

Filipino Martial Arts

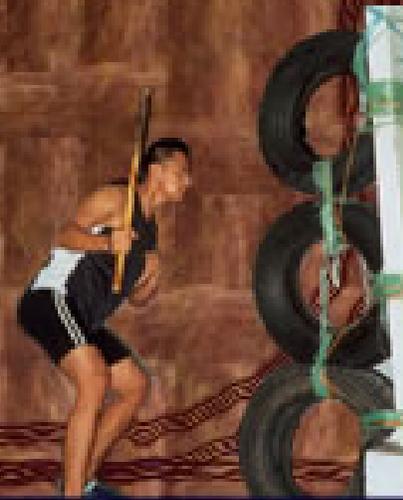
Digest

Special Edition
2007

HOMEMADE TRAINING EQUIPMENT
AND
CONDITIONING

BASIS FOOTWORK

HINTS TO PREPARE
FOR COMPETITION



Publisher

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The ideas and opinions expressed in this digest are those of the authors or instructors being interviewed and are not necessarily the views of the publisher or editor.

We solicit comments and/or suggestions. Articles are also welcome.

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From the Publishers Desk

Kumusta

How many times have you wished, that you could have certain types of training equipment? Just to find that you could not afford them, or once paying the price you wished you would of kept your money for something else.

In this Special Edition are some inexpensive ways to make your own equipment, and yes it may not look great, however in training it accomplishes the goal, to be a better arnisador.

Marc Lawrence shares his homemade backyard training gear. And he does it all from baston practice, hand and foot training gear and also makes his own inexpensive weapons just to practice with.

Jeff “Stickman” Finder shares some of his homemade training equipment. If interested, contact him for further information and also check out his website which has bastons he is well known for - **www.stickman-escrima.com**.

Of course using training equipment whether homemade or purchased from a store, a practitioner needs to know how to build their skills. Jeff Finder once again helps out by explaining proper footwork, which is all-important for that is the foundation of any fighting art.

Finally Master Vince Palumbo and one of his top female students Andrea Wheatley, who was featured in Special Issue Women of the FMA II, consented to an interview, which, Mr. Bill Kneitingner conducted on training for competition.

The FMA Digest was hoping more practitioners would share their knowledge on training or equipment that they have made and use for their training. Or share their knowledge on how to train for competition, some of the basic necessities such as speed, balance, power, endurance etc. And if in the future they will share with you the reader this information. The FMA Digest stands by for another Special Edition.

So it is hoped that you will enjoy this Special Edition and benefit from these practitioners who have shared their homemade training equipment and their knowledge.

Maraming Salamat Po

Building Your Own FMA Back Yard/Garage Studio

By Marc J. Lawrence

With a bit of island ingenuity, a practitioner of Filipino Martial Arts can construct their own studio with quality training aids and weapons. A basic studio can be set up in garage, backyard or other location. I have one constructed in my backyard, another at work in a storage area. The focus of this article is for Filipino martial arts practitioner to be able set up anywhere and be able to practice their art with locally available tools and equipment. I will break down this into three areas, these being first striking aids, second are striking and cutting weapons and third is projectile weapons.

- The first area should be striking aids; these are critical to a practitioner building proper skills. The first striking aid I would recommend building is the Island style tire bag for stick practice. The second striking aid I would recommend would be a freestanding punch bag. The third is a knife throwing / arrow backstop target.
- The second area should be striking and cutting weapons. These have two categories: sticks (Pakal and Olisi) (practice sticks, padded sparring sticks and fighting sticks and staffs are one and the other is knives (Baraw) and swords Bolo, Kris, and Lahaut).
- The third area would be projectile-weapons. These have four categories: Blowguns, Slingshots, Bow and Arrow and Spears.

Tire Bag for Eskrima Practice



All of Eskrimadors need a way to practice strikes for stick fighting. Regular kicking and punching bags do not work are expensive, so one of my cousin's friends came up with this design.

If you can work with tools and do basic carpentry you can build your own. You will need six car tires-same size, (I used 15 inch) and six 2X2 or six 2x4 and some bolts and screws and set of 4 casters. This Tire Bag is available from KRIM, in Cebu City. Build your base first 24 X 24 inches as an X shape brace; notch them so they lock. Run a wood screw to lock them together. Flip this over drill four holes for the four caster wheels then flip it back. Now from the center of the X brace measure 7.5 inches and then bolt on your first upright. Then do the same on the opposite side, and then do the other two. It should look like an X with four fingers sticking out. I recommend through bolting but if you have to use drywall screws it will work. Construct another X brace no wider than the tires are. Now install it at knee level. Make a third X brace at 15 inches and install it about 12 inches from the top. If you want a finish put on your stain and varnish and let dry overnight. Mount your first tire on the bottom and stack the next five up. You will have about five foot 8 inches tall. Two or three students can practice stick at the same time. It will hold up to Espada Y Daga, Bokken sword and staff also. Only one student at a time for edged weapons. If you are going to keep it outside drill the tire sidewalls to drain the water out.



Base view



Frame view



Internal Brace view

Free Standing Punching Bag



Empty hands training requires a punching bag for practice unless you have a banana tree like my wife's uncle Ray. I am not that lucky; he had one and had the kids practice punching the banana bunches till their hands were sore. He said that the green banana juice helped your sores hands feel better.

I looked around at what I had to work with and with a little island ingenuity I came up with this freestanding bag system. I started with a cut-down 55-gallon plastic drum for my base. I had sacks left over concrete mix and 5-foot section of 4-inch schedule 80 PVC from my neighbor the contractor. I talked with relatives and came up with old foam pads. You can use old egg crate hospital matrices, old



commercial shipping pads, or carpet padding. You would need a lot of carpet padding. All I needed was to assemble my project.

