Personal notes on fighting and self-defense

Law of the Jungle

When it comes to fighting for survival, the number one law that rules any fight for survival is the *law of the jungle*. "The strong eats the weak." Physical fitness is a major determining factor in winning fights. If you are a person that do not workout or are not physically fit, you have a disadvantage in fights.

Physical training principles

* FITT - It’s an acronym for **F**requency, **I**ntensity, **T**ime, and **T**ype.
* Frequency - This means number of workout sessions per week.
* Intensity - This means either the resistance of the weights or the heart rate of the aerobic exercise. VO2 max is also used to measure the intensity of an aerobic exercise.
* Time - This can be measured as the duration of the aerobic exercise or the reps/sets of a weighted exercise.
* Type - This is an indicator of the diversity of the exercises: aerobic vs anaerobic, muscle strength vs muscle endurance, targeting various muscle groups, etc.
* Supercompensation - It's important to follow every intense training day with a day of low intensity training or complete relaxation. A variant of supercompensation is exercising different muscle group at different days of the week.

Rule #1 of fighting

There are no rules in fighting. This is not combat sports or modern martial arts. This is a fight for survival. **Fighting dirty and unfair is allowed**.

The true winner of a fight

The true winner of a fight is the one whose buddy shows up with a gun. Always have a way to signal for help in times of crisis. In the event of a confrontation, do your best to last long until help arrives.

Hand-to-hand combat

All fist fights end up in the ground. The following details the phases of hand-to-hand fighting.

1. Standup fighting - this phase is marked with the initiation of combat (with a first strike or clear intent of hostility), exchange of strikes, and ends with one fighter gaining a clinch on another fighter or a knockout.
2. Clinch fighting - once in a clinch, the person who has the clinch will attempt to do a takedown while the person under the clinch will try to do strikes, pressure point attacks, chokes, or fingerlocks in order to escape the clinch.  
   Notable clinches:  
   - 50/50 or "Fifty-fifty", aka overhook and underhook  
   - bear hug  
   - seatbelt clinch  
   - collar tie, aka single collar tie  
   - Muay Thai clinch, aka double collar tie  
   Notes on clinch grips:  
   - Gable grip: this is a good grip for a clinch  
   - S grip: another good grip for a clinch  
   - Interlocked-finger grip: this is a terrible grip because it is susceptible to fingerlocks, so do not ever do this grip in a fight  
   Notes on takedowns:  
   - single leg takedown  
   - double leg takedown  
   - foot sweep/trip  
   - *uchi mata*, a judo takedown move
3. Ground fighting - a successful takedown or knockout hit will result in either **ground-and-pound** fight or **submission** fight taking one of the following positions:  
   - Full mount  
   - Rear mount  
   - Guard  
   - Side mount, aka T mount

Notes on striking

Striking can be done with punches, elbow strikes, knee strikes, or kicks. Training on combat sports or modern martial arts are perfect ways of honing this skill. There are two dominant effect to striking.

* Concussive blow - delivery of a powerful strike to an opponent's **deadly triangle** on their face which is outlined by their two temples and the bottom of their chin, can knockout the opponent.
* Debilitating strikes  
  - Groin strike: most commonly done as a fast "credit card swipe" upwards with a knife hand between the legs of an opponent  
  - Liver shot: a strike (commonly with a punch or a kick) to the lower right-side of an opponent's ribcage that results in paralyzing pain  
  - Ear slap: smacking the palm forcefully to the earhole of an opponent can cause the opponent's eardrum to rupture and cause dizziness  
  - Eye gouge: open-palm push toward an opponent's face where the fingertips land on their eyes; see *sunggab*, a Filipino martial arts move

Notes on chokes

There are two types of chokes.

* Blood choke: This choke requires constricting both the carotid arteries of the opponent. Most recommended to use due to the efficient way of knocking out an opponent in about five seconds. If the blood choke is continued to be applied after the opponent is knocked out around thirty seconds or more, the opponent could suffer from permanent brain damage or instantly die from suffocation.
* Air choke: Not recommended for multiple reasons.  
  - Requires a lot of energy and effort to crush the opponent's larynx in a chokehold due to its boney structure. Sidenote: crushing the larynx will leave a permanent damage in an opponent's neck.  
  - Chokeholds are susceptible to fingerlocks.  
  - An air choke takes over a minute to incapacitate an opponent, which is very inefficient in comparison to the blood choke.

Notes on jointlock

* Armbar
* Kneebar
* Fingerlock
* Anklelock
* Neck crank
* Front facelock, aka "the Guillotine"

Knife fights

Nobody wins a knife fight. The loser bleeds out in the fight while the winner bleeds out in an ambulance. For this reason, consider carrying first aid kits with tourniquets, gauzes, and hemostatic agents (like kaolin) in order to control massive bleeding in this scenario.

