghai Buster’s*” own ***gentleness, tact, and restraint***, in turn. When teaching the most brutally effective wartime skills. Fairbairn never hurt his students — but only an ignorant fool would dare to claim that the vicious wartime savagery that comprised *The Fairbairn System* of the 1940’s was not supremely effective!

We will also say, to be fair, that Professor (“Swami”) Vrygiananda — our *varmannie* teacher — was also quite reasonable and restrained when he taught us, and we must in truth acknowledge that *his* approach to teaching also lacked the insanity and sadism about which we are now being critical. And our studies of Korean *taekwondo*, under Young Lee of the *Chung Do Kwan* were similarly favorable (if not all that practical in many

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ways). However, we've got some bitter memories of black and blue marks, aches and pains, and sprained and sore wrists and shoulders from lessons in utterly unusable and impractical nonsense, from other "teachers" who will remain nameless.

We communicate monthly via this Newsletter with a very large — and growing — audience of self-defense enthusiasts. It is likely that a percentage of them are now being victimized and conned by the sort of crap we have described; that these people are being routinely abused under the guise of being "taught" and "trained" how to defend themselves. We sincerely hope that we have enlightened such people sufficiently so that they will abandon any environments in which they find themselves subject to unnecessary injury. *We can tell you that the most deadly and effective skills of personal combat can be (and should be) imparted to those who study them without the need for regular injuries during the training process.*

Obviously, in any activity that is physical there is the near certainty of occasional injuries. But any school in which injuries are a frequent occurrence is in our view a very bad school. And any "teacher" who sanctions and perhaps even relishes the excessive application of force during the conduct of classes and lessons, is an unprofessional, harmful menace, and should be avoided.

Telling an unarmed combat student that he has to be injured and suffer pain as a normal part of his training in order to learn how to defend himself is like telling a student of combat handgun technique that he must be shot in order to learn how to use a pistol in battle.

Don't fall for that bullshit.

## Quality Outstrips Quantity When Practicing Techniques

**JUST** as *hard work* in physical training does not translate into "*doing a lot of exercise when you workout*", so *effective practicing of combat skills* does not translate into "*practicing for hours on end*".

What makes the practice of self-defense techniques and the skills of close combat really "take" is **seriousness, intensity of effort, visualization, regularity of training, and concentrated focus** during practice sessions. Doing 300 repetitions of, say, the side kick to the knee, may be necessary before a new student learns how the kick is properly performed. But once that proper performance has been learned, only a relatively few repetitions of practice of that kick is required to maintain and keep it sharp for practical, real world application — and even in order to keep improving it a bit.

The same thing applies to all techniques — including weaponry skills. *Learning how to do something* takes the most time; *developing and maintaining proficiency once the skill has been learned* requires **QUALITY IN REGARD TO TIME SPENT IN TRAINING**, much more than mere "*quantity*".

Neither extreme strength nor extreme acrobatic dexterity is required in order to do any genuinely effective and authentic close combat/self-defense technique. Training in many classical/traditional skills on the other hand, which *require both of those attributes* in order to ultimately stand any chance of being doable, demands that the student constantly workout to get better and better in the areas of strength, flexibility, dexterity, timing, and fine motor movements. This is one reason why (at least when training is undertaken correctly) workout sessions

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in classical/traditional *karate*, *ju-jitsu*, and related arts may be two or more hours in length, and why dedicated practitioners need to often train twice a day so as to maintain flexibility and timing for their rather elaborate moves. The **combat** student takes care of his strength development needs mainly by following a correctly organized weight training program, or some form of physical training that demands serious exertion in following a plan of progressive development. He need not rely upon many hours a day of training in calisthenics and complex so-called “martial” movements.

Now certainly when time, energy, fitness, and interest allow, there is absolutely nothing at all wrong or detrimental in practicing for a couple or even more hours at a time. Our point here is that prolonged training in close combat and self-defense techniques is not *necessary*, once those techniques have been learned. And in general, with nearly any normally healthy person of average intelligence and interest, all real world skills can be learned pretty quickly.

Try to practice your repertoire of skills regularly, but realistically (using a schedule that you can live with), and with **fierce and total mental involvement**.

Thirty minutes for a practice session is quite adequate. Train, if your repertoire is fairly complete, by cycling through all of your techniques over a period of three to six practice sessions. Beginners should be able to practice everything, every session.