To make the post stand up I had to make a large clamp out of scrap wood and some old bolts to stand up and center the center post up while pouring the concrete. I saw cut gaps into the wood so that the clamps did not move while pouring it. I used a torpedo level to check the center post on all four sides. I mixed the concrete in my old wheel barrel with a shovel and poured it in the half barrel. I used an old 2x4 to tamp the wet concrete down until I had all four sacks in. That was 240 pounds on concrete in the base. Yes, those who can really punch and kick will rock a little bit. I finished the surface with a bricklayer's trowel that I got at a yard sale. I let the concrete dry with my homemade clamps in place for one week. I removed the clamps.

I went to a fabric store and bought a can of foam glue. The stuff is like spaying spider webs but works great. Follow the directions on the can! Spray in on the pole first and then foam as you wrap it. This is two-person job. My older son helped me do this.

Once it was completely wrapped, I had my son use some duct tape to help hold the foam in place while the glue cured. Again this part is a two-person job, because you need four hands to do this! Two hold the foam while the other wraps it. If you do not have access to foam glue, make two small holes ¼ inch or smaller at the bottom of where the foam ends on either side. This is for nylon cord. You will need a coat hanger or wire to fish the cord back to the top. You can tie it off to hold the foam.

While the glue is curing make a cover out of fabric like canvas or other heavy material. Mine came out to 18 inch wide by 36 inches long on the punching bag portion. If you cannot sew find some one who can, the duct tape does last long out in the sun. I cut the base flush to the concrete with saw and rough sanded the edge of the drum base at the instance of my wife. OK so it did look better when finished. But do not tell my wife she was right. I would never hear the end it.

Homemade Weapons Set



Backstops for Arrow Practice and Knife Practice

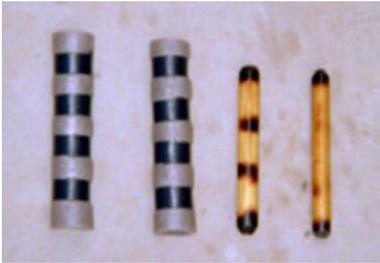
Making backstop requires that you have enough space and place for where arrows can go if you miss. If you have a walled backyard you could set up like one I had as kid. When I was growing up I had a bow and arrow set and so did my older brother. My dad made us an arrow backstop using three old hay bales. The targets were made with scrap paper sheets or cardboard. We used my mother's pots for templates to make the different rings for the bull's eye target.



When I was in my 20s I shared an old house with my Grandmother and my older brother. We lived at the end of block up against the hills. I was teaching my brother and his friends to throw knives as part of their training. We needed a place to practice. I had a backyard that was up against a hill with a lot of rock in it. I needed a backstop for knives and arrows. I did not have anyplace to get hay bales. I solved the

problem in another way I got some old 2X2 to make an A-frame like an artist's easel for a target stand. I got a scrap piece of plywood in was about 2 feet by 3 feet in size. I laid it flat on a table. I put one small nail in the center. This was to hold my cardboard roll in place when gluing the finished product. I got a lot of large cardboard boxes. I cut them into strips about 6 inches wide. I started rolling it on edge like a tire from the center outward and glued the strips ends together. I stopped when I was about 2 feet in diameter. I had a 6-inch thick and 2 foot wide target. This target painted with a grid. We mounted it on the board with white glue. We let it dry overnight. The board was placed on the target stand and set against the hill. We used it for practice and were able to put it away so my grandmother could enjoy her garden.

Making a Pakal for Practice



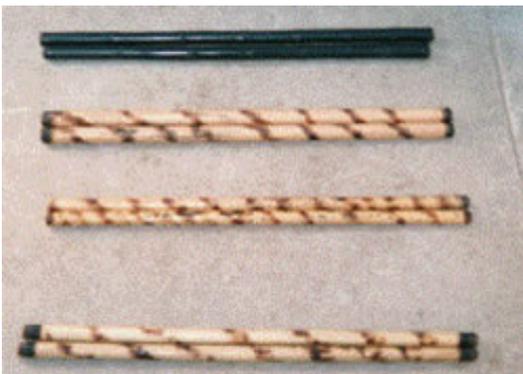
A Pakal is also known as a short stick. It is very effective weapon that can be simple to use. When used with certain knife (Baraw) techniques and in Empty Hands techniques it is highly effective weapon. The problem is that a real one would do damage to your sparring partners if used during speed type drills.

A, training one can be made out of easily obtainable materials. I have made a number of these out of an old Halloween toy axe handle. It is thin-walled plastic pipe, 1/2 inch in diameter like plastic conduit or sprinkle pipe.

To make one I cut a piece at 6 inches long. I sand the edges to smooth. I wrap it with gray foam pipe insulation that I have scrap from other projects. I use 99-cent store grip tape to wrap it at four spots. These spots being the following: top, bottom and two spots in between. These can be given to my boys to practice without worry of one of them will hurt each other.

A real fighting one like a Doce Puntas can be made from a hardwood dowel 5/8th inch diameter cut at six inches long. Using as disk sander in vice, turn the stick like you would sharpen a pencil until you have blunt point on both ends. Take a propane torch and burn the ends black. Then heat the stick back and forth until tan overall. Put any bands or other designs you wish and then varnish it. Now you will have a real Pakal to go with your practice one.

How to Make Eskrima Sticks for Practice



To make a good Olisi, baston or stick, first step is the selection of material. The piece must be straight with no flaws or cracks. The preferred material is Rattan. Rattan is Palm wood. It is palm wood. The spacing of the growth joints is very important. The closer the joints, the stronger the stick will be. Water Bamboo is grass so its strength is in the outside of the wood. If you use Water

Bamboo make sure that it is from the base of the plant. The smaller the water hole in the center the stronger the stick. Look for close joints it will make a stronger stick.

Hardwoods such like Hickory, Mango, Oak, etc. can make good sticks. These woods but may have flaws in the grain. Flaws can lead to failure of the stick. Do not use soft woods like Pine, Fir, Hemlock, etc. These will splinter easily when bagging or during Sinawali.

Stick diameters should be the correct size. Too big or too small will cause many problems in your arm! Your proper grip size is measured from the middle of your palm to the tip of your third finger. Use a paper tape measure to make the measurement.

