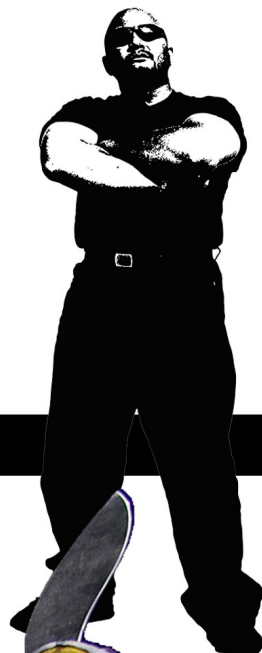


**Cutting Edge Survival Strategies**

# **EDGED WEAPON COMBAT**



**From The Battlefield To The Street!**

**In Module 2 Of 6:**

**How To Spot A  
"Knife Fighter"  
BEFORE He Attacks!**

**Your FIRST MOVE  
When Unarmed  
Against A Blade!**

**Street Carry:  
What's Legal  
(And Practical)?**

**Knife Fighting:  
How To "Master The  
Blade" For The Street  
( Or Battlefield! )**

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## EDGED WEAPONS!

Knives are incredibly effective, potentially lethal weapons. They are also perfectly mundane tools. Knives can be found in any kitchen in any home in the world. They are as close as your toolbox (in the form of, say, screwdrivers) and are common even in the most controlled of environments — prisons — specifically because they are so easily manufactured such as melting and shaping the end of a household toothbrush. In countries where firearms are strictly regulated (such as in the United Kingdom), “knife crime” is on the rise. What does this mean for you? It means that no matter where you are, the chances a criminal could confront you with a blade are good. VERY good!

What do we mean by “very good?” Is it paranoia to believe you could be confronted by a criminal with a blade? While the less prepared are usually only too happy to call the more prepared individual “paranoid,” the fact is that a knife is easy to get, easy to carry, easy to hide, and easy to use. You cannot afford to deny the possibility that a societal predator might try to use one on you, or simply threaten you with it. Chances are your local newspaper has no shortage of accounts of stabbings, or of overnight robbers in which a knife was at least displayed. In every city in every industrialized country in the world, crimes are committed with knives.

Also in every city in every industrialized country in the world, citizens carry pocketknives for utility... and they carry them for self-defense. A huge industry in “tactical knives” has grown up over the years. It’s even been identified (and condemned) in publications like *The Wall Street Journal*. The citizens who carry these “tactical knives” — common folding and sometimes fixed blades that are useful for utility but that can also be used for self-defense —

## HOW COMMON ARE KNIFE ATTACKS?

A knife is far easier to acquire (or make) than a firearm. The United States is, arguably, a “knife culture,” but the fact is that very few countries in the world aren’t. South America, the Arab World... these are places where knives, and the carry of them, are very common. Countries like England and Ireland are, socio-politically, very “anti-knife,” and in the UK in

particular there is a huge push to ban knives and to equate knives and knife ownership with thuggery. It is no coincidence that in these countries, “knife crime” is seen as an epidemic. It is simply unfortunate that these nations’ governments react to the threat by trying to disarm law-abiding citizens, leaving them at the mercy of those criminals who do choose to carry and use blades of varying kinds. As we’ve said, it is easy to manufacture a stabbing or cutting implement, and it is nearly impossible to ban kitchen cutlery. This means that any attempt to outlaw the knife is doomed to failure... and will only impede citizen defenders.



Given all of this, just how likely is it that you will face a blade? By this we mean, is it a distinct possibility... or is it probable? The criminal, the societal predator, is a creature of opportunity. He strikes when the odds favor him, and this means he will quite often stack those odds even more in his favor by carrying a weapon of some kind. The knife is probably the most common weapon found on the street; it is legal in most areas and, whether carried by a criminal or a businessman, pocket knives are found among people of all social strata.

You should assume a criminal facing you is armed with at least a knife, if not something more. It’s better to make this assumption and have it turn out to be false, than to be surprised in the middle of an already physical altercation. In self-defense it is critical that you be ahead of the curve whenever possible, and this means anticipating and preparing for the worst (while daring to hope for the best)

## WHAT DO CRIMINALS USE?



As any police officer with any time on the beat will tell you, the most common knives carried among the criminal class are folding knives. Regardless of whether these are cheap or expensive, common or uncommon, the overwhelming majority carry over-the-counter purchased folding knives. The rest carry a variety of kit according to their (sometimes eclectic) tastes, including fixed blades like dirks, daggers, stilettos, and other blades that lawmakers love to mention by law in penal code knife prohibitions.



There is no knife that is the “mark of the criminal,” no blade type, style, brand, or folding mechanism that is the exclusive purview of society’s predators. Anything with a sharp edge that can be obtained, carried, and misused, will potentially be put to such a use by a criminal. While the majority of pocket knives and fixed blades are owned by law-abiding citizens and will never be used in crimes, any and all edged tools and weapons in the hands of the criminal underclass could potentially be used to further their illicit activities. This is simply the way of such people.