We'd say that about an hour to an hour and a half is **plenty** of time for a solid, quality practice session in combat techniques, once you're advanced. The main thing is always realism and quality of effort output — mentally and physically. Practice with the attitude that you are fighting for your life.

The difference between that which we do and that which the classical/traditionalists do may be seen by reference to that magnificent tournament winner, Bill Wallace (“Superfoot”). Wallace reputedly worked out **three hours every day** in order to maintain his incredibly fine kicking skills. Very admirable and very respectable. However, irrelevant for close combat and self-defense. **We are not concerned with achieving and maintaining intricately difficult and acrobatically impressive actions**. Those who do are certainly impressive and deserving of respect for their accomplishments, but **OUR** approach must be different. We want to retain doable skills that we do *not* need hours a day to maintain at a functional level, and we need to be able to retain combat proficiency and applicability **for the rest of our lives, and while living normal lives**.

## Training Partners

**WE** are *asocial*. That is, while in no sense being or wishing to be harmful in any way to others (i.e. **antisocial**), we rarely if ever derive any satisfaction or pleasure from being with people in the conventional “social” sense. Aside from our wife, our friends, and our students, we really find little if anything that people per se offer us, and we'd sooner read a book, workout, practice combat skills, take a walk through the city or country, go to a good museum, watch a movie, study a subject that interests us, take a ferry ride, correspond with a friend who lives too far away to see, or write some informational/instructional piece. “People”, per se, we respectfully leave to themselves — as we wish them to leave us to our self. We are very much at home with, and enjoy, our own company.

But that's **us**. It may not be *you*.

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We suppose that the majority of people actually do enjoy being with others. And by this we mean “*other people*” — people whom they neither know very well nor necessarily share any real values with, but with whom, for whatever reason, it “feels better” to be with, than it might feel to be alone.

We respect how other people are and we do not presume to dictate to others how they ought to think and live (except insofar as personal readiness and combat training is concerned; and then only when they come to us specifically for that purpose; or to be instructed in physical training).

If you enjoy training (when away from your formal group class environment) with partners, we’d suggest paying attention to these tips:

- Try, if at all possible, to select your training partner from amongst those individuals with whom you practice when you attend classes at whichever school of self-defense you attend
- No matter who your partner may be, **BE CERTAIN** that you do not ever train with a showoff, thrill seeker, or smartass. These fools cause unnecessary injuries, prevent learning and skill development, and are simply a royal pain-in-the-ass
- Always strive to train whenever possible either with someone who is **more skilled** than yourself, or **equal** in skill to your own level. Training with lesser-skilled people is a good idea, but only if you are patient and extremely amenable to assisting them. You have no right to discourage anyone, and some people are easily discouraged when they encounter someone whom they feel “outshines” them
- If you agree to work with someone who is a friend but not already a student with a known skill level and background, be cautious! Be sure that this individual understands proper safety precautions and is willing to be guided by your instructions. The big thing to look out for is either: Someone who can’t resist “trying it out” and showing off by using too much force or being careless when practicing, and/or someone who misuses that which he learns from you when away from practice, shoots his mouth off about what he is learning, etc.

There should be a spirit of mutual respect, cooperation, and a strong, friendly desire to see each other — as well as oneself — improve. In a good group class a professional teacher will strive to see that these attitudes predominate; when you train away from class with one or more partners **the onus is on you** to see that only a safe, enjoyably productive learning and development experience takes place.

If you cannot be sure of these things, **TRAIN ON YOUR OWN!**

### From The FBI

**IT** is always useful to look to the *facts* when trying to develop any practical skills. Self-defense and close combat are activities that provide little margin for error, should they ever need to be applied. Thus the skills intended to prepare students for these emergencies must be rooted in **reality**.

It is no secret that we are in strong disagreement with those who maintain that any sporting/competitive approach to martial arts (**most particularly** those presenting under the name of “UFC”, “Cage Fighting”,

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“MMA”, etc.) have anything to do with hand-to-hand combat and personal protection. They are rough sports, to be sure, and those that practice them are in some instances pretty tough individuals. However — and we have provided reams of evidence and documentation previously, to prove our point — **ACTUAL CLOSE COMBAT AND SELF-DEFENSE DEMAND ENTIRELY DIFFERENT PHYSICAL SKILLS, DIFFERENT TACTICS, AND A DIFFERENT MENTAL ATTITUDE.**

We were interested to learn that the FBI now provides some significant statistics regarding **REAL** physical encounters, that every student of close combat and self-defense should know, ponder, meditate upon, and **USE TO GOOD EFFECT WHEN CONDUCTING HIS OWN TRAINING AND (IF HE IS A TEACHER) WHEN CONDUCTING THE TRAINING OF OTHERS.**

Here they are:

1. Fifty per cent of all hand-to-hand fights last **less than** ten *seconds*.
2. Eighty five per cent of all hand-to-hand fights last **less than** one *minute*.
3. On balance, the single most effective blow is the so-called “sucker punch”.
4. The most effective kick in real world hand-to-hand combat is the **SIDE KICK**.
5. Fully ten per cent of those who have engaged in a hand-to-hand fight have injured their hands.