Stick lengths are measured from the armpit to the tip of the finger. This allows you to twirl your stick without striking the ground or yourself. The Standard length for many schools is 29 inches to 31 inches. Cut your stick to length with handsaw. Sand the ends round. With Rattan and Bamboo wood sand with the grain. Burn the ends and rub smooth. With Bamboo and Rattan be very careful to remove any branch nubs by sanding so they will not cut your hand. With joints lightly sand to smooth area. Varnish or paint to finish. I prefer to varnish as a finish this allows visual inspections.

Some final thoughts; always test yours sticks on bag prior to using for training. If there is a flaw you missed it will break there away from other people. Use this information about making sticks to make some pocket sticks and sticks for the kids to practice with.

Fire Hardening

Fire Hardening is a method of removing moisture from wood by slowly and lightly charring it over a fire. It is the earliest methods of increasing the durability or longevity of wood is fire.

Fire "hardening" is not used so much as to actually "harden the wood" as to "cauterize" the surface fibers and the resins in the wood. My Grandfather use to do it to tool handles. I still do this to my sticks to stop flowering of the ends.

To make a point, like a spear, arrow, or sword, shape the wood with rasp and then use a fine pumice stone to finish it smooth. Always go with the grain of the wood. Then wet surface to raise the broken wood fibers know as whiskers by wood workers singe them off. Dry the shaped portion over the fire slowly until lightly charred to harden. This can be done with propane torch or even over BBQ if that what you have. The drier the wood or course the harder the point or edge. To make a strong wood blade use a hard wood as possible. Rattan is a palm not a grass like bamboo. This is type of material is strong on the outside and soft on the inside. It is pithy and required a lot of drying. It can be made very strong.

How to Make Your Own Padded Eskrima Sticks for Sparring Practice



Well by this point you have been practicing your Eskrima and would like to spar but do not want to get injured or at least bruised up. You need to have some padded sticks for practice sparring.

For kids I start with a very simple padded stick using the Pool Noodles made of heavy foam. Cut the Noodle in half and will be 24 inches. These can be used for sparring sessions they make a loud noise and make light contact. I get them from the 99-cent store. Wear safety glasses with retention straps for eye protection. These would injury your

eyes if hit. So wear safety glasses.

The second version is for adults and big kids. Take the Noodle and insert a piece of 3/4 inch PVC cut to length. Use duct tape to cover the ends. Using these for sparring does require eye protection and light hand protection. I would recommend a Fencing Mask and leatherwork gloves. You will feel it went hit.

The third version can be made three different ways. I made one with 3/4 inch PVC slipped inside standard gray foam pipe insulation. I made another with a dried hollow cane that grows along the river here. I covered the ends with duct tape. This type of cane fractures very quickly but I get it free. The last of third version is made with a worn tire bagging Eskrima stick. Tape up with clear packing tape the flowering ends and slide it into the gray foam pipe insulation. You can cover the length with long strips of duct tape. Then seal and wrap the ends with duct tape. If you want it to last have someone who can sew to make a sleeve to go over it and put Velcro flap at the end to seal. These feel just like commercial padded sticks with the exception of the hollow cane due to the lightness. These sticks when used will require head/eye protection and hand protection.



A fourth version can be made from the thin walled black plastic rods that are used now with the Halloween props sold at 99 Cent stores. Taking the thin walled 1/2 inch diameter rods cut to length and then slide a section of black AC piping insulation over it. This type of insulation is more expensive. Make a fabric sleeve so it will last. These sticks when used will require head/eye protection and hand protection. These feel just like commercial padded sticks.

Homemade Staffs for FMA Practice



Staff is basic weapon that is universal in its use. To make one to practice with, it is not hard. If you are lucky to have rattan or bamboo growing in your backyard, it is simple then. Just cut down one piece you like about one inch in diameter. Cut it to length and then let it cure till dry. The old timers use to take sections and put them on the roof to cure in the sun. Trim off the branches and rough spots. Sand all rough spots smooth. Then finish it by burning ends and varnish to seal it. Remember to sand or use a pumice stone going with the grain not cross grain.

Well the rest of us do not have groves of rattan or bamboo handy but if you are determined to make one out of traditional materials, get in contact with some of the suppliers of Cane and Rush suppliers and you can make one.

My solution was much simpler, I went to my local hardware store and looked at their hardwood squeegee and scrapper handles. They are usually five to eight feet long. Do not use paint roller handles, as that wood I have found breaks very easy. I only use hardwood, no soft woods like pine or fir.

First I look at each one for flaws and warps. I discard any ones that have knots or wavy grain. Then I look at the end and stare down the length and roll the other end across the floor. If it is warped you will see it roll uneven across the floor and see any bowing or other flaws.

Take the tool handle home and cut to length. I recommend that the staff should be from the user's chin to the floor. Sand the end smooth with a slight chamfer to ends. I lightly sand the staff and stain it or paint it. I will sometimes wrap the center section about one foot long with black sport equipment grip tape for practice. This helps when you are twirling and spinning it. This staff will be great for practice with others but it is not meant for full contact sparring. This staff would break bones if used in full contact sparring. If you want to spar with staff use wide joint rattan to make your staffs.

You can make a padded staff out of PVC tubing $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diameter cut to six feet long. Sand the ends smooth and square. Get a bag of gray pipe insulation and slide three sections on it. Wrap it at the ends and foam joints with duct tape then cover with it with duct tape to secure. This one you can spar with!

Training Swords and Knives for the FMA Practitioner

Swords and knives are an important part of Filipino martial arts training. The cost on these can be very expensive and not all are that well made. Having two boys



that are Filipino martial arts practitioners along with their cousin creates a real demand on equipment. To make good wooden sword or knife it must meet three things and these being the right size, the right wood and the right balance.

The blade size must be able be wheeled by the user, most kid size blades should be about 12 inch long overall. The wood should be a good hard wood like mahogany, maple or other similar wood. I have obtained some beautiful pieces hard wood from old motorcycle and machinery crates and pallets from Asia and South America. The grain must be strain with no knots or swirls in the grain when laid out to the sword pattern. The wooden sword or knife must be laid out evenly on the wood when shaped or the blade will wobble when swung or twirled. A well-made blade out of wood is a piece art when done correctly.