## HOW SKILLED IS THE AVERAGE CRIMINAL?

Now that we’ve established and, hopefully, accepted the reality that the average street criminal is very probably armed with at least a knife (or, at the very least, you should assume for your own sake that he is and plan accordingly), we must ask: How skilled is the average criminal? Stories abound of criminals who, once sent to do “hard time” in prison, emerge even deadlier than they were when they entered, after

being tutored behind the walls at the feet of other felons.

There is even an entire fighting system rumored to have its root in the prison system: the “52 Blocks” style, which is described in different ways by different sources but that is often (if not always) purported to be something cooked up by such violent felons. Is there any truth to such rumors? It’s difficult to say, and doesn’t really matter for our purposes. What we must ask ourselves, though, is just how adept the street criminal is at using his blade to harm and kill others in order to get what he wants. That is the only measure of “skill” that is relevant here.

For the average street criminal, the knife is not a magical implement. It’s not the sword of the samurai, or some symbol of the deadly and romantic life he leads out on the street. No, for the average criminal, the knife is a tool, something he uses to get what he wants and needs. Its use is rudimentary, elementary. Rooted deeper than that, however, is the fact that we are all experts in the use of the knife.



Think about that for a moment. We grow up learning to use knives. An eight-year-old child knows perfectly well how to use his table knife to cut his food. He knows how much force it takes to stab vegetables with a fork. In police training, cadets are taught never to interview a suspect in the kitchen of the home... because every kitchen is replete with a small arsenal of potentially deadly knives, with which the resident of the home is probably very familiar. When you cut your steak, slice a pizza, or carve your Thanksgiving turkey, do you really stop to think about

the knife you are using? Or do you just pick it up and use it, accepting it as natural, normal, and common?

This is not to say that the street criminal, when using his blade matter-of-factly in order to rob, maim, or kill you, doesn't have a few specialized tricks up his sleeve. For example, some street cops talk of a technique called "snuffing," in which the tip of a blade is poked into the victim's forehead to elicit profuse bleeding. The blood pours into the victim's eyes and makes it harder for him to defend himself. This helplessness in turn adds to the psychological terror the victim experiences, making him or her that much easier pickings for the street predator.

Those same experienced cops will tell you that criminals who've been inside the prison system have learned to carry knives with them at all times. These predators could be considered "trained knife fighters," after a fashion. When a man lives in the prison system, he lives in fear of getting stabbed 24 hours a day. You take a shower... and somebody could stab you. You lie in your bed at night... and somebody could stab you. Some of these guys even cobble together homemade body armor. This is the world of fear and terror in which they live... and, once outside, they're happy to bring that terror to your doorstep if it means an easy living at your expense.



Even the most "trained" criminal, however, doesn't do anything terribly sophisticated when plying his trade. Maybe he'll act like he wants to bum a cigarette; maybe he'll pretend to ask for directions; maybe he'll simply walk up to you and sucker punch you.



Most people, when confronted with sudden violence like this, simply fold up or start trying, vainly, to block the follow-up blow. That's when the knife comes out, and suddenly this street interview has turned into a shanking. The criminal pumps the knife in several times, usually into the gut at the beltline, like a sewing machine. He'll just ram it in as far as it will go and, if you start trying to defend yourself, he'll shove that blade or that screwdriver or that piece of glass into your neck. That's all it takes. That's what a real knife fight looks like from the criminal's point of view. Then the predator is walking off with your purse or wallet, checking to make sure nobody has seen him, and you're lying in a puddle of your own blood and guts, wondering what the hell happened to you...

The average citizen simply isn't prepared for this type of brutal attack. Some martial artists try to be prepared, and plenty of martial arts systems involve defenses against knife attacks. Most of these, unfortunately, are defenses against elaborate (or, at the opposite end of the spectrum, overly simplified) knife attacks that look nothing like the sewing-machine thrust to the beltline. The latter are the attacks seen most often in prisons, however. They are the reality; the fancy swings and pretty boy fencing duels are not reality.

## HOW DEADLY ARE KNIFE ATTACKS?

Most people, even a lot of instructors who teach knife defenses, aren't experienced in facing knives in real-life encounters. Those who have faced a blade in real life often aren't among those still living, afterward. Many knifing victims are stabbed multiple times and



are found with defensive wounds across their arms. So... just how deadly are edged weapons?

The fact is that the average knife fight is over in seconds. The victim will be severely injured within a few of those seconds, from the time that knife is deployed. If the victim can't escape or somehow fight back effectively, it will all be over long before you finish reading this paragraph. "Over" could mean you are dead. It could even mean that you have successfully defended yourself, but you are maimed for life. Knives are that deadly.

