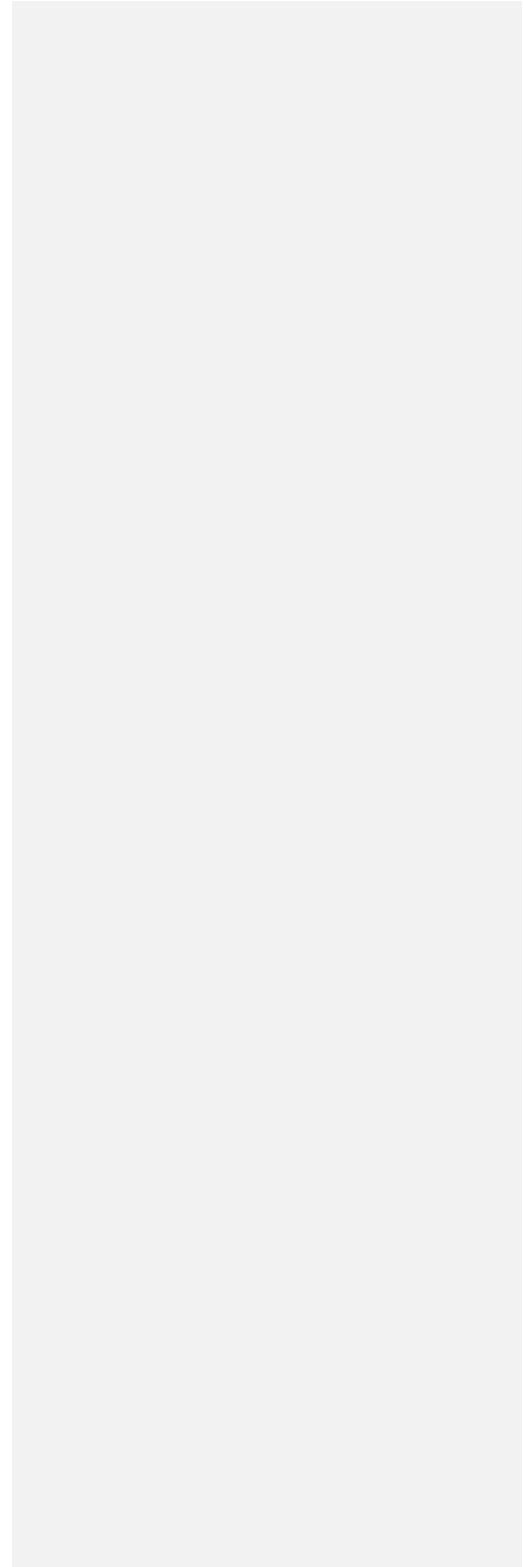
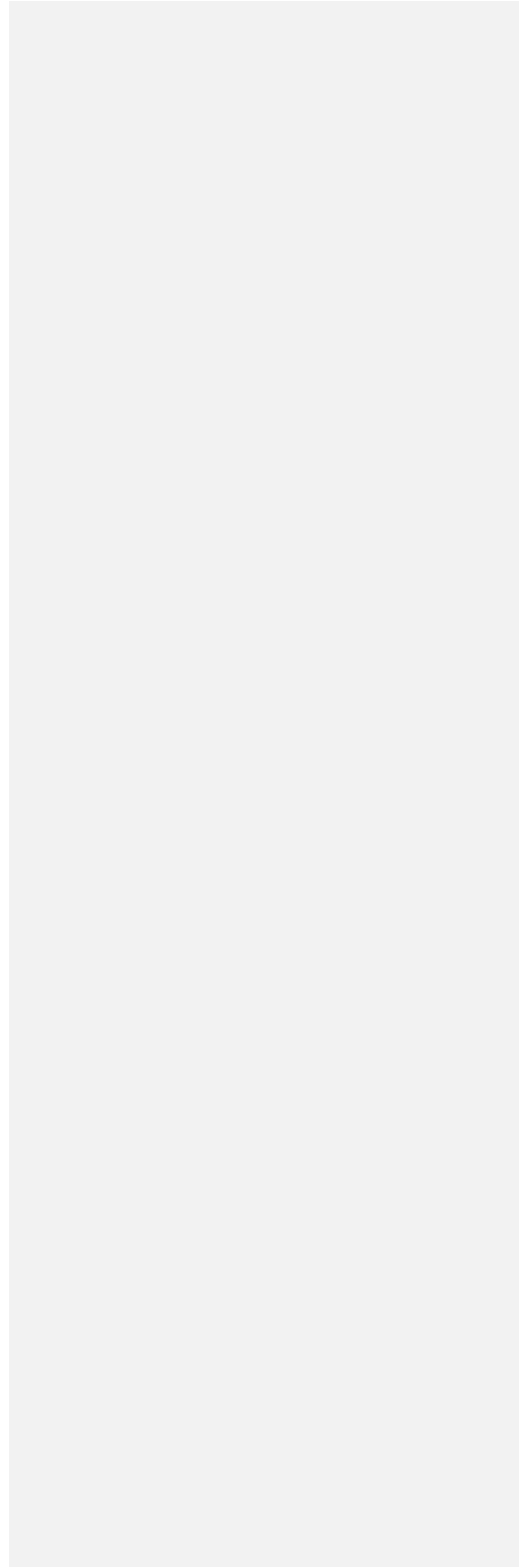


Enclose and Command:
How to Fight with Weapons

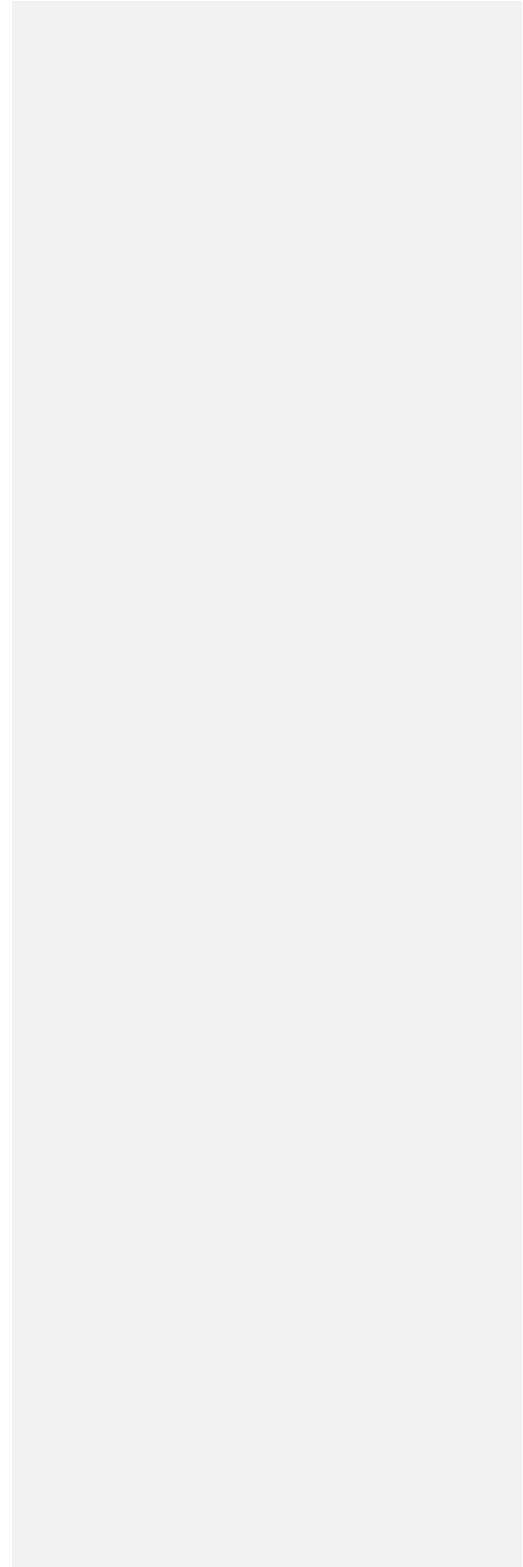


Enclose and Command - Thompson

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Enclose and Command:
How to Fight with Weapons
By Christopher Scott Thompson



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Thanks to Matt Park, Seth Robinson, Timo Seppälä and Lassi Kaleva.

WARNING: Unlike my other works, which concentrate on historical martial arts, this book contains frank discussions of real violence and may be upsetting to some readers. I am sharing this information to help other people survive dangerous situations involving weapons. Racists and anyone else intending to misuse their weapon skills are invited to crawl back into whatever hole they crawled out of.

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The MacGregor Method

The MacGregor Method is a system for instantly assessing any hand-to-hand weapon and using it effectively. It doesn't matter if it's an ancient weapon, a martial arts weapon, a weapon you've never seen, a personal carry weapon or any random object - if you understand the MacGregor Method you'll know how to use it and use it effectively, and also how to defend yourself against it, even if you have no weapon.

Even though the MacGregor Method as a system is new, these techniques are not- everything in this system is derived from the tested and proven methods of the broadsword, quarterstaff and other historical weapons, as described by Archibald MacGregor and other swordsmen of the past.

Archibald MacGregor was a fencing instructor with a philosophical turn of mind and a fondness for biblical references and historical speculation. While he never published a full treatise on fencing, he did deliver a lecture on the broadsword, smallsword, spadron, quarterstaff, buckler and other weapons, which was published in 1791. He also invented his own system of fencing with the rifle and bayonet. In MacGregor's lecture, auxiliary weapons such as the staff and bayonet are used according to broadsword principles. This method is named after him, because everything in the MacGregor Method is based on the tested and proven methods of the old broadsword instructors, as well as on my own experiences with real-world street violence. Having an understanding of both street violence and historical fencing, I was more inclined to see underlying principles and commonalities rather than rigid distinctions, and this was the origin of the MacGregor Method.

The core strategic principle of the MacGregor Method is the same as that of all forms of swordsmanship - "touch and don't be touched." This means a number of different things depending on the circumstances. In a friendly fencing match, it means that I want to strike the opponent without being struck. In a violent encounter, it means that I want to harm my attacker without suffering any harm at all.

The goal and purpose of the MacGregor Method is to develop "spontaneous fluidity," the ability to adapt your weapon skills to any context on a moment's notice. In studying the MacGregor Method, we will begin with basic skills, expanding the concept and its application as we go along.

Weapon Families

Many people practice the art of broadsword fencing because they're interested in historical swordsmanship, but the art was originally a set of survival skills, not just an interesting pastime. We know these techniques work because they were used in single combat and on the battlefield for hundreds of years. The MacGregor Method simply updates the same skill-set for modern needs by dividing all hand-to-hand weapons into four broad families:

Cudgel: a hardwood stick such as a walking stick, cane or eskrima fighting stick. This is an excellent and widely available weapon. The main advantage of the cudgel is that you can carry it legally and without alarming people in situations where it is not possible to carry an obvious lethal weapon. Once you understand how to use the cudgel, you will also understand how to use other weapons in the cudgel family such as the machete. A sharp, high-quality machete is the modern equivalent of a sword, and can be used to protect yourself in life or death situations. The same skill-set can also be applied to historical weapons such as the broadsword, cutlass, spadron, messer, tomahawk and saber.

Knife: knives are a readily available option for lethal force situations, although they don't have the ability to block an attacker's strike from a relatively safe distance like a cudgel or machete. The knife family includes all short weapons, including most improvised weapons.

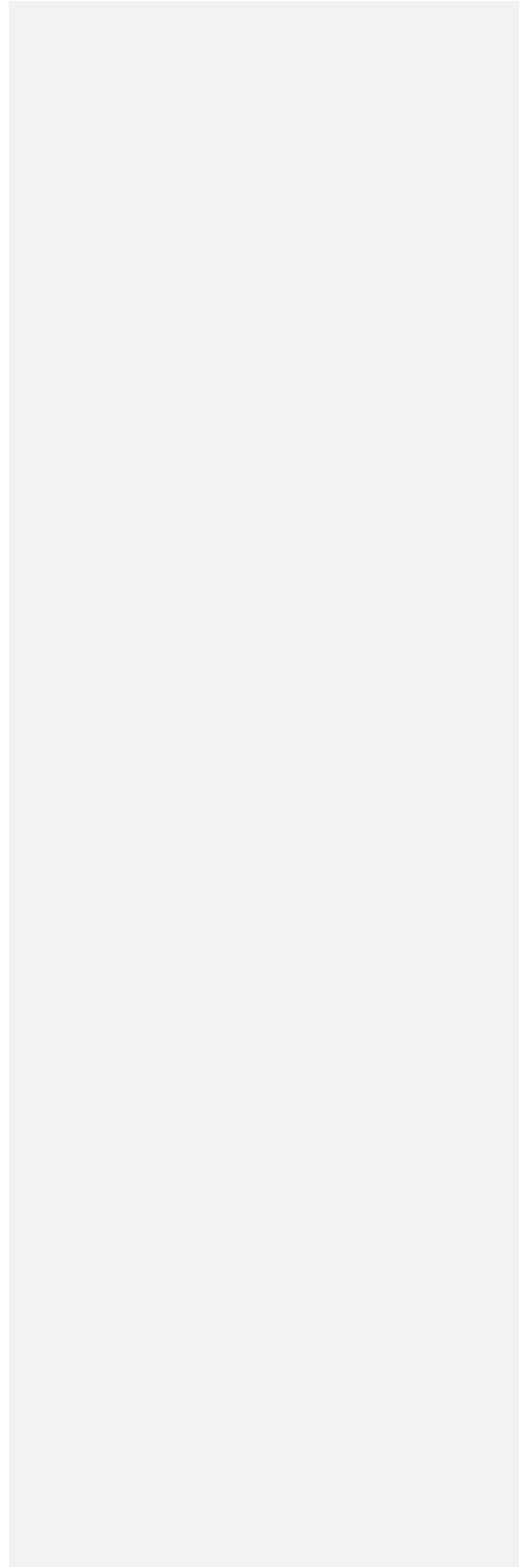
Double: double weapons such as a cudgel and an improvised shield can be useful in situations where multiple attackers may come running in from any direction, such as a riot. Once you know how to use the cudgel and shield, the same skill-set can be applied to historical weapons such as sword and buckler or sword and dagger.

Staff: the staff is a longer stick such as a hiker might carry, used with two hands at once. The staff family includes all longer weapons. Once you know how to use the staff, you will also understand the basic principles of the quarterstaff, spear, rifle and bayonet and other polearms.

