

# Fists, Feet and

By Alan Charlton  
Self Protection Association

# Baseball Bats

LIKE MOST PEOPLE I am one who does not believe in walking the street armed with a baseball bat or hunting knife. One thing is for sure if you get used to relying on something like a weapon to defend yourself with, if for whatever reason you find you do not have it with you at the time of an attack you are more unprepared to deal with the situation. Because your mind is set and comforted by the thought of the weapon in your pocket, Murphy's law will make sure that at the time of an attack you won't have it with you. If you train with the knowledge of how street attacks can kick off, you will understand in most situations with the pressure you are under just how little time you have. Fumbling around in your jacket or bag for the comfort of a weapon can take away the few seconds that you have available. Also walking into a restaurant dragging a baseball bat along the floor will not help you get a table, but it will help you with the police and their inquiries.

If you've ever been on a course that talks about using personal alarms they will tell you it's no good being left in the bottom of your bag. Walk along with it in your hand if you are not comfortable with your surroundings. This is ok with an alarm, bunch of keys, a ballpoint pen or a hand full of coins as you will not look out of place. But believe me a large hunting knife or large red fire axe **will** get you noticed. You are better off relying on your hands and feet to get you out of a situation, whether that means fighting or using them to get away as fast as you can. You have so little time to do anything in most situations once it has kicked off carrying a weapon does not always help. I'm all in favour of doing whatever is needed at the time, especially if your surroundings are able to provide suitable weapons. You do what you have to do to



1st drill face off.



Close down jamming attacking arm.

protect yourself. But before I dig myself into a bigger hole about this point, it's you who has to be able to deal with a situation when it comes at you and this can happen any time. Training with weapons and understanding what they can do is important, but understanding what you can do without one is more so.

## Untrained and Deadly

I feel there is a great danger in getting too technical when it comes to weapons training, and defences against weapons. The problem comes if you just train always at a high skill level. Look at it like this, two people who are highly trained tend to fight with each other's skill level in mind. With counter attack after counter attack they are both playing a high level chess game and are fighting in the style of the system. Put someone in front of them who has not trained in the system and they may find it difficult to counter some of the wild unconventional attacks. Too many systems rely on a set response to a well-learned and trained attack. Take someone off the street that is willing to stand in front of a highly trained weapons fighter and start with: "OK, come on then lets go, I'm goner cave your head in and ram that stick of yours right down your throat". OK I know it was a bit graphic, but the point is that not only is a street attacker not going

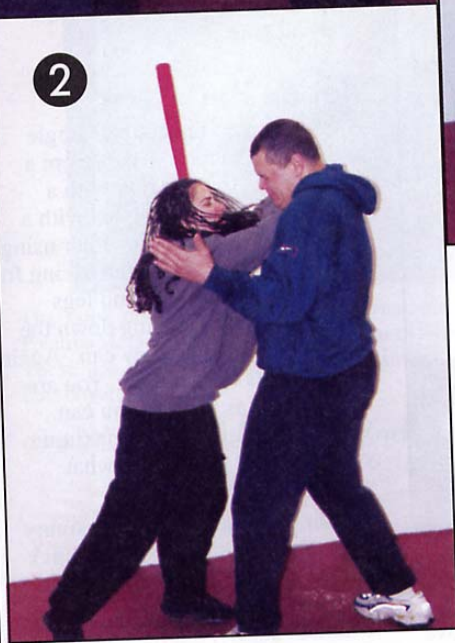


1

1. 2nd drill face off;

2. Move in strike Sev gives Tony a hard strike to the throat;

3. Tony no longer wants to play and just wants to get rid of this mornings breakfast.



2



3

through something you thought worked. I am not knocking training or practising or anything like that, it's just that when it comes to needing it you have to know beforehand that it will work.

### Skill under pressure

Learning and having great skill be it with weapons, hands or feet takes years. If you can use your skill under

pressure it is not a waste of time, after all you have spent years practising the movements. The great news is that because you have put in all the years of training making it work on a street level is easy. You just have to be open minded about how you train for the two, one for the mat and one for the pavement. You will find the latter brings on a whole new skill level of being able to make something work under pressure. You are not playing,

you are stopping hard attacks and as the confidence inside you increases so does your willingness to separate the two sides to your training. Being brutal has a skill level, the skill to use what works under pressure, belief in oneself to handle the fear of the situation, and a willingness to do anything to win.