Knife grips

* hammer grip, aka forward grip
* reverse grip
* punch grip

Knife techniques

* quick draw, from either concealed carry or open carry
* slash
* stab

Knife targets

The goal in a knife fight is to cause hemorrhage to the opponent. An average human adult with massive bleeding can die within five to ten minutes (keep this in mind if applying first aid). Beware of attacking through layers of clothing as it may not be very effective on delivering lacerations. Also consider that the enemy maybe wearing knife-resistant clothing with Kevlar fabric.

* Hemorrhage targets  
  - carotid arteries and jugular veins  
  - femoral arteries  
  - radial arteries  
  - brachial arteries
* Kidney stab: induces immediate shock for about five seconds
* Throat cut: death in about twenty seconds if the carotids or jugulars are cut, or death may take minutes if the larynx is cut
* Heart stab: high risk of fatality; however, this is a difficult target to hit to the rib cage, thick clothing, and sometimes body armor

Knife designs for combat

* Four inches in length minimum for combat potency; six-inch blade length maximum if concealment or portability are considered
* 1/8-inch thickness minimum
* 440 carbon steel or similar alloy like surgical steel
* full tang with at least two metal bolts
* serrated edges for grievous lacerations
* sharp enough to cut through a single sheet of paper
* blood well, aka fuller
* black oxidation for stealth

Improvised weapons

* Thrown projectiles: books, laptops, vase, jars, pots, chairs, plates, boxes, etc.
* "Lock-in-the-sock": essentially a "blackjack"; common in prisons and Army bootcamps; it is comprised of a hard metal padlock stuffed inside a long sock but the padlock can be substituted with a rock, large metal nuts, or even a fistful of coins.
* Millwall brick: essentially an improvised club; requires a thick and tight roll of newspaper or magazine that's been taped into a form of a club; despite the name, this weapon actually requires no bricks or stones to be an effective weapon.
* Shank/shiv: common in prison or Army bootcamps; take a dull object like a toothbrush and sharpen its end with a course surface of a concrete floor or concrete wall in order to create an improvised stabbing weapon; other potential shivs are plastic spoon/fork/knife, wooden stick, pencils, screwdriver, nail clippers, etc.
* Sharp broken glass: commonly seen in bar fights after breaking the bottom half of a beer bottle and using the top half as a handle
* Belt with buckle: belts with large metal buckles can also be used as a "blackjack"
* Hammer, wrench, crowbar, or any heavy metal tool
* Eye irritants: kick sand to the opponent's eyes; spit chewed up peppers to the opponent’s eyes; splash fluids to the opponent’s eyes
* Garrote: electric cords, headphone cords, computer cables, thin clothing, thin curtains, necktie, bowtie, ribbon, rope, or anything that can be used to strangle an opponent’s neck; see choke
* Fire extinguisher: hold the handle tight and swing the bottom half towards the opponent; also, chemical fire extinguisher is an eye irritant, so feel free to spray the chemical at the opponent's eyes.

Active Shooter Drill

Most active shooter drills are forms of **fight-or-flight** tactics. The best active shooter drill is "Run. Hide. Fight." as put forth by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The reality is that an overwhelming number of active shooter cases end before the law enforcement arrives. That means in the event of an active shooter, the incident has to be handled without any external help.

1. Run: This has to be the first action taken in the event of an active shooter. **Always have an exit plan**. Practice situational awareness at all times.
2. Hide: If creating distance with the active shooter is impossible, create barriers, obstacles, impediments, and distractions. Silence or discard noisy devices (phones, mp3 player, etc.). Turn off or discard anything that lights up (smartwatches, phones, etc.). **Stay quiet**. Lay low. Hide.
3. Fight: **You have the right to protect yourself**. Be violent and commit to your actions. Do not fight fairly. Improvise a weapon. Attack from "dead space" (lookup "dead space" in close quarter combat, CQC). There's power in numbers, so incite other bystanders to join your fight against the active shooter (this is known as mob justice). Consider wearing/carrying Kevlar products when going to crowded events. Also consider concealed carrying weapons to crowded events for self-defense.

The buddy that shows up with a gun

There is plenty of value in learning how to operate a firearm, especially if friends or yourself are faced with hostile adversaries. However, bearing a firearm comes with great responsibility. Proper firearm training should be conducted regularly to minimize unwanted casualties and damage.

