

MDTS Practical Unarmed Combatives Workshop AAR, 2-06

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Another outstanding MDTS training workshop was completed today with 8 folks attending, including Adirondack1, Aimless, Ed Sr., Prambo, and myself. Thankfully this was a scheduled INDOOR event as the weather outside was miserable.

Four of us who attended our December training module started early. In December, we drilled weapons retention (blue guns) with our training partner attempting to gain control of the gun. It's no fun when a determined opponent is trying to obtain your holstered firearm. Chris showed us some simple blocks/strikes to retain control. We then did live-fire drills at point blank range, with your forehead literally touching the cardboard target. This is some pretty wild stuff when first experienced.

The concept is your adversary is at point blank/contact range and engaging you, either trying to strike you, drawing a knife, or going for a gun in a lethal force confrontation.

One technique is to raise your support hand up, elbow out-head+ level, and your hand sweeping back over the side of your head to protect it from any strikes. Your support hand may also be placed elbow out/up, your hand locked back against your throat-nicely covering your lowered head/throat from strikes-and also positioning your hand for possible strikes against your opponent if needed. Also important, this positioning keeps your hand out of the line of fire.

Your strong hand draws your pistol-arm in close and elbow pointed high. This places your muzzle downward, effectively striking the target in the pelvic girdle/groin area. This is better witnessed in person than my feeble attempt at describing it-but it is effective at placing rounds on target in extreme close contact. It is safe when properly executed. Best to try this with an experienced person showing you how first, however

We did a few drills today using airsoft, with your partner/adversary attacking you. You can effectively use the elbow up/out-hand locked against your throat as a striking tool, leaning into your foe and pushing him back, gaining time to draw your pistol and shooting him. Ideally, your elbow is pushed into the adversary's throat. Believe me when I say you can easily be pushed backward when a determined person is pushing his elbow against your throat. Its all about stance, balance, and momentum. You want momentum on YOUR side.

After these drills were finishing up, the rest of the class arrived. Chris Fry had about a 30 minute presentation on the day's materials-"Practical Unarmed Combatives." The objectives are developing the proper mindset, skills, and

knowledge intended to improve a student's chances of WINNING a lethal force confrontation.

Chris touched on awareness and the 4 Ds of criminal intent (a concept he attributed to Geoff Thompson). What should you observe when a person approached you? How is he acting? Nervous, facial tics, grooming? Where are his hands? How should you react? Physical barriers? Verbal barriers? This is a good one. "Hey man, stop right there!" Or "Hey man, stop right FUCKING there!" Criminals understand profanity. Best to think about this ahead of time. Criminals might work in packs-move off-line, circular step to check your six.

A lot of material was covered! Quite an interesting lecture, and discussion within the class, including some legal aspects of lethal force in NY. Sometimes having a lawyer in your shooting group ain't all bad.

The main physical portion of the class included learning a series of simple yet extremely effective open hand strikes, a core set of skills that work on a majority of people a majority of the time. We had done some of these strikes in earlier workshops.

Hands up in a fighting stance if your foe advances, lean forward, using a "drop step" to add FORCE to your strike. We drilled an Axe hand, tiger claw, and chin jab. These strikes are aimed at the facial area-from the throat to the nose (from a frontal assault). We then did a series of strikes, and lastly a knee strike to the ol' cohonos.

These strikes are essentially WWII hand-to-hand field combatives. They were effective then and now! Try pushing up on your chin and nose with your palm. What happens to your head? Imagine a 200lb determined man striking you there with a tiger claw. Not a pretty picture.

We each had a partner. Ed Sr. and I paired off (amazingly, I can still type, but the ibuprofen has set in...). We did the drills first with our partner SLOWLY with no real contact to gain some proficiency with the movement. Later, we used shields, pads, and helmets for "full" but still limited contact. Ed and I also enjoyed striking a Spar-Pro training dummy.

I think this is my next training item purchase. We beat the hell out of him!

Towards the end, Chris set up 3 stimulating drills. First, he made me and Ed put on training masks. We were the bad guys. When we made an attempt to strike our other class mates, they were to tiger claw /axe hand us. We could use dialog to engage them and try to get close. Funny how all the guys wanted to get in my line and beat the hell out of me.

The second drill, at the word "GO" you strike a pad that Chris is holding, 2 tiger

claws and a knee. You do this while 2 other guys off to the side are striking you with pads, pushing you off balance.

The final drill was standing in a corner, a foot or so out---eyes closed. The drill starts when you are pushed back into the wall, a blind-side, if you will. You are then to engage the pads, using the strikes we learned, and pushing the attacker back. It wasn't pretty, but damned interesting.

All in all, an amazing amount of material in about 5+ hours. The course concluded with a round-table discussion of the class content.

The MDTS doctrine of training is integrating unarmed, edged, and firearms in a series of interactive defensive skill sets. If you are serious about self-defense, this is some fantastic training in CNY. And ridiculously inexpensive-though I hope Fry doesn't read this!

Our next training module in March will focus on edged weapons. Did I mention knives scare the hell out of me?

We will then get back to firearms in April and May, including some force on force drills.