

Karl Thornton

Modern Defensive Tactics

A life-long martial artist and security professional, Karl Thornton today teaches the Modern Defensive Tactics Australia system to security and law-enforcement personnel

Karl, what are the most important elements in effective self-defence?

The most important elements are on what MDTA base our foundations of teaching. We deal with what we call the FACTS:

- F = Fear (The response to fear and the fight-or-flight effect)
- A = Adrenaline (Dealing with the adrenaline dump)
- C = Conditioning (Mental and physical preparation for dealing with an attack)
- T = Technique (Quick, basic yet effective defensive techniques)
- S = Strength (Working with your strengths to control and deal with a situation).

Self-defence does not just mean physical techniques – as in defending oneself with blocks, strikes and kicks – but also defending in a way that one can effectively deal with an attack or violent situation when under real mental and physical duress.

What makes your school unique and why do you recommend it to potential students?

Unique is probably a strong word. I would say MDTA is more technically modernised and we understand that we are teaching survivors, not fighters. We are adapting tactics and techniques developed to deal with today's violence and possible threats. I am still an active CSO (Covert Special Operations) operative so our techniques are

forever evolving and adapting to the changes of society.

I recommend MDTA to those who want to learn self-defence for today's environment, dealing with environmental/situational awareness and readiness, and who want to learn techniques and tactics that are built around their own skills and requirements – fast, effective techniques working to their strengths.

Can you outline the origins and core principles of the martial arts you teach?

We teach MDTA (Modern Defensive Tactics). The background is Gan Gan Tao, which is a style based on karate and Wing Chun kung fu, and over the years, like many forms, has been modernised for today's environment to incorporate kickboxing and Close-Quarter Combat skills. The origins of the CQC side come from my years of training in various systems, as well as my experience in South East Asia as a covert operative working in high-risk environments, and as an Executive Protection Specialist for The 538 Pty Ltd Group.

The principles behind our techniques and systems are to give an individual as many self-defence options as possible that will work for them, and will work quickly and effectively.

In what ways does martial arts training change people, and how has it changed you?

Martial arts inspire people and allow individuals to explore their own potential, and to develop into free-thinking individuals. With the inner strength and physical and mental development from any martial art, an individual can test and measure themselves, and nurture positive growth.

As for me, martial arts has given me the drive and inner strength to believe in myself and to believe in others. It has given me the skills and determination to apply my experience and knowledge to not only instruct and pass on what I know, but to use what I know to help in organisations such as The Grey Man [a child protection charity].



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 his 28 years of combative experience to help train operatives of 'The Grey Man' charity 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, to 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 42-year-old career bouncer and bodyguard has spent recent years training in Gan Gan Tao, in which he holds a 3rd degree Black-belt under Australian principal instructor JD Moorehead-Rashid, with whom he founded MDTA.

DEFENCE AGAINST AN ATTACK WHILE SEATED: MODERN DEFENSIVE TACTICS



Thornton is sitting when an aggressor confronts him, so he raises a non-confrontational guard.



As the attacker grabs him to strike, Thornton sets his feet and moves to trap the attacker's arm...



...and draws the attacker down into a palm-strike while simultaneously trapping his wrist.



Thornton ensures he thrusts the attacker's head back, creating momentum to lift him from his seated position...



...and as he rises, Thornton maintains the wrist-trap and drives the attacker's head back...



...then scoops behind the attacker's neck and pulls him into a knee strike.



Rolling the attacker's arm over, Thornton takes him down using leverage on the shoulder and wrist...



...and remains on guard as he assesses whether any threat remains.

DEFENCE AGAINST AN ATTACK WHILE SEATED: MODERN DEFENSIVE TACTICS



1
Thornton is seated when confronted by an acquaintance in an aggressive manner.



2
Thornton raises a non-confrontational guard as he talks the aggressor down, but the attacker grabs his shirt, preparing to strike...



3
...so Thornton simultaneously traps the attacker's wrist, and gets in first with an open-hand strike to the side of the face...



4
...while using his heel to hook the attacker's closest leg behind the knee.



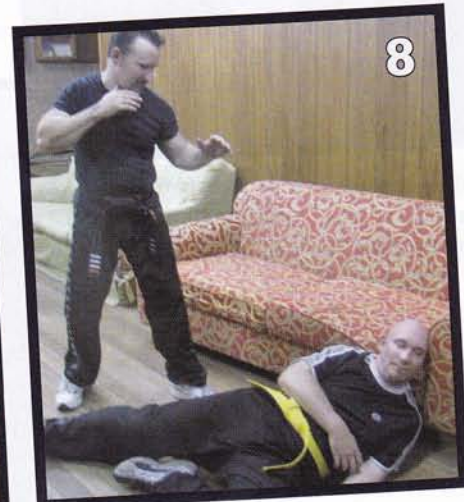
5
As Thornton strikes the attacker in the face with force, with his wrist and leg locked in, the attacker loses his balance...



6
...and falls. Thornton follows through with his strike so the attacker's momentum assists Thornton in rising to his feet...



7
...from where he can then follow up with another strike if required...



8
...and ensure he has neutralised the threat.