

Fundamentals of Knife Fighting: A Guide to Better Educating Knife Defense

Mindset and Awareness

- Situational Awareness: Always be aware of your surroundings. Most knife encounters happen at close range, so recognizing potential threats early is key.
- Avoidance Over Engagement: Knife fights are unpredictable and extremely dangerous. If you can escape or de-escalate, that should always be the priority.
- Aggression and Control: If you must engage, be decisive and control the encounter by dictating the range and tempo.

Grip and Handling

- Hammer Grip (Forward Grip): Standard grip with the thumb wrapped around the handle. Good for slashing and thrusting techniques. Provides strong wrist stability.
- Reverse Grip (Ice Pick Grip): Blade pointing downward with the thumb locked around the handle. Often used for downward stabbing and close-range control.
- Filipino (Sabre) Grip: Thumb along the spine of the blade for added control and precision. Allows for quick changes in angles and fluid movements.

Footwork and Movement

- Mobility Over Strength: Avoid static positions. Always be light on your feet and ready to move.
- Side-Stepping & Angling: Move off the centerline to avoid direct attacks while countering effectively.
- Closing & Creating Distance: Close the gap to control the weapon arm. Create distance to use longer-range strikes and avoid being trapped.

Offensive Techniques

- Slashing: Targets hands, arms, neck, inner thighs, or abdomen. Used to disable the opponent's attacking limbs.
- Thrusting: More lethal than slashes due to deep penetration. Targets throat, solar plexus, ribs, armpits, kidneys, and femoral artery.
- Checking and Trapping: Using your free hand or blade to control the opponent's weapon arm.

Essential in close-range encounters.

Defensive Techniques

- Deflect and Redirect: Use small, efficient parries rather than large movements.
- Evasion Over Blocking: Avoid the attack completely rather than trying to block a blade directly.
- Using the Non-Dominant Hand: Used for checking, grabbing, trapping, or striking. Must be conditioned to avoid getting cut.

Disarms and Counters

- Joint Locks and Arm Traps: Limited use in dynamic fights but can be effective at close range.
- Stripping the Knife: Using leverage to pry the knife from an opponent's grip.
- Using Environment for Disarming: Walls, obstacles, or hard surfaces can aid in controlling or breaking an opponent's grip.

Psychological and Tactical Considerations

- Fake and Feint: Use deceptive movements to provoke reactions.
- Targeting Vulnerable Areas: Hands, forearms, and eyes are prime targets in defensive knife work.
- Multiple Attackers: Keep moving to avoid being surrounded. Use an opponent as a shield.

Training Methods

- Solo Drills: Shadow fighting with a training knife.
- Partner Drills: Flow drills like Hubud-Lubud in Filipino Martial Arts.
- Scenario Training: Simulating real-world encounters using protective gear and rubber knives.
- Live Sparring (Advanced): Utilizing aluminum or dulled steel trainers in controlled settings.

Key Takeaways

- * Knife fighting is high-risk and lethal-avoid confrontation if possible.
- * Control distance and angles-don't stand directly in front of your opponent.
- * Use footwork and movement to stay mobile and unpredictable.
- * Aim for vital targets to disable, not to duel.
- * Train realistically-situational awareness and reaction speed are key.