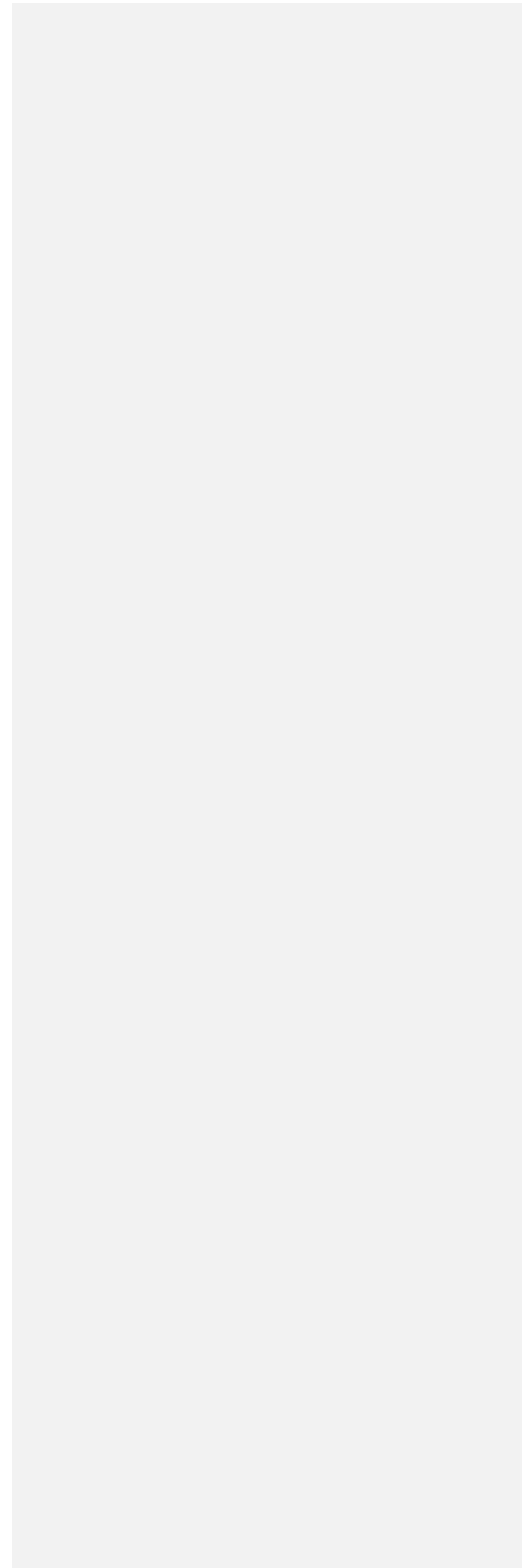
As several recent conflicts demonstrate, fighting situations can sometimes occur that are more similar to ancient battlefield combat than to modern war. Protests and uprisings all over the world have featured fierce street battles involving sticks, shields, knives and flagpoles. The combatants in these situations usually use their weapons for attacking their opponents, but show no knowledge at all of how to defend against a strike. Any fighter who understood how to block attacks would have a huge advantage. Most people will never be in this sort of fight, but the mere fact that such fights occur shows that cold weapon skills are still relevant in the modern world.

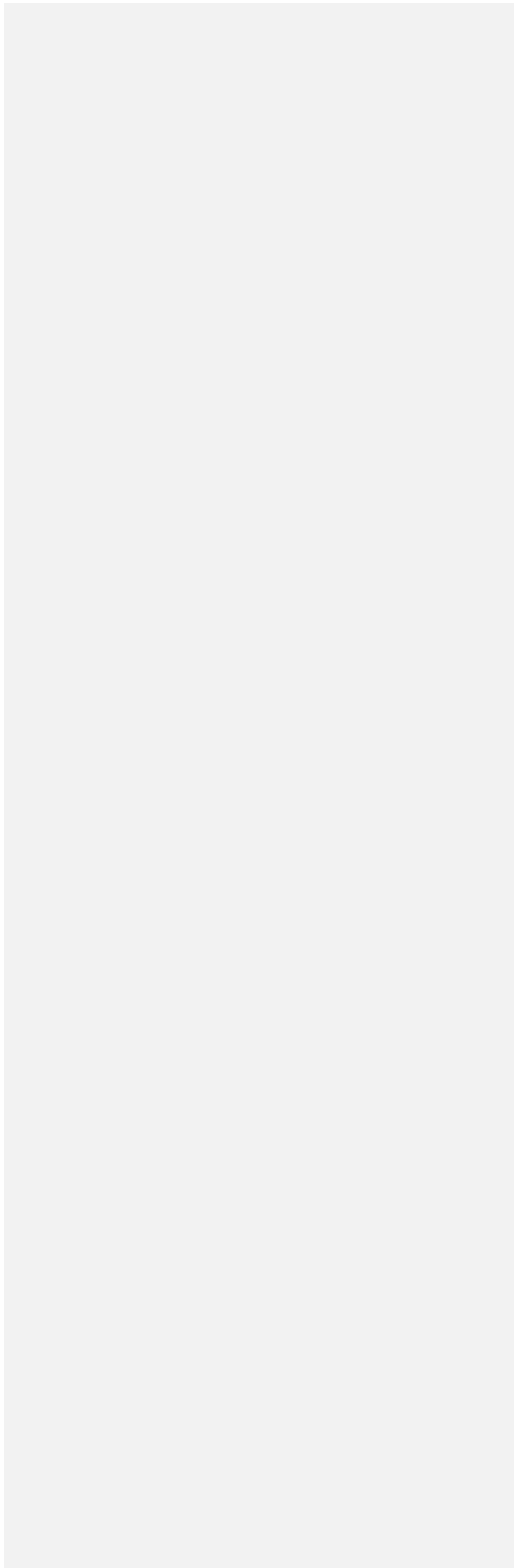
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1 THE CUDGEL FAMILY





1.1 HISTORY

The Highland broadsword was the chosen weapon of the Scottish clan warriors from around 1600 until their final defeat by the British Army in 1746. In the 18th century, several expert broadsword fencers wrote manuals explaining how to use this weapon. A few of these manuals included instructions on self-defense with the cudgel or walking stick based on broadsword principles. For instance, the 1790 broadsword fencing manual *Anti-Pugilism* has this to say:

Now a days, scarce any person walks the streets without a stick; and, when attacked by robbers... (will) naturally have recourse to it. A moment of reflection will imprint on the imagination of the candid Reader, the awkward figure they cut, and the danger they run in this situation, provided they are unacquainted with the rudiments of defence. On the other hand, a person skilled in the use of a stick, may defend himself, with ease, from the attack of three or four at a time.

The author of *Anti-Pugilism* treats the cudgel and the broadsword as equivalent weapons, used in exactly the same way. A few years later, the same manual was republished under the title of *Cudgeling* with no significant changes to the text.

However, another broadsword manual called the *Art of Defence on Foot* of 1798 points out that a stick should not be used exactly like a sword, because its edges are not sharp and a quick opponent can grab your stick and immobilize it, or hit you in the knuckles and disarm you. This manual describes the changes that have to be made in order to safely use a stick for self-defense, including adjustments to the stance and the parries.

The most important thing is to have a flexible mindset, and the willingness to adapt immediately to any situation. Remember that although a stick is a good force equalizer, it can't work miracles. To successfully apply these concepts in a violent encounter will require a certain amount of physical strength and a lot of aggressive energy.

It is possible to apply these techniques effectively without prior training in swordsmanship, but historical broadsword fencers will find the art especially easy to pick up. While it would take a beginner several months to learn this art of stickfighting to a level of basic competence, an experienced broadsword fencer could pick it up in an afternoon.

Cudgeling can be useful in any situation in which cold weapons might be involved. That doesn't mean you shouldn't also learn how to use firearms effectively or that cold weapons are more effective than firearms, because they obviously aren't. You should always train for the full range of threats you might realistically have to face.

This book is primarily concerned with fighting technique, not the legal issues involved in self-defense. The basic principle that applies in most jurisdictions is that the law expects you to use roughly equivalent force to your attacker. Your actions have to be such that the average person would consider them reasonable under the circumstances. For instance, you can't respond to a shove by cracking the person's head open with a stick. However, if someone comes up and takes a swing at you with a tire iron, you can use your walking stick to defend yourself. That's the basic concept in most places, but the details can get a lot more complicated. Readers are strongly urged to research the legal aspect of self-defense and know what the law says in their own jurisdictions.

1.2 BASIC SKILLS

Choosing a Stick

Most walking sticks are far too light and flimsy to serve as adequate cudgels. When you choose a stick, pick one that is sturdy and made of hardwood. The ideal length depends on your height and the context in which you expect to use the stick. If you intend to use it as a walking stick, it should rest comfortably on the ground with your hand on top of it. If you intend to use it for home defense, choose a stick that you can swing freely in the available space.

How to Hold the Cudgel

Many walking stick systems teach you to strike the opponent with the head of the stick, but this is not a realistic option if you are suddenly attacked while walking, as you would not have time to turn the stick over. In this system of cudgeling, the head of the stick is treated as the pommel of a broadsword – in other words, it's at the bottom while you are fighting.

To keep your cudgel from feeling tip-heavy, don't hold it all the way at the end. Grip the cudgel further down, leaving a length of stick below your hand for balance. Hold the stick naturally as you would hold a hammer or a camp-axe. You can extend your thumb along the back in a saber-grip if you prefer, but your grip will not be quite as strong.

If you are walking with your stick, you should discreetly slide your hand down into this position as soon as you perceive a potential threat. In a real encounter you would usually begin in this position rather than a guard, so we will refer to this as the "ready position."



Guards of the Cudgel

There are three basic guards or fighting positions for the cudgel: the hanging, inside and outside guards. According to the *Art of Defence on Foot*:

The hanging guard is however the most usual and often the safest, as it affords more protection to the head and face, at which blows with a stick are generally directed. The only difference in holding this guard with a stick instead of a sword consists in directing the point about six inches towards the outside of your antagonist's right hip, instead of opposite his side; because the point of a stick, if held stationary like the point of a sword, will not prevent his advancing; but on the contrary may be seized with his left hand. (Art of Defence on Foot, 1798)

In the broadsword stance called the hanging guard, the fencer usually extends the sword arm completely, with the hilt high over the head and to the outside a little, and the edge turned upwards. The blade slopes diagonally downward to cross the body, and the point is aimed at the opponent's body. This stance is too exposed with the stick, as the opponent can simply seize the end of the stick.

Commented [CT1]:

The hanging guard we use in cudgel fighting is a little bit different, with the lead arm bent and the point withdrawn, allowing you to make powerful attacks while keeping the stick out of reach of the enemy. Keep your free hand up by your elbow with the palm open to assist with close-distance fighting techniques.



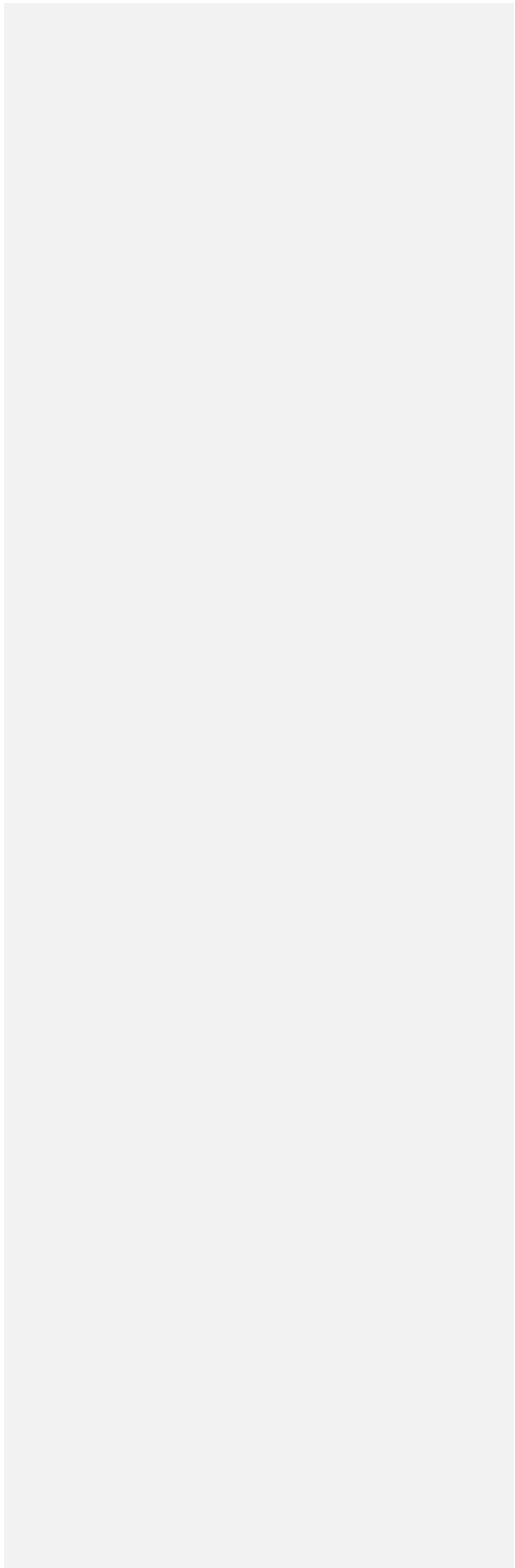
According to the *Art of Defence on Foot*:

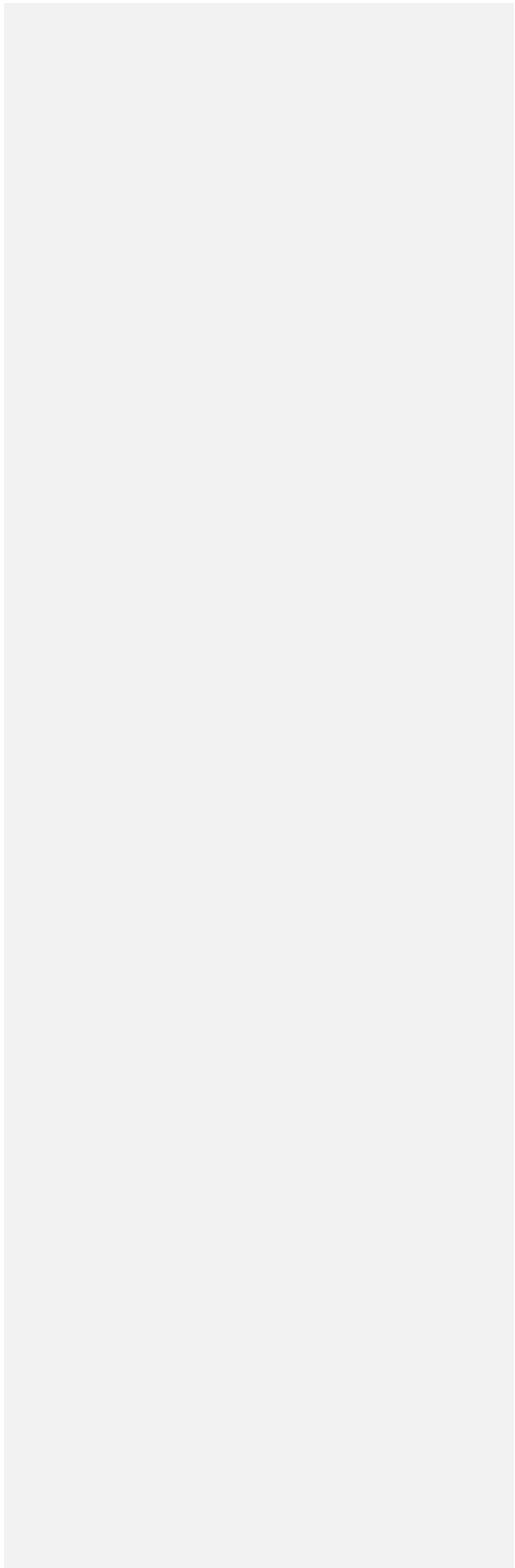
If you stand on guard with a stick previous to your antagonist making his attack, it is impossible to avoid presenting your knuckles as an object for his cut, without some change of position, and the more correctly you are on guard (that is the less opening you leave at your head or body) the more probable will it become that he should select your hand as the part at which to direct his blow. To avoid giving him this opportunity, you must change repeatedly from the inside to the outside and hanging guards, threatening his face with your point in each motion, which will occupy his attention, and prevent his making such choice... . (Art of Defence on Foot, 1798)

To take the outside guard, extend your stick so that your point is at the level of your opponent's right eye, with your wrist turned outward, knuckles angled to the right. Your arm should be bent rather than completely extended, and your stick should cross the body diagonally from the right to the left.

To take the inside guard, rotate your wrist so that your point is aimed at your opponent's left eye. Now your knuckles should be angled to the left. Your stick should cross the body diagonally from the left to the right. Because of the risk that the opponent will strike your hand and disarm you by breaking one of your fingers, we don't stay in either of these positions when using the cudgel. Instead we change rapidly and repeatedly between the inside and outside guard or between all three guards. When your fight from the inside or outside guard, your free hand should be held up near your head with the palm open.

Remember that the ready position is not the same as any of these guards, although you can parry on any guard from the ready position. To take a ready position, hold your stick like an ordinary walking stick with the tip on the floor. Slide your hand down the stick in preparation for raising it to parry. Practice rapidly moving into each of the guards from the ready position. (The outside guard and inside guard are shown on the next two pages.)





Footwork

In all three guards, you lead with the same foot as your weapon hand. So, if you are right-handed you should stand with your right foot forward. Practice moving around freely in all directions while standing in the hanging, inside and outside guards using whatever footwork feels natural and comfortable for you, then familiarize yourself with the following steps:

Advance: the lead foot steps forward and then the rear foot follows.

Retreat: the rear foot steps back and then the lead foot follows.

Lunge: the lead foot takes a deep step forward.

Recover: the lead foot steps back into the guard position after a lunge.

Shift: the lead foot takes a deep step backward to dodge a strike.

Traverse: either foot steps to the side in either direction.

Distance

There are three types of distance in any fight. Close distance is when you are close enough to strike the enemy without moving forward. Out of distance is when you are too far away to hit or be hit. In distance is when you can hit the enemy by taking a single step. Whoever attacks in close distance will almost certainly hit, because there is no time to block or evade at point-blank range. Close distance is therefore the most dangerous place for a fight to start.

If you have reason to think you may be at higher risk of attack, you should try to be aware of your place in the physical environment - controlling the distance between yourself and other people, discreetly making sure that no one is standing too close or at an angle where they could easily overwhelm you, checking ahead of you for anything that could be a set-up.

From the first moment that something seems wrong, you should be thinking, "control the distance, don't let them get too close." This is an elementary principle of martial arts, especially weapons arts. But it is often ignored in real life. Why? Maybe because the martial artist is too often thinking in terms of sparring matches or sporting fights. Without the salute or the bell or some other signal, they don't start watching and controlling the distance. You should be doing it from the beginning.

Basic Attacks

There are five basic strikes with the cudgel, and one thrust. Against a right-handed fighter, these are as follows:

Inside: a strike to the opponent's left face or shoulder, usually on a downward angle.

Outside: a strike to the opponent's right face or shoulder, usually on a downward angle.

Low Inside: a strike to the opponent's body on the left side, usually on an upward angle.

Low Outside: a strike to the opponent's body on the right side, usually on an upward angle.

Medium: a strike to the head from above, usually straight down.

Thrust: a strike with the tip of the weapon from any angle.

Against a left-handed fighter, these lines would be reversed – for instance, an inside strike would target the right face or shoulder of a left-handed opponent.

To perform a strike, simply swing the weapon so that it strikes the target at the center of percussion, about a quarter of the way down the stick from the tip. Make sure you strike in such a way that if you were using a sword instead of a cudgel, the sharp edge would land on the target rather than the flat of the blade.

To perform a thrust, extend your arm and drive the tip into the target.

To practice your basic attacks, perform the strikes in sequence on a pell, hanging tire or other target: inside, outside, inside low, outside low, medium, thrust.

The Figure Eights

You should practice figure-eight patterns to build striking power. The downward figure eight uses the inside and outside strikes, while the upward figure eight uses the inside low and outside low. You should hear a distinct sound as your stick cuts through the air. Make sure no one is nearby, because these strikes have power!

Basic Defenses

The basic idea for all the defenses is to cross the attack so that your weapon makes an X with the attacker's weapon.

From the hanging guard:

Inside: to block a strike to the inside, simply move your hand a little to the inside so that the strike lands on your weapon in the shape of a letter X, with your cudgel sloping downward.

Outside: move your hand to the outside while raising the tip of your weapon to make an X with the attack.

Low Inside: move your hand to the inside while lowering it.

Low Outside: move your hand to the outside while lowering it.

Medium: hold the weapon higher than your head and slightly ahead of it, so that you resemble a letter T.

From the inside or outside guard:

Inside: move your hand up to the inside so that the strike lands on your weapon in the shape of a letter X, with your tip pointed upward.

Outside: move your hand up to the outside so that the strike lands on your weapon in the shape of a letter X, with your tip pointed upward.

Low Inside: drop the tip of your weapon to make an X with a low inside strike.

Low Outside: move your hand to the outside while lowering the tip so that the weapon slopes downward.

Medium: hold the weapon higher than your head and slightly ahead of it, so that you resemble a letter T.

Thrust: to block a thrust from either guard position, sweep your weapon to the outside with your tip lowered.

To practice your basic defenses, take a guard position and then pretend an attacker is making the basic attacks against you in sequence: inside, outside, low inside, low outside, medium, thrust.



A block on the hanging guard inside.



Blocking an inside strike. Note how the weapons cross in an X.



Blocking an outside strike. Again, the weapons cross in an X.



Blocking a low outside strike.



A low inside block with the broadsword.



Blocking a medium strike.

Parrying Principles

According to the *Art of Defence on Foot*:

In a contest with sticks, if you parry with an inside or outside guard, you must endeavour to meet your antagonist's blow with your fort, rather more to the left or right of the line of defence, according to which side you are protecting than with a sword. By these means the recoil of the sticks will prevent the blow sliding down your knuckles, and in proportion as you can stop your antagonist's blow wide of the line of defence, you obtain a greater opening to return it. (Art of Defence on Foot, 1798)

The fort is the lower half of the weapon and the feeble is the upper half. With either sword or stick, attacks are generally made with the feeble and defenses with the fort. The parries in broadsword fencing are often taken very close to the hilt, sometimes even striking the basket itself. If you did this with a stick, of course, your hand could be broken. Therefore you must be sure to parry further away from your own body, and to keep your stick at a more horizontal angle during the parry. Deflect the opponent's stick away with the force of your block rather than simply stopping it as you might do with a sword. This is especially important in the inside and

outside guards. In the hanging guard, your stick will be angled downward already, so gravity will shed blows off to the side. But you must remember to keep your hand up high where it cannot easily be sniped at.

I have fought training bouts using a single stick with no hand protection, but by following these simple principles I kept my hand from being struck. However, a broken hand could easily keep you away from training for months, so you should always practice with safety gear.

You will often shift when you parry, so that if the parry fails the shift will still protect you by moving you out of distance. This doesn't affect your ability to reach the opponent with a lunge, because your lunging distance is determined by the position of your rear foot, not your front foot. This means that if the opponent lunges and you shift, you're out of distance of the opponent's attack but still in distance for yours.

Protecting the Hand

Anyone familiar with the Filipino martial arts will be aware that the hand is a primary target in a stick fight. The author of *Art of Defence on Foot* described a simple method to protect the hand. This can be practiced as a drill with two singlesticks, fencing masks, and padded gloves.

Stand on guard while the opponent attempts to hit your knuckles. To prevent this, continually change between the inside, outside and hanging guards, always threatening the face with your point.

Once you're familiar with this, you can add slipping. This means to pull the target out of the way as the opponent attacks it. Pull the weapon back all the way, then strike as the opponent misses.

The Shield

As important and useful as the traditional parries are, you can only use them after coming on guard. So what can you do if you are attacked while still in the ready position?

Our answer to this question is based on one of the guard positions used with broadsword and targe, the small round shield of the Highlanders. In *The Use of the Broadsword* from 1746, Thomas Page describes an outside guard with sword and targe, with the broadsword angled to the right and the targe to the left, effectively protecting the entire upper body.



You can achieve a similar effect with no weapons at all, by throwing both arms up simultaneously on either side of your head. Both palms should be open. We call this position “the shield.” Practice moving into the shield rapidly from a relaxed position, beginning with arms folded or down at your sides. Perform the shield while moving forward and while escaping backward.



Once you can do this very quickly, practice going into the shield from the ready position. The basic movements are the same, but when you perform these movements your cudgel will swing in a huge clockwise circle through all the lines, sweeping any attack to the outside. The only line this movement doesn't cover is the outside low, but that line is the least likely to be targeted while in the ready position.



The shield is the most important defensive movement in this system, so practice it as much as possible both unarmed and with the cudgel.

The Cleek

One of my favorite tactics for defeating a sudden attack in close distance is something I call the "cleek." I've used this tactic successfully in two random encounters – once in a nightclub and once on the street. In both cases, the act of throwing both arms up in the shield protected me from the attacker's punch and then the cleek allowed me to end the encounter decisively.

The name I have chosen for this technique is actually borrowed from the Lochaber axe, a Scottish battle-axe with a hook on the end. This hook is known as the cleek, and it was used for pulling the opponent to the ground.

The cleek can be done with a cudgel or with no weapon at all, and is effective against all of the most common street attacks when performed with the right timing. Some of the most popular street attacks include a wide and powerful right cross, a tackle, a shove with both hands followed by a punch or tackle, a head butt, a groin kick, or a lapel grab followed by one of the above. You might also see a simple combination, such as a left followed immediately by a right, or vice versa. Some street fighters will come in with a flurry of rights and lefts in rapid succession.

These are all designed to get you on the ground as quickly as possible, and they will most likely happen from either extreme close distance or a few feet away. They will generally be preceded by a conversation of some kind, even a very short one.

Most people have to work themselves up to committing an act of violence. This is why two drunks arguing with each other in a bar will usually progress from belligerent words, to shoves, to a fist fight - they can't go from zero to sixty in the blink of an eye. This means you sometimes have a little warning, as long as you know what to look for. If a situation seems potentially violent, you should get ready, positioning yourself so as to be prepared for a sudden attack.

In my experience, about half of all fights happen at very close range and with little warning, allowing no time for you to take a stance. You can still get ready for the attack mentally if you know it's coming.

The other half occur from conversational distance, which is still close enough for a sudden charging attack. These situations are more likely to occur on the street rather than inside a building.

You and your training partner should practice applying the cleek in all of these scenarios.

To apply the cleek with the cudgel, move into the shield rapidly and swing your weapon up behind the attacker's neck. Then grab the other end of it with your left hand as you shift back, pulling on the stick to bring the opponent down. This can be done incredibly quickly, and the extra leverage provided by the stick can allow a small person to pull a big person down.

To apply the cleek without a weapon, throw both your hands up in the shield as you move in on the attack, with your arms out to protect against being struck. Don't worry about blocking, just get right in there and grab the back of the attacker's neck with both hands, then pull down forcefully.

This method can be an effective preemptive attack, especially if you are at extreme close distance in a crowded place, but it works far more effectively as a response to a forward rush, because the opponent's own onrushing momentum will help you perform the technique. If you're going to use this as a preemptive attack, you will have to pull down with all your weight on the opponent's neck as you shift backward, aiming to unbalance the opponent.



1.3 COMBINATION EXERCISES

When practicing combinations, the attacker should not always begin with a committed strike - sometimes the real strike should be preceded by fake attacks. The defender should not always use the same type of footwork. Sometimes the counterattacks should be applied on the retreat, and sometimes on the advance or the traverse. The targets should also be varied, striking opportunistically at the hands, the legs, the stomach, the head or the face.

In these combinations, the attacker is parried and then the defender responds with a series of strikes designed to follow the easiest and most natural path for a powerful strike from that position. These strikes are designed to end the fight immediately, as we reject the notion of engaging in any kind of "give and take" with the stick in a real encounter.

These combinations should be applied with a free-flowing spirit of “violent improvisation.” Do not strike your training partner with a real stick unless you are wearing protective gear.

1- From the hanging guard, block an inside then strike inside, then low outside, then multiple strikes to any target you like.

2- From the outside guard, block an inside then strike low outside, inside, then multiple strikes.

3- From the inside guard, block an outside then strike low inside, then outside, then multiple strikes.