To make sword the basic cutlass style blade is good starter blade to make. Other blades can be made once you have honed your wood working skills. A Kris, Lahaut or Bolo blade is more difficult to shape and finish. A basic cutlass is good sword for kids because it has hand guards to protect their knuckles.

The first step is to lay out the shape of the blade on piece of cardboard or heavy card stock. Next lay out the tang of the blade from the centerline of the blade. It should be about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch wide and about 4-5 inches long. Make sure it is even or the blade will be off weight. Cut the pattern out and lay it on the piece of wood you selected for the project. For short cutlass the piece should be about 15 inches long, 3 inches wide and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Trace the pattern with a pencil to the wood. Take the piece of wood and clamp it flat. Now using a coping saw carefully cut out your shape. Next take a 4 in 1 wood rasp and smooth the edges so it is flat and even. Use a strait edge to check it. Next put a bevel on one side of the cutting edge side of the blade. Next put a bevel on the other side of the cutting edge side of the blade. Now clean up the area cut out for the handle. Start with #80 grit sand paper and sand with the grain the length of the blade until all of the rough spots are gone. Next use #120 grit sand paper and sand with the grain the length of the blade until smooth. Next use #140 grit sand paper and sand with the grain the length of the blade until smooth again. If you are going to use this for every day practice this finish level is fine. If you want to show it off finish it with stain and varnish or just varnish

Get a foam brush and give a coat of varnish. Let it dry for at least 1 day. Take some fine steel wool and slightly rough up the finish. Get another foam brush and give a coat of varnish again. To make the grip get a piece of hard wood dowel about 5 inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch wide and cut it in half-length ways. I have used old hard wood broomsticks. These will make the side plates of your handle (grip) of your sword. These will be put on after you put on a hand guard. To make a hand guard get another piece of cardboard and lay out the shape of the hand guard you



want, include the hole on one end to slide the bottom of the blade into. Lay the pattern on a piece of leather. An old wide leather belt is good source. Trace with a marker. Cut it out with heavy scissors and sharp knife. Cut it on an old pine board or thick cut board when using the knife. Cut slowly so you do not mess up. Take this part (leather hand guard) and slide it up the tang of the blade to bottom of the blade. Now attach the two side plates of the grip. If you glue them in place or cross dowel them or do both is your choice. If you are in a hurry you can use brad nailer instead. Attach the base of hand guard to the butt of the sword. This can be drill and screwed with two screws and washers. Again if you are in a hurry a brad nailer will do the job quick.

This same process can be used to lay out any blade shape you wish to make. To make small simple knife for practice you will need 1 ½ round hardwood dowel. A simple but nice blade can be made this way. Cut a section at 9 inches. Find the center of the overall length and mark it at 4 ½ inches. Next make from the tip down 4 inches. This will be your blade section. Go the end and divide it in half now your have a top centerline. Go ¼ inch from top center line both sides and mark it. Now cut lengthways twice down to the center mark at 4 inches. This will give you a ½ inch thick blade. Now cut along the center mark to your lengthways saw cuts. It will now look like a blade. Round the blade tip so it looks like knife. Put a slight bevel on the butt of the blade. Carefully put a small bevel on the top of the grip either side of the blade. To make the grip better do the following: mark three bands around the diameter at the 1, 2, and 3 inch points. Take a small round file and make grooves all the way around on these lines half the depth of the small round file. Sand and finish the knife as you see fit.

Homemade Slingshots and Other Stories

My mother in law Kris and I were talking after lunch one day about growing in the Philippines during WW-2. She told my sons and me about how she and her brother had made slingshots and used them for defense and hunting small game during the war. She said everything was in short supply, so you really had use what you had. She said she used wear the slingshot around her neck all the time so it way handy. She said it was made from good Y-shaped branch as big as my thumb, with the bands from rim liners of the old cars and piece of leather from a belt for the sling. I said to her we should make some for the boys. We ran into some supply problems due to many of these items are not still available any more.

I thought about it and came up with some alternative materials. We got some Pen Rose rubber surgical drain tubing for the straps, a piece of old leather belt from the garage. I found one Y branch to make up one slingshot. I used nylon construction string line to lash the rubber tubing to the slingshot. This worked to my older son but not for my younger one. I did not have enough materials. I made a second one using a coat hanger bent and twisted into the shape of a Y. I used a pair of pliers to roll over the ends for eyes to attach my bands. I used the heavy bands that come with the balsa gliders that were left over



from broken planes. I cut the belt piece about 2 inches long and punch two small ¼ inch holes with sharpen hole punch I made from some old metal tubing.

My younger son took hi with him, when we went camping and used it on targets he set up. He is trying to be as good of a shot as his Grandma.

Making Your Own Bow and Arrows Filipino Style



Grandpa Espi and I were talking about how he used to make his own bow and arrow sets. He said that back in the Philippines, he used to cut bamboo about ¾ his height long and as big around your finger at the about 2 inches from each of the joints. He would let the bamboo dry

out on the roof to be ready to. He said that he would cut the nubs and shoots close and then burn the spots and the ends. He would singe the ends.

Then he would drill through the end were the bowstring would sit and then saw carefully to drill hole. He would mark the center of the bow and then wrap with cord from six inches to the bottom of the mark. This would be your handgrip. The bowstring was made out of the gut fishing line with loops tied in the ends. The arrows were made from the skinny bamboo ends. The arrows were cut to size about 16-18 inches, sanded smooth. The base of the arrow shaft was notched for the bowstring. The arrow feathers came from chicken wings feathers that were cut and split then glued in place. He said they would then use sewing thread to carefully tie the top and bottom of the feather to the shaft.

I said this is great but we do not have any bamboo patch to raid for materials but with a little island ingenuity we could make some bows and arrows for the kids with what we had. We dug around to see what we had and we found some materials. We used schedule 40 PVC pipe about 4 feet long and ½ inch diameter. We cross drilled the ends with a 1/8 bit then sawed with hack saw down to the drill hole. We marked the center of the bow. Then we used a left over piece about 6-inches long of pipe insulation for the handgrip. We used duct tape and wrapped it to hold it in place. We used the nylon sting line used for construction work and tied figure eight loops knots in the ends for our bowstring. We made the arrows out of dowels the diameter of a pencil about 16-18 long.

