

Defence technique workshop with Jim Armstrong

Jim Armstrong has been involved in the martial arts for the last 25 years. Originally from Northern England, he trained in the UK in Freestyle Karate (ECKA) and Thai boxing with Barry Norman, and with Jimi McAvooy in Blind Princess eskrima. Since arriving in Australia in 1993, his main influences have been kickboxing with Kelly Seif and eskrima with Rob Halajjian of the AIM Academy.

Around nine years ago he formed his own club, RAW combatives, which is now an affiliate of Richard Dimitri's Senshido International group. He has also added to his club's repertoire through extensive training in Doug Tucker's Nasubukang arnis over the last three years.

"RAW was originally a bit of a 'fight club' but it has changed considerably over time into what and who we are today. Self-protection is the main thrust, with self-improvement also a huge part of what we do," says Armstrong.

Jim, what are the most important elements in effective self-defence?

I believe the most important elements of self-defence are what we, Raw Combatives, term the ABC's: Awareness, Balance, Confidence. These are very broad terms but almost everything we do, physical or mental, is covered by developing skills and experience in these three areas.

Awareness — This is how switched on you are to your surroundings and the people around you, and, more specifically, how much awareness you have of yourself and your skills. If you are aware then you can spot trouble and avoid it before it becomes a problem.

Balance — Speaking strictly about the physical aspect, this is about keeping your own balance while destroying your attacker's balance. In the broader sense, it is also about maintaining balance within yourself and your life.

Confidence — Real confidence comes from knowing yourself, as well as having faith in yourself and your skills. Being outwardly confident will make you a 'hard target', but cockiness will attract trouble from the wrong people.

What is great about the ABC's is that they pertain to all facets of your life, from work to relationships. If you are training in self-protection two or three times a week over a long period of time and all you get from it is the ability to fight better, then I think you are wasting a valuable part of your life.

What makes your martial arts club unique and why do you recommend it to potential students?

First and foremost, we genuinely care about each other. We are all there to help each other, as well as ourselves, to become better versions of ourselves. In training we make no distinction between skill, size, experience or anything else for that matter; everyone trains with everyone. We take our training seriously but also have a great laugh.

If you want martial arts magic, belts, sporting competition or even want to be the next Terminator, then we are definitely not the club for you. If you are looking to develop realistic self-protection skills in a safe and friendly environment, train hard, have a great laugh as well as discover more about yourself, then we might be the club for you.

DEFENCE AGAINST A KING-HIT: RAW COMBATIVES



As the aggressor (right) moves forward, Armstrong passively mirrors his hand position.



As the punch is thrown, Armstrong's trained flinch reaction jams the strike and sends his other hand toward his attacker's face...



...palm-striking him as Armstrong starts to drive forward and take his attacker off balance.



As he claws into his attacker's face, Armstrong moves his other hand to the back of the head...



...and twists his attacker's head around with both hands to take his balance, while still palming his face with his right hand and going forward.



With a strong posture so his attacker can't drag him down, Armstrong controls his foe's descent so his head doesn't smash into the ground (a common cause of serious injury and death in street fights).



Still controlling the takedown by hanging his attacker by his arm, Armstrong ensures his foe's head doesn't hit the ground with full force while also keeping him in a weaker position.



With his attacker down, Armstrong starts to move away while looking for other assailants (note, the attacker is starting to get up because Armstrong didn't apply unwarranted force)...



...then runs to safety as the attacker starts to get his bearings.



What we do:

- Self protection
- Eskrima
- Train core martial concepts

What we don't do:

- Competition fighting
- Gradings/belts
- Wear uniforms

What we offer:

- Honesty & confidence
- Physical & mental training
- A safe, caring and fun atmosphere

We expect you to:

- Ask questions
- Try your best
- Become a better you

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