*Anyone (ANYONE) who has followed that which we have been teaching and writing (whether for the last year, or for the last 45 years!) knows that these statistics represent only a mere **fraction** of that which we have been proclaiming and urging vociferously, and that they reflect our teachings **exactly!** Long before the FBI presented these statistics we knew about them (and many others) and we have been conducting training and skill-level development — as well as mental conditioning procedures and principles — **TO ACCOMMODATE REALITY.***

**ALL** of our preliminary, interactive tactics (Relaxed-Ready Stance, distancing, eye placement, adjustment and movement, walk-and-turn drills, avoidance methods to prevent being setup, etc.) grew — in the late 1960’s — out of our understanding of point number three, on the FBI list. **It is also this FACT — which we were able to observe and note as a youngster — that made us aware of the supreme value of PREEMPTION, and of utilizing a barrage-like followup that never gives the enemy a chance to recover or to get set.** Point number four has been stressed by us so often and so strongly that the FBI may have gotten it from us! Point number five is one of the **key reasons** why we always stress **open hands, elbows, claws and fingers** to eyes, etc., and why we **INSIST** that the clenched “normal” fist be relegated to only exceptional and occasional use against *soft* body targets! This is also why we insist that **HITTING THINGS** and moderately conditioning the natural weapons to actual impact is vital. Points one and two speak for themselves to anyone who has read even a single article that we have written, or taken a single lesson from us, in the last four decades. ***Combat is fast and furious, and one must train to explode with a barrage of vicious attacks, and FINISH THE DAMN THING FAST!***

**AND . . .**

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*We get the following from our cousins in the British Isles, after their conclusion of hospital studies that covered a TEN YEAR PERIOD and a total of 30,000 physical attacks:*

1. Often a **handgun** was used. However, when that was not the “weapon of choice” stomping victims with one’s shoes was the preferred means of “armed” attack. (OUR COMMENT: THIS IS THE KIND OF “GROUND SITUATION” THAT THE COMBAT ARTS STUDENT NEEDS TO FOCUS HIS PRIMARY ATTENTION ON! AND, ONCE AGAIN, AS OUR STUDENTS KNOW VERY WELL, AND AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING OUR WRITTEN WORKS FOR DECADES KNOW VERY WELL, THAT IS PRECISELY THE CORE PREDICAMENT THAT WE EMPHASIZE DEFENSE AGAINST).

We have also gone practically hoarse emphasizing again and again and again that weapons are most usually encountered in actual, real world attacks.

2. Twenty-five per cent (one in four) of all physical attacks against victims were carried out by **THREE OR MORE ASSAILANTS**. (OUR COMMENT: WE SUSPECT THE RATE IS EVEN HIGHER IN THE USA FOR MULTIPLE ATTACKER PREDICAMENTS. IN ANY CASE, WE HAVE STRESSED AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN, AND WE CONTINUE TO STRESS, THAT ONE MUST BE PREPARED FOR MORE THAN ONE ASSAILANT WHEN TRAINING FOR REAL WORLD SELF-DEFENSE!).

We appreciate that those who do not want to believe the facts simply won’t believe them. *Who cares?* Our concern is for those who want the truth, and who want to be able to *use* the truth in order to properly train and prepare themselves for any possible emergency.

The truth is out there. We’ve been expounding it since the 1960’s.

Now, no less an authoritative source than the Federal Bureau of Investigation is starting to publish statistical data that verifies what we say.

### The “Black Belt” Is Merely A Fool’s Terminus

**SETTING** one’s self the goal of reaching black belt is an excellent idea when one commences training, providing it is one’s serious desire to make the combat arts a permanent part of his life. However, seeing one’s attainment of the black belt as indicating that he has “arrived” and that now he needn’t regard himself as a “student” any longer, or continue to pursue training, is as embarrassing a confession of shallow-mindedness and superficiality on the part of the one who holds that idea, as is the notion that one is “educated” because he now has secured a bachelor’s degree, and henceforth he needn’t study, read, think deeply about matters, or strive to improve his mind, on the part of the recent college graduate.

