



POLICE JUDO

PART FOUR

Training for effect – Going to the ground

by Toby Hinton and Al Arsenault

Although we do like to ground fight in Police Judo, that kind of training is placed within the context of being taken off your feet as opposed to willfully going to the ground with your subject. The goal is not to ‘win’ on the ground, it is to stay on your feet at all costs. If taken to the ground, the goal is not to look for a submission but to fight to get up as soon as possible.

We have seldom been taken off our feet or slipped, however we concede that in this day of ‘mixed martial arts’ (MMA) popularity officers may end up on the ground during an arrest situation. There are MMA clubs which cater to anyone regardless of their personal backgrounds or intentions.

People of dubious character will use their skills for nefarious purposes because they have low moral standards. Police Judo does not accept those who are involved in or associated with crime, gangs or drugs. ‘Thug life’ can train elsewhere.

We do not teach leg and ankle locks unless they are used in the context of team arrests. They can be injurious (even in training), due to the likelihood of partners failing to realize their knee joint has been fully extended or twisted beyond its normal range of motion before pain begins.

Also, the ground is simply not a safe place for a police officer due to the possibilities of eye gouging, biting, head butting, multiple assailants, etc. Why teach someone to stay on the ground rather than to get up as soon and as safely as possible when other assailants could be looming?

If suspects ‘tap out’ when you’re not in a position to handcuff them, they don’t ‘promise’ to cooperate if you release your hold. Solo officer applying a leg lock don’t get any closer to handcuffing an individual. The benefits of practicing leg locks do not outweigh the risk of injuring students.

That’s why we refrain from teaching them other than to recognize that the technique is unfolding and showing how to escape.

Keeping it savagely simple

Police Judo is relatively easy to learn and use; it just takes practice. Under stress, fine and complex motor skills begin to decline when the heart rate exceeds 115 and 145 beats per minute respectively. In regards to the stressed brain, Bruce Siddle and David Grossman found that the 115-145 BPM range to be the optimal heart rate for survival and combat performance (code ‘red’).

To counter this negative physiological effect, environmental inoculation training (simulations and scenarios designed to stress the trainee, as utilized in Ken Murray’s *Reality Based Training*) is needed. This allows the least complex techniques to be performed under stress for lasting and meaningful training effects. Handcuffing alone while under realistic stress can pinpoint preventable control inadequacies and prevent many undesirable outcomes from occurring.

The adrenaline rush

The knowledge of how the human brain operates under adrenalin-dumping stress separates Police Judo training from that of most

martial arts, especially those steeped in rules of sport. We drill our students to respond in the safest manner possible while keeping focused, not just on the target, but on their surroundings. We place them under some stress; breath control is very important in calming the mind so that rational thought can occur and peak performances can be achieved.

Having a winning mindset is also an important aspect of our training, since it enhances environmental awareness. Proper training to handle stress prevents freezing up and reduces tunnel vision.

Which schools and martial arts styles train to preserve, or at worst, accommodate the loss of fine and complex motor skills by at least keeping their skills savagely simple? Will the drills that are practiced allow the ‘reptilian brain’ to react in a safe manner? Are the nasty things like eye gouging and biting woven into the fight training, or are these harsh lessons left aside as afterthoughts and nice-to-know information only to be sadly learned on the street?

The street can be a cruel teacher

The ‘fight or flight’ brain, which kicks in upon the onset of adrenalin rush (heart rates above 175 beats per minute), is incapable of rational thought. Officers will default to their training, regardless if it is ‘safe.’ Tales of officers stripping a gun from a suspect and subsequently handing it back or doing unneeded gun malfunction drills in a battle instead of returning fire result from unsafe training practices and/or improper mindsets.

Police Judo regularly incorporates

environmental inoculation into very basic and common scenarios, making our training more meaningful and effective. We put our students in some degree of stress in the most likely situations, such as arresting a non-compliant drunk outside of a bar while bellicose belligerents and vociferous, anti-police, cell-phone toting paparazzi are leaving. Such external stressful influences can make an officer act inappropriately.

Self-defence in context

While Judo is the foundational basis for Police Judo, many of our techniques have originated from an eclectic blend of martial art styles; all techniques, regardless of origin, have been placed within a context outside the realm of sport, or 'self-defence' for that matter.

'Defensive tactics' for policing also includes a good offence, as police do not get paid to be victimized. Police officers should not be attacking people as if it were some kind of 'contest,' nor should they do so for the sole purpose of penalizing or harming them. Offenders must be controlled and taken into custody; deadly threats must be neutralized, using lethal force if necessary.

All police officers have as their main goal going home to their loved ones after each shift. There are some anti-police dimwits who feel that officers, when they don their uniforms, somehow trade their right to defend themselves with deadly force. They are so wrong. The focus of this series has not been to

downplay the right of police to stop deadly threats, but rather to offer a multitude of great arrest and control tactic tools you can use to arrest resistive and assaultive parties as safely as possible (for both the officer and the arrestee).

If people die, it is usually the consequence of suspects' refusal to co-operate and their willingness to use lethal force; by their own violent actions those forms of resistance can quickly ramp up necessary use of force to reasonably justifiable deadly levels.

Force with ethical vigour

As modern warriors and society's guardians, learn what you can (and need) and toss the rest away. Be prepared to use force judiciously and with minimal risk to all involved – serve it up with ethical vigour. If you absolutely must, then stop the threat your opponent poses by whatever means is needed. Lend your even and compassionate hand to those who struggle through life but be ready to take on the predators who would harm the flock. Walk softly but carry a big stick; wear a velvet glove over an iron fist.

Let your sense of profound professionalism be your warrior code; let each stroke of your dispassionately forceful but judicious hand be the public's protective shield.

You carry a badge that you can choose to honour or dishonour; you can either polish or tarnish it through your actions and deeds. The force is with you. Will the public stand by and

respect your actions? What will they look like on the six o'clock news or YouTube? What will your friends and family think?

Let your sense of ethics temper your blows; do not let the fury of your temper drive your actions. It is easy to be ethical when you are in control.

Learning the essence of Police Judo is a huge step in the right direction of seizing and controlling a person rather than beating them into submission. Its philosophical and ethical underpinnings, coupled with numerous street-smart techniques and tactics, aim to put you in solid control over those who resist your policing mandate and would do us all harm.

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