

DEFENSIVE TRAINING FOR SECURITY

Traditional vs Contemporary-

Richard Kay



COMMON GROUND OR WORLDS APART

With the implementation of 'use of force' units of competency in the *PRS03 Asset Security Training Package*, there will, no doubt, be a need for professional and competent trainers in defensive tactics for the security industry. Obviously for specific use of force requirements such as baton, handcuffs and firearms, there are specific criteria and skills required for instructing at this level. But what about the empty hand units of competency, specifically *PRSS0222A Protect self and others using basic defensive techniques* and *PRSS0315A Control persons*

using empty hand techniques? It is to be expected that martial artists may step forward ready to instruct in these units, but the issue is whether they are actually competent to do so.

The aim of this article is to highlight important and specific variances between these two related but different disciplines and to examine them in relation to operational requirements. I have been involved in martial arts since 1984, in addition to being involved with defensive tactics since 1994, and from personal experience, it took me several years to adjust and adapt my martial arts knowledge to the demands of defensive tactics instruction.

I must also acknowledge that being a defensive tactics instructor has certainly progressed my martial arts study in a positive manner, especially in terms of realism and practicality. A key factor is the issue of applicability to modern, lawful use in an operational context for law enforcement, security, corrections and even military. In a nutshell, martial arts focus primarily on the technical aspects of self defense, whilst defensive tactics primarily deal with the strategy and tactics required to minimise harm. If we look at the titles of each, we see the fundamental difference:

According to the Collins Dictionary:

Martial Arts:

Martial adj. of war, warlike (**martial art** any of various philosophies & techniques of self defence)

Art n. creation of works of beauty

Defensive Tactics

Defensive adj. intended for defence (**defend** v. protect from harm or danger)

Tactics pl. n. methods or plans to achieve an end

Most, if not all martial arts are technique-based, teaching a multitude of physical solutions to a multitude of attacks. Defensive tactics, on the other hand, whilst having an element of technique, need to cover content more relative to an operational environment – threat awareness and evaluation, psychological and physiological effects on performance under stress, tactical considerations such as environmental analysis, tactical positioning, both for general communication and control, approach to contact, methods of conflict control and de-escalation linked into the lawful application of force, and the reasons behind the need to use such force in the first place, including duty of care through the provision of after care.

There are three aspects integral to defensive tactics training:

- What we would **like** to do
- What we **must** do
- What we actually **will** do

The first 'would like to do' category, often contains fancy and unrealistic techniques that are better suited to fight choreography in movies. Programs based on this category are great for entertainment, but hold little value for real world defence against real violence and often leave officers vulnerable, both in terms of safety and legal consequences. Defensive tactics training for operational personnel must be based on the latter two aspects, combining what must be done, within operational and lawful parameters, with what people will most likely do under the stress of actual confrontation, ensuring effectiveness under realistic operational circumstances.

Law

The ability to use force against the public is the primary factor that distinguishes security, law enforcement, corrections and military agencies from the remainder of society. No other segment of our population is permitted this license. As a result of this responsibility, the use of force by the police comes under close scrutiny by both the public and the courts. To define and clarify appropriate circumstances for the use of force, defensive tactics uses 'use of force' models or

continuums. These provide operational personnel with reasonable guidance in determining what level of force is needed and a means of documenting that use of force, while providing administrators with a realistic means of evaluating force usage. These guidelines were initially developed in an effort to explain to operational personnel, the proper response to an assailant's actions, as a mechanism for explaining the level of force that was employed and the circumstances under which it was exercised.

Like it or not, we live in an increasingly litigious society. Those few industries that have a use of force entitlement as a function of their job role, such as law enforcement, security, corrections, military and even aspects of health services, are very mindful of this and generally every aspect of their job, especially use of force, must stay well within lawful parameters, and their training generally covers this component extensively.

As far as lawful requirements related to use of force are concerned, the following sections from the **Crimes Act 1958** are relevant - s.462A, s.31. There are also several potentially important aspects related to use of force after the fact, that are largely aimed at the appropriate and responsible use of force - s.16, s.17, s.18, s.20, s.21, s.22, s.23, s.24, s.30, s.39. If you are applying restraint techniques, such as joint locks, vascular restraints or ground pins, you are probably straying into the area of arrest, and therefore should understand the following - s.458, s.461, s.462.

Practitioners of martial arts train regularly in use of force options, mostly empty hand but may include filled hand (weapons), and often train in use of force 'solutions' to violence that can be extreme in the least. Yet, there is no requirement for them to receive training in the lawful parameters surrounding what they are learning to apply. If martial arts do not cover the law aspect related to the content of what they train, then it is likely they are unable to pass on that knowledge to industry operatives, or explain how it all ties together under operational conditions.