## WARNING SIGNS HE HAS A KNIFE

If you really stop to look around, to be aware of your surroundings, you will be surprised just how many people you see who are carrying knives more or less openly. Most commonly, this will take the form of a pocket-clip-equipped folding knife riding in the front pocket of someone's pants. Less commonly, it will be a fixed blade on someone's belt, something you'll see more often than you might think. Awareness is the most important, most fundamental component of all self-defense, and proper situational awareness will go a long way towards alerting you to the possibility that someone is armed.

We've already said that you should assume a predator is armed with at least a knife. But how will you know a criminal when you see one? What you're looking for are indicators that someone has ill intent — that he or she is "fixing to put a hurtin' on ya'". If somebody appears nervous, if he or she is sweating, if their face is flushed, if they're staring, or if they're concealing their hands, you should be concerned. If the same person starts to make little practice motions, pre-attack motions that look like mentally gearing up to, say, draw a knife, that is a very clear indicator that this person is up to no good. Often, when exhibiting these "pre-deployment" motions, the criminal will pat himself down, touching the weapon or the area of his clothing that conceals it.



The overwhelming majority of weapons will be concealed in the waistband area. This makes good sense. On most people, this is where there is a "joint" in their clothing, allowing them to get past their clothes to draw the weapon. This is also the position that puts the knife, gun, or other weapon closest to the hands when the hands are held naturally at the sides. Remember, too, that while it can sometimes be difficult to conceal a gun or to prevent that gun from "printing" through clothing, it's much easier to conceal a knife. Knives are much smaller and easier to tuck away. A knife with a blade as little as an inch and a quarter can be used to kill you; a two-inch blade will kill you just as dead as will an eight-inch blade.

Criminals may "palm" knives, meaning they may carry them in their hands, concealed up and along the arm in such a way that the knife is ready for deployment but not visible to anyone from the front. A knife carried in this manner can be easily flicked out and into a vital area.

Because it is impossible to predict exactly from where a weapon will be produced, the hands are the most important area of concern when observing a potential attacker. Always watch the hands and know where they are. If the assailant's hands are hidden, a weapon will very likely be produced. The danger of a kick or a head-butt is far outweighed by the danger of a lethal weapon carried in the attacker's hands.

## KNIVES OR GUNS: WHICH IS SCARIER?

Until now we've spoken primarily of knives while also implying, heavily, that an attacker may be carrying a firearm. Many students of self-defense have asked themselves, or been asked by instructors, if they would rather defend against knives or guns. Amazingly, many people respond that they would rather face a gun than a knife, offering a variety of explanations for this. Despite the fact that the firearm is the most deadly and most effective means of personal defense and criminal offense, the knife is more feared by the majority of law-abiding citizens.



There are at least a couple of reasons for this. Among law enforcement officers, who are very gun-oriented, the officers often will say they'd rather be in a gun battle because they're more familiar with that scenario than they are with the specter of a "knife fight."

Coupled with this is the fact that in law enforcement training, not a lot of time is devoted to edged weapon attacks. A lot of officers simply aren't comfortable in this realm, so they have very little training for dealing with it. Among civilians, the average person is, as we've said, very familiar with knives and what they can do. Most people have been cut or stabbed by accident in purely mundane settings. Being shot, however, is an abstract concept for most people. Because they have no real idea what it is like, they have no meaningful fear of it. Knives, however, scare them precisely because they know what a sharp edge or point can do to their bodies.

The reality is that both the knife and the gun can be deadly, and that the knife can be deadly from farther away than many people understand. There's a famous exercise called the Tueller Drill that basically demonstrates how easy it is to close a distance (say, 21 feet, what some cops call "interrogation distance") and stab a man armed with a gun who is trying to deploy and fire that weapon as the blade-wielder advances.



Twenty-one feet is really quite a distance; most attacks occur at far closer ranges. A lot of people, police officers and civilians alike, simply aren't prepared to be attacked from what seems like so far away... but they can and should be aware of the danger.

Twenty-one feet is roughly seven meters. Regardless of the system of measurement you use, that's a long way in which to fear what someone with a blade might be able to do to you. Prepare for it now, or pay for it later.

## THE MARTIAL ARTS MYTH OF EDGED WEAPONS DEFENSE (WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SURVIVE?)

Most martial arts systems assume that the knife is coming at you in some easily identified, broadly defined way. These systems describe elaborate blocks for use against these defined attacks. In reality, you are NOT going to step in and perform a block against a

determined, fast, and brutal edged weapon attack. Your first instinct will be that of any individual who is suddenly confronted with a fast-moving projectile. Throw a beer bottle at someone randomly; their reaction will be the natural reaction you will experience if you somehow see that knife coming at you at lightning speed.