4- From the hanging guard, block an inside low then strike inside, then low outside, then multiple strikes to any target you like.

5- From the outside guard, block an inside low then strike outside low, then medium, then multiple strikes.

6- From the inside guard, block an outside low then strike medium twice, then multiple strikes.

7- From a hanging guard, block an inside low then strike medium twice, then multiple strikes.

8- From an outside guard, block an outside low then strike inside, then outside, then multiple strikes.

9- From an inside guard, block a medium then strike inside, then outside, then multiple strikes.

10- From the ready position, make a stop-thrust to the body against a rushing attacker, followed by multiple strikes.

The Combination Exercise

Once you have some experience with these exercises, you can combine them into a single free-form exercise. Begin in the ready position and have your training partner make a single committed strike.

As you cannot know which attack the opponent will make, you must defend with the shield while moving either forward, backward or to the side. As you are moving into the shield, you may notice that the attack is coming in on a low line. While you should never try to chase the opponent's attack, you can adjust your defense if you can see clearly where the attack will land. Regardless of where you parry the attack, follow up with a rapid series of strikes designed to drive the opponent to the ground.

You can also practice against weapons other than a cudgel – for instance, the opponent might be armed with a safe training knife and attack with continuous slashes or stabs. This is a more advanced version of the exercise, as the knife is an extraordinarily dangerous weapon. As the defender facing a knife, you must not allow yourself to be touched at all. In practice, this means that you should make your combination strikes from outside the knife's effective range, taking advantage of the cudgel's greater length. Don't try to track the knife, it moves far too fast. Just throw your weapon up into the shield and then start hitting. Back up as much as you need to in order to stay out of range of the knife.

As the attacker in this exercise, you should use the most common knife attacks favored by untrained fighters. A shove with the free hand followed by rapid stabs to the body is arguably the most likely attack, or a series of rapid slashes from right to left and back.

Sometimes you should use real sticks and no protective gear, and perform the whole exercise in slow motion. On other occasions you should use safe foam weapons and fencing masks so you can practice the strikes with no restraint. The same is true of the other exercises.



After parrying, Chris strikes Seth in the body.



Then the head.



Then the face. The entire sequence of strikes can be performed very rapidly.

1.4 STRIKE AND FLY OUT EXERCISES

The following exercises illustrate the important principle of “strike and fly out,” a hit and run mentality in which you lunge in for the attack and shift out rapidly on a guard as soon as your attack is completed. These exercises are similar to the “doubling” exercises of the Ceteran Society’s Regimental Highland Broadsword system. They all derive from the exercises of “Throwing at the Head and Slipping the Leg” and “Scholar’s Offensive and Defensive” in the broadsword manual of Thomas Mathewson from 1805.

The strike and fly out exercises teach you how to fence with a cudgel, which is an interesting type of fencing but not much like an actual street encounter with a stick. The odds of getting into a random fight with a stick-fencing expert are basically nil!

That doesn’t mean they have no training value. On the contrary, fencing with a stick is quite a bit harder than defending yourself with one against an untrained attacker. The idea in these exercises is to make you into an expert stick fencer, thus leaving you with far more skill than you would ever need to defend yourself effectively – and making the job that much easier.

Use fencing masks, head protectors and padded gloves when practicing these exercises, along with any other safety gear you find necessary based on the level of force. Exercise caution and restraint when striking.

- 1- Take a hanging guard. The opponent lunges and strikes at the head with a medium. Shift back and parry the medium, then lunge and make the same strike. Continue exchanging head strikes until you need a break, then step out of distance and call a halt.
- 2- Exchange head strikes as above, except that either of you may suddenly strike the leg instead of the head. The other must successfully shift to avoid the leg strike, and counter to the arm or head at the same moment.
- 3- Exchange head strikes as above, except that either of you may suddenly strike the body with an inside or outside low instead of the head at any point. The other must successfully parry and continue without pause.
- 4- Exchange head strikes as above, except that either of you may suddenly feint to one target and strike another at any point. The other must successfully parry and continue without pause if possible. Remember that your foot should not move when you feint, only when you actually strike.
- 5- Exchange head strikes as above, except that either of you may apply a combination attack at any point after a parry. To apply the combination, step forward when you parry instead of shifting back. Then traverse to the side and apply multiple strikes to any target.
- 6- Take an outside guard. The opponent lunges and strikes at the inside. Shift back and parry the inside, then lunge and strike the outside. Continue exchanging inside and outside strikes until you need a break, then step out of distance and call a halt. Switch sides and repeat. You can do the same exercise from the inside guard, but the attacker should then begin with an outside strike.
- 7- Exchange inside and outside strikes as above, except that either of you may suddenly strike the leg instead. The other must successfully shift to avoid the leg strike, and counter to the arm or head at the same moment.
- 8- Exchange inside and outside strikes as above, except that either of you may suddenly strike the body with an inside or outside low instead of the head at any point. The other must successfully parry and continue without pause.
- 9- Exchange inside and outside strikes as above, except that either of you may suddenly feint to one target and strike another at any point. The other must successfully parry and continue without pause if possible. Remember that your foot should not move when you feint, only when you actually strike.
- 10- Exchange inside and outside strikes as above, except that either of you may apply a combination attack at any point after a parry. To apply the combination, step forward when you parry instead of shifting back. Then traverse to the side and apply multiple strikes to any target.

The Strike and Fly Out Exercise

Once you're really familiar with all ten of these, you should combine them into a single Strike and Fly Out Exercise. To perform this exercise, begin on any guard and exchange strikes and parries back and forth, using any strike or parry you choose. Include leg strikes, low strikes, feints and combinations freely, but try to keep the same back and forth rhythm. This exercise is very close to free fencing with the stick; the only real difference is that free fencing uses broken rhythm instead of taking turns to attack and defend. You can free fence with the stick using safe protective gear whenever you feel ready to do so. However, free fencing is much less important with the cudgel than the broadsword, as it does not represent a real-world situation.



Chris begins an attack at the head as Seth takes the hanging guard.



Having parried, Seth attacks the inside.



After parrying, Chris attacks the outside.



Seth feints to the inside after his parry...



Then makes the real attack to the outside.

1.5 ENCLOSE AND COMMAND EXERCISES

The following exercises illustrate the principle of “enclose and command,” which means to get in close and seize control of the attacker’s weapon arm to end the fight immediately. The phrase “enclose and command” is borrowed from the writings of Sir William Hope, a Scottish smallsword and backsword instructor. To *enclose* is to close the distance, and to *command* is to seize the opponent, in such a way that you can either strike with impunity or throw the attacker to the ground.

While the circumstances of a specific fight may require a variety of tactics, the specific technique you use is not important. What is important is to enclose and command, so that you can put the opponent out of the fight *instantly*. Although you may put your weapon up and take a stance, it's not because you intend to fence. You are only covering yourself so you can enclose and command.

Unlike the strike and fly out exercises, these drills have no “give and take.” The opponent attacks, and you respond decisively and end the encounter in an instant – the safest thing to do in a real attack.

Be careful to only simulate these attacks in training, as the finishing strikes are highly dangerous.

1- Begin in a hanging guard. The opponent attacks inside with a committed strike. Move in on the strike instead of shifting back, and parry with your cudgel. Use your cudgel to sweep the attack up and over, while stepping forward with your rear foot. Push the opponent’s arm to the side with your free hand, then strike as many times as necessary to drive the opponent to the ground. This technique is called the “bind.”

2- Begin in an inside or outside guard, changing constantly to protect your hand. The opponent attacks either inside or outside. Move in on the strike with a parry and apply the bind.

3- Begin in a hanging guard. The opponent attacks with a committed strike. Move in on the strike with a parry, then step forward with your rear foot. Use your free hand to push the attacker’s weapon arm upward from below, driving the opponent backwards and off-balance. Raise your weapon and stab the attacker repeatedly in the face with the head of the cudgel until the opponent collapses. This technique is called the “lift.”

4- Begin in an inside or outside guard, changing constantly to protect your hand. The opponent attacks either inside or outside. Move in on the strike with a parry and apply the lift. Stab into the opponent’s ribs from below with the tip of your cudgel as you drive forward, running the attacker into any nearby object or hazard.

5- Begin in a hanging guard. The opponent attacks with a committed strike. Move in on the strike with a parry, then step forward with your rear foot. Immediately after the parry is made, thrust your free arm up between your crossed weapons from below, and entwine your hand under the opponent wrist and then over the opponent’s arm. Exert upward pressure or turn your hips to lock the elbow joint. Finish with repeated strikes until the opponent collapses. This technique is called the “lock.”

6- Begin in an inside or outside guard, changing constantly to protect your hand. The opponent attacks either inside or outside. Move in on the strike with a parry and apply the lock.

7- Begin in a hanging guard. The opponent attacks with a committed strike. Move in on the strike with a parry, then step forward with your rear foot. Immediately after the parry is made, grab the opponent's wrist and pull it sharply down and forward. Finish with repeated strikes until the opponent collapses. This technique is called the "grip."

8- Begin in an inside or outside guard, changing constantly to protect your hand. The opponent attacks either inside or outside. Move in on the strike with a parry and apply the grip.

9- Begin in a hanging guard. The opponent attacks with a committed strike. Move in on the strike with a parry, then step forward with your rear foot. Immediately after the parry is made, grab the opponent's wrist. Kick the opponent's leg or heel from behind to force the opponent to the ground. This technique is called the "back heel."

10- Begin in an inside or outside guard, changing constantly to protect your hand. The opponent attacks either inside or outside. Move in on the strike with a parry and apply the back heel.

For advanced training, combine these exercises with the Strike and Fly Out Exercise.



The Bind.



The Lift. (Shown with a broadsword.)



The Lock.



The Grip. (Shown with machete vs knife.)



The Back Heel.

The Enclose and Command Exercise

You probably won't be lucky enough to have your weapon in a guard position when an attack occurs. To use commands effectively, you must be able to apply any of the commands from the ready position with your stick lowered. After you have some skill at performing these commands from a guard position, you should practice them all from the ready position.

In a random attack, you don't know what strike the opponent is going to make. It's very difficult to correctly track and assess an incoming attack so you can apply the correct counter, so you're not going to try. Instead you'll respond to any attack by throwing both arms up in the shield. No matter what the attacker does, you only do this one thing. You can either move in on the attack as rapidly and forcefully as possible while performing the shield, or you can move backward or to the side if circumstances require. As always, you can adjust your parry if you can see clearly see what line the opponent is attacking on – but you should never try to chase the attack around. For example, if the opponent is obviously attacking the outside low you can use the appropriate parry rather than the shield, but in the far majority of cases you simply move into the shield with total confidence.

As you move into the shield, you will make contact with the opponent's attacking arm or weapon somewhere. Because the shield causes your cudgel to sweep through all the lines in a large circle, your weapon will probably

push the attack over to your outside. In some cases, you will make contact with your free arm against the attacker's weapon arm.

Don't worry about seeing it - just try to feel it through your weapon or arm. As soon as you can feel that you have contact, apply whichever command comes most easily from that position. If you happen to get injured in the contact stage, don't let it stop you. You can get to the emergency room when the fight is over. If you pause because you're hurt, you could be killed.

Finish the encounter by driving the opponent to the ground with multiple strikes. You should practice different kinds of finishing strikes for this purpose – for instance, head strikes for an unambiguous life or death situation and knee or leg strikes for an attacker you'd prefer to spare. There are many different options, but always force the attacker to the ground as rapidly as possible.

All of the commands follow a three-step pattern:

- 1- find (make contact with your arm or weapon)
- 2- freeze (control the opponent's weapon arm with your free arm)
- 3- finish (end the encounter with a decisive series of attacks)

Note: In our broadsword fencing curriculum we call this "contact, control, kill." I'm using a different mnemonic here because I don't want to encourage you to think of every encounter as a lethal force situation.

You can easily improvise your own commands once you're familiar with this pattern.



Chris steps into the shield against Seth's attack and gets the Bind.





Chris finishes with repeated hammerfists.



Seth attacks; Chris is ready.



Chris steps in, gets the Shield, and turns it into the Grip.



Chris finishes with elbow strikes.



Chris stops Seth's attack with the Shield.





Chris gets the Lock and finishes with hammerfists to the face.

Defense Against the Knife

When training against a knife attack, the most effective command is generally the grip. If the attacker shoves you with the free hand and comes in stabbing with the other hand, the shield will usually make contact with the attacker's free hand. From the shield position, it's surprisingly easy and instinctive to drop your free hand down and grip the attacker's knife hand, even while stumbling backward. You may not be struck at all, or you may immobilize the knife after being wounded once. If your timing is slightly off, you may injure your hand by grabbing the blade instead of the wrist. If you act with determination no matter what happens, you will minimize the damage to yourself and end up in position to finish the encounter with a barrage of cudgel strikes.

The same basic sequence applies when defending unarmed against a knife attack, except that you can apply the grip with both hands if you choose. Yank the opponent off-balance, then finish with elbow strikes to the face, a back heel or any other useful attack.

You should also practice removing the knife from the attacker's hand and throwing it out of reach while retaining control of the encounter. Unless you are training for an environment where the use of lethal force will not be questioned, you should not practice finishing off the attacker with his own knife.

1.6 OTHER WEAPONS

Now that you're familiar with cudgel fighting, you can practice all of the same exercises with a training machete made of wood, aluminum or some other relatively safe material - never use a sharp machete for training with a partner.

Everything you have already learned applies to the machete. The guards are the same, the attacks are the same and the "commands" or grappling techniques are the same. The only significant difference is that most machetes are not designed to thrust, so if you have a machete without a thrusting tip you can't rely on thrusting attacks. There are also some strikes you can make with the cudgel that you can't make with an edged weapon like the machete, but we don't use any of those strikes. All of our cudgel and machete techniques are designed to be interchangeable, so pay close attention when you're striking with the machete - is the edge of the weapon hitting the target? If the answer is no, you need to change how you strike with both weapons.

Practice the Combination Exercise, the Strike and Fly Out Exercise and the Enclose and Command Exercise. As you can see, there is no difference at all in how you use these weapons.



Chris blocks Seth's dagger attack with his machete.



Chris gets the Bind, and finishes.





Chris blocks outside low with his machete.





Chris gets the Bind with his machete.





Chris finishes with a medium strike.



Chris gets the Grip.