I notched them with a hacksaw and the sharpened them with pencil sharpener. I used wing feathers we found from the sea gulls at the beach for my arrow shaft feathers. The feathers are cut to 2 inches long and were split with a razor knife so they could be glued to the shaft base. Remember to stay up about ½ from the bottom by notch and divide the diameter by three so you can glue the feathers in place with proper offset.

Make sure that one of the three feather arrows is horizontal when you notch it. Glue them parallel on the shaft. I used crazy glue gel to hold the feathers in place. It should



look like a rocket fin if done correctly.

This bow can be very powerful if this will be used by kids do not sharpen the arrows but keep blunt and glue pencil erasers on the ends. I made larger one and used Spectra 80 pound fishing line for the bowstring. When it was fired it put a sharpened arrow through a roll of old carpet. So be careful.

Marc J. Lawrence is a Filipino Martial Arts practitioner, a member of PAKAMUT and a member of the Doce Pares Los Angeles Academy in California.

Hanging Baston

The hanging baston consists of course a baston, length at your preference, and an eye screw and sturdy string or light rope, hung from the ceiling at a desired level in height.

This homemade training aid, can for the practitioner, build awareness, (knowing where the end of the baston is}, speed (reactions must be sharpened through practice to react), and balance and timing.

There are several ways of practicing with this training aid:

1. To strike one end and duck, or bob and weave as the other end of the baston comes toward you and then be able to strike or block the end you have just struck.
2. Strike one end and block the other end coming toward you before it hits you.
3. Strike one end and then block and strike the other end coming towards you.

The possibilities are left to the practitioners' imagination on what various types of combinations that are used. This is excellent training to sharpen the reflexes, and awareness. Depending on what height the practitioner sets the level of the baston will determine what is to be practiced. Of course a high level is set for the head or shoulders. Middle is good for dodging (moving out and in), and at a lower level is good for lower blocking or leg lifting and then re-positioning for a low attack.



Practitioner strikes one end and as the other moves towards him, he ducks and blocks the end of the baston he struck. Practitioner must be observant of the position of the baston at all times and quick enough to execute a blocking technique to the end coming towards him.

Training Targets

By Jeff "Stickman" Finder

One of the things that make's martial art practice so much fun is that we get to hit things. There is something satisfying about that primal feeling of power. Sure golf, tennis and baseball hit things too, but sports generally specialize their range of skills. Our range of movement is potentially limited only by skill and imagination, and we don't need an organized team or special location. Best of all, our equipment needs are simple and generally quite modest in cost and can be tailored to fit a wide range of choices.

For those times that a training partner is not available, or we want to hone specific skills, targets provide feedback on accuracy, power, endurance and a host of other attributes. Different devices can provide specific options for particular skill sets. The more the merrier, as variety keeps training interesting.



Targets encompass a variety of objects, including heavy bags, makiwaras, wooden dummies, focus pads, boards, bricks etc. Most of these are designed primarily for empty hand and foot training. Not much has been created for the stick fighting community; the most common backyard target still seems to be an old tire. While landfill operators are happy to give these away, tires have the unfortunate qualities of being dirty and smelly which means you wouldn't want one in your living room, plus they tend to leave rubber residue on your favorite sticks.

Another traditional option is a bundle of bamboo or rattan, often laid horizontally for downward strikes. Bamboo can be found cheaply at most places that carry garden supplies. This is a good option for learning basic sinawali and power strikes, but the downside is it is noisy, takes space and lacks versatility.

Punching bags are still one of the best options for all-around training. The downside is they are heavy and require a place where they can be hung, not always an option. The newer freestanding bags can set up anywhere, but aren't something to move very often. The mannequin target is particularly nice, providing a lifelike variety of angles of deflection with various strikes. Unfortunately those are not cheap.

For those limited by shortfalls of money or floor space, there are creative options available. Some are light enough to travel well and fit limited spaces. Some of the ideas presented here originated with the late Maestro Sonny Umpad. A couple are available commercially, others can be made at home with a few simple tools.

The smallest and lightest of these is my "Third Arm, which weighs less than two pounds. It is also one of the most versatile devices I use. I originally developed this around 1986 using bamboo, rather than the durable high-impact plastic ones I sell today.

The idea for the “Third Arm” sprang from the basic idea of hanging a ball on a string, but with some simple yet significant improvements that give it unique characteristics. The initial goal of this device was to create something to emulate the articulation of a human arm. I was just learning snaking and figure-four arm locks at the time and couldn't often find a willing partner with whom to train. This helped fill that gap.



The “Third Arm” is comprised of three tubular sections and a tennis ball hanging on a string. It is positioned so the ball hangs at the level of one's waist, where it represents a hand. The three tubes represent the forearm, upper arm and the head. A spacer holds the lowest tube above the ball at a certain distance so that free string acts as a wrist. Another spacer at the top restricts the vertical sliding movement of the tubes. These spacers create the proper tension for practicing the wristlocks. It's primitive, but it works!

The bonus with the “Third Arm” is as a striking target for the stick. In addition to the “hand” ball one can strike at the tubes. The three segments add a high degree of unpredictability to the movement of the entire target. Unlike string, which mostly swings like a pendulum from a

single anchor point, each gap between sections of the “Third Arm” create additional pivots, allowing it to twist at odd angles. Much like a live opponent, the lowest “forearm” will move the most, while the upper “head” moves the least. One can focus on accuracy, just going for the ball, or you can free spar actively striking all parts; keeping the check hand high is recommended as this device can hit back!

Two people can use it at the same time and make a game of it, trying to hit the ball towards the other person.



