

UNITED STATES ARMY COMBATIVES COURSE
1/29 Infantry Regiment, Fort Benning GA

Realistic Training 1

Jitsu v.s. Do

“Jitsu” is the reference of a Science, Technique, or Methodology specifically designed to enhance survivability and increase lethality on the battlefield. “Do” is the reference to the Way or Path, a system of becoming a better, more educated, more enlightened, individual. Both of these terms come from Japan, but they apply to all cultures dating back as far as can be historically supported. It is however, difficult to find a society in which its Warrior Ethos has had a greater influence on the entirety of its population than that of the Japanese.

To have a better understanding of the dramatic differences between trained warriors and nice people, let's use the following examples:

You have 8 elite Mixed Martial Artists. From any organization across the globe. And on the other, you have 8 Hollywood Actors. Any of the biggest action stars you can think of. Match them up one versus one, and the outcome will be both obvious and significant. Also keep in mind that this would be occurring in a competitive environment with safeties, judges, referees, time limits, and medical professionals whose job it is to ensure that there is no significant or excessive risk of injury.

For an extreme comparison, replace those 8 Fighters with elite, battle-hardened Special Operations NCO's. A mixture of Rangers, Special Forces, Force Recon, SEAL's, etc. Given the wide range of Tactical and Technical capabilities, education, physical, and mental endurance that they have cultivated specifically as a result of nearly two decades of high-intensity conflict and operational tempo, it is impossible to imagine a realistic scenario in which the Actors prevail were they to go into battle against the Special Operations Group.

The reason this comparison is necessary is that the commercial romance the public has with everything from how gunfights are portrayed to how grenades always erupt in fireballs is largely, if not completely inaccurate when compared to the reality of warfare. Realistic training creates realistic results. It is critically important to understand that the standard of training must gradually increase to mirror the standard of warfare as closely as possible without engaging in blatant and unnecessary risk to those involved in the training. If the standard of training does not attempt to emulate the standard of warfare, then the standard of training must be re-evaluated. The simplest example of this is Basic Rifle Marksmanship taught in Basic Training advancing up to Live Shoot-House Training in Special Operations Groups.

Army Combatives, therefore, is a Jitsu. Where most of today's traditional martial arts are far more concerned with profit, recreational fulfillment and enjoyment, Combatives is a scientifically-proven methodology that has only two objectives: Enhance Battlefield Survivability and Cultivate Warrior Ethos. The defining characteristic of a Warrior is the willingness to close with the enemy. Combatives directly stimulates this growth by teaching Soldiers how to effectively engage the enemy in all ranges of combat should the primary engagement strategy of projectile weapons range not be a realistic immediate option.

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Realistic Training 2

Option 3

We can take the following 5 lessons away from the Option 3 Drill:

1. Given the relatively short period of time of instruction by comparison when training in most other systems of self-defense or traditional martial arts, you were able to execute a Basic Fight Strategy utilizing the Three Elements (Range, Angle, Level), and the Three Phases (Close the Distance, Dominate the Clinch or Position, Finish the Fight) to achieve one of the Four Basic Clinches in each of the Three Range Control Techniques and Closing the Distance through Projectile Weapons Range.
2. Some of you paid more attention to the technical aspect than others, achieving the clinches faster. Those of you who simply relied on your physical size to be the carrying factor during the Drill had a more difficult time.
3. Quality, not Quantity repetitions. The more precisely you drill your techniques, when the stresses of high-intensity Live Application Exercises are initiated, the better your body responded.
4. It's never as clean and polished in Live Application as it is in practice or rehearsal. A famous Boxer once said, "Everybody's got a plan until they get hit in the face." A more relevant military saying is, "The best-laid plans usually do not survive initial contact with the enemy."
5. The value of training in this single Live Application Exercise and its predicate training in the last two days exceeds, in every practical capacity, the value of twenty years of theoretical self-defense scenarios with no Live component.

(Questions and Comments from the Class)

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Realistic Training 3

Grappling for Dominant Body Position

Today's Live Application Exercise reinforces the understanding that positional and postural basics are every bit as important on the ground as they are in a standing position. One additional variable is that one of the two Combatants is almost always fighting downhill, which is much easier than its opposite. Again, we see the application of Range, Angle, and Level. The most even of these positions is the Guard. Even that is not a Dominant Position when striking is authorized. If we continue up the scale to Side Control, Knee On Belly, Mount, and Rear Mount, the potential for severe consequence skyrockets for the individual in the bottom or Non-Dominant Position. You never want to be on your back in a real fight, but understanding basic body position and how to survive, escape, and reverse these positions is no less important than being able to effectively engage targets from the greatest possible distance with your primary weapon system.

