



A female student defends against a rear bear hug by an attacker in a 'FIST' suit. In this drill, students had to close their eyes so the direction and type of attack came as a surprise—the way it can happen in real life! Once attacked, the students could open their eyes and defend as appropriate.

UNARMED SELF-DEFENSE The Special Forces Way

With all the training emphasis placed on firearms, one aspect of "weapons, tactics and training" that can be overlooked is unarmed self-defense. In many situations it will not be appropriate to even brandish your weapon, and even though you have a gun you'll be glad if you know how not to use it. To this end, S.W.A.T. recently attended a two-day unarmed combat class at the InSights Training Center in Bellevue, Washington.

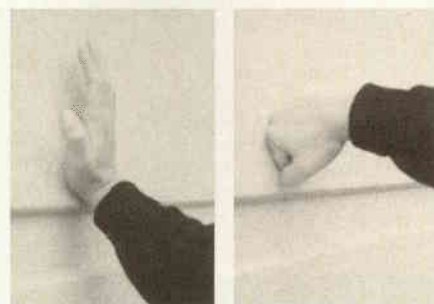
InSights was founded ten years ago by Greg Hamilton, a former U.S. Army Special Forces (Green Beret) operator. Though primarily a shooting school, InSights offers extensive training in an integrated combative system of unarmed self-defense that borrows heavily from the system taught to the

U.S. Army Special Forces. Most of the InSights instructors have Special Forces backgrounds, and the senior instructor for this class was John Holschen, a former SF medic and unarmed combat instructor.

Before discussing individual techniques, it's perhaps best to discuss some of the principles of the system.

PLUS ONE

InSights treats every fight as a multiple assailant fight. You're fighting the immediate threat in front of you "plus one" you don't see. If you're a peace officer and see only one suspect, you have to be prepared for the other suspect in the getaway car. If you're a private citizen dealing with a lone drunk in a bar, you have to assume that any of the



Palm or Fist?

InSights prefers palm strikes, because there's less risk of breaking your hand. You can therefore strike with full power because you're less afraid of injury.

bystanders might join in at any time.

This "Plus One" concept has implications throughout the course, as every technique taught has been devised with multiple attackers in mind. For example, InSights believes you shouldn't plan on "finishing your opponent off" because that means sticking around longer than necessary. Instead, you might only fight long enough to stun your opponent so that you can get out of there before others join in.

MOVE OFF THE LINE OF ATTACK

Your attacker can run forward faster than you can run backward. When under attack, avoid the natural instinct to retreat along the attack line. Instead, InSights teaches stepping laterally to avoid the attack while still being in position to attack back.

USE YOUR NATURAL WEAPONS

Natural weapons are the fairly indestructible parts of the body that make good "clubs", such as the palm, the elbow and the heel of the foot. Punching can easily result in a broken hand, which could prevent you from being

able to use your sidearm if you need to.

To illustrate this point, walk up to a brick wall and consider if you'd rather punch the wall full-force with your fist or a palm strike. If you're like most people, you'll see that a palm strike is less risky, and will allow you to throw more power into the blow because you're not as afraid to hurt your hand. What applies to the brick wall also applies to your opponent's jaw or skull: Use the palm strike.

ATTACK THE HEAD

Body strikes, even strikes to the groin, can be effective but many times are not. With adrenaline, PCP or just physical size, many assailants will not be fazed by a body blow. Even a groin strike takes twenty to thirty seconds to produce maximum pain, and football players and other athletes routinely "suck it up" and keep functioning. By attacking the body's "computer," the head, either directly or by striking the base of the skull, face or throat, you can stun your opponent regardless of size.

COVER YOUR HEAD

Conversely, the most damaging blows you can receive are blows to your head.

To minimize that risk, InSights teaches you to bring your chin down, your shoulders up, and to raise your elbows above eye level with your open hands touching over your head. From this position, you can protect your head against attacks from all angles (remember that second assailant?) and still execute powerful palm strikes.

KEEP MOVING!

Muggers and other predators may not have formal training in conducting ambushes, but they understand the concepts. When you get jumped on the street or in the bathroom at the local bar, don't stay in the "kill zone"—keep moving! This will prevent your attacker from getting "set" before his attacks, and also make it harder for any accomplices to corner you.

UNIVERSAL APPLICATION

The techniques taught by InSights were selected because of their universal application. For example, their defense against a standing chokehold also works if someone straddling you chokes you with your back on the ground.

With these principles in mind, let's look at some of the techniques taught.

