

KNIFE
HANDLING
for
SELF
DEFENSE

by George B. Wallace

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PREFACE

Almost every day in the week one can read of robbery, rape, theft, murder, assault and riot. People are being attacked in parking lots, dark streets, hallways, elevators and even in the privacy of the home. Case in point being the "Tate Murder Case" involving the "Manson Family".

There is a burglary in the United States every 16 seconds. In the majority of cases, a skilled or "professional burglar" does not want physical confrontation unless he is cornered. However, suppose he is trapped or the more dangerous type of house-breaker is involved, such as the "kill for kicks" type? It is then the obligation of a citizen to protect and defend the lives of himself and his family.

The purpose of this manual is to acquaint the reader with one of the tools of self-defense, namely the kitchen knife. It is the one weapon that nearly every home has and yet is seldom thought of in an emergency, or if so, how to use it properly.

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Stones and clubs were man's first weapons of survival. Their primary function was to obtain food and help defend against attacks by wild animals and other tribes of men. As these primitive people gained knowledge in the construction and shaping of tools, the stone knife came into being. It wasn't until the Stone Age was nearly over that the true fighting knife appeared. With the discovery of metal, knives became more and more sought after as a fighting weapon.

This country from the 1600's to about the 1860's has an extremely violent history as regards man's use of the knife against his fellow man. Even though firearms had been invented, they did not always prove reliable or accurate. The knife was always ready. In fact, the first duel to be fought in the American Colonies employed the use of daggers. Both men were badly cut, but lived to suffer punishment by the leaders of the community. Because....only gentlemen, not servants, were permitted the privilege of dueling.

James Bowie and his famous knife is perhaps the most noted fighter of his day, but there were many others that did not have the publicity that Bowie received and deserved.

One such example was a colorful and pugnacious duelist of the Old South by the name of Cassius Marcellus Clay. He was a cousin of the famous statesman, Henry Clay. In his many fights, he used the pistol, cane and his favorite weapon, the bowie knife. In fact, he wrote a history of the bowie and how to use it. (Cont'd P.22)

TYPICAL KNIFE FIGHTING STANCES

In photos. #1, 2 & 3 you will note that the knife is in view. Depending on the style of the knifer, anyone of these can be used where the element of surprise is not necessary or possible. Usually the fighting is done in a cautious fencing style. Photo. #1 is preferable when facing another knifer.

DEFENSIVE STANCE WITH KNIFE HIDDEN

#4. A good stance because it is easy to protect the vital organs. The left hand is ready to parry or block opponents hands or feet. The knife is held in the right hand hidden from the attackers view. The upper body is straight for good balance.

#5. In this side view, you will notice the knife held in the right hand with the blade along arm. Sharp edge away from forearm. The feet are about shoulder width apart for balance and slightly bent at the knees for quick moves.

HOLDING KNIFE FOR SLASHING AND THRUSTING

When working with a knife that has no cross-guard, it is important when thrusting, slashing and blocking that the knife is held firmly and in such a way that the hand will not slip down blade edge.

#6. When knife is used for blocking, be sure knife is held firmly against forearm so that edge of knife blade does not twist sideways. If necessary, other hand behind forearm can be used for support.

#7. In thrusting, use left hand cupped around butt end of knife for the thrust and the right hand for guidance.

#8. When slashing downward and extra cutting force is needed, use left hand over right hand and press downward together.





METHODS OF STRIKING

It is extremely important to use considerable force when striking. In a life & death struggle, it is necessary that every blow counts. Keep a secure but relaxed grip on knife handle. Tensing of muscles will slow your responses. At the moment of striking, grip handle firmly.

#1. A slashing attack to side of neck. Palm down.

#2. Ditto #1. Palm up.

#3. Downward slash thru clothing. Left hand is placed on top of right hand for added pressure.

#4. Left hand cups butt end of knife handle and shoves. Right hand is used for guiding blade. This method helps eliminate danger of right hand sliding down blade edge.

#5. Ditto #4. Downward thrust to back or hollow of collarbone.

#6. There are times when the knife cannot be put to instant use because of the angle of attack or defense. So, the hand holding knife can punch ribs or elsewhere, thus setting up opponent for rest of counter attack.

#7. Knife is wrapped around wrist with blade edge cutting into wrist. This particular usage may not come into play very often, but it can be useful for maintaining a grip or pulling opponent off balance for other strikes

METHODS OF STRIKING CONT'D

On occasion it might be necessary to use thrust immediately. Since there is no guard to prevent hand from slipping, handle is held between fingers. Example Photo's. #7 & #8.

