World Jiu-Jitsu Academy
Presents

Ground Defense Tactics
For Law Enforcement
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Introduction

Modern Day Criminals
It is common knowledge that modern day criminals have less respect for the badge, are more cunning, and more skilled than any criminals in history. These high tech gangsters, drug dealers, and extremists have the time, resources and motivation to train for police encounters. These super villains expect to be caught one day and know what to do to escape. We (law enforcement officers) must also be ready.

Critical Training
You train annually or semi-annually with your sidearm. You get additional high speed driving exercises on a regular basis. You even get legal updates with liability and use of force training to ensure that you stay on the right side of the law. The one area of training that seems to be forgotten is close quarter combat. Handcuffing, unarmed defense, weapon retention, and control/compliance techniques are part of the daily arrest routine, but somehow they are pushed aside and rarely updated with cutting edge technology. That is the purpose of this course.

This Course
During the next 4 (or more) hours training, you are going to be refreshed on self defense tactics that could save your life. Always remember that a seasoned criminal is looking for one weakness to exploit. Historically that weakness is when the officer and the criminal go to the ground and wrestle for the officer’s sidearm. The criminal knows that he is going to jail either way, so he has nothing to loose by attacking. The officer is not likely to shoot the criminal if he can subdue him instead. The officer has to be aware of this and ready to defend at all times.

Worst Case Scenario
We will emphasize what an officer must do when the worst case scenario happens. What does an officer do when he finds himself on the ground and the suspect is going for his gun? What would you do?
Objectives

Awareness and anticipation-
A suspect knows when you are paying attention and when you are distracted. Stay focused and be aware of his actions, his body language, and convey confidence and awareness in yours. Anticipate his actions. When combat begins, chaos usually takes over. Maintain focus and be aware of your position, weapons, and options. Anticipate the suspect’s actions. Being aware and using anticipation can give you the advantage just as panic will almost always cost you those advantages.

Weapon Retention-
A trainer can never emphasize weapon retention enough. If a suspect attacks you, he is going to go for your gun. You can count on it. Even if he doesn’t go for it immediately, he will as soon as the opportunity presents itself. Never give him the chance. Maintain weapon retention at all costs. Your sidearm is the equalizer that he needs to win, just as it is the equalizer you need to survive.

Position-
It does not matter if you are approaching the driver of a car, standing beside a suspect, or on the ground fighting for you life. Position is the key to survival. Use cover when possible, angle (blade) your body for maximum protection and strength, maintain your balance (base) at all times, and seek the best position (or stance) to overcome your opponent. Complacency before combat and panic during will cost you these advantages.
Takedown Defense

Awareness and anticipation will greatly reduce the likelihood of having a suspect attack, but let's face it; there are times when a suspect just won't come quietly. The reactionary gap is a catch phrase used to describe the 6 (or more) feet between you and the suspect. This distance makes it hard for a suspect to land solid punches (or kicks) immediately. Many suspects will try to close that gap and ultimately “tackle” the officer in order to reduce the chance of being sprayed with OC, hit with a baton (ASP), or shot by the officer’s side arm. Once on the ground, the suspect can then pummel the officer into unconsciousness or take one of the officer’s weapons. Step one is obviously be aware and anticipate this attack by maintaining the reactionary gap and looking for body language.
**Side stepping the attack** is the best option because you can maintain mobility and escalate in use of force to intermediate weapons such as OC spray or the baton. All you have to do is step offline of the suspect's tackle.

Next you guide his momentum past you. With a little skill (or maybe luck) this move will send the suspect face first to the ground.

You know what to do next (deploy OC, baton, or sidearm as needed). Always use verbal commands during this process.
The high clinch defense is used when somehow the suspect surprises you and you were unable to sidestep his attack. The high clinch is basically a tackle above the waist, which means he has access to your gun and his base (balance and position) is lower than yours. He is very likely to take you down here. You need to control the suspect and maintain weapon retention.

For control, you need to grab the suspect in a front headlock with your non firing hand and drop into the guard (sit down and wrap your legs around his waist). You can apply some pressure to the suspect’s neck, but it critical that you control him and maintain weapon retention first.

From this position you can apply pain compliance to the suspect by pulling with your arms and pushing away with your legs. You are essentially stretching the suspect’s neck.

Always use verbal commands during this process. If he submits roll him onto his stomach and go into handcuffing actions. If he does not, you can go into fighting from the guard tactics (discussed later).
The low clinch defense or double leg tackle defense is also used when somehow the suspect surprises you and you were unable to sidestep his attack. In this situation the suspect has one or both legs and has a lower base (position and balance) than you. You are very likely to be taken down here. You need to control the suspect and maintain weapon retention.