The next lightest device is the “quiet target” made by Kenneth Gee, from one of Sonny Umpad's ideas. This string-bean bag is a stick-and-blade training cousin to the long Muay Thai banana bag. Made from industrial high-pressure hose, its 5.5” circumference comes in 4' lengths (custom sizes are available) that are encased in its tough woven sheath, providing substantial targeting high and low. This is light enough to be hung almost anywhere and can easily be taken from one location to another.

For most applications an anchor at the bottom will be desirable. You can use a plate from a weight set to anchor the base. I have a bag of ball bearings. Using some kind of bungee for the bottom holds tension in the system, rather than rope, which will slacken. Using slipknots or

hooks through the eyelets on the ends allows quick releases for easy travel. Sometimes just undo the bottom to let it swing freely for more free-sparring action. Perhaps my favorite use for this target is practicing with blades.



Another of Sonny Umpad's ideas was to use a piece of round fence post from the lumberyard. These have thin (1/4" or 5/8") fiberglass legs, allowing them to stand freely anywhere. Just drill holes in the base for the legs; setscrew slip collars from the hardware store can be used to adjust insertion depth to even out any irregularities. These posts come 6' long by 4.5" diameter. I had one cut into 3 sections, then one piece cut again to make the head on this dummy.

Additionally, arms can be added to make this a stick fighter's version of the Wing Chun wooden dummy. These can use thinner, more flexible pieces of fiberglass for more movement.



This one has a tennis ball duct-taped on the end as a "hand" target.

Another variation puts the ball in the middle so you can check to the "hand" while practicing parries against the weapon it is "holding", as you can see this on the PVC dummy.

Although PVC is terrible material for sticks, breaking easily into jagged pieces, this target has held up well for years. The difference is the target doesn't take constant punishment to the same spot with each blow like a stick, and the larger diameter seems to diffuse the impact. As with the wooden dummies, holes can be drilled in various places so the arms can be repositioned to represent different strikes.

Notice the legs I built on this one. By using a 5-point star base and tension loading the legs using two pieces of fiberglass rod, this is stable enough to slide without tipping even when kicked. I've also tried heavier black schedule-40 PVC, but that was too top-heavy. The plain PVC is cheaper and is adequate for this purpose.



The same concepts for the freestanding dummies can also be utilized for hanging ones. I like to use laundry line for support as it is strong without being bulky. This one is anchored at the bottom with a mini-bag which can be used for low leg kicks. Cardboard tubing covers the rubber bungee cord for better mid-level targetting (less bouncy). This was once a free-standing target and can still be set up that way if desired.



The wooden post dummies can be too noisy for apartments if used with live sticks. Similarly, the sound of stick-to-stick training can be problematic for some environments. This is one of the reasons why Sonny created his unique padded sticks, seen in these last two photos. The sound these sticks make is muffled, allowing practice almost anywhere or any time. They are not designed for heavy contact, but for developing accuracy and for light contact sparring. Originally marketed through Stickman Escrima Products, these sticks have been unavailable for several years. They are now available thanks to Kenneth Gee, who is using Sonny's design to once again provide these great training tools.



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Escrima Training Partner

A swing heavy bag is good for training, rubber tires are good for training, and a speed bag is good for training. However, none of these training aids has arms or legs. Sparring partners, which are the best training aids, are not available all of the time.

So another training apparatus is a homemade escrima dummy. The material is not too expensive, not hard to construct and with a little imagination can be made to fit your personal training needs.



The material is PVC piping. This particular escrima training dummy has a base of 2½-inch diameter; overall height is approximately 6 foot. The legs are 1½-inch diameter and the arms are ¾ inch diameter. The arms go through the body, as do the legs, which have a 45-degree joint so the legs can balance the escrima dummy on the floor. No part of the escrima dummy is glued. This makes for easy replacement incase of breakage, or disassembly if moving. Note the body is not touching the floor.

This escrima dummy was constructed with flexible arms for parrying, pushing, etc. Using a spring that fits inside the ¾ inch PVC pipe.



Padding can also be attached to the body if desired.



Executing a swing block (Unday Salag) to the solid area near the body, then parry after the spring, finish with strike to the body.



Blocking solid arm, then parry spring arm, strike to the body.

This particular escrima dummy is on the floor, so while training you can move around it at various angles. With a little effort the escrima dummy can be mounted to the wall.

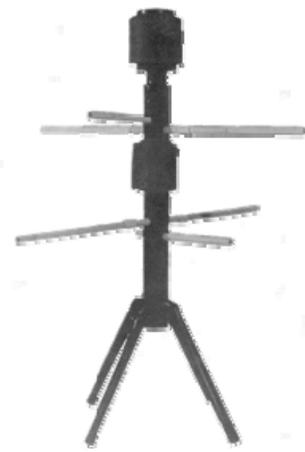
Various Escrima Training Partner designs that can be constructed.



Escrima Training Partner #1
Basic simple.



Escrima Training Partner #2
Added arms.



Escrima Training Partner #3
Has, live action, spring loaded limbs and head, which move with your energy in all directions.

Footwork Angles

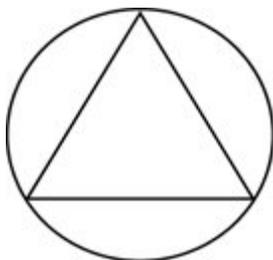
By Jeff Finder

Something I've been pondering these past few days after viewing fights on video clips is directness, and in particular how it relates to the male and female triangles. On one level these symbols are a map of efficient movement, though on a practical level they are perhaps better as metaphors for moving to an optimal position, wherever that may be.

For anyone here who is not clear on what these represent, the male triangle has a point in front, on the centerline in the direction one is facing. The female triangle has the triangle pointing towards the rear, so forward movement is angled off the centerline.

Conversely, in retreating the forward triangle moves offline, the female triangle moves in towards the center.

Both directions (forward and backward) are worth considering.



Most Filipino Martial Arts schools emphasize the female triangle, yet the prototypical Filipino martial arts symbol is represented by a male triangle inside a circle. Why this paradox, and what might it mean?