#1. Blade is held along forearm.

#2. Weight of blade allows point to drop and handle is caught between fingers as per Photo. #8.

#3. The palm cupping the butt end of knife is used for support when thrusting.

Changing Knife from Right to Left Hand

Shifting the knife from one hand to the other may be necessary to confuse opponent, an injury to knife hand or the style of combat may have changed to a fencing match. Never toss knife from one hand to the other. It may be dropped or knocked to floor.

If necessary to shift knife, keep point aiming at opponent. It may make him wary and allow you to complete change.

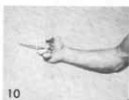
#4. Bring right hand to front with point facing opponent.

#5. Left hand grabs handle from underneath. Do not release right hand until sure left hand has knife.

#6. Left hand has knife with blade forward. Knife can be kept in that position for fencing or folded back along left forearm.

Substitute Weapons

Sometimes the only weapons available are a small paring knife or a pair of scissors. They should be used in a punching or thrusting manner. Photo's #7 to #10 illustrate grip.





METHODS OF BLOCKING

While blocking with knife, be sure and have a firm grip. If blade is twisted sideways, the defender cannot disable attackers arm.

As you block roundhouse and backhand blows, slide blade upwards in order to cut muscles and tendons. This already occurs when blocking arms coming down or up.

#1. The blow given here can be a roundhouse punch to face or downward strike such as club attack to head.

#2. This blow could be a backhand or a straight punch to chest. Forearm block has the support of the left hand. This support might be necessary against large opponent.

#3. This block is directed against the inside wrist of a right punch.

METHOD OF BLOCKING AND HOOKING WRIST

It is used to drag or pull opponent off balance for other strikes.

#4. Forearm block on outside of arm.

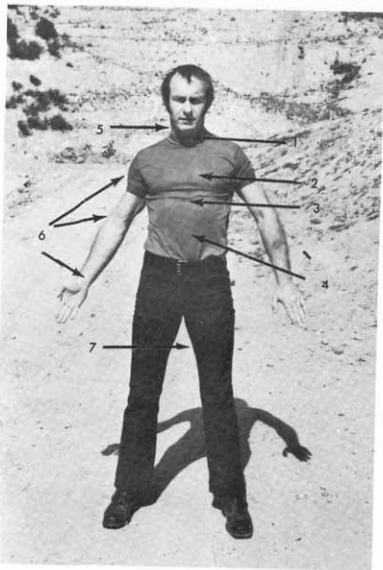
#5. Roll knife over top of arm and at same time turn fist over so knife edge will face attackers wrist.

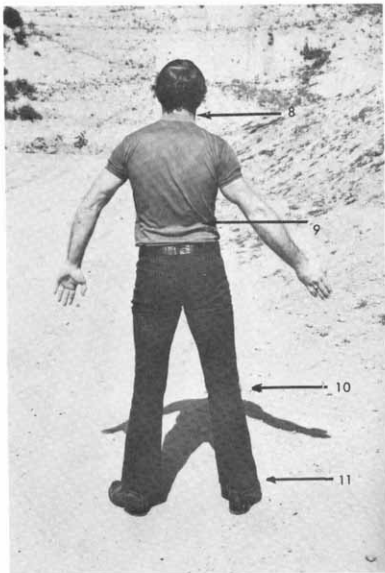
#6. Knife in place with blade edge at an angle in order to get a good bite.

WHERE TO STRIKE

FRONT

- 1 - Jugular vein under "Adams Apple". Thrust into hollow results in death in a very short time.
- 2 - Heart. Fatal. Usually best to avoid due to rib cage.
- 3 - Stomach. Thrust will cause great shock and eventual death if left unattended.
- 4 - Abdominal Area. Ditto No. 3.
- 5 - Carotid Arteries. Slash on either side of neck will cause death in a very short time.
- 6 - Arms. Slash across large muscles of the biceps, slash to sever tendons of the inside of wrist and elbow will render arm useless. Force him to drop his weapon.
- 7 - Femoral Arteries. Deep slashes at the upper inside of thigh will sever the various veins and arteries. If left unattended, will cause death from loss of blood.





