

Taking it to the ground

- by Morné Swanepoel -

The end of the last century saw the birth of a new era in the Martial Arts world. With the advent of events known variously as 'Ultimate fighting', 'No holds-barred' matches and 'Mixed Martial Arts', martial artists across the world learned the value of learning more than one art, and becoming complete in what does work and what doesn't in the real world. The effectiveness of ground fighting or grappling cannot be denied. In the concept of Jeet Kune Do you always push towards totality in combat. Take note there



is a difference between grappling/submission wrestling, No Rules Ground Fighting and ground fighting for the street. This is a topic all on it's own.

There are a number of Martial Art instructors and students out there that believe that no one will take them down to the ground. Even Guru Dan Inosanto has stressed the importance of ground fighting in his latest video series on the Martial Arts

The worst opponent you can come across is one whose aim has become an obsession. For instance if a man has decided that he is going to bite off your nose no matter what happens to him in the process, the chances are he will succeed in doing it. He may be severely beaten up too, but that will not stop him from carrying out his objective. The main modes of fighting one will find oneself in are weapons, Stand up, Clinching & ground fighting. Whenever the skills and tools of fighters are equal, victory will generally go to the person who possesses the stronger will and most cunning strategy.



As with any form of fighting, one of the biggest mistakes is to take the opponent lightly, and with grappling the main mistake is to loose ones sense of calm and to waste energy with inappropriate use of physical strength. You must be fierce, but have patience at the same time. Most important of all you must have complete determination. Opportunities will surely be missed. Too many students & instructors train their techniques without properly testing them under a full resistance environment. How would

you deal with somebody that's goal is to take you down to the ground? No matter how good you are, if your opponent wants to take you down he will. Remember, the opponent is not only NOT co-operating with you but he is very much out to knock your lights out! In any encounter, one is always searching for the advantage. Speed, angling, superior technique and especially pain compliance are great to have, and it is generally preferable to remain standing on your feet, but, Murphy's Law.....If you should loose your advantage such as slipping in the mist of throwing blows, be pulled off balance in the process of executing the best throw or take down. What do you do

then? What if you apply the perfect joint lock, and the opponent doesn't react to it or counters it. Worst yet, what if you are not afforded the luxury of having the advantage in the first place and forced into a wrestling situation. It is not the best place and time to get your first grappling/wrestling lesson lying on your back in the street with your opponent on top of you busy blasting away. Fluidity of tactics and skill within all the ranges of combat is a must.

No matter how good you are on your feet with or without a weapon you must be equally proficient on the ground in order to be a complete fighter. Especially when dealing with



a bigger, stronger opponent, or with someone who can close the distance and force grappling, or might just be better than you with stand up fighting skills. Weapons training is to be included in your grappling and overall skills. To round out your training, include drills and sparring sessions that would pit empty hand vs. various weapons, weapons vs empty hand and weapon vs. weapon grappling.

With co-operation vary sessions from light to full contact, lots of rules to limited to no rules. The benefits will be many for all involved. You should not be afraid to try different methods in your training, for it is never complete (as much as we may believe it is). Nature has shown us that all things evolve, therefore, so should we. The only thing constant in life is change itself.