Watching these videos, what I noticed was how fights arrive at point of directness. Fighters may circle, looking to time an entry or snipe a peripheral shot on the fly, but at some point the aggressor takes control and goes after his opponent. Subtlety of

angle is out; finishing is about taking it right at the other guy. Maybe my perception is skewed, but that's how it generally appears to me. So how and why do different triangles theories work?

In talking about entries, it's about setting up the position from where to attack. We can come straight in by defeating defenses or go around them to a less defended point. Theory often stresses the latter, but experience seems to favor the former.

I'll start with the female triangle, as training it is more familiar to most people. It is useful in several ways. One can evade a direct attack while countering forward; it zones away from the opposite hand (unless one stays inside between the hands and simply opens up the stance, not my favorite concept) and it allows one to get to the opponent's backside.

The male triangle has a different set of attributes. It can cut the opponent's balance and energy by bisecting his baseline. Being direct gets point-to-point faster than longer circling, plus it more readily attacks vital targets on the centerline rather than the periphery. Taking the center redirects the opponent's energy towards the outside of the circle while staying compact, like the hub of the wheel.

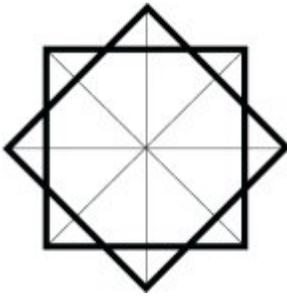
This is only for the forward direction of these triangles. Moving away from an opponent the qualities are reversed. The yin triangle pulls in towards the center, the male triangle steps outwards. People typically backpedal in a straight line when charged. It takes a bit more awareness to move offline effectively, a task made more difficult because a forward fast moving attacker may overwhelm one's response, or be able to adapt so quickly as to re-align on his target.

This is a point frequently made by **Marc "Animal" MacYoung** in his seminars, where he demonstrates a realistic street attack as opposed to the kind of squared-off dueling practiced in many martial art schools. In the face of something that intense, shifting off the line of attack can be critical, and not everybody can do it well.

Is there a difference in a self-defense situation compared to a ring fight? Perhaps in self-defense one may have an element of surprise on the part of either party. An attack could be a surprise, or perhaps the counter catches the attacker unawares. It is less likely that both parties are equally primed to fight or armed with similar weaponry. Thus there can be variable mismatches to overcome.

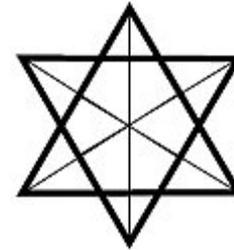
Ultimately the value of any footwork is positioning. Whether the goal is to get to an opponent's weak spot or prevent him from finding yours, one has to have an awareness of these as prerequisite to any plan or strategy. The purpose of tactics is simply a means to an end, and as such it is limiting to think only of them in terms of a single triangle. I think it better to see them as a continuum within larger forms.

Consider that the angles of a triangle must add up to 180°. Many people step at a 45° angle on the female triangle, which works for largo counters at longer distance (mostly towards the limbs) but may veer too wide for deeper strikes or grapples. Entering from greater distance decreases deflective angle and vice versa. The tighter 60° angles of the Filipino martial arts logo might be a more accurate roadmap for many applications. At closer range, one may need more angle of deflection, but then the counter angle back towards the center is a sharper turn.



A common training aid is to cross two lines in an “x”, creating both male and female triangles. Along with the lines, however, one can step to the quadrants thus formed, and those steps are like a “+”. This creates the “eight directions” which is a popular strategy of direction in Japanese and Korean martial arts, among others. Draw lines connecting the tips of the “x” and “+” shapes to form a square and diamond, and overlaid together these form an 8-pointed star, a common motif in Moslem art.

If you look at the inside lines, triangles are but half squares or rectangles. In this shape each triangle is a 90° angle and two 45° angles. Compare it to the 60° angles of the Filipino martial arts logo above. That triangle, overlaid in male/female duality, creates a six pointed star, which creates a different pattern of movement. You can lay tape on the ground to practice stepping; each has it’s own logic and lessons to teach.



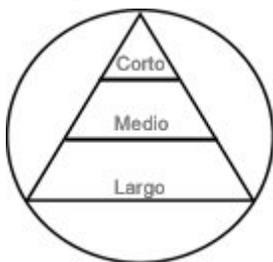
Don’t you wish geometry had been this interesting in high school?

Wedges

Everyone here is probably familiar with triangle stepping and angles. I constantly remind students that the FMA logo (triangle in circle) is not just symbolic, but also a more literal roadmap.

This is always shown with the "male triangle" which points up or forward. Forward usually means towards the opponent's centerline, but it can also mean facing the strongest point of his attack. Situations vary. Rotated, of course, into the female position, the points demonstrate angles of evasion.

Points are strong, being reinforced. Lines are strong in direction of movement from point to point. They are vulnerable, however, across their width. Think of a pencil; strong one way, weak the other.



Inside the triangle's lines lies our safe zone. Outside the triangle increases exposure. An example is doing a cross-block (a downward pointing defense on our check-hand side) but leaving our rear elbow or shoulder exposed wide, outside the angle of protection afforded by the defense.

The closer we get to the point, the tighter the lines and smaller the area we have to move to stay within them, yet the angles themselves are the same degrees of arc at any range.

This is a key essence of Serrada. We want to find the smallest, tightest range at which we can function. It represents our last line of defense, what is closest to us.

Functionality is, of course, the key. Too much compression could be immobilizing or collapse. Some might think it lacks power because there is less room to accelerate. Understanding fulcrums and balance, however, gives us full measure. In every technique I seek to apply Grandmaster Ed Parker's three maxims for power: linear, rotational, gravity.

Al Thomas, my original Kenpo teacher, used to remind us of the magnifying effect of adrenaline. His point was if we train like a golf ball, we'll fight like a baseball; train like a baseball, fight like a basketball; train like a basketball, we'll fight like a beachball. In other words, we open ourselves up under stress. By training more tightly, that habit tends to remain more effective when it's most needed.

