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# Karl Thornton

## MODERN DEFENSIVE TACTICS AUSTRALIA

One of Australia's most accomplished security professionals, Karl Thornton used his 30 years of martial arts training to create Modern Defensive Tactics Australia.

When he discovered an Australian charity that sends men to infiltrate and take down child-prostitution rings in South East Asia, Karl Thornton — a security professional, martial artist and father — knew he had to help. The co-founder of Modern Defensive Tactics Australia, Thornton is now using over 30 years of combative experience to help train operatives of charities such as Silent Integrity to rescue children from sex slavery in Asia. Thornton first started his martial arts training under Sensei Richard Norton (now 8th Dan, Zen Do Kai) in Croydon South, Victoria, but has since trained in many different styles, from karate to boxing and kickboxing with Eastside in Bayswater. "It was kickboxing that gave me the passion for the full-contact side of combat, so I started pursuing close-quarter combat training," says Thornton. "This included private tuition and open classes via different CQC seminars and courses over the years, while still training in traditional martial arts." The 45-year-old career bouncer and bodyguard has spent recent years training in Gan Gan Tao, in which he holds a 1st degree Black-belt under Australian principal instructor JD Moorehead-Rashid, with whom he founded MDTA.

Thornton, who runs Modern Defensive Tactics Australia (MDTA) out of Melbourne, was recently 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 Northern, Southern and Western Africa.

### Q&A **Karl, how would you describe your martial art in terms of its combative principles and approach?**

Its approach is based on the realities of violence, so the combative side is a high priority. As an RBSD (reality-based self-defence) system, our techniques and systems are based on gross motor skills, the need for primal actions and reactions, as well as the application of realistic primal survival instincts of the average individual, and how to apply the trigger response to act. We base our combative principles on the 'fight, flight and freeze' dynamics of reality.

Our approach is to train an individual based on our core fundamentals of the FACTS — that is, understanding and

teaching someone defence systems based on how they will deal with their Fear and Adrenaline, as well as Conditioning them to reality, learning Techniques that work for them, as well as systems that work to their Strengths. The F.A.C.T.S.

MDTA don't just deal in physical defence applications for reality-based self-defence. We look at the realities of why, where and how.

### **What can a person expect to see and do if they attend one of your regular MDTA classes?**

We offer a very unique system for gross-motor-skill development in all areas of RBSD training. We also offer the realities of learning weapons-defence applications, and we also run scenario nights that test and measure an individual's progress. This is, once again, undertaken via a system developed by MDTA to test and measure fear, adrenaline and the realities of violent encounters. We focus on the psychology and physiology of the realities of violence. We also look at the environmental and situational factors, as well as how the law relates to the use of force for dealing with a violent confrontation.

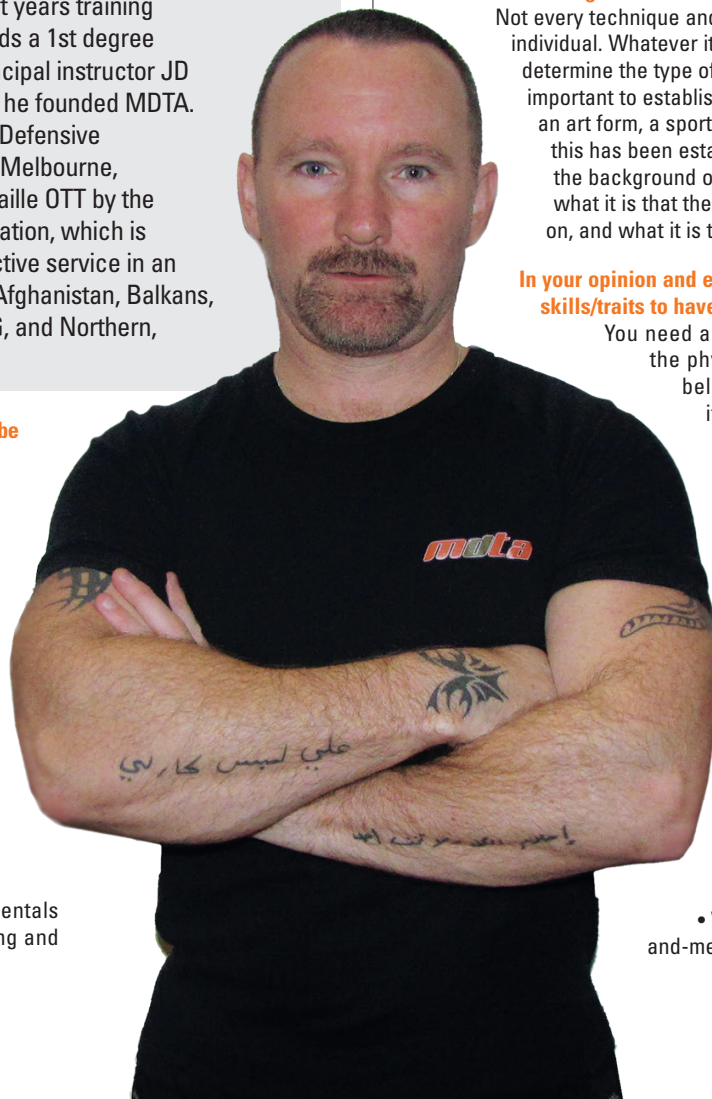
### **In your martial arts journey, what are the most important lessons you've learned that you believe your students, and readers, would most benefit from knowing sooner rather than later?**

Not every technique and/or system is going to work for every individual. Whatever it is you are looking to develop will determine the type of training you should seek out. It is important to establish your motivation and determination. Is it an art form, a sport or is it reality-based self-defence? Once this has been established, I would make sure I research the background of the organisation and instructor to see what it is that the teaching style and philosophy is based on, and what it is that is expected of you as an individual.