The reality is that no individual, facing a determined knife attack, will step in, block, and counter, much less perform an elaborate disarm. You are going to flinch and lean back. Your eyes will shut, at least momentarily. Your hands will come up and you will do your best to shield your body. Whether it's a beer bottle or a knife, you will absorb the blow as best you can, while experiencing the shock and dismay that most of us feel when we realize, suddenly, He's trying to kill me!

## YOUR BEST FIRST MOVE

When dealing with knives, distance is your friend. This is obvious to most people. If it is at all possible, immediately put distance between yourself and the assailant. Be aware, however, that simply turning and running may not be the best option. If the opponent is faster than you, he may just run you down and stab you in the back.



Trying to put obstacles between yourself and the attacker goes a long way toward helping you create distance. If you can duck into and out of hallways or between buildings, changing direction in a way that

makes it harder for the attacker to follow you, so much the better.

It may be the case, however, that you cannot run, especially if you are in the company of dependents like children or other loved ones. In that case, you must put what distance you can between yourself and the attacker while simultaneously keeping yourself between the knife-wielding assailant and those whom you are protecting. There are no easy answers to such a scenario.

Once you do have a little distance between yourself and the assailant, you will find it is easier to make other decisions, such as whether to run or to close, to find an improvised weapon of some kind, to counter-attack and with what technique, etc.

## FIND A DEFENSIVE WEAPON?

If someone is coming at you with a knife, you are unarmed, and you can pick up an object that will help you defend yourself, by all means, do so. A chair is the most common example, probably. Other random items, like books, plates, or any other random, heavy, thrown object can be tossed at the attacker in an attempt to hurt him or simply to distract him. The chair, of course, is both bludgeon and ward; it can be used to strike or it can be used to block the attacker by forming a barrier between you and him.

Unfortunately, as we've said, most knife attacks are over in seconds. That doesn't leave much (if any) time to hunt through the landscape looking for improvised weapons.

## THE WORST MISTAKE IN A DISARM

Without a doubt, the worst mistake any student of self-defense can make when attempting to defend against a knife attack is to go for a disarm. Simply put, your disarm will not work. Don't believe it? Try this:

Take a training blade and coat the edges with lipstick or colored chalk. Stand toe to toe with a training partner. Have your partner attack you at half-



speed, coming in wide, giving you opportunities to try and defend yourself.

Within minutes, you will be covered in marking. You will have traditional defensive wounds, but you will also have slashes and stabs that would be fatal in a real fight.

## PROPER RESPONSE

The proper response is to make use of your natural “flinch” reaction. Your hands will typically come up to defend yourself when you flinch in response to a sudden attack, so make use of that. Combine your natural instincts with your training. Train your flinch, in other words, so that when you are surprised, your hands come up defensively and this triggers your combat mindset. When the hands come up, the game is on, and it’s time to fight for your life with everything you’ve got.

## THE “TACTICAL L”

Build on your flinch response by coupling it to another natural reaction when confronted with a sudden attack: the step back. When surprised, we naturally want to step back, to put distance between ourselves and the perceived threat. When you step back, train yourself also to shuffle into what we call the “tactical L.”

The “tactical L” is a quick shuffle step to the left or the right, which you add to your natural reaction to step back. It doesn’t matter which direction you step; that will depend on the situation, the terrain, where the weapon is relative to your body, and so on. The point is that, rather than simply moving straight back, you’re moving back and to the side, getting off the line of the attack so the assailant can’t simply run you down and run you over.

From your tactical position off the line of attack, throw your counter attack. You’re at close range to the assailant. That means you could throw a vicious kick to his knee, poke him in the eyes with your fingers, slam the edge of your hand into his neck, or use any of several other “hit and run” tactics. You must “hit and run” because that blade in his hands still gives him a huge advantage, and you cannot under any circumstances simply stand there and slug it out with

him. When you’re punching and he’s stabbing, you’re going to lose each and every time.

If you’re a police officer or a citizen with a concealed weapons permit, that tactical L move could give you the time and space you need to deploy a weapon such as a concealed firearm. When a knife fight is over in seconds, buying yourself a couple more of them in which to counter-attack or escape is the difference between life and death.

## JIM WAGNER’S DISARM RULE

That’s not to say that you may not find the opportunity actually to disarm a knife-wielding attacker.

The International Society of Close Quarter Combatant’s (ISCQC) New World Patriot, consulted with noted reality-based self-defense pioneer Jim Wagner in compiling this report. Wagner has traveled all over the world to train with all kinds of special response units, including the German counterterrorist GSG-9, the US Marine corps, and the British Special Air Service, not to mention citizen students of self-defense. Wagner has a rule concerning knife disarms that he expresses as follows: Grab, Close, Take Down, and Escape.

For more information on Jim Wagner, visit...

[www.JimWagnerRealityBased.com](http://www.JimWagnerRealityBased.com)

According to Wagner, the first thing you must do is grab the weapon hand with both hands. Instinct tells you to get your hands up there and grab; use that. There is no specific position, no specific grab. Just get your hands on the weapon-bearing limb.