Chris finishes the encounter.

After you're familiar with the machete, you can try out any historical weapons you may have access to, remembering to use proper safety gear and safe versions of the weapons. Try any of the following you can get your hands on:

Broadsword

Cutlass

Sabre

Spadroon

Messer

Practice the Combination Exercise, the Strike and Fly Out Exercise and the Enclose and Command Exercise. You should find that you can use these weapons effectively regardless of whether you have ever trained with them before or not. The same is true of weapons from other parts of the world such as the *dao* or the *bolo*.









Some weapons in the same weapon family do require a slightly different approach. The head of a camp axe, hatchet or tomahawk can be used to trap the attacker's weapon or whirl it violently off-line.

The whirl is actually a broadsword technique, but it is much easier to perform it successfully with a hatchet. The idea is to parry in one guard and then wrench your weapon suddenly into another guard: inside to hanging, hanging to outside, or outside to low inside. If you do this with speed and force it can actually send the opponent's weapon flying through the air.

When fighting with a hatchet or tomahawk, try to close distance as rapidly and aggressively as possible. The weapon is too short to be much use on defense, so you need to avoid any protracted exchange. Get in there immediately, chopping into your opponent's attack rather than parrying it. Trap or whirl if you can, get a command right away, then finish the fight decisively.



Seth uses the Whirl.





This next sequence features two medieval German weapons: the sickle and the messer.







A Bind with the sickle.



Some weapons of cudgel length cannot be used to strike effectively. The classic example historically would be the smallsword. The smallsword was basically a long needle with a handle, and was used only for thrusting. The art of the smallsword is one of the most complex fighting systems ever developed, and there is no way to gain any real skill with the smallsword without taking lessons from a qualified fencing teacher. However, you can gain a minimal level of competence with the smallsword by using the MacGregor Method guard positions and restricting yourself to thrusts.

Some people carry a strong umbrella as a back-up weapon. An umbrella generally cannot be used to strike the opponent, but a thrust with the tip can be effective. I once used an umbrella as an improvised weapon in a street encounter, but not realizing that this was not the most effective way to use it I simply swung it as hard and fast as I could. My opponent tried to turn away, with the result that the umbrella tip sliced across his back and ripped his jacket. Luckily for me, he decided not to stick around at that point. I don't recommend that you repeat the experiment – even though a strike was effective in this encounter, it isn't the smart way to use this weapon. Treat it like a smallsword and thrust with the tip.

Some people use flexible weapons like belts, bike chains or even a shirt or towel. These are of limited use because they have no defensive capability. If you have no better option, you can use a flexible weapon to strike but must otherwise approach the fight as if you were unarmed. Figure eight strikes performed with great power and speed can force the opponent to stay way from you. You can also whip your weapon at the opponent's eyes, close in rapidly behind it, and get a command of some kind. Strike again and again until the opponent falls, or use your weapon to pull the opponent down. The cleek can be very effective when assisted by a shirt or chain! Obviously you should only strike if the weapon is heavy enough for strikes to be effective.

Any time you pick up an object – any object at all – you should ask yourself what it can do and what it cannot. Is it rigid enough to block an attack? Is it likely to break if you hit someone with it? If it can't be used to strike, can it be used to thrust? After a little while, this should become second nature.

The cudgel family is the largest of all the weapon families, and includes the widest range of necessary skills. Once you really understand how to fight with a cudgel, you can use most other weapons with little or no additional training as long as you have the right mentality. Spontaneous fluidity is the key.



Timo uses a spare boot to stop a knife attack.



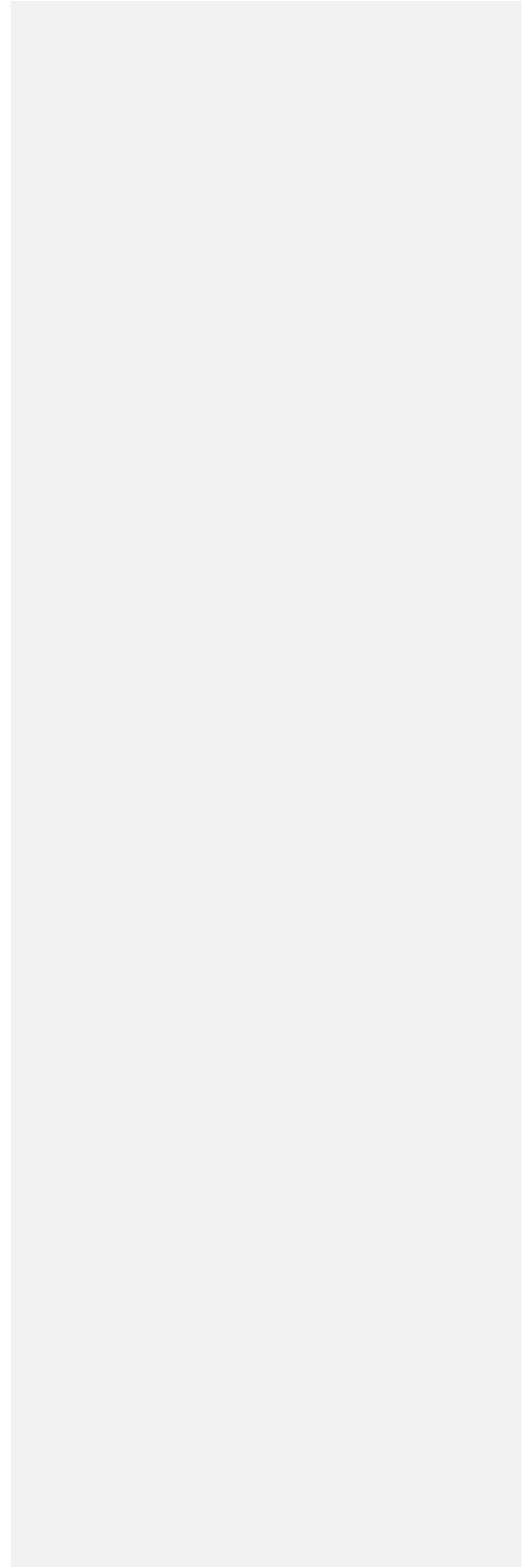


Chris uses a measuring tape to defeat a machete attack.





2 THE KNIFE FAMILY





The knife is one of the most useful of all tools and one of the ugliest of all weapons, inspiring a visceral fear and revulsion in the average person. Unlike a sturdy walking stick, it cannot block an attack, so it is useless for self-defense in the strict sense. You can't use it at all unless you are fighting for your life, so it isn't helpful in the far majority of real encounters. If you are ever unfortunate enough to be forced to defend yourself with a knife, you may have a harder time convincing the authorities that your actions were justified - knives creep people out, and people who carry knives creep people out.

Twenty years before I wrote this book, I was arrested and found with a concealed knife in the aftermath of a fight. I was charged with a felony and nearly sent to prison for five years. My first marriage fell apart. I paid a high price for carrying a knife, but I could have paid a much higher price. So I want to be totally unambiguous here: *I do not recommend carrying a knife for self-defense.*

However, it is important for anyone interested in self-defense to understand the knife, to know how to use one and to know how an attacker might use one. You may carry a knife for some other purpose, such as to open packages or cut ropes or kindling. You may be attacked when a knife happens to be at hand and is your best available option to keep yourself from being killed.

So we're going to talk about how to use knives effectively, but the assumption will be that you are forced to access a knife when someone deliberately attempts to murder you. This is specialized knowledge for a worst-case scenario, but the basic skills involved can then be applied in a wide variety of other circumstances. The skills of getting a knife into play provide the principles for any short weapon whatsoever, from a hammer on a workbench to a cup of hot coffee on your desk. The real purpose of studying the knife is to understand short weapons in general, not to become an expert knife fighter. The world has very little need of expert knife fighters.

2.1 THE SHIELD AND CLEEK

Begin by reviewing the shield, our basic response to any sudden attack. Start with your arms at your side or crossed on your chest. As rapidly as possible, explode forward or spring backward or sideways while throwing both of your arms up and out to either side of your head. Make sure your arms are high enough to prevent any attack from striking you in the face or head, and make sure any attack would strike the bones in your arm rather than the flesh.

As soon as you get your arms up in the shield, bring them down again by miming the action of the cleek – pretend you are grabbing an attacker by the back of the neck and pulling down.

Repeat this sequence as many times as possible, as often as possible. The movements of the shield defend against any high attack, and the movements of the cleek will sweep any low attack off to the side.

2.2 THE DRAW

To practice the draw, wear a safe training knife in your belt and perform the shield as described above. After throwing your arms up in the shield, drop one hand down to your belt and draw your knife as quickly as you can while keeping the other arm up. Drive forward while stabbing repeatedly with your knife.

You can draw in either of the two standard grips, and you should practice both. In the forward grip, you hold the knife with the tip up like a sword. In the reverse grip, you hold the knife with the tip down and the edge facing out. The old Highlanders used their dirks this way, and it can be a faster draw depending on the type of knife.

Repeat the draw as many times as possible, as often as possible.

2.3 THE COMBINATION EXERCISE

After at least several hundred repetitions of the shield and cleek and the draw (not necessarily all on the same day) you should proceed to the combination exercise. Your training partner can be armed with a safe training version of any lethal weapon, but we'll assume the attack is made with a knife for purposes of instruction. You will also have a safe training knife, but remember that this is only an exercise. A fight between two people armed with knives hardly ever happens in real life.

If you're holding your knife in the forward grip, change constantly and rapidly between the inside, outside and hanging guards so the opponent can't target your fingers easily. If you're holding your knife in reverse grip like a dirk, keep it pulled back and ready for a strike.

Have your training partner make a determined attack, and respond by either slipping (dodging the attack) or deflecting it with your free hand. Move in on the opponent and make a rapid series of strikes to finish the encounter, using your free hand to actively prevent the opponent from stabbing or slashing at you.

2.4 THE STRIKE AND FLY OUT EXERCISE

This is the same as the combination exercise except that both partners exchange attacks back and forth. Your training partner attacks and you slip it or deflect it and make your own attack. Whether your attack lands or not, you should fly out and get back on guard immediately. Your partner slips or deflects your attack and makes a return attack, then flies out on guard. This exercise is useful for building defense and evasion skills, but should not be overemphasized. Practice it often enough to be competent, but don't make it central to your training with the knife as it does not represent a likely scenario.

2.5 THE ENCLOSE AND COMMAND EXERCISE

The combination exercise and the strike and fly out exercise have real but limited value with the knife, but the enclose and command exercise is essential. This exercise should be the core of your knife training. Unlike the other two exercises, this represents the most likely scenario for a real attack.

Your partner should make a committed attack of the sort a street attacker would be likely to use:

1- a shove with the free hand followed by rapid and repeated stabs with the knife while pressing forward.

2- wild slashing back and forth.

3- multiple inside strikes.

You must defend with the shield, get a command, access your own knife and then finish the encounter. Do not stop or pause if you get hit, finish the encounter no matter what.

Remember, the most effective command against a knife attack is generally the grip. From the shield position, you can drop your free hand down and grip the attacker's knife hand with one or both of your hands, especially if you've been practicing the shield and cleek. Of course, if you actually manage to grab the neck and cleek the opponent down it's even better!

Once you have a grip on the wrist, yank the opponent off-balance, then draw your knife and finish.

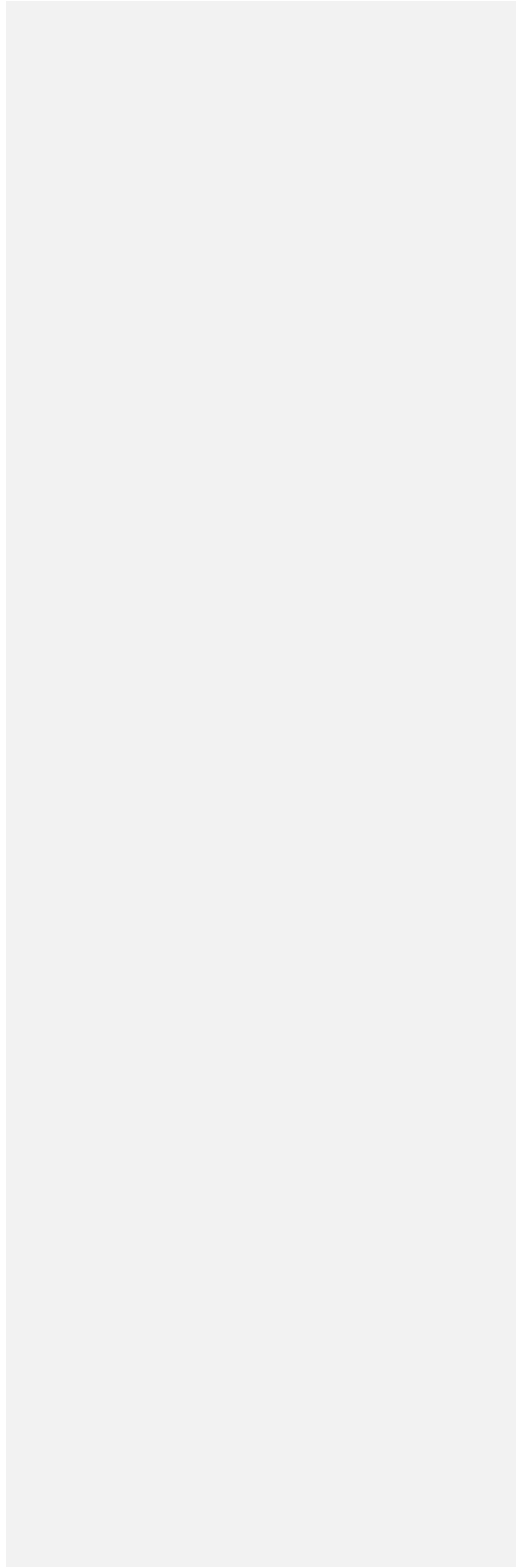
As a more advanced version of the exercise, place your training knife on a nearby surface instead of on your belt, and access it from there.

Another advanced version of the exercise is to use a folding knife, which is harder to get into play because you have to extend the blade. This one will have to be performed solo against an imaginary attacker – please be careful when training with real knives.

You should also practice defending against a knife attack while unarmed, by using a command and then removing the knife from the attacker's hand and throwing it out of reach.