If you look at various reality TV shows you will see an abundance of self-proclaimed experts or experienced Law Enforcement Officers who, when confronted with a hostile individual, lack the fundamental understanding of how to control the person of interest. Even more importantly, they, on occasion, lack the capability to effectively maintain their own physical base and posture.

Again, we reflect on the short amount of time versus the applicable value of the techniques you have been shown over the last couple of training days. Given the increased understanding of how and why you position various parts of your body in both the offensive and defensive positions, during the Live Application Exercise you made it difficult for your training partners to achieve increasingly dominant positions. Your training partners did likewise for you. This is important because the educational curve you are all on is identical. This means that since you are all learning the same things at the same time, those of you who are a combination of larger, stronger, and have greater endurance will find a higher degree of initial success. This is a critically important tool for the smaller members of the class because if they can survive for longer and longer periods of time, odds are that in a Battlefield Scenario their Battle-Buddy will have the opportunity to provide support for them. Another critical point is that the person who wins a Hand-To-Hand engagement down range isn't necessarily the one who's better at a large number of moves, it can sometimes boil down to whoever's ally shows up first, preferably with a gun.

This may seem counterproductive to the argument for the need for Combatives and its related training systems, but it is not. Imagine for a moment that you are engaged in Hand-To-Hand with a Hostile. You have been tripped over a piece of furniture, but managed to place the enemy inside of your guard. Your fellow Squad-member is on his way to provide support, but due to the angle and potential for collateral damage, is unable to take the shot that will immediately save your life. You having the presence of mind and understanding of how to

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control both your body and your weapon system will provide your Battle-Buddy the necessary time to Close the Distance and apply the necessary force to bring an end to the engagement. Now imagine the roles are reversed and you have to provide aid to your Battle-Buddy. Being trained gives you the higher probability of success because of the confidence instilled in you as a result of the techniques and Live Application Exercises you went through during training. If you remove this training and its cultivation of Warrior Ethos, you fundamentally increase the odds of panic or failure due to the lack of realistic, contact-related training. These lessons will only become more profound with the inclusion of Submissions, Strikes, and ultimately the React To Contact Lane on Day 5.

(Comments from the class)



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Realistic Training 4

Grappling for Submission

Now the fundamental importance of proper body mechanics becomes even more relevant. When you make simple, small mistakes when Dominant Positions are paired with Submissions, the potential for failure is significantly elevated. If you make the mistake of raising your chin while someone has your back, you run the risk of being put to sleep by a Rear Naked Choke. Drop your head while you're in the guard, and you can fall victim to the Guillotine Choke. Extend your arms from the bottom of Mount because you are trying incorrectly to eject your opponent from the position, and either the Straight Arm Bar or Bent Arm Bar are there, waiting to make you tap.

The critical point to understand about what you have just gone through is that every failure in a training environment such as this is a chance to build future successes. Every time you are caught in a submission or forced into a Non-Dominant Position, it's because there was an actual measure of failure. Whether it was technique, timing, concentration, or strength and conditioning, any and or all of these in combination have shown you how you can improve your functionality, capability, survivability, and lethality.

(Comments from the class)

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Realistic Training 5

Grappling with Strikes

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React To Man-to-Man Contact

Grappling with Strikes and the React To Contact Lane are the culminating events for the Basic Combatives Course. They allow you at your current level of education and training to engage in Live Application Exercises that simulate both Kit and Non-Kit Scenarios. Their purpose is to further remove from your mind the cinematic perception of what a fight is and replace it with what realistic training failures and successes are.

There is no App for Hand-To-Hand Combat. There is no file to download. There are no shortcuts. What you have are the techniques, the time, and the realistic training methods for employing those techniques to cultivate the necessary Ethos and skills. Like every other skill you develop, Hand-To-Hand competence is perishable. If you do not review and maintain what you have learned in this course, your capability will fade. The example comparison for this is simple. You train intensely for three months prior to an APFT, and for the first time in your career, you score a 300. You receive the PT badge and then are allowed to do PT on your own as a result of your hard work. You let your discipline slide a bit and before long, you're barely putting any effort in because you already maxed out the previous test. Command springs a surprise APFT on the unit in 48hrs. You take the APFT and score a 205. The standard for excellence didn't change, your dedication to the skillset did. The results were evident in the Live Application. Now take the simple requirement for basic physical fitness and compare it to the paramount demand of surviving and advancing in combat. Now while you cannot train every day, you should make a determined effort to at the very least maintain a capable baseline of tactical and technical competence in the event you find yourself in a Hand-To-Hand situation.

(Comments from the class)