Many people come to combatives studies solely to learn basic self-defense. That is a respectable and worthy objective, but it is not the objective of one who focuses on attaining black belt. The individual whose purpose is to become a black belt wants to be an expert. The problem is, many who do achieve the rank of black belt fail to understand that an *expert* is one who never rests on his laurels, who is ever-training, always learning, and who appreciates that no matter how well something has been done in the past, it can be done *better* — if only he will **keep on trying**.

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**Reaching black belt is not the “end” of a martial arts study. For anyone worth the rank, it is the *BEGINNING*; and it is the beginning of a journey that never ends.**

Again, we are not speaking now of those whose objective is merely to “learn how to defend themselves”. Six months to a year of intensive effort should accomplish that task; and doing so with virtually no attention to “belts” at all is entirely legitimate. *But there are two aspects to any comprehensive system of close combat and self-defense.* There is the short-term trainee’s program (i.e. train until you’ve gotten what you wish to have), and then there is the long-term course (training for **life**). Either one is legitimate and worthwhile. But if yours is the latter — and it would appear that it is, if you’re training for black belt in the system that you are studying — then don’t quit. Make up your mind to *train for life*. Regard your attainment of black belt as a milestone, never as a terminus.

### Just Attack!

**General George Patton** said , *‘A GOOD PLAN VIOLENTLY EXECUTED RIGHT NOW IS FAR BETTER THAN A PERFECT PLAN EXECUTED NEXT WEEK.’*

A situation in which you find yourself suddenly under violent attack is, to say the least, shocking and disorienting. We don’t think that we will find too many who disagree with that statement. Yet, we would doubtless encounter many thousands who, as “martial artists”, believe that their reaction to a violent crisis can be a specifically pre-planned, precise, finely articulated series of motor moves that have been designed and intended to fit the exact manner of physical attack that they find themselves encountering at any given time. At least, from that which we have seen in many *hapkido*, *ju-jitsu*, *kuk sool won*, and *kenpo-karate* courses, this is certainly the case. (**Note:** All of these arts are beautiful and worthy, but they have serious shortcomings for all-in close combat and real self-defense emergency applications. As “*martial ARTS*” they are fine; but as “*MARTIAL arts*” they leave a great deal to be desired, and their advocacies of that which may be practically and realistically accomplished under the actual stress of *real combat* indicate in numerous cases an enormous failure to comprehend that which combat *is*, and that which victory in combat *requires*.)

The truth is, to return to Patton’s admonition for a moment and apply it to self-defense, that **there are no “perfect plans” that enable one to employ perfect techniques that will effectively and exactly fit each and every individual action that an attacker might conceivably employ against one in the chaos of a real situation.** There is a “perfect strategy” (it is **ATTACK THE ATTACKER!**), and one can, with almost amazing reliability and dependability, utilize a handful of good techniques effectively against almost *anything that might happen* when he employs that strategy. But that is a hell of a lot different than the classical/traditional school of thought on the matter of self-defense.

Your ability to defend yourself is not a function of how many “self-defense techniques” you know. There are thousands of self-defense techniques, and even if we were to assume that you could **master**, say, **5,000** of them (which you **certainly could NOT do**), you could be attacked in the **5001st** variation!

The way to learn how to defend yourself is to first and foremost understand and establish the right **MINDSET** and proper degree of **MENTAL CONDITIONING**. Literally **nothing** will help you without *this*. Then learn the

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best and most practical physical techniques and tactics of individual combat. If you would master — *really* **MASTER** — the performance and application of the following blows, that **ALONE** (accompanied by mindset and psychological conditioning) would see you better prepared to dispatch a dangerous attacker under real world conditions than many black belt holders in classical/traditional styles possess:

1. The edge-of-the-hand blow
2. The chinjab smash
3. The “tiger’s claw”
4. The side kick to knee
5. The knee attack
6. The hammerfist smash
7. The front kick
8. The elbow smash
9. The fingertips thrust to eyes
10. The throat lock

Just ten simple blows. However, when you consider how many variations and permutations of application exist with each one of those blows, not even including the possible **combinations** that may be applied using them, it should be fairly clear that a person who had mastered those ten blows would have a pretty formidable repertoire of unarmed combat and self-defense skills at this command.