Cycles of firearm operation

1. Feeding
2. Chambering
3. Locking
4. Firing
5. Unlocking
6. Extraction
7. Ejection
8. Cocking

Types of firearm action (repeaters only)

* bolt action: preferred by snipers and commonly seen in hunting rifles
* lever action
* pump action: a shotgun mechanism
* single action vs double action: handgun mechanisms; single-action can either be striker-fired or hammer-fired
* revolver
* autoloading: semi-auto, fully automatic, or burst fire modes; has three sub-types
* blowback
* recoil
* gas operation: has two subtypes
* gas piston: best example is the AK-47
* direct impingement: best example is the AR-15/M4/M16 family

Four fundamentals of marksmanship

* Steady posture
* Sight picture
* Trigger squeeze
* Breathe control

Firearm stances

* Prone shooter: Very steady, most consistent shot groups, and lowest profile; beware that it is hard to quickly get up and move
* Kneeling shooter: Sight picture on target is not steady; avoid “bone-to-bone contact” (do not rest elbow on knee); lower profile than standing shooter stance but prone shooter stance has a lower profile; shot groups are more consistent than standing shooter stance but prone shooter stance has more consistent shot groups; use if always on the move
* Sitting shooter: Similar to kneeling shooter stance; however, it's hard to get up and move so do not do this during combat
* Standing shooter: chest facing the opponent (if wearing body armor, the armor would face the opponent), feet shoulder-width apart, knees bent, and sight picture on target; aka the football stance or the fighter stance
* Isosceles stance: for taking sight pictures with handguns only; grip the handgun grip with both hands, stretch both arms forward, and assume the fighter stance; the arms and the chest form the isosceles triangle if looking from above; this stance absorbs handgun recoil which creates consistent shot groups
* High ready: a common CQC stance with a long gun or handgun; just like standing shooter stance except the firearm is pointed 45 degrees upward with the muzzle on eye level
* Low ready: a common CQC stance for long gun or handgun; just like high ready stance except the firearm is pointed 45 degrees downward with arms straight
* Compressed ready: a crowd favorite in CQC for long gun or handgun; just like low ready stance except the firearm is pointed forward toward the opponent, parallel to the ground, and level with the chest; for handguns, the handguns are held by two hands in front of the chest; for long guns, the butt stock is between the firing arm and the torso right below the arm pit; this stance allows the possibility of shooting an opponent without making a sight picture
* Careful hurry: moving on foot while keeping a steady sight picture or direct fire on an opponent; this is accomplished by keeping the knees bent while walking quickly; very important in CQC when it comes to room clearing procedures; in street gunfights, movements should be towards cover (or concealment) and should not create an exposure longer than 3-5 seconds
* Sul stance: this is the stance for relaxation, for movement, or in a crowd of friendly personnel; the firearm is close to the body and pointed straight down; sidenote, "sul" is Portuguese for "south"; just like in careful hurry, movements in gunfights should be towards cover (or concealment) and should not create an exposure longer than 3-5 seconds

CQC Shooting

CQC firearm should be precise (no fully automatic guns, and no burst fire) with at the most 8 MOA ("minutes of angle"), semi-automatic (pump-action is good too), and has nice red dot optics. CQC gunfights can range from 100 yards to less than 25 yards. Only shoot when the opponent is in sight. Conserve ammunition, and minimize collateral damage. Consider practicing safety discipline-only disable the safety when actively shooting an opponent.

* Hammer Pair, aka "Double Tap" – Take a sight picture. Fire two rounds rapidly. Bullets will not have the same point of impact which spreads out the damage. At farther distances (greater than 10 yards), the second round will most likely not hit the target in the sight picture due to recoil and is therefore a waste of ammunition. Also, this drill is not effective on opponents with body armor or under the effects of anesthetic drugs due to the lack of concentrated bullet impact.
* Controlled Pair – Take a sight picture. Fire first round. Take the same sight picture again. Fire second round. Consecutive bullets on the same exact point of impact will: maximize damage and stopping power on opponent, and penetrate to certain layer of body armor.
* Failure Drill - Fire a controlled pair. Follow up with a well-placed headshot. A headshot is aimed in the center of the **deadly triangle** where the eyes and nose make the points of the triangle. This drill is employed if the controlled pair failed to stop the opponent. This is also known as the Mozambique drill. This is the go-to drill if the opponent seems to have body armor or under the influence of anesthetic drug.
* Quickdraw Shooting, or Combat Pistol Drill – Quickly drawing a handgun from a holster (whether inside waistband, IWB, outside waistband, OWB, or drop leg) and immediately shooting an opponent within 15 yards or less. One of the most popular combat pistol drills is the “El Presidente” drill.

Words of wisdom

* *The greatest victory is that which requires no battle*. – Sun Tzu, The Art of War
* *An armed society is a polite society.* – Robert A. Heinlein, Beyond This Horizon
* *The successful warrior is the average man, with laser-like focus*. – Bruce Lee
* *Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear*. – Mark Twain
* *Fear cuts deeper than swords*. George R. R. Martin, A Game of Thrones