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Paul Richardson

Kevin Stringer 7th Degree MCSDA and JKD instructor explains why it's so important to target your training towards the reality of the street, where rules don't exist...



SELF-DEFENCE FROM THE TRAINING HALL TO THE STREET

There is nothing more sobering than the physical confrontation of a street fight for any martial artist, experienced or beginner. A time when all those years of being thrown, locked up and the countless hours of pad hitting, drilling with both weapons and empty hand, a time when you hope that all the pain, blood, sweat and tears of the simulated practice pays off in a blink of an eye. This is why it's so important to target your training towards the reality of the street, where rules don't exist, no referees and the constant fear of dealing with the unknown aggressor or even worse someone who's clearly watched too much UFC.

Fear can also be the motivation for an attacker and consequently they are often armed; posing the most dangerous threat and worse nightmare! If you haven't done your best to prepare for this then it can go wrong very quickly and the end result can be anything from a beating to you being killed.

Having had my fair share of 'confrontations' the advice passed on to our students at MCSDA is:

- Avoid potentially dangerous areas and situations.
- Be aware at all times of what is going on around you.
- Use defensive 'Fence' posture with a verbal command 'Stay Back!'

- Use defensive 'Fence' posture with distance/movement control.
- Ask questions to mentally disarm the attacker then pre-emptively strike hard to the jaw.
- Use all other combative skills as support to Fence/Pre-emptive strike.
- If the situation continues then HIT, Cover and Move (Hit the 5 primary target areas - Groin, Eyes, Nose, Throat and Shin)
- Use anything to hand as a weapon.
- Avoid allowing the attacker to get behind you.
- Avoid being taken to the ground.
- Avoid grappling (spending too long on the ground GET TO YOUR FEET)
- If attacker gets to your rear - kick/stamp low to the shin/instep or strike to groin.
- If attacker takes you to ground - 3 point spin and kick out low to shin/knee (ground defensive position)
- If attacker gets the mount whilst grounded use one sided trap and roll (3 variations)

READERS SHOULD BE AWARE OF AND ADHERE TO THE LAW AS IT RELATES TO THE USE OF REASONABLE FORCE

From the list above there are some points I would like to expand on. Avoid at all costs going to the ground purposely given today's culture and mentality, rolling around on the ground is a really bad idea. That's not to take away from the grappling arts but the street is neither the time nor place, so getting to your feet is paramount.

The way we train at MCSDA is that getting to your feet at all costs is imperative. Self-defence systems must have some grappling, it's a very important part of the self-defence game, but its aim **MUST** be to get you to your feet, **NOT** to submit. The way you address this in training needs to be as best you can to reflect the realism of an attack.

Most physical confrontations will end up on the ground, but they all start standing and finishing it here is the ideal place. Remembering that fighting has its dangers, and in the heat of the moment this can be forgotten.

Standing Attacks: When we practise at MCSDA we start by dealing with large gross motor skills and other most common attacks i.e. the big push and right hand or 'windmill!' grabs, single or double, chokes and strangles as examples.

Grounded Attacks: Being kicked or stamped on whilst grounded can be very common in the street especially when multiple attackers get that 'mob mentality', this is why going to the ground can prove fatal, so we teach our guys to try and stay on their feet. We also understand that sometimes this just isn't possible and arm them with very simple and basic techniques and guide lines.

- If you can, **GET TO YOUR FEET!!**
- If you can't, **DO NOT END UP FACE DOWN!**
- Best case, **GET THREE POINTS ON THE GROUND, YOUR BUM AND HANDS.** We call this 'ground defensive position'. This gives you 360 degree mobility and uses the largest and strongest weapons, your legs, to fend off an attacker or attackers, presenting you with better opportunity to **GET TO YOUR FEET!**
- If you can't get to best case, **GET ON YOUR SIDE** or 'shrimp position'; this should be used as a transition only, getting you to 'best case' or to **YOUR FEET!** If you do have to defend yourself from here the golden rule is deflect then wrap the legs using your arms and trap with your legs, force the standing knee backwards or out to the side, breaking the balance and use your momentum roll in and up. Again, **GET TO YOUR FEET.**
- If mounted trap one side and roll then **GET TO YOUR FEET.**

As you have probably read by now the theme is **GET TO YOUR FEET!**

ARM'S LENGTH RANGE



Block/Deflections: Also we feel that training out a natural response is counterproductive. For example, when an attack is aimed at your head the natural reaction is to throw your arms up defence. We turned that into a block or deflection called 'double forearm cover'. This works well from the 'fence posture'. Learn the difference between the two and know which one to use, because using your arms to block someone kicking you in the head while grounded will only do one thing, break them and quick! So deflecting or 'padding' the strike is key, this allows you to take a strong kick because the force of the blow is deflected or 'padded' down and away.