The prerequisite for the successful application of those blows is, of course, **ATTACKING** with them — instantly upon being attacked, oneself, and relentlessly following up with repeated and ferocious action until the adversary has been rendered helpless.

We are not suggesting here that even complete mastery of those ten blows would constitute any kind of “comprehensive system” or “100% readiness training” for anyone. They would not. There is much to be learned if one wishes to study and train in close combat and self-defense as a *martial art*, and for the eventual goal of learning most of that which is effective with and without weapons in all contexts — in peacetime and war. *But our point is that “a lot of techniques” are not required for basic self-defense, and when a student shifts from attempting to acquire encyclopedic knowledge of various techniques to mastering a few good techniques and striving to utilize them with a viciously offensive strategy, he has taken 100 giant steps toward **really** being ready to handle violence.*

If we were asked to reduce things to an even lower common denominator, we would say: ***“The most important thing, even if you know only ONE technique or no ‘techniques’ at all, is to ATTACK YOUR ADVERSARY***



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***LIKE A WILD ANIMAL the moment he moves on you, and do not stop attacking him until he is no longer a threat!***” Just go get him! Improvise. Wing it. Do whatever comes naturally, for heaven’s sake — ***but ATTACK!***

People who have never trained in anything formally, have successfully defended themselves throughout history. They did it by taking immediate action, going after the individual(s) who attacked them, and striving mightily to maim or in some cases to kill their assailant(s) by ***attacking him however they were able to attack him at the time.***

And, once again as Patton advised, *the sooner you act — go after the individual who is attacking you — the better.* Don’t wait. Don’t try to “think about” or to “plan” what to do. It’s too late for that. Just ***go after the one who is attacking you.*** You must never hope to handle a dangerous situation by figuring out and applying the “perfect response”. Hell, if you’ve got that much time, *just get out of there!*

The important thing when you are attacked is to ***TURN THE TABLES ON YOUR AGGRESSOR. BECOME THE ATTACKER, YOURSELF.*** So long as you are “on the defensive” you are losing. The moment the tide turns and ***YOU*** are the attacker, you are winning. Then press the offensive and do so without hesitation or mercy. Keep on attacking and attacking and attacking until you or whomever you are protecting is safe.

Train with *that* strategy uppermost in your mind, and, while there are never any guarantees in this business, and no one can ever be certain of victory in combat, you are going a long way toward stacking the deck in your favor.

## ANNOUNCING A NEW INSTRUCTIONAL MANUAL!

**WE** have just completed a 214 page training Manual on “*Mental Conditioning For Close Combat And Self-Defense*”. Our visitors have asked repeatedly if we could offer materials for their personal training, and this Manual is sure to be a tremendous aid to anyone training either in our own System, or in any other — if his objective is real combative ability and preparation for emergency defense of himself and those he loves!

**MENTAL CONDITIONING IS 90% OF WHAT IT TAKES TO BE PREPARED FOR VIOLENCE, AND REAL WORLD SELF-DEFENSE!** This Manual is a **“FIRST”** AND WILL HELP YOU

## *TO TRAIN YOURSELF TO A PEAK IN REALISTIC PERSONAL READINESS!*

We have plans to produce this Manual in a printed version, shortly. However, if you would like a copy on a quality CD (that you can either read on your computer screen **or** print out in a hard copy) we will send you one for \$30. **AND AS A BONUS WE WILL INCLUDE PRINTABLE COPIES OF *COMBAT JUDO*, by Robert L. Carlin, and *DEFEND YOURSELF!*, by Jack Grover** (two books that are collector's items and would cost a small fortune in their original editions *if* you could locate copies!!!) The mental conditioning Manual is highly readable on screen **or** when printed out. The other two publications should be downloaded for study purposes.

This is a hell of a bargain, and we **urge** you to take advantage of it. You'll be receiving a premier first-of-its kind Manual on mental conditioning and **two** impossible-to-find classic texts on practical self-defense and close combat!

This is considerably below what the cost of a printed copy will be, since modern production costs, packaging, and mailing is through the roof.

This is not an academic or theoretical study of the subject. It is a forthright how-to-do-it Manual that will instruct, inspire, guide,

and motivate you — *just as I would if you were my personal student.*

Teachers of self-defense and close combat will find a gold mine of information here that will not only help them, but help them to teach their students this absolutely critical subject.

This Manual is comprehensive and extensive. It explains and describes WHAT you must do, and then HOW to do it. It is politically incorrect, direct, and pulls no punches. It is the **REAL DEAL**, and if you are serious about training yourself for close combat and self-defense you will certainly want to obtain a copy and study it again and again.