WHERE TO STRIKE

BACK

- 8 - Carotid & External Jugular. Slash on either side of the neck, cutting the arteries which furnish blood to the brain results in extreme loss of blood and death in a very short time.
- 9 - Kidneys. A deep thrust will cause great shock and internal hemorrhage.
- 10 - Ligaments behind Knee. A deep slash will cut the muscles, ligaments and blood vessels. This will render leg useless.
- 11 - Achilles Tendon. A slash will prevent opponent from standing on injured leg.

DEFENSE AGAINST CLUB ATTACKS

In order to save space, it will be assumed that for each attack, a defensive stance is taken before the counter.

Roundhouse Strike to Ribs - Right Hand

#1. Attacker swings club in a roundhouse strike aiming for ribs. Defender steps forward so that his right side is facing attacker. At the same time, knife is raising to block and cut his inside forearm.

#2. As soon as arm is blocked, slide left hand over butt of knife and thrust to abdomen.

#3. Remove knife.

#4. Slash side of neck with palm up.

Backhand Strike - Right Hand

#5. If it were not possible to move inside roundhouse strike as illustrated in Photo. #1, then step back and let club swing past you. As club returns for backhand swing, leap forward. Block forearm. Note: Left foot is close to attacker.

#6. Roll knife around and hook wrist, at same time grab upper arm with your left hand. Pull attacker past you with "hook-grab" combination.

#7. As attacker passes you, release grip on his arm and slash side of neck.

#8. As you slash neck, step forward and past him with right foot. Stay clear of opponent.





DEFENSE AGAINST CLUB ATTACKS

Attack to Head - Right Hand

#1. Defender leaps toward attacker and blocks club arm from the inside with a firm left arm. Allow attacker's arm to slide down outside of blocking arm in order to grab it.

#2. Step forward with right foot and quickly slash across neck. Be alert to a punch or block from attacker's left hand.

Jab into Stomach

#3. As attacker jabs for stomach or ribs, defender twists body to the right and at the same time parries club with his left arm.

#4. As defender parries club and twisting to the right, he should be kicking at opponent's nearest knee.

#5. If assailant has not been knocked to floor, leap forward and press club arm downward with your left hand while slashing neck.

Backhand Strike

#6. Attacker is left handed or is able to switch club from one hand to the other. In any event step in with right foot and place yourself behind the attacking arm and up close to your opponent. Stop his backhand swing with a strong forearm block.

#7. Grab opponent's wrist with your left hand and pull him down and off balance. This will make room for strike to neck.

#8. As you cut neck, side step to rear

At one time in his long career, he was our Ambassador to the Court of Russia. It was always his habit to carry a pearl handled bowie knife, even at formal occasions. Since he had an eye for the ladies of the court, many challenges came his way. Clay was always ready to accept. . . on his terms.

Clay lived to the ripe old age of 83 and he claimed his longevity was due to fast reaction to attacks upon him.

Unfortunately, human nature has not changed since the beginning of time. We still have dangerous, violent people about who care nothing for human life.

In our civilized society of today, we are not permitted to carry weapons for personal protection while conducting our daily work. When we have laws and police protection, this is proper. However, when our lives are in danger within our own homes then steps have to be taken to protect ourselves and our families.

When faced with a life or death situation in your home, it is important that you develop appropriate responses. The method of defense shown here has been designed for your use in the event you are forced to face an armed assailant. Excluding firearms.

Since knives are essential tools, almost every home is so equipped. In many cases, a kitchen knife is the only weapon available for self-protection. As a need could arise when you least expect it, it would pay to have some knowledge of knife handling for self-defense.

Careful planning is important to protecting your home from invasion. This means setting up safeguards - the installing of

good locks on doors and windows plus a means of escape to avoid physical contact with the intruder. Finally, if all this fails, there are means of defending your life. People buy insurance for losses resulting from injury, fire and theft. Think of self-defense training as insurance. Nothing may ever happen to you, but it could cost you plenty by not being prepared - your life!

TYPES OF EDGED WEAPONS There are three types of knives that you should know about. The fighting knife (stiletto or dagger) with the double cutting edge. The hunting knife with its single cutting edge and the third knife is the single-edged butcher or boning knife found in the kitchen. It is the kitchen knife that this training manual is about.

The techniques of handling are different from the usual knife fighting but well suited to the knife found in the home and to the type of attack one might encounter. A very hard, fast and ruthless attack in a limited working area.