DEFENSE TACTICS

by Joe Torre

COMPREHENSIVE SUITE OF SELF-DEFENSE COURSES

While primarily a shooting school, Insights also offers a complete suite of unarmed self-defense training, including Unarmed Self Defense I and II, Defensive Folding Knife I and II, Ground Fighting, Pepper Spray and more. The following are two classes which may be of particular interest to S.W.A.T. readers.

Street and Vehicle Tactics (3 days)

This course teaches "street smarts" through lectures and practical exercises on predator/prey behavior, body language, verbal confrontation skills, and physical defenses against aggressive panhandlers, gangs, car jacking and other street threats. The class culminates with a practical exercise in which students walk through "shady" areas of downtown Seattle under the watchful eye of the instructors. If you're a police officer with years on the beat, you already know this stuff. But if you're a private citizen from the suburbs and could use a crash course in street savvy, this may be the course for you.

Home Defense Tactics (2 days)

In this course, you sketch the layout of your house and, working with the instructors, devise home defense tactics such as creating security zones ("safe rooms"), identifying fields of fire, tactics for house-searching and structure clearing, and learning how to interact with first responders such as police and paramedics.

After all, aside from work, we spend most of our time at home or in the car so we should know how to fight in those places. Look for reviews in future issues of S.W.A.T.

Defense Against A Two-Handed Choke



1 Chris J., a Bellevue, WA corrections officer, attempts to choke a defender.



2 The defender reacts with a rising elbow strike between attackers arms...



3 then cocks his arm back...



4 and strikes again with another elbow blow..



5 followed by a right palm strike to the head.



6 The defender then covers his head and scans area for other attackers...



7 then leaves while ensuring he's not being pursued...

The attacker is assumed to be a "he" throughout.

TECHNIQUES

Defense Against A Right Haymaker

This is a favorite opening move of bar-room brawlers everywhere. When the punch comes, InSights teaches you to get off the line of attack by quickly stepping to your ten o'clock and pivoting about forty-five degrees to your right, while immediately covering your head with both arms in the event of attacks by unseen multiple opponents. At this point, you're in a good position to attack him, but he's not in a good position to continue his attack on you.

Strike the base of the attacker's head with left and right palm strikes, using your weight and momentum to keep him reeling. Don't let him get his feet under him and re-set! After being struck in the head by a few blows, he'll be dazed enough to allow you to cover up, scan for more attackers, and head for the exits. All InSights techniques end with Cover-Scan-Move.

Defense Against Rear Bear Hug

The attacker comes from behind and gets you in a bear hug. Immediately throw your hips back, shift your weight onto your left leg (if you're right-handed) and stomp on your attacker's right instep with your right heel. Turn your body clockwise and step into your attacker, pushing him off balance with your right shoulder. As he tries to gain his balance, you pummel him with palm strikes to the head. Then cover, scan for other attackers, and leave. Cover-scan-move.

Defense Against A Two-Handed Choke

Here a criminal attacker chokes a law-abiding S.W.A.T. Magazine subscriber. The defender strikes the opponent's chin with a left elbow strike, cocks his left arm back, then strikes again with a horizontal elbow, followed by a right palm strike to the head. The defender then covers his head, scans for other assailants, then gets out of the area. Cover-scan-move.

These techniques are harder to describe in words than to demonstrate in a class, but the descriptions and photos should provide a good feel for the training. Over the two-day course, we learned defenses against punches, kicks, bear hugs, wrist grabs, chokes, stomps and kicks while on the ground, and many other common attacks.

A few words about the training methods: The training progressed from strikes in the air, to strikes against focus pads, to fighting full-force against attackers in FIST® protective suits. If the student took too long to deal with an opponent, a second attacker joined the attack to simulate what would happen in a real fight.

Another valuable aspect to the training was InSights' method of rotating students after every few repetitions of a technique. Over the two days, students practiced their techniques against all body types, from short and stocky, to tall and skinny, and everything in between. This helped the students fine-tune their technique, depending on the attacker's size and weight.

WHO SHOULD TAKE THIS COURSE?

If you're a traditional martial artist interested in learning an "art", this course is not for you. This course distills a lot of techniques borrowed from the martial arts and is designed to provide practical self-defense tools in a short amount of time, but its purpose is not to produce "dojo ballerinas" (no disrespect intended!).

Peace officers would find the practical techniques in real-world situations to be a useful complement to the defensive tactics training they've already received. Two of the students in the class were local corrections officers, and said they learned a lot from the class. One of the corrections officers had taken the course before, but there was so much material covered in two, ten-hour classes that he wanted to take it a second time.

Above all, this course is good for the private citizen who wants to learn how to defend him or herself in common street situations, and is a good complement to any firearms training already possessed. As the InSights flyer says: If you have a gun, learn how *not* to use it! ☺

SOURCES:

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