

PreDefence

Self defense before SHTF

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Knife drills?

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While there are a bunch (hundreds, probably thousands), there are 5 that I really like. 3 of them are solo drills. And let's face it, solo drills can get done while waiting for the kettle to boil. (And most of these drills apply to other weapons as well.)

Drill #1 - Drawing

I don't care how well you can defang the snake. Or how ridiculously cool your sumdrada drill looks. Having a knife doesn't count for shit if you can't get it into play.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygJPxLesXcQ>

While you can stand in your kitchen doing 10 draws every morning and night (and you should), I prefer to focus on positions instead of repetitions. You can obviously get your blade out when you're standing there doing nothing. How about while walking? And sitting? Curled into a ball on the floor while protecting your head? In the car in traffic?

The thing about a knife is that you probably won't need to pull it while things are going fine. And when things are not going all that well, you're probably not standing upright, facing off against the bedroom mirror.

P.S. the standing-and-calm draw (i.e. the surreptitious draw) **is** important to practice. It's called being pre-emptive ...

Drill #2 - Drawing under pressure (Drill #1 + partner)

The natural extension of Drill #1 is drawing under pressure. Although that's a bit misleading. What I mean is practicing **situational draws**.

Can you draw while your partner is trying to punch you? Trick question, because often the answer is to **not** draw just yet.

It's not just about being able to draw your knife, it's about knowing when you can do it safely? This

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will vary from person to person. For me, I've noticed the wisdom of Southnarc's words when he talks about needing to immobilise the opponent before going for your weapon (i.e. create time to get your weapon into play). Alternatively, I've also noticed it can sometimes be best to create distance (another way of creating time) to get to the weapon unmolested. (I'm not saying it can't/won't happen, especially with multiple opponents, but if someone's fouling your draw, then distance/time/not getting knocked out might be more important in that moment than your knife.)

I think drawing against a timer has its place (a way to add pressure if you don't have a partner), and so does getting shoved around while drawing (e.g. while getting through a crowd), but I don't think anyone should train to take punches to the head because they're fumbling to get their knife out.

This drill is meant to ingrain the following:

You can only draw under one condition - when you're not getting hit (don't trade a draw for getting unconscious).

And there are three times this occurs: When you've created enough distance; when you've got enough control of the other guy's body; and when you're drawing pre-emptively.

Drill #3 - Movement

While there are all kinds of movement to work on (footwork, knife, body movement), I'm going to focus on knife movement here.

This drill is called the "Standard 25", the "Standard 81", and probably a couple other things as well. It involves systematically working through every combination of knife cuts (the angles) in order to see which ones flow, and which ones don't.

Here's an example of someone cutting the angles. He uses the abbreviated 5 angles, I use 9 angles (although to be fair, the upward angles aren't as natural as the others). And don't worry, everybody defines their angles differently.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyDMI4cCPuA>

To do the drill I like you cut 2 angles in a row. The first cut is an angle 1 followed by another angle 1, then a 1-2, then 1-3, up to 1-9 (or 1-5 if you're just using the abbreviated 5 angles). Then you cut an angle 2-1 then 2-2, up to 2-9. And in this way you work up to a 9-9 (81 combinations). If you work on 10 angles, then it'd be a "Standard 100 drill".

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This drill allows your body to feel what knife movements follow each other naturally, and which you have to force. This is like practicing punching combinations for boxing. It lets your body figure out what movements work for you, and, very important, what movements naturally flow on from each other.

The hope is that this drill will make you smoother with the knife. It might seem unnecessary, and maybe it is, but I've trained with people who used jerky movements because they couldn't figure out what stab/slash to use next, and so they had to take micro-pauses to figure out their next angle.

Some people think this is a dexterity drill, but that's not why I like it. I like it because in doing this drill you're playing with how you and the knife interact. And in playing with how you function with the knife, you're ingraining what motions your hind (lizard) brain can trust. This means that under pressure, you won't have to think about which knife movements "work" with your body - your body will just flow.

Doesn't mean you can hit anything, or can void getting cut (subtle hint: footwork and body movement helps here), it just means you don't have to stop and think about which cut to try when going for a certain target.

Here's another dude's interpretation of the angles. I don't like his version because his angle 6 & 7 are actually his angles 1 & 2, just stabbing instead of slashing (& his angle 8 is a repeat of angle 2 again). And his # 11 looks like it'll always be awkward. (Don't watch the whole thing, just watch the first 20 seconds that plays.)

<https://youtu.be/HDrEF5bl9Do?t=334>

The version of the angles I use is different to both of these guys for example.

You can do this "Standard 81" drill with slashes only, with stabs only, then slash-stab, and stab-slash. Your body needs to play with all the possible combinations so it can feel what "works" (i.e. flows naturally and smoothly without being forced - for example a 1-2 works just fine for me, but a 2-2 doesn't. A 7-6 is reasonable, but a 6-7 I have to force).

And once you know what works for you and what doesn't, you can still do the Standard 81/25/100, but afterwards you throw in extra reps doing only the ones that feel natural.

Drill #4 - Movement with a partner (Drill #3 + partner)

Once you know which movements with a knife feel natural, you toss in a partner (when you can rustle one up).

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You plunk your partner in front of you, and then (using a training knife) you circle your way around him, cutting any and every target you see. You start off as slow as you need to, and you can stop and think about what targets you want to hit. But only to begin with. After you've done it a few times you never stop circling to try and suss out another target, if you move past a target, it's too late, you can get it on the next circle.

So you might stab him in the throat, then slash along the side of his neck, then slice open his abdomen. But once you've moved a few steps around him you might find his abdomen is hard to get at. Or maybe the neck slice only works from an angle 1, not an angle 2.

The point of this drill is to help ingrain identifying and attacking a viable target without conscious thought. That's why you don't stop circling - it's to put a time limit on target availability and continually presents a new and moving target. The end result is a drill that gives you a fleeting glimpse of a target, and no time to figure out how best to attack it, but you've done it enough times that you manage to get the target anyway.

This drill is basically playing with targeting a living human being. The reason this comes after Drill #3 is so that you don't have to think about what slashes or stabs you want to use, the movements that feel natural will have been practiced already, and you can focus on identifying what targets are available, and what angles you can use to hit them with.

Variations to play with include:

How fast you circle;

How far away you are from your partner;

Artificially restricting yourself to only stabs or only slashes, or only angle 3, or only a certain combination (e.g. 1-5) etc.;

(And my favourite variation) Having your target partner move around, waving arms, wiggling etc. to make the available targets change more often, and also throw in obstacles like arms in the way, or distance changing in a way you're not used to.

Drill #5 - Stabbing tree

You find a tree/plank of wood/anything solid you can fuck up, and then you stab it. Hard. And you slice it. Hard. And you try your combinations on it. Hard.

Because I don't care if you can pull off a great combination 7-8 if you have to weaken your grip to

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make the angles work.

I'd argue that a weak grip (i.e. anything other than rock fucking solid) is one of the biggest dangers.

A weak grip means you might drop the knife. Or your hand might slide forward onto the blade during a stab.

So find a tree and practice your 9 angles against it. Hard and fast. And also practice your Standard 81 combinations, hard and fast. (Yes yes, start off slow and build up - but do make sure you build up to full speed and power.)

Start with a training knife, move up to a butter knife, and if you want, a live blade in the end (recommended).

Get to know what it feels like when something resists your knife. True, flesh doesn't offer that much resistance against a properly sharp knife (if the blade is perfectly in line with the angle along which you're cutting). And if your knife really is that sharp.

But what about buttons? And bones?

Go find a stabbing tree (or anything hard and immovable) and get stabbing.