



Article 1

Over a short series of articles I will be discussing a variety of martial arts aspects including technical analysis and methodology. In addition, in each issue I will show an individual technique in order to address the key aspects discussed. Please remember that participation in any martial art carries risk of injury and its use has legal implications.

The one element that truly unites all martial arts is the systematic application of learnt skills in a self-defence scenario. Whether it be in the form of blocking and striking styles, parrying and trapping methods or control and restraint training, all tuition offers a platform for self-protection.

Much has been written and discussed on the current issues and subject of self-defence, street safety, awareness and anti-social behaviour. Unfortunately, the need for self-defence and protection skills are rapidly becoming as essential as learnt skills of reading, writing or swimming.

Not everyone possesses the personal confidence, skills and self-assurance needed to stand up to an aggressor in order to defuse a confrontational and potentially violent situation, though through closed skill training and rehearsal it can be achieved. The wide majority of scenarios will be initiated and follow a series of similarly defined levels, as briefly highlighted below –

1. Verbal exchange
2. Finger pointing and verbal exchange
3. Double or single handed push or shove
4. Double or single grab
5. Strike

It goes without saying that some may appear as a combination i.e. numbers 4 and 5, and it also makes sense to suggest that depending on the situation, the confrontation can move through any of these stages at any time.

There are many suggested methods of control and diffusion through stages 1, 2 and 3 and body language can play a major role. For example stepping forwards towards your aggressor with a clenched fist suggests aggression and is likely to accelerate and increase the chances of physical violence, whereas a step backwards with a lowered posture is almost suggesting weakness and defeat.

Positioning yourself in a more neutral position, side facing or at least at a slight angle will allow the protection of primary strike targets such as the groin and mid-section area and may also allow for more efficient evasive movements or striking capability should the need occur. Raised open hands will also suggest a neutral 'want no trouble' position but will serve as a good position to block and counter strike, almost Thai style – see Fig 1.

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

Assessing the previously suggested 'Stages of Confrontation', stages one and two are not serving an immediate danger or threat to your own personal safety but, depending on the situation, may quickly lead to doing so. You could choose at this point to defuse the situation through verbal communication or take a more proactive physical approach towards resolving the engagement.

When stage 3 begins 'double or single handed push' the confrontation has just become physical and will rarely be resolved without the involvement of stages 4 and 5.



As the Fig.1 suggests, the aggressor is on the right and is attacking with a double handed grab.

The defender should ideally position themselves accordingly, neutral body shape - side ways on with hands in a raised position. The majority of aggressor strikes in this position is either a head-butt or knee attacks.

Lower your predominant arm, draw it under the aggressors forearm, a counter strike is optional at this point i.e. palm heel, punch to face or mid-section.



The hand that was taken under should come up inside as the other pushes over and inside the elbow of the opposite arm – therefore one arm is over and the other under.



This is the point where the aggressor is most likely to try and strike and control you, so with the arm that came underneath trap the back of the aggressors head and draw him in towards your chest and on to a possible up and coming knee strike – as per the figures below



Weight distribution and body positioning will determine the effectiveness of the following technique and take down. With your aggressors head lowered you should step backwards and draw him towards you as well as simultaneously pressing him into the ground either face first or with a rotation to their backside. Although the photo shows the loosening of the opponent (left hand) ensure maximum control as balance is a key issue.



At this point an optional restraint, counter strike or a simple return to a guard or safe position is important for the completion of the movement.

Don't forget, prevention and avoidance is always the greatest form of self-defence, and that there are a number of variable situational factors that could contribute in a worsened case result and scenario i.e. multiple attackers, size, strength and technical competency of your aggressor, to name a few.

Next month I shall discuss the use of verbal communication, language and gestures in the role of effective self protection.

For more information feel free to visit our website at www.vervemartialarts.co.uk or get in touch via email on info@vervemartialarts.co.uk or telephone 01562 827437.

I look forward to seeing you next month.

