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Defence against a grab and elbow-strike:

Modern Defensive Tactics

KARL THORNTON

A security professional and martial artist for over 30 years, Karl Thornton uses his combatives experience to train international operatives of NGOs, as well as security professionals and the general public, in self-protection. Thornton holds a 3rd Degree in Modern Defensive Tactics Australia and runs MDTA out of Melbourne. He is a registered instructor with Geoff Thompson and Peter Consterdine's World Combat Association, and employs a WCA-approved syllabus at MDTA.

As well as being a certified international police defensive tactics instructor and certified military combatives instructor, Thornton is still an active operative and licensed bodyguard, so "MDTA is a reality-based system, developed for today's environments," he says.

Thornton has been awarded the Medaille OTT by the International Bodyguard Association, which is given for meritorious and protective service in an area in conflict, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Balkans, Thailand, Northern Ireland, PNG and much of the African continent.

Q&A Karl, what are the core principles of the martial art you teach?

Although we are a reality-based system, there is a misconception RBS systems are about hitting first and asking questions later. In fact, part of our alliance and syllabus approval with the World Combat Association is based on threat awareness, threat evaluation and threat avoidance.

Reality-based defensive tactics are for dealing with the aggression and violence in society today. We don't just deal with the physical, we deal with the psychology of violence and self-preservation — the realities of violence.

We break our principles down into 'the FACTS':

- F = Fear (the response to fear and the fight-or-flight effect)
- A = Adrenaline (dealing with the adrenaline dump)
- C = Conditioning (preparation for dealing with an attack)
- T = Technique (quick, basic but effective defensive techniques)
- S = Strength (working with your strengths to deal with a situation)

The World Combat Association passed our syllabus as "Superb! Very well structured and it certainly covers all the criteria".

So, in brief, our core principles are basic: keep it real and honest, look at reality for what it is — nothing fancy, but can be violent. Be aware but not paranoid, and remember, you have a right to protect yourself and those you love. You have the right to self-preservation.



Usually, MDTA principles would dictate that a counter is launched before a grab is on; however, in this scenario Thornton has been grabbed around the throat...

...so he immediately goes with the force of the grab/push, latching onto the arm as he pulls the grab side back and draws the attacker into an upward elbow-strike/cover from his other side, beating his opponent's elbow attempt.



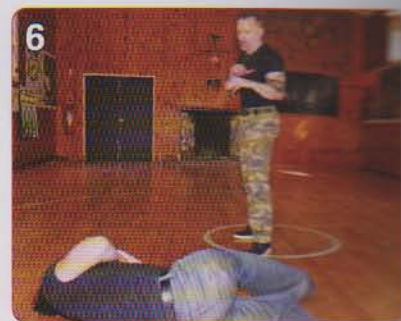
On the return motion, Thornton folds the elbow back down across the attacker's neck, pulling him into a clinch with both hands...



...and down onto a knee-strike or several, as necessary to stun and disorient the attacker...



...making it easier for Thornton to take him off balance, using the attacker's head as a lever...



...to spin him down into the floor. Thornton can then follow up if necessary or retreat to a safe distance.