For control, you drop into the guard as soon as possible. If he has both legs tied up, you will go into the guard as soon as he lets go to move on top of you.

Wrap your legs around his waist and go into fighting from the guard tactics (discussed later).
The **pancake** is a simple defense that works against the attacker’s takedowns when the officer is able to react from the attack, but is too close to sidestep. As the attacker comes in to clinch (low or high tackle), the officer simply shifts one or both legs backward and drops his weight (upper body) on the attacker’s back.

This combination of off balancing the attacker and flattening out (pan-caking) on top of him will force the attacker to the ground face first and allow you to control him from the top.

If done successfully the officer simply rotates 180 degrees and goes into handcuffing procedures. If this fails, drop back into the guard for the low clinch defense.
Mount Escapes (From Bottom)

When the worst case scenario happens and the suspect successfully takes an officer to the ground and gets on top of him, the officer has to use mount escapes. This is when the suspect is sitting on the officer’s stomach and the officer is likely to get pummeled into unconsciousness. Weapon retention is still critical, but since the suspect has the officer’s sidearm pinned under his leg it free up his hands.
The bridge (also know as “the wiggle” or the “buck”) is often taught in police academies. This is where the officer bucks his hips upward to knock the suspect off balance.

When the suspect’s hands hit the ground, the officer entangles (traps) one arm (right arm) and one leg (right leg) (the arm and leg must be on the same side) and then he bridges (bucks) the suspect off.

If the suspect is a good ground fighter he will go into the guard. If he is not, then the officer can climb on top into the mount or escape into a standing position to utilize weapons. From the top position (mount) the officer will go into fighting from the mount tactics (discussed later).
The shrimp (also known as the knee to elbow escape) is another way to get out of the mounted bottom position. The officer may need to buck to avoid being punched, but instead of trying to roll the suspect off, the officer will focus on getting into the guard.

The officer needs to roll slightly to one side (the non-gun side first) and push the attacker’s knee out and down. This makes space for the officer to pull his leg out from under the suspect.

The officer repeats the process for the other side (gun side) and when both legs are free, the officer wraps his legs around the suspect's waist (going into the guard). The reason the non-gun side is first is to maintain weapon retention. From here the officer goes into fighting from the guard tactics (discussed later).
Fighting from the Guard (On Bottom)

This section discusses what you can do once you end up going to the ground on your back with your legs around the attacker's waist (THE GUARD). How the officer got into this position has been discussed earlier so the focus of this section is what to do now.
Defense against punches is critical since the most obvious and most immediate threat is from the attacker striking with his fists. Most officers can absorb a few punches to the body, but few can withstand being punched in the face/head. For this reason, emphasis will be placed on those punches to the head. Use your hands and arms to shield your face and head. This is step one.

Getting control with your legs you can move the attacker forward and backward, enables you to break his base down (balance and position). Pushing the attacker away gives you a chance to disrupt the attacker's punches. The officer must gain control of the arms/hands of the attacker to stop the punching attack. The officer can use the guard to pull the attacker into a grappling position to control his body. This is step two.

The next step is determined by the level of intensity of the fight. If you have gained control and are able to maneuver into a better position then you will execute a turnover to begin handcuffing actions. If the attacker is still determined attack, you will have to use pain compliance to de-escalate the fight. These “submission” techniques will be discussed after turnovers.
Turnover into the mount techniques require a fair amount of control of the suspect. A wild flailing attacker must be controlled in the guard before a turnover should be attempted. Once control is established you can do two easy turn-over techniques to get into the mount and then into handcuffing position.

The 1st turnover is the Kick-out. The kick-out turnover starts from the guard. Control is established. The officer leans onto his gun side (weapon retention) and brings his gun side knee up to his chest. He places the foot on the suspect’s knee/thigh while controlling the suspect’s arms and upper body with his hands.

Simultaneously, the officer will “kick-out” the attacker’s base (with the foot on the attacker’s knee) and pull the attacker forward and toward the gun side.

When the attacker lands on his side, the officer rolls the attacker onto his back and throws his non-gun side leg over the attacker’s body, assuming the MOUNT. (Fighting from the mount is discussed later)
The next turnover is the **scissors**. This turnover starts from the guard. Control is established. The officer leans onto his gun side (weapon retention) and brings his gun side knee up to his chest. He places his shin inside the suspect’s chest while controlling the suspect’s arms and upper body with his hands.

