

Knifefighting The Amok! Combatives Way

Most knifefighting trainers live in a fantasy world! Find out why Amok! training differs and how it can help you to prevail against real, armed criminals. Unfortunately, a great deal of the blade instruction out there is:

- Unrealistic
- Too scripted
- Fantasy-based
- Likely to get you killed in a real violent situation

Or...locked up for murder! A lack of actual, violent experience means that most trainers just rely on their "logic" and what they THINK a knife fight will look like. Sadly, it's very hard to imagine the kind of speed and sheer chaos that exists in an actual fight with weapons. Many underestimate the complexity of this kind of situation or worse, OVERestimate their own ability to handle it.

With all the misleading information out there, I'm very grateful to have discovered Amok! Combatives at an exciting 3 day seminar on knifefighting that I attend a few years ago.

A "Real World" Knifefighting System

Started by Tom Sotis of the United States, Amok! (the exclamation mark is part of the name) is a realistic fighting system based around the use of the knife as a weapon. It's interesting, in that the techniques and principles can be used with small or large knives and even transfer quite nicely over to the use of other weapons like sticks, short clubs, pens and so on.

I spent a short while studying under a very competent South African Amok! Combatives instructor and also attended a 3 day Amok! seminar. It was quite an exciting and painful experience for me! The "exciting" part is easy to understand. We spent hours and hours:

- Learning to disarm knives
- Fighting against a knife with our bare hands (blunt ones in this training, of course)
- Fighting knife against knife
- Using a knife against an unarmed person (may be necessary if attacked by a gang)

The great thing was that we had a chance to practice all these highly effective knifefighting techniques against every one of the other seminar participants (there were about 20 of us attending the 3 day training event). We rotated partners often. It proved to be exhausting, but oh so rewarding!

It was "painful" at times because of the hard contact and realistic speed we fought at. My forearms were covered in bruises by the end of the three days from blocking knife thrusts!

Sound Fighting Principles

What makes Amok! different from many other systems that teach the use of the blade for self defense is 2 things:

- Contact
- Pressure

Contact

While you are briefly shown new techniques in a slow, clear way, the instructors immediately make you practice the move against a training partner at full speed with some pretty hefty contact using special foam covered, wooden training knives (by "contact", I mean hitting each other quite hard with the training knives and making firm bodily contact. This is not for sissies!)

These training weapons are unique, in that they allow you to really "stab" or "slash" your partner without running the risk of serious injury. Don't get me wrong, they are quite capable of leaving painful bruises behind (ask me how I know that!). They are firm (thanks to the wooden core), but with just enough padding to make them usable in dozens of practice sessions. This makes for excellent training!

Pressure

The downfall of many lesser blade fighting systems out there, is a lack of realistic pressure in training. What I mean is, when the moves are being trained with a partner, many knife methods teach you to go slowly and carefully, almost like a dance.

This is fine for the very first stages of learning a move, such as a specific attack, block or defense, but to keep things at such a slow pace for too long simply teaches bad and unrealistic habits. Amok teaches you to defend against full speed attacks! You get to feel more realistic pressure, depending on the kind of attack. This lets you set up believable scenarios and do some role playing too.

For instance, training partners could conceal their foam knives (tuck them into their belts or hide them in their pockets), and then pretend to be packing groceries or standing at the bar, having a quiet drink. Without warning, the "criminal" could start attacking the "good guy", who then has to access his knife and use it to defend himself using the Amok! techniques he has just learned.

It makes for fantastic training and lets partners figure out solutions to challenging self defense problems. Any self defense scenario can be gamed out and practiced as many times as necessary to feel a sense of confidence.

An Real-life Criminal Attack

The reality of a criminal knife attack is that it will likely be:

- Fast
- Unexpected
- Extremely violent
- Difficult to defend yourself against

Many people who train in other blade systems live in a dangerous fantasy world. Most of them have never had to actually USE the sloppy techniques they've learned against an actual criminal trying to kill them with a knife. This makes it hard for them to realise that what they're practicing simply wouldn't work very well.

Most fancy blade defenses completely fall apart in the face of the sort of ferocious, rapid attack used by violent street thugs who may have actually used a knife to kill another human being in the past!

Experience High Quality Instruction

Amok! Combatives is a system of fighting with a knife that I highly recommend. Fortunately, it's not only MY opinion that it's a highly relevant and worthwhile art.

Do some of your own research on this topic. Large, reputable online discussion forums such as [Warriortalk](#) or [Total Protection Interactive](#) have thousands of words written about this method. You'll find out how it differs from many other useless knifefighting "systems" out there and probably come to the same conclusion that I have.

Better yet...go to an Amok! seminar and experience it for yourself! It will completely change the way you view self defense with a knife.

If you are in South Africa, contact Amok! Instructor Morne Swanepoel through his website, (<http://www.combatcoaching.com/contactus.html>) for local training times and venues. Visit the [Amok! Combatives](#) website for more information.

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