THE KNIFE VERSUS THE GUN While the gun is an excellent weapon of defense, the cost for gun, ammunition plus the need to practice could be expensive. The kitchen knife would cost two or three dollars. Most states require some form of registration or licensing of firearms; none is needed for the knife.

A nervous gun owner could make an irrevocable mistake. Relatives and even neighbors have been mistaken for burglars. The fact that you would have to be very close to the attacker makes a mistake highly unlikely for the knife user. (Cont'd P.40)

Attack to Head - Left Hand

#1. Move forward swiftly with the left foot leading. While blocking descending club arm with rising knife hand, shove heel of palm left hand onto chin or nose of attacker.

#2. Step forward with right foot and turn knife over so point faces ceiling and proceed to slash downward with the help of the left hand to press through clothing.

#3. On completion of downward slash, draw knife across body and at the same time cup butt end of knife with left hand.

#4. Thrust into abdomen or stomach.

Attack to Legs - Left Hand

#5. Quickly step in with left foot and use heel of palm left hand into face of attacker to upset balance. Simultaneously the knife arm is brought forward to block leg strike.

#6. Step across to attackers right side with right foot while slashing across neck.

#7. Continue stepping until clear of opponent.





DEFENSE AGAINST CHAIN ATTACK

Attacker has chain hanging from his hand about waist level. Defender is standing in defensive position with knife hidden. The chain attack could be a roundhouse or figure "8" type of attack. In any event, the defense is the same.

#1. Attacker is preparing to strike in a horizontal manner with chain.

#2. As chain is swung, defender leaps back out of range.

#3. Before chain returns in a backhand strike, defender leaps forward and stops returning arm with a strong forearm block.
Note: Left foot of defender is forward.

#4. Immediately after block, hook knife around wrist of attacker.

#5. Swing right leg behind yourself and at the same time pull hooked arm around and against your body.

#6. While swinging into position, your left hand should reach around and tilt attacker's head backwards until he is unbalanced.

#7. When attacker drops chain, unhook wrist and step back away from assailant with your left foot and slash side of neck.

#8. Always step away from attacker after counter-attack. Until opponent drops to floor, he is still extremely dangerous.

DEFENSE AGAINST CHAIN ATTACK

An alternate defense.

#1. Attacker preparing to strike with chain.

#2. Defender moves back to avoid being hit.

#3. Defender leaps in quickly and blocks chain arm with his left hand and at same time slashes muscles of upper chain arm.

#4. After slash, step back with left foot so that your right side faces back of opponent. While doing this, prepare knife for thrust.

#5. Step with right foot towards opponent and thrust to kidney.





DEFENSE AGAINST THE KNIFE FIGHTER

It should be noted that when a knife is used in a forceful manner similar to club attacks, the defenses are very much the same. One exception would be the jab to the stomach. Defender should parry the hand instead of the weapon.

Against the cautious type of knifer a different type of defense is needed. In this case, the blade along the arm does not allow enough flexibility for all the subtle moves needed in fencing. The knife is placed in the palm with the blade forward and the cutting edge towards the thumb.

#1. Face opposing knifer with blade forward and right side facing opponent. Your left hand is held ready for parrying, blocking or for distraction.

#2 & 3. In this case the defenders knife hand is used for the distraction. Make a gesture towards throat of opponent. When attackers knife raises to slash at your wrist lean back and quickly kick at his knee.

#4. If opponent is hurt but not knocked to ground move in quickly pressing attackers knife arm towards his body. At same time slash side of neck.

#5 & 6. In this case throw keys or some object at face of attacker. If his hands raise to protect his face, quickly slash wrist holding knife.

#7. If knife drops from attackers hand move in, if not, wait for another opportunity. When safe, slash side of neck.

DEFENSE AGAINST GRABBING ATTACKS

There might be times when you may be confronted with more than one attacker. One attacker may grab you so that his partner may overcome you. It is extremely important that you work fast to free yourself and if possible use the grabber as a shield.

Both Wrists Grabbed from the Front.

- #1. Upon being grabbed, kick attackers shins. If possible, use left foot for kick.
- #2. If grip is weakened but not released, raise knife hand high in order to slash wrist.
- #3. Pull knife free and across body with point facing attacker. Cup left hand over butt of knife.
- #4. Step forward with right foot and thrust to stomach.