Simultaneously, the officer will kick-over the attacker (with the shin inside of the attacker’s chest) and pull the attacker toward the gun side.

When the attacker lands on his side, the officer rolls the attacker onto his back and throws his non-gun side leg over the attacker’s body, assuming the MOUNT. (Fighting from the mount is discussed later)
Submissions are used to control and de-escalate the attacker’s intensity. These techniques are designed to be used against a hostile and often flailing attacker. From the guard (officer’s legs wrapped around the suspect’s waist) the officer has gained control but can not execute a turn over into the mount due to continued resistance.

The Key-lock submission. The key-lock is executed by making a “C-clamp” grab on the attacker’s wrist (closest to the officer’s gun-side). Using the legs, the officer pushes the attacker away until his “C-clamping” arm is nearly straight (gun side arm).

![Image 1](image1)

The officer then pulls the attacker in with his legs and pushes the attacker’s arm back past his hip. The officer reaches over with his non-gun hand and interlocks his hand in a reverse figure 4 manner. (Non-gun hand reaches over the attacker’s shoulder and the under his forearm and holds the officer’s gun-side wrist.)

![Image 2](image2)

The officer is still controlling the attacker with his legs and now has one of his hand behind his back. The officer rotates the hand backward and upward, locking the shoulder (rotator cuff). This submission should bring the attacker into compliance or tear the rotator cuff, disabling the arm. Once compliance is gained, execute a turnover into the mount and then go into handcuffing actions.
**The Head and Arm Hold**  The officer should have control of the attacker’s body with his legs and the arms/upper torso with his arms. The officer must get his non-gun arm around the back of the attacker’s neck. This can be done by pulling the attacker in with the legs. Once the non-gun hand is in position, the officer uses his gun-hand to push the attacker’s arm (closest to the officer’s gun side) over his head and onto his non-gun shoulder.

The officer then tightens the hold around the attacker’s neck and arm with his gun-side hand. This causes the blood flow to be slowed to the brain and could render the attacker unconscious. If more pressure is needed the officer can change his grip from his gun hand to his gun side bicep and “curl” the hold in tighter.

Once the attacker complies (or is rendered unconscious) the officer executes a turnover into the mount and then goes into hand-cuffing actions.

These two submissions are done with weapon retention in mind. By attacking the gun-side hand, the officer eliminates the threat of losing his weapon to his opponent. If the officer goes to the non-gun side, the suspect would obviously be able to seize the officer’s weapon. This is a critical distinction!
Accessing weapons from the guard is a matter of being in control long enough to retrieve a weapon. From the guard, the officer can always punch or kick. Elbows and head-butts are good too.

The officer has access to his ankle weapon by merely pulling the attacker in close and getting his hand to his ankle holster. This is an excellent option in life or death scenarios because the attacker can not see what you are doing and can not stop you from getting it.

The officer has to be careful not to shoot through the attacker and hit his own leg or opposing arm, but the shot is guaranteed to hit at point blank range. If your ankle weapon is a revolver, it is not likely to jam from the scuffle like an automatic will.
The **side arm** is a good option if the officer is using the Head and Arm lock because the attacker is tied up and can not prevent the officer from drawing it. The only shortfall is accessibility. If the officer is somehow lying on his weapon or up against a curb, stump or wall he might not have access. Once it is retrieved, the side arm is employed with the same concerns as the ankle weapon. Don’t shoot through the bad guy and hit yourself. The jamming issue could come into play from the scuffle, but a resourceful officer knows how to re-chamber a new round with one hand.

The **utility blade** is another excellent option, but it is tough to explain stabbing a suspect when you are expected to use your side arm and intermediate weapons. A knife is kind of an unauthorized weapon. Aside from that issue, the utility blade is fast, easier to control than a gun (no re-chambering issues) and is hard to take away since the business end is edged and can not be grabbed. This works well from the Head and Arm Lock too.
The **baton** is better than nothing for damage, but too hard to access and has little or no room for swinging. In the hands of a trained grappler, the baton is excellent for pain compliance magnification! That is another seminar in its entirety.

**OC spray** is not a good option. Even if you get the bad-guy, it is going to get you too. Even if you aim well he can rub it on you at this range. It is better to hit him with the can than to spray it on him. You are better off going with another option.