Resist the urge to go after the knife itself, because it’s going to cut you up if you try to grab it or take it away. Focus instead on grabbing that arm with all your might. The knife can’t hurt you if the arm and hand holding it can’t move.

Now that you have the weapon-bearing limb, quickly close to jam up the attacker. In order for the opponent to use his edged weapon, he needs a little space; he has to push you back or back up in order to stab and cut. If you close the distance rapidly and jam him up, you deny him that opportunity.



This brings us to the take down phase. Don't forget that the bad guy, your assailant, has survival instincts of his own. He's not simply going to stand there; he's going to fight you as you fight him. You won't be able to make some fancy take down or throw work, most likely, and you won't have to do so. Just get him off balance, perhaps by tripping him or pushing him into a wall. If you can get him completely on the ground, so much the better, but this is not essential.

Once you pulled, pushed, twisted, or otherwise put him off balance or even knocked him down, get the hell out of there. This is the escape phase. Escape may not mean removing yourself entirely from the situation, however. It may be embodied by a counter-attack. If you have someplace to go, by all means, go there... but if you're trapped, you have no choice but to follow up the take down by "escaping" into a counter-attack that brings the fight to your assailant and neutralizes him.

No matter what, keep going. Don't stop. Don't give up. You are fighting for your very life; you must explode into your counter-attack (and in every phase of the disarm) if you are to come out of this alive.

## CHOOSING AND CARRYING A BLADE

So far we've been talking about defending *against* a knife. We've assumed that unless you can pick up something nearby, you're unarmed. But what if the rules changed slightly? What if it wasn't just the attacker who was armed? What if the attacker didn't have a weapon at all... but YOU did?

To prepare yourself for self-defense, you might choose to carry a knife. Before we talk about what you should carry, however, we need to talk about the law. There are laws in most places that govern what you can and cannot carry, legally, because knives are considered dangerous weapons in a lot of places. Worse, a lot of myth and misinformation is floating around out there about your knife laws.

You need to learn the law on your own. Your state's penal code is the best starting point. Do not ask a police officer, a court representative, or anyone else, because you'll get as many different answers as you ask questions.

Find your state's legislature online and look to see if your penal code is on the Web. If you can't find it there, take a voyage to your local library and look up your state's penal code in the reference books available there.

You may not really be able to understand what the laws tells you. There are books that try to explain the case law and interpretation of those laws, such as David Wong's *Knife Laws of the Fifty States*. When in doubt, be safe rather than sorry. If there's any question about whether you should carry a specific knife (by type, by blade length, or whatever), then don't choose that knife.



To cover your ass, you should try your best to carry a knife that doesn't scream Ninja Death Killer. That means if you can choose a knife that looks like a utility tool and not a Tactical Rambo Survival Blade of Doom, you should carry that utility tool.

One of the best choices is a multi-tool knife like the SpyderRench pictured to the right. It's a very innocuous blade with an obvious utility use. It says "tool," not weapon, to everyone but the most paranoid.

The tool has the same great super-sharp Spyderco blade that the company's "tactical" folders have. It's just as deadly. But it's a multi-purpose tool with a built-in excuse for its carry. When the jury at your use-of-force trial is shown this "weapon," your attorney can say something like, "Thank goodness my client had this tiny little pocket wrench with which to defend himself from this violent criminal! A tool like this is easy to clip to your belt or pocket for easy withdrawal, and the tools built into it even make for a great grip.

In general, when you look at your state's laws (don't forget your city's laws if you live in a big city, like Boston or New York), do it with an eye towards these points:

- Are specific types of knives outlawed, like butterfly knives and gravity knives?
- What is the maximum legal blade length?
- Can you carry a double-edged knife (a "dirk or dagger") or is this forbidden?

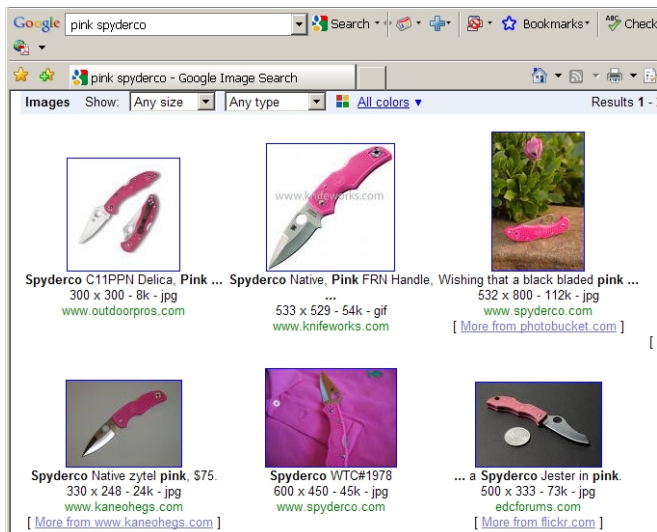
Choose your knife accordingly. In some areas, even whether the knife locks open or not is a factor. Your choice should be driven by your purpose, your tasks, and the environment in which you operate. For example, A large, plain blade is best for stabbing and for activities and areas where it's acceptable to have a large "killing blade" that penetrates deeply.