2.6 OTHER WEAPONS

The knife provides a template for understanding how to use any weapon too short to parry with. Once you are proficient with the modern knife, start practicing with historical knives such as the dirk, Bowie knife, Navaja and sgian dubh. Then practice with other short weapons, such as:

Pepper spray or Mace

Blackjack

Hammer

Brass knuckles

Extendable baton

Coffee cup

Glass bottle

No matter which weapons you're training with, the initial defense is the same. Apply the shield, obtain a command and access your weapon. Then use your weapon to finish the encounter. The specifics depend on the weapon, but the basic concept is the same:

- The opponent attacks with a baseball bat. You apply the shield while moving in, and make contact above your head. Applying the lift, you reach into your pocket and acquire your pepper spray. Finish by spraying the pepper spray in the attacker's eyes.

- The opponent attacks with a knife. Apply the shield and acquire the grip, then grab a cup of hot coffee from a nearby table, throw the coffee in the attacker's face, then follow up by striking with the mug until the opponent collapses.

- The opponent attacks with a bottle. Applying the shield, you realize that you are close enough to grab the back of the neck. Cleave the opponent to the floor, then grab a bottle from the counter next to you and smash it against the attacker's head as he tries to rise.

These are only examples, and as always the key is to improvise. When training with a partner, please be careful not to cause any injury. Mime the attacks but don't actually complete them.

As an advanced exercise, have your training partner attack you from behind. Practice whirling around while taking the shield position, defending against the attack and acquiring your weapon.

Another useful exercise is to select something most people would consider useless as a potential weapon. What happens if you only have a plastic water bottle, a child's toy or a ballpoint pen? No matter what it is, some part of it can be used to hurt an attacker. Teach yourself how to assess any object immediately, figure out which part of it can be treated as a weapon, and how to hold it or swing it to bring that part into play against a vulnerable target. You can only acquire this skill through applying it yourself, but here are a few examples:

- The opponent attacks with a stick. You apply the shield, lock the opponent's elbow, then grab a plastic water bottle from a nearby table. Brace your thumb against the lid so it doesn't collapse on impact, then jab it repeatedly into the attacker's eye.

- The opponent threatens you with a stick. You take off your hat, throw it directly at the attacker's face, and come in behind it as rapidly as possible. Throwing your hands up in the shield, you get a lift and then strike the

opponent in the face with a hammerfist over and over again until the attacker collapses. The hat is too soft to hurt the opponent, but by provoking a flinch response it buys you the time to get close.

Spontaneous fluidity can make a weapon of almost anything!



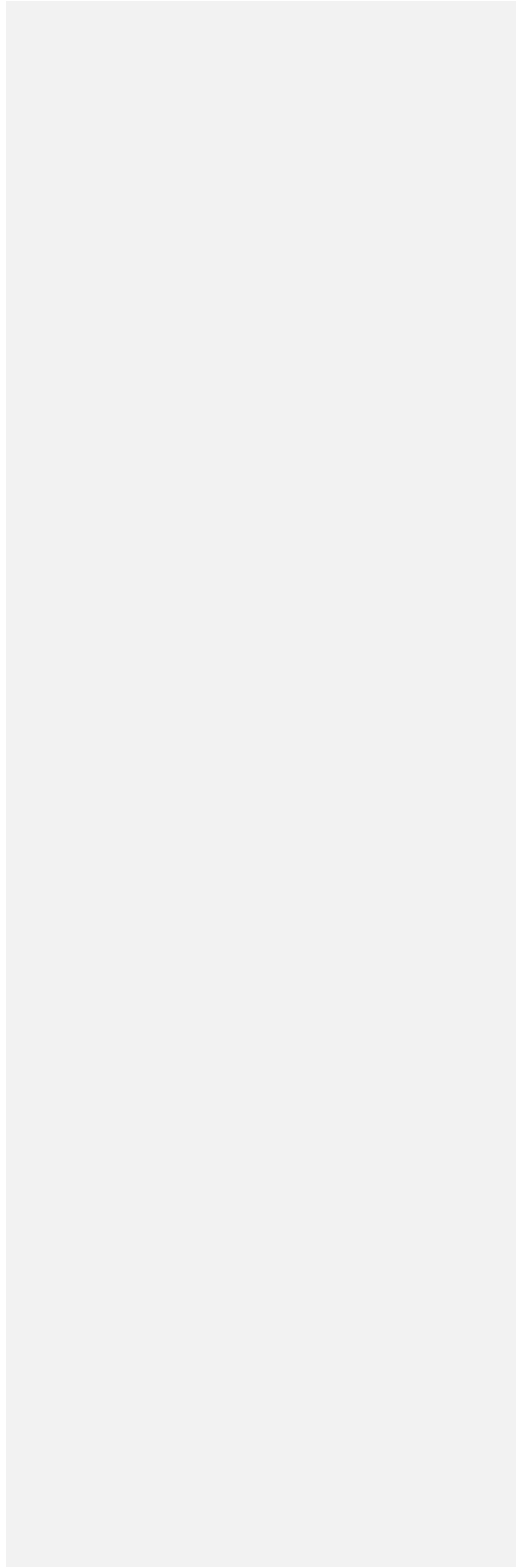




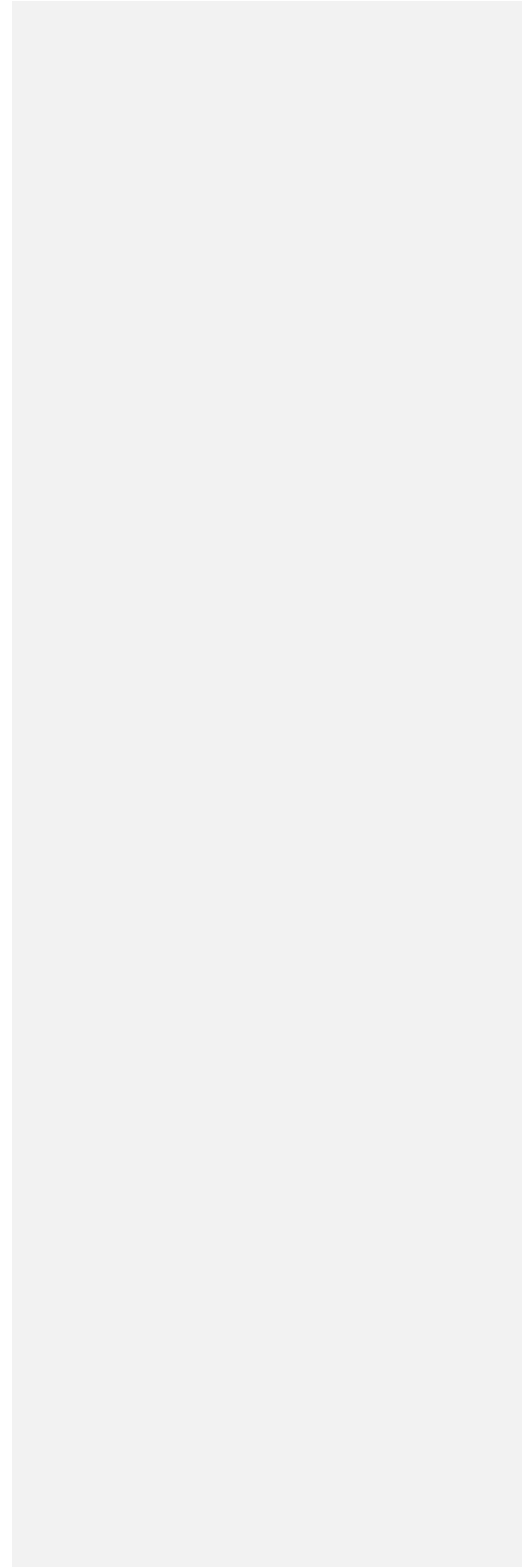
As this sequence shows, a simple pen can be used as a weapon according to the principles of the MacGregor Method. The next sequence shows the same concept with a stick from the ground.







3 THE DOUBLE WEAPON FAMILY





The hanging guard with broadsword and targe.

In the modern world, double weapons are most useful in a situation where law and order has broken down, such as large-scale rioting. If you watch some videos of the street battles in recent urban disturbances around the world, you will see that many of the combatants are armed with double weapons. One of the most common combinations is a cudgel and an improvised shield. The techniques we're going to examine here can be performed with many different double weapon combinations, but the cudgel and shield is the most basic variation.

Based on analysis of the same videos, virtually all opponents will do exactly the same thing - multiple inside, medium or outside strikes with little or no attempt at defense. Unfortunately, street battles of this type are filled with many other hazards, from tear gas to flying rocks to Molotov cocktails, so knowing how to use double weapons is no guarantee that you will be able to fight your way to safety. However, it's a useful skill to have in such an emergency.

When you're using an improvised shield such as a trashcan lid, hold it out in front of you with your arm extended. Larger shields can blind you when held in front of your face, so if your shield is large enough for this to be a concern you should avoid holding it straight out in front of you. In this situation, it's better to angle the shield so that the rim points at the opponent's left shoulder.

You can hold your cudgel in the hanging or outside guard if you're on the defensive, but if you need to charge to break through a line of attackers, you can just hold your cudgel up beside your head as you run in. If you are suddenly attacked, the easiest response is to throw both weapons up in the shield position, as this will block most attacks while also chambering your strike.



3.1 THE COMBINATION EXERCISE

To practice the use of double weapons, have your training partner rush at you and make a rapid series of inside, medium or outside strikes. Don't use your shield to simply parry - instead, punch it aggressively into the attack as you move in. Try to end the encounter as quickly as possible. In the combination exercise, block the attack and respond with a rapid series of strikes to different targets while driving forward with your body. Keep your shield on the opponent's weapon and suppress any attempt to get out from under it. Strike until the opponent collapses.



3.2 THE STRIKE AND FLY OUT EXERCISE

In the strike and fly out exercise, exchange strikes with your training partner in a back and forth pattern. Include leg attacks, feints, combinations and so forth, just as you would with a cudgel. When you attack the leg, cover your head with your shield to defend against a simultaneous counter.

3.3 THE ENCLOSE AND COMMAND EXERCISE

The shield greatly enhances your ability to apply a command and take control of the fight. You should think of your shield as a weapon of control rather than as a weapon of defense alone. In the enclose and command exercise, your goal should be to get a command immediately by using your shield.

For example, the attacker runs in and makes repeated inside strikes. You block on the hanging guard with your cudgel and shield, push the attack over to the outside with your cudgel, punch the attack

aside with your shield, then attack again and again with your cudgel until your attacker collapses. This is a bind.



Or, the attacker stands directly in front of you holding a large board in both hands, swinging it up and down in a medium strike. You jam the attack up with your shield, push the attacker's arms up, and punch the attacker repeatedly in the face with the butt or pommel of your weapon until the attacker collapses. This is a lift.

You should try every variation you can think of.

Once you're comfortable fighting on the defensive, practice charging an armed opponent using the same principles. When you get close enough to strike, make an inside attack and apply the bind or lift regardless of what the defender does.

Please exercise great care when practicing these techniques with a training partner- don't strike them violently with your weapon, but simply indicate that you could.

The enclose and command exercise is the most important exercise with double weapons.





3.4 OTHER WEAPONS

Once you're proficient with the cudgel and shield, try the same techniques with a broadsword and targe or buckler if you can. As you will see, they are exactly the same.



A bind with the broadsword and targe. To perform this technique, parry with your sword and then use your targe to bind the opponent's sword over. Finish the encounter with your sword.



This is a lift with the sword and targe.

However, some double weapons do work a bit differently.

Archibald MacGregor mentions that some fighters trained with double sticks, as preparation for fighting with sword and dagger. Based on comments by MacGregor and McBane, the basic idea in sword and dagger is to use one of two guards: a double outside guard or X-guard, and a hanging guard with the dagger paired with an outside guard with the sword. You parry with one weapon and finish with the other, or parry with one weapon and get a command with the other. Try out sword and dagger, two swords and other combinations like sword and axe if you can.

Also try out a variety of modern double weapon combos, including:

Two sticks

Stick and knife

Stick and axe

Stick and back-pack

Machete and shield

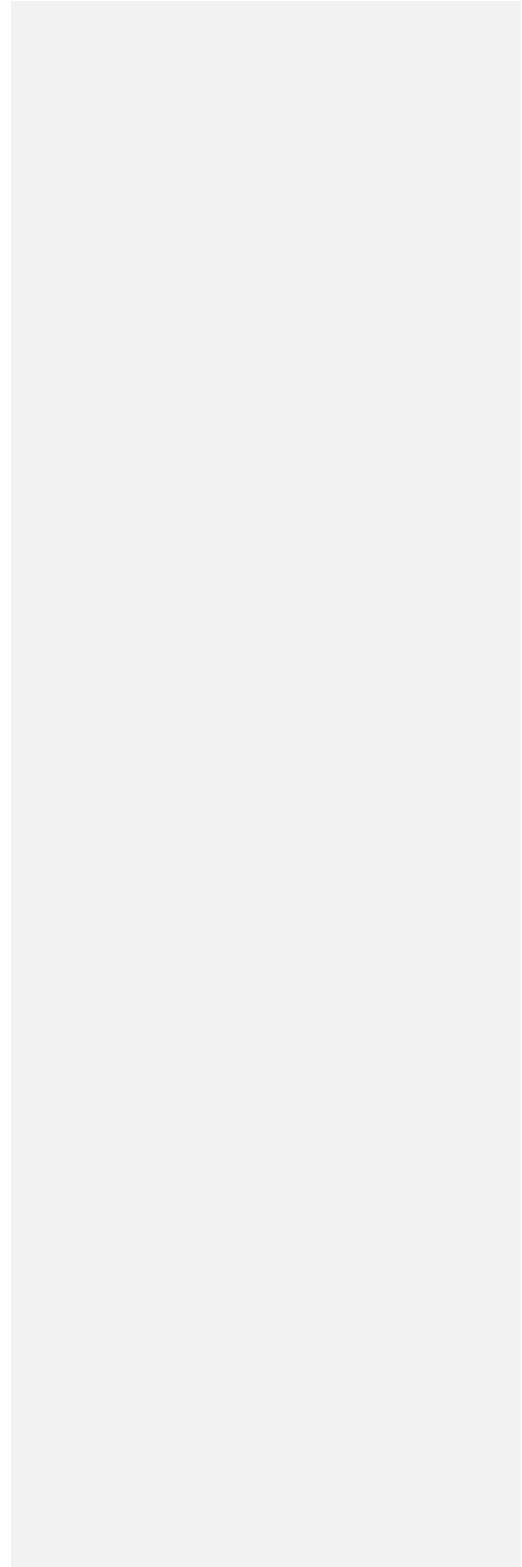
At this stage, you should find it almost effortless to apply the MacGregor Method to any weapon you pick up.