### **In your opinion and experience, what are the most important skills/traits to have for effective self-defence?**

You need a full understanding of the realities of the physiology and psychology of violence. I believe in a 20/20/60 survival ratio when it comes to how an individual will really deal with a violent encounter: 20 per cent is the psychological reaction of what we learn from self-defence training; 20 per cent is the physical reaction of what we learn from self-defence training; and 60 per cent is what I call the 'reality trigger effect'. When the shit hits the fan, will you really react? RBSD training MUST adhere to three basic fundamentals:

- Is it reality-based in technique and delivery (gross motor functionality)?
- Is it based on primal applications, both physiologically and psychologically?
- Would it pass in a scenario-based test-and-measure environment? ■



### Defence against a stick attack:

# Modern Defensive Tactics Australia



1 The attacker (right) threatens with a weapon, with intent to strike. Thornton is in an MDTA open-handed passive stance, ready to react to the attacker's intent.



2 As the attacker strikes, Thornton launches in with an elbow guard to protect his head and negate the attacker's delivery system (his striking arm). At the same time, he delivers a palm-strike to the face to disrupt the attacker's cognitive function...



4 Maintaining the arm-trap, Thornton strips the weapon from the attacker, maintaining visual contact at all times, and continues through with a reverse elbow to the face, to make sure the attacker releases the weapon.



3 ...then follows through with a sweep from his elbow guard over the attacker's striking arm, to trap the limb and retain weapon retention, while simultaneously elbow-striking the attacker's face.



5 Once the weapon has been secured, Thornton steps back and releases the arm-trap, maintaining a firm hold of the weapon, ready to transition into a defensive stance in case the attacker retaliates.



6 Staying in a dominant position and ready to respond, Thornton keeps watch on his attacker and allows him to retreat and/or comply. (This is an MDTA grip and stance for the use of force with a stick or club.)



### Defence with a stick:

# Modern Defensive Tactics Australia



1  
The attacker decides to retaliate and tries to initiate a haymaker...



2  
...so, reacting to the attacker's intent, Thornton strikes with a jab to the face, allowing the weapon to block and/or minimise the impact of the haymaker.



3  
Thornton then steps across the attacker with his rear leg, placing his foot almost to the front of the attacker's foot, allowing him to deliver a reverse strike with the weapon to the attacker's midsection.



4  
While keeping the end of the weapon on the midsection in place, he rotates his other hand over the attacker's neck and pulls him to his chest to deliver trauma to the side of the neck with the weapon...



5  
...then rotates his lower hand holding the weapon in a clockwise motion, and twists the weapon over the attacker's neck, again causing trauma to stop the threat of attack.



6  
By maintaining a tight rotation of the weapon in a clockwise direction and applying force behind the rotation, Thornton brings the attacker to the floor...



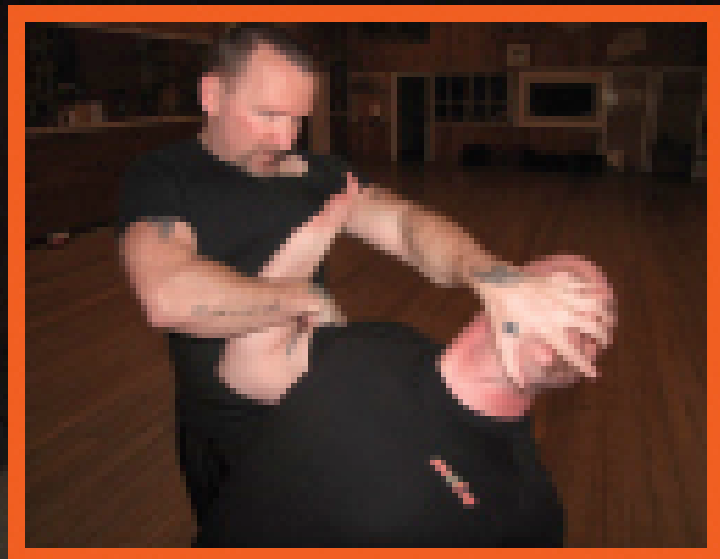
7  
...then moves back, suggesting to the attacker that he doesn't attack again.



MODERN DEFENSIVE TACTICS AUSTRALIA

REALITY BASED SELF DEFENSE

- BEGINNERS
- ADVANCED
- MALE
- FEMALE



MDTA, delivering a system of self-defense tactics and techniques developed to deal with aggressive behaviours, physical threats, attacks, through to life threatening situations.



### *Medaille OTT*

MDTA's Founder and Principal Instructor, Karl Thornton was awarded the Medaille OTT by the International Bodyguard Association and this Medal is the IBA's medal for meritorious and protective service by a person who has served in an area in conflict including Iraq, Afghanistan, Balkans, Thailand, Northern Ireland, PNG, Northern, Southern and Western Africa, Providing protection.

Karl Thornton has extensive experience (over 30 years) across a broad range of martial arts and self defence disciplines holding a Black Belt in Gen Gen Tai, and a 3rd degree Black Belt in MDTA Defensive Tactics Systems. Karl is a licensed Bodyguard and is also qualified in Conflict Resolution, Crisis Negotiations, Firearms, as well as being one of SOA's Head Trainers in Advanced Bodyguard Techniques and Covert Special Operations.

# First Lesson FREE

*Nothing Fancy, Just REALITY!*

**Ph:1300 856 538 - [www.mdtta.com.au](http://www.mdtta.com.au)**