For personal defense, however, you want a smaller, serrated blade, which can slice through street clothing in order to inflict damage in a civilian environment. You certainly don't want anything that screams "killing implement."



The SpyderRench and other utility tools like it is one great choice for a self-defense tool. Another would be any of the pink-handled knives available on the market. There are plenty of them. Do a Google search for "pink Spyderco" and you'll be amazed at what you find.

Why pink? Well, to most people, that's the color that is the least combative. It's not a color we associate with macho wannabe street toughs, either, and therefore if you were carrying a small, pink folding knife, chances are that knife will be seen as the tool that it is, and not the dangerous weapon some overzealous prosecutor might like to paint it to be.



Once you've chosen your harmless-looking, utility-oriented self-defense blade, you have to choose how to carry it. Basically, put it in your pocket. Stay away from any fancy carry system. Don't go toting your knife around in a shoulder harness or some other combat rig. Just put the knife in your pocket and put your hand on it when you need it. It's that simple.

What you're about to learn is that using that blade to defend yourself isn't complicated, either, no matter what some instructors — or the screenwriters of an action movie — might like you to believe.

## KNIFE FIGHTING: TAKING THE BLADE TO YOUR ATTACKER!

This is the section you've been waiting for: "Knife Fighting." To call self-defense with a blade "knife fighting" isn't exactly accurate, because "knife fighting" conjures up images of two steely-eyed warriors dueling with large Bowies. You probably remember the climactic fight scene between Steven Seagal and Tommy Lee Jones in *Under Siege*, a knife fight so cool it was even covered in a couple of knife trade publications at the time.

Real self-defense with a knife is nothing like that. You aren't there to duel the attacker. If he has a knife and you have a knife, at *best*, both of you are going to end up seriously wounded. If you're lucky and well-trained *and* determined to survive, you might be the one who comes out alive while the other guy is

crippled or dead. Defending yourself with a knife is serious business.

Using a knife for self-defense is also escalation, depending on the situation. If you are attacked physically by someone who is not armed, if you introduce a weapon to that situation, you are escalating that situation. That is, you are taking the game to a higher level, a deadlier one. Legally, this may make you the bad guy when the incident is hashed out in court later. Therefore, you must be sure you are justified in using your knife to defend yourself.

We're not lawyers, remember, but generally, you're justified in using a deadly weapon in self-defense if you are genuinely in fear for your life. That means another "reasonable man" in your situation would have to make the same judgment, in the eyes of the court.

Against an attacker who is not armed but much larger and stronger, or against multiple attackers, you might be justified in using a weapon (a "force multiplier") to even the odds against you. In that case you might be able to use your knife to defend yourself.

If you are justified in deploying your blade, just what do you? No newsletter or training manual can completely prepare you for armed self-defense, but we can give you the basics and you can go out and train them. Here's the most basic, solid method you can use:

Deploy your folding knife from where you carry it. Make sure you get a good, solid grip on that knife.

When the knife snaps open and locked, making sure to keep the knife close to your body with your elbow in (or even braced on your lead leg, which should be the side you hold your knife on). From here, you'll use that knife to slash at targets of opportunity as they get close to you.

What that means is that you don't approach the bad guy. You are armed; he can see that. If he chooses to continue his attack, let him come, but don't go to him. You're defending yourself, not assassinating someone with a blade.





As some part of him gets close, like his arm as he tries to punch or grab you, carve it up. Slash it as deep as you can. This will hopefully discourage him. If it doesn't, you may have to stick that knife in him forcefully. Pump it in as many times as you have to do it to get him off you. Become a sewing machine. Shank him until he gives up, because *he's trying to kill you*.

Hold your knife in a tight fist forward. There are other styles that use a reverse grip, or a reverse grip with the edge in (to make it easier to rip your way out of a limb tangle and so on). If these work for you, fine, but keep things simple. As Antonio Banderas said in that *Zorro* movie, sword (or knife) fighting is simple: "The pointy end goes in the other man."

Obviously you have to develop an understanding of range and distance in order to be able to do this, and no list of "knife fighting rules" can take the place of live scenario training and sparring with training knives. That brings us to...

## TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS

You can't really learn to fight with a knife from reading alone. You've got to go out and train this material with other people, preferably with a lot of other people (because styles differ). Get appropriate

protective equipment and training knives to spar with, and get into the game. There's no substitute for time spent working and drilling on your own.