4 THE STAFF FAMILY



The staff is a formidable weapon, far superior to any shorter weapon in a serious fight. According to Archibald MacGregor:

It has often been known that people, who were dextrous at handling it, have forced their way through a crowd, defending themselves, and knocking down numbers as they passed. (Archibald MacGregor, 1791)

People don't usually walk around with long staffs in their hands, and the staff is also too long to use in most houses or apartments. Unless you're attacked while on the hiking trail, there are not many circumstances in which you would have the opportunity to use your staff skills. That's why the cudgel is given much more space in this system although the staff is more effective.

That doesn't mean staff weapons are never used. In 1992, local newspapers in southern Maine reported a melee between campers on the Saco river in which five people were injured while fighting with canoe paddles! Flagpoles and long boards have also been used as weapons in many street battles. It may not be a common occurrence, but staff weapons are still in use. In the MacGregor Method, the principles of the staff are based directly on the use of the broadsword.

MacGregor's quarterstaff was several feet long, but for our purposes the best training weapon is a walking stick of about your own height.



From the hanging guard, Timo parries on an outside.



4.1 HOLDING THE STAFF

When using a staff, hold one hand near the butt of the weapon and the other hand about a quarter of the way up. The rear hand should be over the staff and the lead hand under. The space between your hands is called the "mids."

The guard positions are determined by the position of the lead hand. In other words, if your lead hand is in the same position as an inside guard, you are considered to be in an inside guard. The same is true of the outside and hanging guards, but note that these will cause your arms to cross. If you take a hanging guard on the opposite side, your arms won't cross but your lead hand will no longer be in a true hanging guard. Instead your lead hand will be in the same position as a low inside parry. You can also switch the forward hand and leg, in which case your inside and outside guards will change sides.

When fighting in close or defending a medium, your hands slide away from each other toward the opposite ends of the staff, increasing the size of the mids. This is known as "half-staff." In the half-staff position, you should step back and to the side with your lead foot.

You should experiment with all of these positions, but we will be concentrating on the inside guard because you don't have to cross your arms to take this position.



An inside strike parried on an inside guard.

4.2 ATTACKS AND DEFENSES

The attacks and defenses with the staff are mostly the same as with the cudgel except that you use both hands to swing the weapon. Slide your hands up and down the shaft as needed when striking. Remember to lunge or traverse when you strike. You can also strike with the butt of the staff while taking a large step forward with your rear leg. From an inside guard, practice the following attacks in the following order:

Outside

Inside

Outside Low

Inside Low

Medium

Thrust with Tip

Butt Strike



Block inside followed by butt strike.



Then return to inside guard and practice the defenses to the same attacks. Parries with the staff are more vertical than with the cudgel, so don't worry about keeping the tip aimed at the opponent while parrying. You can parry low strikes with either the tip or the butt.

Parry all thrusts by sweeping them to the side with the tip low and the rear hand high, much like a hanging guard although it can be performed on either side. This was the basis of MacGregor's rifle and bayonet method.





Figure Eights

According to MacGregor:

There is a method also, of winding it like the figure eight, by catching it by the middle, and changing it from hand to hand, as you see me do. (Archibald MacGregor, 1791)

This figure eight can be performed in either a standard guard position or by holding it in the middle as described by MacGregor. Either way, the figure eight strikes are extremely dangerous and powerful. Make sure you are far away from other people when you practice these.

In a melee fight, you can clear the space around you by making figure eight attacks as rapidly and powerfully as possible while holding space, advancing or retreating.

4.3 THE COMBINATION EXERCISE

In the combination exercise with the staff, the opponent makes a single committed attack and you respond by parrying, then follow up with a series of strikes and thrusts to any part of the body. Because of the staff's great power, you will have to be especially careful to control these strikes. Here are a few examples:

- You are on the inside guard. The opponent jabs at your body with the tip. Dropping your own tip and raising your rear hand you parry the strike, then indicate a thrust to the opponent's face on a lunge. Passing forward with your left foot you indicate a butt strike to the opponent's temple, then step back again with the left foot and indicate a strike to the face inside.

- You are on the inside guard. The opponent strikes outside. You traverse to the left and parry this strike, then strike inside at the opponent's face. Finish by indicating a thrust to the face.

- You are on the inside guard. The opponent strikes medium, and you block the strike above your head while stepping back and to the side with your lead foot. Respond with a medium, then pass forward with your lead foot and indicate a butt strike to the jaw from underneath.





Block inside, strike outside.



4.4 THE STRIKE AND FLY OUT EXERCISE

To practice the strike and fly out exercise with the staff, simply take turns attacking and defending in a back and forth pattern. Incorporate feints, leg strikes and combinations once you're ready.

Donald McBane describes a particularly effective feint, which can only be practiced with great care as the final strike is very powerful:

when you engage him close, dart your Staff at his face with your left hand. Which he endeavouring to stop, slide your right hand to your left, and at full length hit him on the left side of his head, which is scarce to be defended. (Donald McBane,1728)

Practice the strike and fly out exercise slowly and carefully, and be especially careful to guard your hands.

4.5 THE ENCLOSE AND COMMAND EXERCISE

The commands cannot be performed as easily with the staff but they can still be useful in modified form:

The Bind: to perform the bind, parry inside and then step forward deeply with your left foot and place it behind the opponent's legs. Simultaneously sweep the butt of your staff up and over, placing it over the opponent's left shoulder. Use your staff to sweep the opponent backward and over your leg.

The Lift: to perform the lift, close in rapidly on the opponent's attack in half-staff, and use your weapon to push the opponent's arms up. From this position you can either push the opponent into an object or apply the cleek by getting your staff behind the opponent's neck and pulling down.

The Lock: to perform the lock, parry inside and let go of your staff with the rear hand, then lock the opponent's elbow as you would with the cudgel.

The Grip: like the lock, the grip requires you to let go of the staff with your rear hand after the parry, but otherwise works the same as usual.

The Back Heel: back heel is basically the same as the grip except that you also kick the opponent's heel out from behind.

To perform the enclose and command exercise, parry a single committed attack and then apply any command.





A bind with the staff.





A lift with the staff. You can easily cleeck the opponent down from this position.



4.6 OTHER WEAPONS

Once you have achieved proficiency with the staff, you should practice with other staff weapons, such as:

Quarterstaff

Axe

Halberd

Pool Cue

Boat Oar

Spear

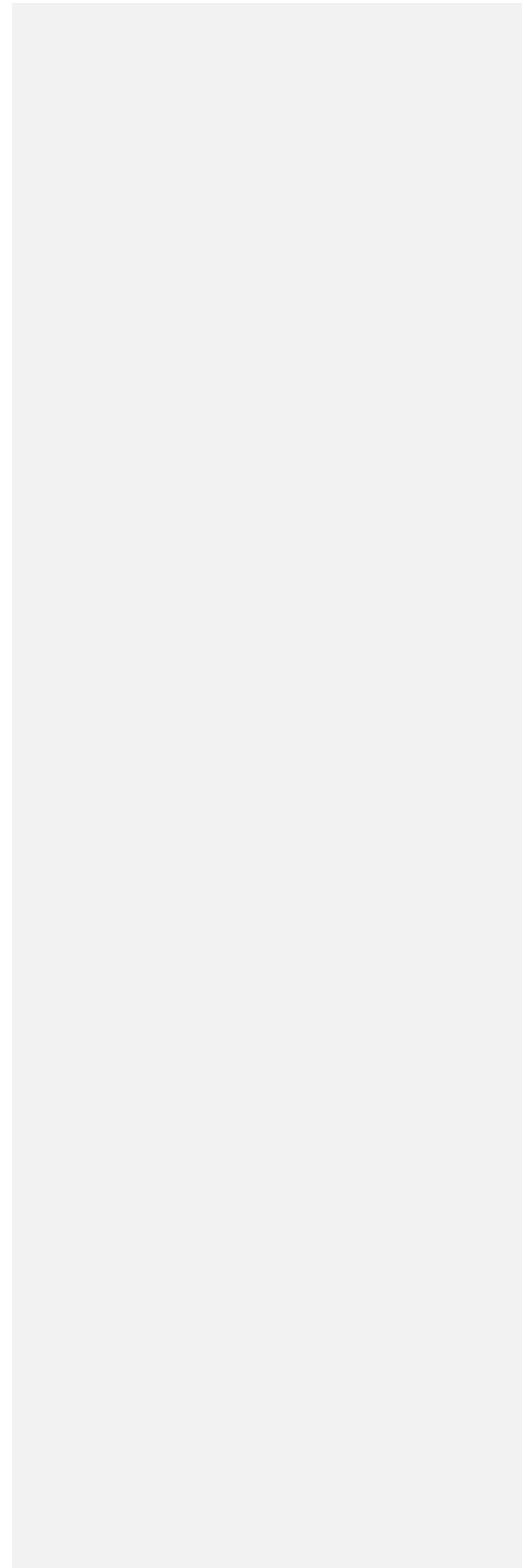
Rifle and Bayonet

Pike

When practicing with the spear, rifle or pike just emphasize thrusting rather than cutting. Parry with the tip down, pushing the attack to the left or right, then return your own thrust.

The staff also provides the template for other long weapons such as the longsword and two-handed sword, but the staff method provided here will only give you basic skills with that type of weapon. If you are interested in fencing with the longsword you should study a historical longsword system.

5 TOUCH WITHOUT BEING TOUCHED



Even in areas with high levels of street crime, most assaults occur between people who already know each other. The victim and the perpetrator are rarely strangers. When you're hanging out with a friend you are obviously not likely to have a cudgel handy just in case this person turns on you – so cudgeling is not usually relevant to that type of situation.

Cudgeling skills are most useful in situations where you have decided to carry a stick because you have reason to believe someone may target you. Many people in that situation would carry a firearm, but that isn't always possible or preferable for one reason or another. The following comments apply primarily to deliberate ambushes and attacks on the street, whatever the motivation. They don't refer to shoving matches, drunken brawls or what would normally be considered a simple fight. If your life isn't in danger, you shouldn't be swinging a stick at anybody.

Most methods of empty-hand fighting are boxing styles, in which the assumption is that both fighters will trade hits back and forth, trying to block each other's kicks and punches. But the strategic principle of swordsmanship is to *touch without being touched*. My intention in any violent encounter is that I don't want to be hurt at all, and while this isn't always possible, it can be done. According to the anonymous Highland Officer in 1790, training with the cudgel is:

well calculated for chance encounters in the street, as there is no show or preparation in it, and our adversary probably supposing you are totally unacquainted with the stick, will heedlessly attack you, when in all human probability you will settle the difference with the point of your stick, without any trouble, or receiving a single blow.

In broadsword fencing we keep our distance, manipulating events to create an opportunity. When that opportunity has been created, we *strike and fly out*, so that we achieve our goal of touching the opponent without being touched. It's a cautious mentality, but it has to be, because a broadsword can sever a limb or kill you instantly. To achieve the same results in a street encounter, our methods must be modified. We're not going to be carrying a broadsword, but we still want to touch without being touched. The ideal is to put the opponent on the ground and escape without being hurt at all.

If our goal is to touch without being touched (and it certainly should be) then what better way could there be of doing this than to get the opponent on the ground? This doesn't mean to roll around on the ground and apply a submission hold, like the fighters in a mixed martial arts event. If you're down on the ground applying a choke, your opponent's friends can simply boot you in the head. And then there's the matter of the police. If you're all tangled up with someone on the ground they could easily arrest both of you, whether you think your actions were justified or not.

Whenever possible, the goal is to get the opponent down while you remain on your feet, allowing you to get away and go home. That's your goal from the beginning of the fight, and there are a thousand ways to achieve it. For instance, you can block with your stick, grab the opponent's weapon arm, then strike the legs repeatedly until the opponent collapses. Or you can cover with a guard and then unleash a barrage of strikes to various targets while maintaining your distance. If you can get right in there and do it immediately, the attacker will never even manage to touch you. That's the ideal.

5.1 "FAIR PLAY IS WHAT THEY OUGHT NOT TO HAVE"

According to the Scottish swordsman Donald McBane:

If you are engaged with a ruffian or stranger, be watchful that he does not throw his hat, dust or something else at your face which may blind you, upon which he will take the opportunity...and if he misses, trust to his heels. I would not advise you at any time to do the last mentioned, but with a bravo or ruffian, I would throw anything in his face to blind him, and then take the advantage of it: such fellows as those, often carry dust in their pockets, or something on purpose for that end; but no gentleman ought to use such methods; unless with such people who often carry pocket pistols about 'em, so to prevent the worst to oneself, I think 'tis not amiss to get the better of them as soon as possible, by blinding them, or by any other means whatever, before they show a pistol, for fair play is what they ought not to have. (Donald McBane, 1728)

You must never forget this fundamental principle of street violence: *fair play is what they ought not to have*. This isn't a duel or a sporting match; it's a violent assault. A person intending to attack you will try to approach you when you are distracted or unaware, and will try to get the advantage in some way before the attack – by using a weapon, or attacking you from behind, or by ambushing you with superior numbers.

The attack itself will happen without warning and with overwhelming violence. The attacker's goal is to get you to fall down somehow - whether by tripping you, throwing you, using a sucker punch, or breaking a bottle over your head. Once you're on the ground, the attacker can kick you, strike you with a weapon or crouch over you and punch you in the face.

This works a lot more often than it doesn't. If someone seriously wants to hurt you on the street, this is how it's done. If this strikes you as something ruthless, senseless and horrible, that's because it is. You can be lying on the ground with a face full of broken glass and a boot coming down on your head *before you even realize it's a fight*. The last thing your attacker will ever do is give you a chance to fight back.

So how do you defend yourself against such an opponent, considering that the whole strategy in a serious street attack is to give you no chance?

Tactical Awareness

Calculated and deliberate attacks of the type I'm describing here are not common in most places. The odds that you will ever be targeted in this way are not high. You should live your life at whatever level of tactical awareness makes sense to you personally based on your circumstances. If you don't have any reason to think anyone wants to hurt you, then you may not wish to maintain an attitude of constant vigilance that would interfere with your quality of life. That's perfectly reasonable. The following comments apply to people who have some reason to be more concerned about potential threats.