Practicality

To be effective, defensive tactics programs must provide efficient defensive tactics for operational personnel without long hours of training. The techniques should be designed to work effectively for all operational personnel, male and female, large and small, fit as well as people in less than peak physical condition. The tactics should be quickly learned, easily practised and readily maintained. The training should incorporate

drills that stimulate the stress of street encounters. Participants must have a good understanding of the conditions in which defensive options may be used, justification for their use and how these actions should be documented. Defensive tactics programs should be based on modern, court defensible standards for less lethal use of force, and be designed to meet three key standards of training:

- Techniques must work operationally, not just in the ideal setting of a training environment
- Content is court defensible
- Content is administratively feasible for use in a contemporary agency

Many martial arts taught in modern society are still taught in a 'traditional' manner, adhering to philosophies from another culture and using physical techniques designed for use in an entirely different context, based on civil or military conventions of the period, and often heavily influenced by the cultural and political environment at the time. Subsequently, the techniques are often not relevant, appropriate or applicable to use in a modern society. Other so-called martial arts have evolved into martial sports, where the emphasis is on a sporting contest and there is little combat reality. This, of course, is fine and in keeping with a peace-time society, but can be dangerous if a 'sports champion' is suddenly teaching operational street tactics, with little or no combat reality and diluted 'sports-appropriate' techniques.

Martial arts generally take prolonged time to learn and apply effectively. Modern agencies usually have limited budgets and resources, and have to balance training time carefully against operational resources. Although defensive tactics play a major part in training, operational staff require practical components that are quick to learn, simple to use and easy to maintain. They cannot devote huge quantities of time and energy to learning and honing skills that they may only use periodically. Techniques must be designed around sound tactical theory, such as gross motor skills, forgiving principles and the 40/10 rule, to name a few key relevant ones.

Then the aspect of what is appropriate for modern, lawful solutions to controlling violence needs to be considered. Most martial arts teach multiple-sequencing techniques. This is where a defence solution is actually a combination of responses. This is usually learnt as a response by rote, often required to be performed for promotion in grading, and subsequently becomes a conditioned response. Combine that with the

common habit in martial arts of targeting key vital points on the body such as eyes, throat, groin, combined with punches, kicks and throws, and one is using techniques that may be inappropriate for lawful use of force purposes.

Operational Capability

All actions, relational factors between parties and conditions surrounding the street confrontation comprise what is known as the totality of the situation. Each relevant condition relates to the confrontation in determining the officer's course of action. It is reasonable that a discrepancy in the age, gender, physical size, fitness or skill level of individuals involved in the confrontation may mandate that an officer use more or less force to control the situation. In a similar manner, it would be reasonable for a single officer to use more force in controlling a situation when confronted by multiple subjects. In addition to officer/subject factors, a confrontation may include special circumstances that would allow an officer to increase the use of force. A subject in close proximity to a weapon creates an increased danger to the officer, which must be dealt with immediately. An officer may have special knowledge of a subject's skills that would require the use of increased force. An officer who is injured, exhausted, on the ground, disabled or in imminent danger would be justified in escalating through the use of force options.

The goal of operational personnel in a confrontation is control. Each technique

employed in a confrontational situation must be evaluated in terms of its likelihood to gain control compared with its likelihood to cause damage. Those techniques, which offer a high degree of control and a limited potential for damage, are preferred options. In evaluating options, a final consideration must be made to insure safety, which involves the ability to instantly disengage or escalate in response to a confrontation. Techniques, which tie operational personnel to a subject, must be rejected. Techniques, which do not allow the ability to escalate the force option in response to a subject's threat, are unacceptable.


A critical portion of any defensive tactics program must include training in documentation. A properly documented report detailing a street confrontation is the first step in minimising potential civil liability. Although reports vary from agency to agency, basic information is necessary in all use of force reports. This aspect is rarely, if ever, covered in martial arts' syllabuses.

No one person or system can teach you everything you need to know about self defence and combat. Unfortunately, there is an aspect that can only be learnt by experiencing violence for real, with no rules or safeguards to protect you, where you discover what works and what does not work under the stress of violence, and how you as an individual will respond to the threat of real violence under real stress. No matter how intense training is in the club, you always know it is still just training, and that your safety is never

in real jeopardy. There are no such assurances on the street. Many martial artists have never experienced the reality of violence and stress, and then most certainly not in an operational settings similar to those they will be teaching defensive tactics in. There is also the matter of integration of concepts and techniques with other *use of force* options that may be available in the operational environment – communication (de-escalation and compliance), tactical disengagement, cordon and contain, batons, handcuffs, and firearms. These should all mesh together simply to form a logical continuity, rather than be addressed as separate disciplines.

In summary, the key point is that martial arts and defensive tactics are different, and need to be approached in different ways. Martial arts practitioners make good martial artists, but require additional and specific training to make the transition to instructing in defensive tactics. ■


Richard Kay is the principal of Dynamic Training, a registered training organisation, and has been designing and implementing defensive tactics and personal safety programs for agencies and civilian groups alike since 1994. He has been studying martial arts since 1984 (karate, tai chi, ba qua, hsing-i, aikido), including 3 trips to Japan, and is currently a 4th dan black belt. He holds an ASP Trainer Certification and 3 PPCT instructor certifications. He has been involved in security operations since 1994. For more information: www.dynamictraining.com.au




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