Remember that training with knives, even blunt training knives, is dangerous. Eye protection is an absolute must. Even a flexible rubber "knife" can poke out your eye.

Start with flexible foam or rubber training knives, especially for practice that involves one student being "stabbed" or "slashed" with the knife. When you move up to disarms in training, choose a less flexible plastic or even metal blade.

Understand, however, that an aluminum training blade can be used to deadly effect. It is not a toy and must be treated with respect.



For advanced sparring, used dedicated marking blades (there are several on the market) or training knives coated with lipstick, chalk, highlighter, or other marking substance.

These will leave a distinct track behind that tells you where you've been tagged. You'll be surprised just how often and easily this does happen, which will only serve to remind you of just how deadly a knife can be.

Most critically, keep your training alive and unpredictable. Do not, under any circumstances, give in to the natural human urge to choreograph it. Predictable, choreographed training isn't going to help you; training in which you know what's coming will give you a false sense of security.

You must strive to make your training as unpredictable as possible in order to ingrain your responses so you do not have to think about them consciously. Otherwise, in those scant seconds available to you during a knife attack, you will be too busy thinking about what to do and you will die before you even reach a decision.

## KNIFE "FIGHTING" DRILLS

For those who need a little more in the way of specifics for knife training drills, we will provide them here. There are quite a few drills, active and passive, in which you can train.

Keep in mind your goals: You are trying to develop attributes that will help you survive in a self-defense scenario. This means you're trying to develop speed, accuracy, the judging of distance... everything you previously associated with "knife fighting" that you now know is part of surviving self-defense with a sharp blade.

## ACTIVE SPARRING

Active sparring is the best of all knife drills, provided one spars against a variety of opponents. (If you always spar the same person, you'll develop bad habits, because you'll be prepared to spar only that particular person.)

In active sparring, two (or more) individuals armed with soft rubber training knives or marking blades duel each other. Such a drill develops reflexes, speed, flow, timing, and the proper mindset for knife fighting.

Active sparring is itself a drill, rather than a category of drills. All you need is a willing partner against whom to test your skills.

## DISARMS AND DEFENSES

Disarms and defenses are those drills that involve "defanging the snake" or simply deflecting an incoming knife attack. Remember that in a real knife self-defense scenario, this may be a really bad move; if you train these at all, do so simply so you understand

the mechanics involved, as we discussed much earlier in this training program.

Rigid training knives are best for this type of drill because many of the mechanics involved are about leverage. A flexible "knife" would be unsuitable for such training.

Training disarms and defenses requires the willing partner to "attack" with a knife — at slow speed at first — while the defender practices deflecting, trapping, and taking the "blade." Special care must be taken to avoid injuring the training partner doing drills of this type, as it is very easy to harm someone's joints in this fashion.

Remember always, as you engage in these drills, that you're just trying to increase your speed, your accuracy, and your kinetic awareness. *These are not street survival drills.* Refer always to the Wagner disarm material we discussed earlier.

Now, in this category of training, drills will vary depending on the techniques used (specific knife defense techniques are beyond the scope of this document) and the style in which one trains.

Disarms and defenses are best trained under qualified instructor supervision. Be aware that a rigid training knife is potentially dangerous, especially if thrust into an eye or the throat.

While training disarms and defenses it is very easy to get into bad habits, hurt the "attacker," or experience injury as the "defender." Wear protective gear as appropriate.

## FORMS AND MECHANICS

Drills for training forms and mechanics can be as simple as watching yourself in the mirror or watching your own shadow on the wall as you move through the mechanics and flow of your particular fighting style.

Aluminum trainer blades are best for this purpose, as they are closest to live blades (and thus help you develop the appropriate mindset for wielding the knife) but still relatively safe if you make a mistake.

## HANGING OBJECT TEST CUTTING

Hanging object targeting can be done with training knives or with live blades. Using tennis balls, ping pong balls, sheets of paper, pieces of cardboard, or other suitable targets, hang the targets from a wall or ceiling with cord or string.

Using your knife or trainer, practice stabbing and slashing at the targets to get the feel for hitting where you're aiming. For best results, hang targets at different heights.

Always use extreme caution when test-cutting with a live blade! One very useful piece of equipment is a simple pair of leather wrist cuffs. Remember that your knife can maim and even kill you. Respect it.



## HANGING BOTTLE TEST CUTTING

Cutting hanging bottles can be a very useful exercise. Targets can be empty or full of water (with predictably messy results). This is really just a variation on the hanging object targeting drills, the stipulation being that the targets are bottles. Do not use glass!

One of the great things that hanging bottle test cutting provides is physical feedback. Especially when full of water, the bottles allow you to test your cutting ability and technique. If you can get through the bottle, you know your technique is sound. If your technique is faulty, you'll just end up pushing or knocking the bottles around, rather than cutting through them.