CQC striking: learning to hit hard in close quarter is a skill and an important one. This requires lots of training - hitting pads and focus mitts are a must. The importance of feedback from the pad holder tells you a lot, whether the strike is going through and with the whole body behind it or just the weight of the weapon. Here are some useful CQC strikes:

- The head butt, this is an unorthodox skill and sometimes over looked as you can do more damage to yourself should you get it wrong. But by using the right part of the head to correct areas it's devastating. Like any strike if you train it your chances of getting it wrong reduce. It's an option and not every one's cup of tea but worth a mention.
- The elbows, these are a fantastic CQC weapon, trained and used in the right way, to the correct areas they can provide a quick end to the confrontation. Sneaky

painful and blunt but sharp thrown at speed, cutting like a knife. These can be trained on pads or focus mitts.

- The knee strike, both raising and thrusting. Very useful and sneaky combined well, hitting low first and working your way up these can be equally damaging in a CQC situation. I would advise keeping the strikes low to medium in height hitting inside the legs. Great for removing mobility, the groin, floating rib area and diaphragm at a push should the aggressor drop due to lower blows and if it's needed of course! Any higher, you may run the risk of being pushed or tipped over.

These are just a few and none of them should be undertaken without correct training or supervision. It's self-defence, only do as much as is needed to get away and safe.

Technique attributes: These are practised into pads or focus mitts singly at first, pulling them from the technique and drilled improving the student's timing, accuracy, power and competency working through the stages until they are confident to incorporate the pad work back into technique.

Learning process: All MCSDA techniques are performed in three stages, beginner and intermediate then advanced or (live), this gives the student time to master all the attributes within each one.

Beginner: All elements of a technique should be over emphasised, teaching the



student to recognise movement, distance, timing, balance and targeting, along with blocking or deflecting followed by a counter.

All attributes are singled out and drilled on pads plus in technique simulation learning to place the strike on its target. The student stays at this stage until they feel comfortable. The technique should look clean, slow, balanced and precise.

Intermediate: Again over emphasise attack and defence but at a faster speed, allowing the eye to react to the movement. Where possible use pads or focus mitts allowing the defender to hit into resistance, giving the student a good understanding of power generated. Hitting too hard in CQC can sometimes be counterproductive should you want to hit more than once, because playing the odds game, i.e. the more parts that we hit

ABOUT THE AUTHOR...



KEVIN STRINGER

My name is Kevin Stringer 7th Degree MCSDA and JKD instructor. I've studied martial arts from the age of 4, under GM Gary Stringer 10th Dan and founder of MCSDA. He taught me various systems from traditional Kung Fu, Small Circle Jujitsu, weapons to JKD. I also study BJJ under Mr Mark Cooper 7th Dan MCSDA, a student of Gracie Jujitsu London, BWA Level 2 Wrestling Coach, recently trained with the legend that is Guru Rick Faye.

I've grown up around martial arts and I remember people like the late Larry Hartsell, around at my brother's house, doing my first demonstration when I was just 5. I've taught door staff control and restraint, worked alongside my brother teaching women's self-defence up and down the country as part a police initiative called 'Hands Off', worked as a door supervisor, and bodyguard or in close protection as it's called these days, plus I've had 8 years working in accident and emergency as part of the security/flying squad, taught at various seminars abroad and in the UK. I am the father of two boys, Jacob and Joel, I must say the hardest job to date.

the better, this tends to keep the attacker's mind focus on what hurts the most.

Also play with closing distance where possible if the technique or situation allows, this will give the students access to more CQC weapons.

Advanced (Live): So by now students should be recognising strikes, blocking or deflecting accordingly. These shouldn't look clean but must be effective, ensuring that all available CQC strikes are at your disposal and hitting high and low on your way in. Again the best way to practise this is using pads or focus mitts. At MCSDA we are lucky to have some very good training equipment we use the REDMAN for this.

Safety has to be the key without losing the reality of what we are trying to achieve, and this is a well-rounded, skilled, free thinking, opened minded, confident person who has the ability to adapt.

■ KEVIN STRINGER