Forearm Choke and Wrist Grab from Rear

- #5. Attacker has approached from rear and is bending defender backwards. If his partner approaches from the front, quickly kick for his groin before freeing yourself.
- #6. All of these moves are simultaneous. Tighten neck muscles and bear down on attacker's arm with chin. Raise knife over head and jab elbow into ribs or stomach.
- #7. Quickly slide left foot behind opponent and at same time raise your left arm forcing attacker's arms up and bend him back. This will expose the abdominal area for knife thrust.





DEFENSE AGAINST GRABBING ATTACKS

Two Hand Grab of Knife Arm

#1. Attacker grabs arm in order to prevent use of knife.

#2. Immediately punch or use heel of palm into face of attacker to force him to loosen grip.

#3. If attacker is still gripping wrist, shove knife towards floor and making a large circle (clock-wise).

#4. At top of circle, roll knife over to hook opponents wrist.

#5. Step back with right foot and pull attacker towards you.

#6. Step towards him and slash side of neck.

DEFENSE AGAINST GRABBING ATTACKS

Knife Arm Grabbed from Side

#1. In this case, the attacker may be aware of defender having knife and his partner is trying to restrain defender. Immediately kick sideways with bottom of foot onto knee of assailant. In most cases the knee would be dislocated.

#2. If grip is weakened, make a circle clock-wise.

#3. On downward part of circle slash at muscles of upper thigh.

#4. After cutting thigh, follow thru and start circle upward again.

#5. At top of circle, slash downward on side of neck.





DEFENSE AGAINST GRABBING ATTACKS

Front Choke

#1. Attacker has grabbed throat with both of his hands. Immediately exhale thru mouth to keep throat open (it should be a long exhale) and prevent coughing..

#2. Throw your left arm over attackers forearms and pin them to your chest. At the same time step back with right foot to pull him off balance. As you get into position, squat a little to break his balance and to maintain your own balance. Keep your back straight.

#3. As soon as choke is broken, execute a fast backfist to face. While this is being done drop blade from side of forearm to thrust position. Stomach is target.

If dropping blade to thrust position is difficult, then step forward with right foot and slash neck with blade along arm.

WHY THE BLADE ALONG THE ARM

The usual butcher knife is fairly long and there is no guard to prevent the hand from sliding down edge of blade while thrusting.

There is a better chance of success with the blade hidden against the arm - surprise is an important element to winning.

Since the defense is against a hard, fast attack, the knife arm can block and cut the muscles of assailants arm at the same time.

COMMON SENSE IN SELF-DEFENSE

No matter how well trained you are, it is usually wise to avoid physical action if there is an intruder in your home. Leave your residence and notify the police. On the other hand, if you are positive your life is in danger, defend with all the spirit and ruthlessness necessary to win.

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Confidence in your abilities to defend yourself is essential, otherwise the emotion of panic and fear will take over. Practice of knife techniques are very important. Practice is the best teacher of all.

COMBAT TIPS

Keep your eyes on the chest of your opponent. This will enable you to see his hands and legs. Staring at his eyes could have an hypnotizing effect and slow your reactions.

Never look away from your opponent. Do not allow your attention to be diverted for an instant from the business at hand. Do not be affected by remarks the opponent may make. His object is to deceive.

Watch out for objects that may be thrown

The attacker may fake an injury in order to close with you. Be alert!

After cutting at a vital area, stay clear of him. He may not know the seriousness of his wound and still could be extremely dangerous.

DISTRACTIONS

There are times when a look, a sound or a motion of a hand may short circuit the thinking of your opponent. A split second of distraction can make a tremendous difference between winning and losing.

A look over an opponent's shoulder could make him nervous; a loud yell will sometimes freeze the action of attack. A hand in motion; throwing coins or keys at face of intruder could aid in defeating him.

TRAINING TIPS

It is impossible to picture every possible way an opponent might attack you, so change and add where suitable. Create and practice as wide a variety of attacks that could not be covered in this manual.

When training with a partner, it is just common sense NOT to use real knives. Use rolled up newspapers of different lengths to represent clubs, knives and broken bottles.

Practice your moves slowly for accuracy, balance and study. As you improve, increase the speed of the attacks. After the moves have been memorized, follow up with unrehearsed attacks with different weapons to increase your fighting abilities.

If you practice using the knife in your right hand, be sure a practice with the left hand. Your favored hand might be injured when you need it most.

NOTE

The author has been a student and teacher of the Martial Arts since 1956. He is a Black Belt in Jujitsu and specializes in teaching the use of weapons for self-defense.