The first and most effective defense is to avoid making enemies if you can help it. However, some people are outright predators and you never know when you'll run into one. Also, some people are not in a position to avoid making dangerous enemies. If you believe yourself to be at greater risk for whatever reason, you can reduce the risk by developing the habit of tactical awareness.

In my book on *Highland Knife-Fighting*, I included a short section about the need for vigilance:

Vigilance is a combination of awareness and strategic behavior. First, don't make yourself an easy target. When you're in public, avoid sitting or standing in a way that limits your ability to move or to see what's going on around you. Don't expose your back to the crowd if you can help it. Don't allow people to get too close to you or to stand at an angle where they can easily attack you. You have to be aware of the physical space around you and all of the people in it, and move through that space in such a way as to keep the advantage in any physical conflict. This is something you can only learn by thinking about it habitually whenever you are in public. Take note of anyone you consider most likely to be dangerous, and be especially careful not to let them position themselves so they can attack you. Don't lose awareness of where these people are.

One of the most common tactics is to distract you with a short and seemingly innocent conversation just before the attack. For instance, the attacker may ask you for the time or a light as an excuse to get closer. Another common tactic is to throw you off balance psychologically by saying strange things or asking inappropriate questions. The most important thing to understand here is that distance is the key. The attacker needs to get close enough to launch an assault, or must distract you long enough for someone else to creep up on you. The moment someone approaches you and asks any question or initiates any conversation you should go on high alert. Be friendly and respectful, but be aware. Watch and listen in all directions. Don't hesitate to step back to get some distance, and don't hesitate to tell the other person to give you space.

If you ever find yourself in a fight, don't let yourself be fooled. If you cannot see one of the opponent's hands, assume that hand is holding a knife or some other weapon. If the opponent is taunting you to get you to come closer, assume there is a hidden weapon in play and don't fall for the trick.

Never underestimate the potential danger of a hidden blade. A man was once stabbed several times right in front of me with a screwdriver, and I never even saw the weapon or realized anyone was being stabbed until I read about it in the newspaper the next day. I thought I was seeing a fistfight but it was actually a stabbing. Just as you should never assume a gun is unloaded, you should never assume an opponent is unarmed.

Why Violence Happens

Why would someone want to attack you in the first place? Generally speaking, there are only a few reasons. One is to predate on you in some way. Predatory violence is not the same as aggression. A predator wants to get something from you against your will, and you don't have to do anything at all to attract a predator's attention. You just have to have something the predator wants.

Aggression is different, and is usually motivated by basic human emotions like hurt feelings, fear or resentment. People who see themselves as tough guys will react with violence when they experience negative emotions. This is obviously a lot more common among men in our society, but not all tough guys are men – I once saw a young woman burn a man in the face with a lit cigarette and then stomp him on the ground because he insulted her in front of her friends. A tough guy will not tolerate feeling insulted by anyone.

It stands to reason that you can avoid a lot of trouble by not hurting other people's feelings when you can help it, but you have the absolute right to set reasonable boundaries and so you cannot always avoid upsetting people. Be aware that these situations have a high potential to turn violent. Try to de-escalate if you can. If you can see that the other person is escalating toward violence, get ready to respond. And don't think like a tough guy – life's too short as it is!

When Things Go Wrong

If you always pay attention to potential threats in your environment, you should be a difficult person to ambush or surprise. But it can happen to anyone. So what can you do to protect yourself in the worst-case scenario, where you are already behind the game and in a lot of trouble?

It depends on the situation. A typical streetfighter will be trying for one of two outcomes - a boot party or a ground and pound. A boot party is when you get knocked down and kicked on the ground. If you can roll out of it and get back on your feet immediately, do so. Don't hesitate for a fraction of a second- the ground is your enemy here! Get back on your feet and get the other guy on the ground.

If you can't do that, lie on your back and get your feet up. Keep turning so your feet are in front of you. Make it impossible for an attacker to approach you without getting kicked. If the attacker gets too close, grab onto the legs and drive your weight forward to bring the attacker down. If there's a whole gang of attackers and you are on the ground, your life is in serious danger. If you can't get back up immediately and the boot party has started, your priority has to be to minimize your injuries. Curl up into a fetal position, as tight as you can, and cover your head with your arms.

The other approach an attacker might use is the ground and pound. This is one of the only scenarios where a street fight will resemble a fight in the mixed martial arts ring. I was coming out of a nightclub one night when I saw one man punch another hard in the head. The victim fell to the ground like a sack of cement, at which point his attacker jumped on top of him and started punching him repeatedly in the face from above. This is the ground and pound. When I ran into the victim of this assault a few months later, his whole personality had changed as a result of this beating. From being a cocky and outgoing guy, he was now meek and shaky and visibly depressed.

If someone is on top of you and pounding away at you, you are going to get badly hurt very quickly. That's exactly why you have to be aware and control the distance - if the attacker can't get close enough to take a swing at you, you won't find yourself in that position. But if you do find yourself on the receiving end of a ground and pound, what can you do?

Without training in a grappling art, it's unlikely you can escape this position - so if you get the chance, it's a good idea to train in grappling. If you don't have the training, you can minimize the damage by covering your face, sitting up as far as possible, hugging your attacker close to you with both arms, and then lying back down. Hold on as tight as you can, and don't let go. With no room to generate momentum, the attacker's ability to hurt you will be limited.

If you have no reason to think anyone will help you and you're in fear of your life, you can do something really horrific at this stage like biting the attacker's ear off. It's definitely not an ideal option, but sometimes you just have to do what you have to do. One of the Highland swordsmen actually did this, when he was overwhelmed on the ground by an English officer - he bit out the man's throat. If you have your teeth in a man's windpipe his priorities will switch from pounding you to getting the hell out of there in about half a second. But this is truly a desperate option, for life and death situations only.

Another possibility is that you will be choked or grabbed from behind. From what I hear this is not uncommon, although personally I have never seen it happen. If an attacker grabs your arm and cranks it up behind you, you can often escape by turning your body in whatever direction the opponent isn't applying force, then moving your arm as violently as possible through one of the figure eight motions you use in cudgel practice.

If an attacker puts you in a chokehold from behind, one option is an old wrestling throw called the flying mare. Get both of your hands on the attacker's forearm and pull it forward a little so you can get a breath, then shove your buttocks backward to bend the opponent's body at the hips, while simultaneously pulling on the attacker's arm with both of your arms. Bend forward as you continue to pull and the opponent will literally go flying over your head. Make sure to tuck your head down as you do the throw.

One response to a bear-hug from behind is to step a little to the side, crouch down and pick both the opponent's legs up. You can then land the attacker wherever you wish.

All of these options are contingency plans for when things go wrong. Awareness and control of distance are more important than any technique.

5.2 MASS ATTACK SCENARIO

You should practice combat against multiple opponents once you have reached an advanced level of skill. You can start by facing two opponents armed only with sticks or rubber training knives, and progress up to any number of opponents you can learn to handle effectively, armed with any variety of weapons.

Fluidity is essential when facing multiple attackers. You may feel outnumbered and overwhelmed, but remember that each of your opponents has a personal fear of being hurt. You can do considerable damage by moving through their ranks, keeping your cudgel in constant motion, covering yourself and being careful to stay out of their distance while striking at them constantly.

They may attempt to charge in while your stick is swinging, if they can see an opening. Create a circle around you with your weapon, which no one can enter without being struck down instantly. Do not be tricked by their attempts to close in on you while you are striking at one of them.

Even while you are swinging the stick, be ready to move, and to adjust the distance relative to all your attackers. If you can control the distance, you will always be able to reach them while staying just far enough away that they cannot reach you.

Whenever you hit one opponent, be on guard against a simultaneous attack by the others. Do not allow any of your opponents to get behind you or to get out of your sight in any way. If they maneuver you into such a situation, adjust your position quickly so that you can clearly see them all if possible.

If someone does get inside your distance, you can grasp the stick about halfway up with your left hand in order to shorten your reach. This will not allow you to strike at full power, but short strikes and thrusts will still be possible. In general, if an opponent succeeds in getting inside your distance, you should get out of that situation as quickly as possible. Avoid using commands unless you have no choice, as they fix you in one place where you can easily be attacked from behind. Parry or slip the attack, possibly following it up with a quick and aggressive attack of your own, then immediately move back or to the side to adjust the distance.

The most important overall principle in fighting multiple opponents is to take the initiative and attack them hard and fast, trying to get them bunched up behind each other in order to limit their ability to rush you all at once. However, there are exceptions depending on the circumstances. No matter what you do, this is a desperate situation, so your main goal must be escape rather than total victory. I once survived a mass attack at a punk hardcore show by fighting my way into a corner and then simply defending the corner until the bouncers intervened. If I had gone on the offensive against so many attackers, I would have quickly been knocked down and stomped on the ground.

5.3 AMBUSH SCENARIO

To practice defending against an ambush, begin with one of the training partners walking away and the other one attacking from behind or the side, or rushing in from in front when the other partner is not in a stance.



5.4 TREACHERY SCENARIO

To practice defending against a treacherous attack, set up various situations in which one training partner is armed with a rubber knife or some other safe training weapon. Simulate a committed no-warning attack, combined with any other sort of trickery you can think of. As you will see, these attacks are very difficult to defend against.

Although I have been in a number of violent encounters and am generally aware of potential threats in my environment, I was once taken completely by surprise when an attacker shocked me with an electric cattle prod. I collapsed immediately, and another attacker ran forward and squirted yellow mustard directly in my eyes. This attack was planned out beforehand by people who weren't happy that I had come through unscathed from the

mass attack described above – and were especially unhappy that I had been mouthing off about it. There is no way you can train enough or be vigilant enough to be completely safe from a treacherous attack, so as always the best defense is to make as few enemies as possible. Running your mouth like I did is not good self-defense!

You can also practice preemptive treachery as McBane recommends. For instance, throw your hat in the opponent's face and then apply the cleek, or toss a backpack at the opponent's legs and then turn and run.

5.5 FIREARM SCENARIO

The worst contingency of all is when your opponent is holding a gun on you. The first thing you need to know is never get into a car or go anywhere with your attacker in this situation. Make the attacker shoot you on the spot if you have to – matter what, things will get much worse if you are taken to a second location. Next, don't mouth off or show bravado - the person with the gun holds all the cards.

If you turn suddenly and make a run for it, there's a good chance you'll survive – especially if you make yourself a hard target by zig-zagging. But if you have no choice but to try to disarm the attacker, the most important thing is to get out of the line of fire with a sudden movement, then grab onto the opponent's weapon arm and pull the attacker to the ground face first. Remember, if the gun is not pointing at you it cannot hurt you, so getting out of the line of fire and controlling the weapon arm are the two crucial factors. Practice this scenario frequently with your training partner, both unarmed and with a cudgel. Use both hands to pull the attacker down if you are unarmed. If you have a cudgel, use it to drive the attacker to the ground with repeated strikes, but only after you get off line and grab the weapon arm with your free hand.

Safety Warning

Note: Do not strike any unprotected area of the neck or head with your weapon!

Great care must be taken when performing these exercises, particularly when striking with the cudgel or throwing your opponent to the ground. You must simulate the intensity and stress of a violent encounter without losing control and causing an injury. The intensity level of the fighting exercises should be relatively low at first, building up bit by bit as you get used to training with each other.

5.6 THE TWO TYPES OF CONFLICT

Even though this book is not restricted to the concept of self-defense as such, there are always serious ethical issues involved whenever weapons are used. As it happens, the old Highland broadsword fencers developed a coherent ethic for the use of weapons, and the logic of their ethical code still applies today.

According to Archibald MacGregor:

(A) few wounds in the sword arm, will soon disable a man, which is far better, and more Christian like, than taking his life, as in general the most of quarrels arise from mere trifles... A broad swordsman should also only try to cut the arm inside, outside, or under, any thing, but taking the life.

This compassionate custom of respecting and sparing the opponent's life was the traditional ethic of broadsword fencing. MacGregor goes on to say:

It is supposed by many that fencing makes a man quarrelsome, by availing himself so much of his art, he turns proud of it, and so on. What reason they can assign for saying so, I know not, seeing, as I said before, that the very meaning of the word fencing, implies warding, or defending; and I have always observed this, through the whole course of my life, that those who were the greatest fencers, made the least bustle or noise about it, and were loth to quarrel or fall out with any person, and when they were even forced to defend themselves, engaged with some kind of reluctance.

This ethic applied only to one on one fights, most of which, as MacGregor says, "arise from mere trifles." While confirming MacGregor's ethic for one on one fights, Thomas Page also tells us about an entirely different context and mindset:

In single Combat he aims at nothing more than disabling his Antagonist... (but) In the Field of Battle and in promiscuous Combat his first Principle is to attack and not to be attack...

This distinction between two broad types of conflict is just as valid today. We may describe these two spheres as "anything but taking the life" and "promiscuous combat." Any situation in which your own life or another person's life is not on the line falls into the first category. Only life or death combat falls into the second category. The old broadsword fencers did not even consider the use of lethal weapons to be a clear indication of "promiscuous combat," but would still attempt to spare the opponent's life. Only a foe intent on killing the swordsman would be treated likewise.

"Anything but taking the life" does not mean: "do anything you want as long as you don't actually kill the opponent." It means that you must do the bare minimum that will completely resolve the situation, whether that means sitting your drunk friend down rather hard in a chair with a whispered admonition to behave, or dropping an attacker with a well-timed counter and retaining control until the bouncers separate you. It means that you must put respect for the life and even the dignity of your opponent at the forefront of your actions to the greatest extent the opponent will allow. In verbal interactions it means that you should always be respectful, never cause anyone to lose face unless you have to, never shame anyone or ridicule them, always consider their pride and their feelings. This is the most effective self-defense possible. In physical conflicts, it means that you should hurt them only as much as they make you hurt them to restore the peace.

When it *is* a matter of life or death, however, all bets are off. The principle in a "promiscuous combat" situation is to "attack and not to be attacked," because it is literally a matter of kill or be killed. In "promiscuous combat," you engage and destroy the opponent by any means necessary.

Your own good judgment and your conscience are the only way to tell the difference between the two.