*Not available from any other source!*

Send \$30. (cash or money order payable to Brad Steiner) to us:  
Brad Steiner P.O. Box 15929 Seattle, Washington 98115 USA,

We will keep our visitors posted on the availability of this new Manual in a printed edition, once that is published.

We urge anyone who is serious about self-defense to order a copy of this new Manual today on CD. You will not be disappointed.

### **How's Your Acting?**

**ANYONE** who knows anything about self-defense should see immediately that taking an attacker off guard and using the element of surprise is one of the most valuable tactics that anyone could employ. *Execute a good*

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*technique with the element of surprise and it will almost certainly be effective.* And even if it isn't, the confusion and shock that your attempt triggers in the attacker will give you the opportunity to followup.

Whenever there is any opportunity to interact with someone who intends you harm before he takes any physical action, *take advantage of it and act in a manner that conveys the opposite of your true intentions.* Feign fear, compliance, misunderstanding, illness, or any combination of those things — then explode and break every bone in your tormentor's body!

Acting is not normally regarded as a “self-defense technique” but it certainly is a valuable aid in setting things up to your advantage when you are being targeted by street bacteria or other forms of human trash. Like any other skill, acting must be done right if it is to be effective. And that means *practice*. **Practice** — just like you practice how to strike and kick.

Spend some time rehearsing with training partners, or even alone, in front of a mirror. Get meaningful feedback from partners when you train with them. I.e. *Do they feel — honestly — that your “performance” is believable?* If so, then have no doubt that it will work on an adversary, since a real opponent has no idea of what you are doing.

**Example:** — Facing two punks who block your path and demand money, learn to look terrified, and to say something like the following, *convincingly*:

“Oh my God, fellows, please don't hurt me. I'll give you my money, but I have a heart condition so please — no violence — okay?”

When they respond (probably with laughter or some callously indifferent remarks) **ATTACK!** It is always wise to attack a troublemaker *when he is speaking*, because his mind is inevitably focused to an extent on what he is saying.

Pretending to feel ill, then attacking as your assailant takes notice of your “feeling sick”, is always a nice trick.

The key to success is to be *good* at these performances. If you are, then you can all but take anyone whom you have tricked into believing what you want him to believe 100% off his guard and **SQUASH HIM.**

“ALWAYS ENCOURAGE THE ENEMY'S ARROGANCE.” — **MIYAMOTO MUSASHI**

By mastering the art of deceit and deception you will have acquired a powerful and highly practical tool for shifting the advantage to yourself in many types of emergencies.

Excellent technique: If we assume that you are in legal possession of a concealed firearm and know how to use it . . .

Bad Guy who is armed with a knife: “*Hey man, give me your wallet!*”

You: “*Okay, okay, just please don't use that knife. Don't hurt me*”.

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Bad Guy (as he smirkingly observes you reaching for your wallet in compliance with his command): “*Just get me that wallet — now!*”

You: “Here!” (As you produce a snub nosed .38 Special revolver and empty it into the bastard’s torso).

This is umpteen times more effective than any “quick draw” (the attempt to perform which, just might cause you to be stabbed to death *as you shoot the felon*). By feigning terror and compliance the bacteria’s attitude relaxes . . . he feels certain that you are obeying him . . . and you can — almost casually — shoot him.

Give a lot of thought to this, and start devoting some practice time to it, also.

Just as it is in **war**, in self-defense we depend upon misleading and deceiving the enemy via *disinformation* and deception. Then, we capitalize upon the **element of surprise** that the misinformed and deceived state of mind in which the enemy now exists, and in light of which how he may be anticipated to function, in order to defeat him.

Good strategy and tactics, no less and sometimes even *more so* than good techniques, will enable you to achieve an edge in many types of confrontational encounters. So do not fail to train with this critical fact in mind.

***Become a good actor!***

Well, that does it for this month. Please visit our other site, [www.seattlecombatives.com](http://www.seattlecombatives.com). Until August we will wish you success in your training — and enjoy the summer!

And ***please***, be so kind as to tell others about our two web sites so that more decent people can begin to acquire the means of defending themselves and those they love.

Best until next month!

## Stay Combat Ready,

## Prof. Bradley J. Steiner

[AmericanCombato.com](http://AmericanCombato.com) & [SeattleCombatives.com](http://SeattleCombatives.com)

— E N D —