It should go without saying that this type of training is extremely dangerous, or potentially so. Make sure no one else is nearby when you attempt this type of test cutting, and make sure your own body parts are out of the way of your swinging knife.

## PURCHASED DUMMY TEST "CUTTING"

More than one human-shaped punching "bag" exists on the market. Buying one of these is a quick and easy way to practice accurate targeting against a person-sized opponent.





Training knives are used for this purpose, obviously, because live blades would carve up and destroy the dummy.

Your goal is simply to accustom yourself to targeting specific vulnerable points on the human body, using an implement that represents your knife. If you've never done it before, you'll be surprised by how awkward you first feel — when trying to bring your slashes and thrusts into something that only starts to look like *reality*.



## DUMMY TEST CUTTING

Once you've gotten used to targeting vital areas on your body-shaped dummy, it's time to move up to actual cutting on something that simulates the human form. There aren't really any targets like this that you can buy, so you'll have to build one.

There are a number of different ways to construct a test-cutting dummy. The most common methods involve some type of hard core — PVC or wood, for example — covered in padding of foam or layers of cloth.

Duct tape is usually used to wrap the padding (and can be used to extend the life of the cutting dummy). The object is to create something that provides resistance but which can be cut from the outside to a harder core (which simulates bone).

This gives the knife wielder some idea of what to expect when striking a human target. The design of the dummy is really up to you. Use your imagination and experiment with different methods.

## CUTTING MEAT

Cutting slabs of meat is another way to get some idea of the resistance one's blade will encounter against a human target. Slashing into a slab of beef will also impress on you the damage a sharp knife can do to the human body with very little effort.

A certain famous knife maker produces videos of endless cutting of hunks of meat to demonstrate the effectiveness of his blades. The best part about all this meat cutting is you can have a cook-out afterwards.

## ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND...

Remember that the purpose of training drills is to develop the skills necessary for wielding a knife effectively for self-defense.

Practicing a lot of flashy, useless maneuvers that look impressive but have no application is a waste of your time and may cause you to do something foolish in the stress of a real encounter. When performing these drills and in devising drills of your own, always ask yourself a few questions:

- What skill does this drill develop?
- Will the drill create bad habits as performed?
- What is the application of the skill developed?
- Is there a way to develop this skill more efficiently?

Remember also to never train when you are tired, either physically or mentally. Even a training knife can hurt you very badly if you aren't careful and don't wear the proper protective equipment.

**REMEMBER THIS:**

The blade is a deadly weapon. Facing it is no small thing.

It can be a daunting, even terrifying task, and one that no sane individual wishes to experience. The unfortunate reality of our violent world, however, is that you may indeed face a criminal armed with a blade.

That criminal may want your money, your wife, your daughters...or your life. Regardless of what he wants, you must face him down and survive, or be prepared to pay the ultimate price in order to protect your loved ones.

All self-defense involves risk. When a weapon such as a knife is introduced, the gamble you take with your life increases accordingly. The choice before you is whether to lie down and die, or keep fighting until you succeed.

Success or failure isn't, in this case, as simple as "winning" or "losing" a fight. In a knife fight, the winners often can be hard to tell apart from the losers.

When one person defends against a knife, that person can expect to be cut, and cut badly. When a knife-wielding attacker surprises a citizen defender who has a knife, both individuals may be maimed or killed.

In any event, you must be trained, prepared, willing, and able to do everything in your power to stop that assailant from getting what he wants.

This is why we advocate knowing not only how to defend against an edged weapon when you're unarmed, but also how to use one yourself for defensive purposes. It will most likely be a very different mental state you play with when training with a knife in your hands, sinking it deep into a pot roast...

...and that's the point!

Edged weapons escalate a standard "brawl" into a life or death consequence. The mental preparation for such a violent, traumatic encounter is done long before the actual attack. It happens now.

Prepare for the worst, dare to hope for the best, and train safely as you keep reality always in mind.

## Coming Up In Module 3: **FIGHTING ON THE GROUND!**

You've heard it over and over again..."*most fights go to the ground!*" It's true. But the ground is the **LAST** place you want to end up in a real street fight (sorry mixed martial arts fans!)

On the ground, **you're a sitting duck** for your attacker's buddies to begin stomping on your head or for your attacker to pull out a knife or other weapon and make short work of you while you're locked up defenseless. That's why in **Module 3** we'll show you...

- How to make "**child's play**" **out of even the most experienced mixed martial artist!** (*Hint: they learn "groundfighting" – we'll show you **how to "fight on the ground!"***)
- "**LESSONS FROM THE CAGE!**" Why the best survival strategies from no holds barred sports fighting **AREN'T** found in the ring!
- When "*getting nasty*" will actually **DESTROY** your chances to survive a ground attack!
- "**SECRET TARGETS**" **most men have never even thought of!** But they're brutally effective at **ending ANY ground assault** in mere **SECONDS!**

**And Much, Much More!**