### Aggression with less technique

It is not always wise to make claims about how well a technique works but if you are willing to give the next few ideas a try, I'm sure you will be pleased with what you find out. We will start with someone facing a partner armed with a bat; this training drill will protect you from attacks to the head, body and legs. Doing my best not to be patronising, the part of the bat you want to avoid is the fast moving bit at the end.

#### 1st Drill, Closing down the attack.

Face your partner, have them swing the bat attacking your body. Keeping your hands in a guard position move in as quickly as you can cover down the attacking arm. Just think of it as giving your partner a big hug. In the first drill we are not striking our partner, we are just learning how to close down the attack. Try it ten times slowly and then build up the speed and power, using a padded training stick lets you really turn up the pressure. Within a short time you can really have the attacks coming at you very hard and fast. I have given this demonstration at many seminars and everyone who has tried it has been impressed with just how quickly they can stop the attack from a bat or heavy stick.

Closing down the attack from the bat to the arm, your target area when you are defending should be the attacker's inner forearm to elbow and from elbow to shoulder. As you move in your arms should

to use set movements of attack, but the etiquette of the situation has gone right out the window. Suddenly faced with this, the most highly trained of us will falter and find ourselves unable to respond. Also with a strong powerful attack, if we have only been training for control and skill this can let us down. A normally flicked away attack from your regular training partner has turned into a bone crushing smash, and has come right



**Bat on bat.**

move over and across the attacker's when you are chest to chest, then wrap your arms around them. You will find yourself working the idea very quickly and maybe thinking to yourself is that it, is that all there is to it? Yep that's it. That's the great news. It's so simple I have found that even the most uncoordinated person can make this work.

### **Belief in yourself and what you can do builds power**

Simple is the best way when it comes to teaching people self-defence but many will look at the basics and dream of more. If you jump on that dreamboat it can only end with disappointment when it hits you for real. Build up the strength of the attack on the first drill at your own pace, but you will find yourself controlling very hard attacks quickly. Also your partner will feel the impact of your body slamming into them because you are focused at moving in, out of the way of the bat. So without meaning to, you are already striking your partner. Try it, the harder they come in the greater the impact.

The closer you are, the slower the bits you have to control will be

moving. At the end of the day the bat is not an independent attacker, it takes the person holding the other end to swing it. Get control of them and the bat is no longer a problem, don't think about where they are going to hit.

If you keep adding the possible areas you maybe attacked so you can use the right type of defence then hang on! Just think what it would be like if you were under attack. You don't want fifty ways to defend yourself, you need only one or two that are going to stop him. If you can get hold of some more training partners give this one a try. Have three people stand around you all armed with training bats now



**Finding out what works.**

close your eyes, you can only move when one of them shouts your name. You open your eyes to see one of them coming at you, you don't have time to think about the part of your body he is going to cave in, you just have to move in and close down the attack.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Drill Jamming and Damage.**

The main point of the drills is the fact of closing down the attack before the full and powerful striking power of the bat comes into range. We are not blocking the attack we

are jamming the attack at the source; the attackers shoulder and elbow. As you found with the first drill just moving in and giving your partner a big hug will stop a strong attack and the victim can be a lot smaller than the attacker.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> drill we will use the closing down to attack, the striking hand is normally the hand that is inside when you close down. For training you can strike the chest area to build up power on the strikes. Target areas will be the throat eyes, nose, chin and groin. You can strike with closed fist, palm heel, finger and elbow strikes. You should pick the one that is best for you. But remember once you are in close keep striking until they are no longer a threat. Again it's a horrible feeling but better than having your knee smashed to pieces or your skull opened by an unforgiving baseball bat.

### **Bat on Bat**

A good way to understand single and double handed strikes from a bat attack is to try it out, with a partner one holding the bat with a single hand grip and the other using a two handed grip. Each striking for the other's head, body and legs using the idea of closing down the attack as quickly as they can. Again training bats only please. You are trying to hit as hard as you can. With the pressure set to maximum you are going to find out what works.

Don't get fancy, don't try funny tricks and don't fight stick to stick just hit for the target and mean it. The person in the street is not into technical ability, but he's angry and aggressive. How about you?

I hope you enjoy trying out the ideas I have talked about. Take it at your own pace. Work together and build up the pressure. Enjoy your training, train safely and remember it's your right to protect yourself and only you can do anything about it.

If you would like to contact the SPA for more information you can call us on 01992 632270 Email [Alanspa@aol.com](mailto:Alanspa@aol.com) or [www.spa.ukf.net](http://www.spa.ukf.net)