**Handcuffs** can be used for various strikes, but again consider the accessibility. Most cops keep their cuffs behind them, which is between your weight and the ground. If you already had them out when you got taken to the ground, by all means use them to the best of your ability. We will not be discussing handcuffs as a weapon.
Fighting from the Mount (On Top)
This section discusses what you can do once you end up on top of the suspect’s stomach/chest (THE MOUNT ON TOP). How the officer got into this position has been discussed earlier so the focus of this section is what to do now.
Getting control is equally important in this position as it is in the previous positions. If he is struggling you will need to control his arms and upper body by laying flat and tying up his arms.

Turn-over for handcuffing techniques are used once you have control or a compliant suspect. If you need to physically turn him over you simply push one arm across his face, reach under his head with your opposite arm and grab his wrist (if his right arm goes across his face, you reach with your left arm under his head and grab his wrist).

Slowly roll him over by pulling the wrist and pushing his elbow and then his shoulder in the direction of his arm. You have to allow his body to rotate under your weight. Once he is face down, you put the cuffs on him.
Submissions from the mount are pain compliance techniques that you can use to get control of the suspect if he continues to resist. The Head and Arm hold is effective for controlling the suspect. To do this submission, you need wrap your non-gun hand around the suspect’s neck and place his arm (on your gun side) on your non gun side shoulder.

Using your gun side hand, constrict the hold to slow the blood flow to the suspect’s brain. This will weaken the suspect and could render him unconscious. As soon as you have control or the suspect goes limp, execute the turnover for handcuffing procedures.

You can always use wrist locking techniques or “come-a-longs” as pain compliance techniques from the mount. These wrist locks can be very effective if used properly.
Accessing weapons in the mount is also a matter of being in control. Once the suspect is tired it becomes easy to use strikes, intermediate weapons and your sidearm. If the suspect is still struggling and you have tried the head and arm hold, you should have access to your gun side weapons.

Ultimately, your side arm is available. You must be careful not to shoot though your suspect and hit yourself, but in a life or death struggle, a bullet at point blank range into the side should end the fight.

Your baton and utility blade should be accessible. These can be used to incapacitate your suspect in addition to lethal applications.

OC spray is available, but be careful not to spray yourself or lose control of the suspect in a manner that allows him to rub the OC covered areas on your face.
Survival

It is very important that you take some time and consider the legal and personal effects your actions will have on you, your family and the local population. You must always remember the golden rule, which is to go home alive at the end of your shift. This means you are aware and ready to anticipate trouble at all times. This requires you to make tough decisions at a moments notice with your life or the lives of others at risk. Training can save you life, but being mentally prepared and able to do what is necessary is something you must know before you ever go on shift.

Inform dispatch and call for backup should be your top priorities. These are lifesavers when all else fails. Need I say more?

Never ground fight more than one suspect. This might not seem important until you are on the ground with suspect #1 and suspect #2 is kicking you in the head. Break away and draw your weapon if possible. If you go to the ground with more than one suspect, you will lose unless you incapacitate one immediately and get to your sidearm. Never let them surround you. Keep one in between you and the other at all times and call for backup.

Break contact and live to fight another day is a great fail safe device. If you know you can’t win and you don’t have the backup you need, reconsider engaging. Over pursuit is extremely dangerous especially if you could be outgunned or outnumbered. Inform dispatch of your location, the suspect’s last known location and observe instead of engaging. Obviously, certain situations will force you into a dangerous encounter in order to save someone else’s life, but be wise and live to fight another day.

Deadly force is not always the answer, but be ready to use it when it is. Use of force is the escalation and de-escalation of lethality you must employ when you are confronted with resistance. Your department policies and procedures outline this specifically based on case law and historical data. You must know this information to avoid using too little force and getting hurt (or killed) as well as avoiding the liability from using too much force. Take time to review the use of force continuum as often as possible (daily).

Panic is the main reason many people drown, have automobile accidents, or get killed on duty. It is also the main reason many officers use excessive force. Training can reduce the likelihood of panic, but only you know how you will react when you are fighting for your life with a suspect who is bigger, meaner, and more willing to fight than you are. Run through these scenarios and decide now what you will do.

Ultimately, you will have to live with the decisions you make during the aftermath of these critical encounters. You need to be prepared to work through the issues that arise which may include: anger, fear, depression, anxiety, legal matters, family matters, and employment issues. Having a plan now on what you need to do if things go perfectly or if things go wrong can help you overcome these obstacles quickly.
Special Thanks

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Kyle Breland – Student and primary suspect in this manual.
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For seminars or training events call / e-mail us and we will gladly set up a custom event for you and your department. We offer private lessons and group self defense classes at 5 locations.

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