A basketball isn't a bad area of protection for the body, but a beachball is excessive movement. It it too much volume of space to protect and takes too long to finish a movement. Even largo mano (long range) techniques tend to hit pretty directly to the target. No matter what style you do, nothing matters until "point of impact" (POI) anyway, and so we want to maximize our effectiveness there, whether we hit and run or jam and control.

Range is a basic tactical choice, but efficiency is even more fundamental. It allows us more time to observe our opponent and to engage less telegraphically.

Like a sine wave, greater ranges involve more momentum whereas closer ranges increase frequency though the energy can remain a constant (how a whip accelerates and cracks, for instance). Top speed is traded for speed of reversal, and to a certain extent power might be traded for accuracy (though expert proponents can demonstrate otherwise).

Closer ranges have different risks. There are fewer weapons to monitor at longer ranges. As one moves in, the opposing hand can strike, then grab, then envelop or encircle. One needs to be as aware of one's own vulnerable targets as is attention to the opponent.

Once again we have our "threat triangle" to monitor, and this has been a reminder to keep everything protected within it, both front and rear sides of your body. Pay attention, as you move your guard towards or away from your opponent, how it will open and close different areas relative to your opponent's weapon and centerline.

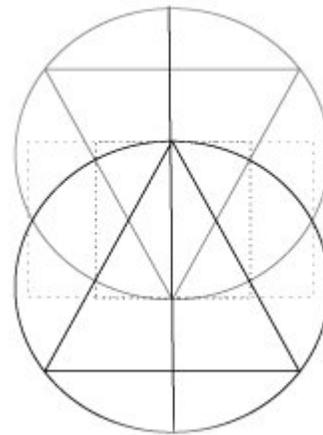
In this diagram we stand in the center of our circle/triangle, which is the point to which our opponent reaches. The back half is our largo range where we move our vital targets out of reach.

This might be redundant to many, and others may not want to dig through the archives anyway. Regardless, it's always good practice to review fundamental concepts, refreshing the touchstone from which we measure our understanding and progress.

The Threat Triangle

The "Threat Triangle" is a term I've coined to describe the tactical use of the lock position. Again, it is not a static position but an active and responsive tracking method. We want our "guns" facing the main threat, and there are nuances to this orientation as we move relative to an opponent.

The most fundamental is footwork, using the male triangle to face the opponent's centerline. We lead with either foot, using papeet (replacement step) to orient towards either the left or right sides. If we control the center of the encounter, there are advantages of leverage and shorter lines of movement with the shorter stick.



Our basic consideration is the centerline, which is the most inside line. Our footwork and weapon should maintain directness.

There is also an outside line, which is the widest angle from which we need to guard against the most likely threat presented at that moment.

If we just lock facing forward and the tip of our opponent's weapon can thrust around our guard, we are vulnerable; think of a rapier or dagger.

Too many people just finish a technique, give a cursory lock, and they're done, or they just step straight up the center as though that threat had been neutralized. The purpose of the lock is to defend against the next attack. Why assume it will not be with the same weapon, from its previous position? Angel Cabales was a master of the quick thrust, and the lock has to be able to intercept that. For this, angle is critical.

If our opponent is beyond contact distance, the angle between his centerline and outside line is very slight. As we approach, that angle gets wider, and the longer the weapon, the deeper he can reach around us. Visualize his attack as anywhere on an arc, with you in the center of the circle.

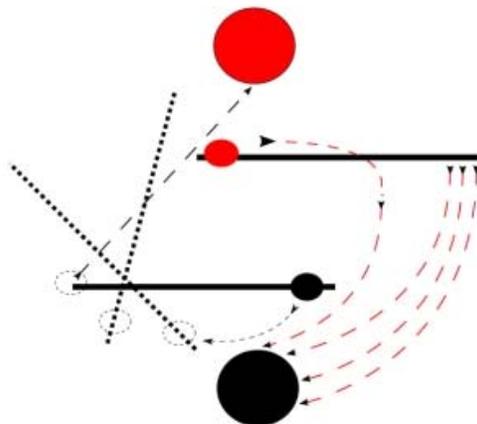
At a longer distance, or closer but all weapons forward, our lock can be straight in front. If my opponent's weapon is off towards my right, that is the side I most likely need to defend, and if he moves the other way, I should be shadowing that direction.

The idea is simple. If I am already in a position that cuts off a surprise attack simply, without resorting to a long or complicated maneuver, my defense will be quicker and more likely to succeed. I don't want to have to think about a sudden threat when it's time to react, so if I'm already pre-positioned to intercept that move, I get better use of trained subconscious reflexes.

I can't always just rotate my body or move my weapon over to cover an angle because I might expose another, more vital one. If the threat you track is a fake, you may have played into your opponent's strategy.

A good way to solve this is to angle my weapon, using the male triangle principle. For instance, if I am in a right lead, my opponent might be showing a low thrust to my left abdomen. If my weapon is just forward, I've left him that gap. If I angle the tip of my weapon back toward the left, my right hand covers the centerline. Both inside and outside angles have proximate coverage.

If my opponent sweeps his weapon to the other side, I would papeet into a left lead. Now the tip of my weapon covers the centerline while my right weapon hand is tracking the opposing weapon. At all times some part of my weapon accounts for every angle his weapon's got.



In this diagram, the attacker is in red, the defender is black. The light dotted lines represent movement; the heavier black dotted lines represent the position of Black's stick (and his hand) as he thrusts inward from an outside position.

Notice the entry path available from the end of Red's stick using an arcing strike. There is also a line showing how moving Red's hand over across the body allows even deeper access toward the front of our body. This is

particularly important against witiks (snapping blows), especially if sharpened by reverse tapping our own arm to accelerate the effect.

The defender also has a similar angle to counter-attack in this diagram. Black shows a thrust on a direct line from the tip as his hand moves over to compensate. The Threat Triangle is thus the separation by degree of incoming angles we have to monitor, from the weapon hand to the the end of that weapon, as these lines converge on target. In other words, an attack can come from either end of the weapon! We can see this triangle clearly in Black's diagram, using the lines of sight and thrust.

My old Kenpo teacher used to have us imagine having an eye on the toe of our foot. We'd actually place our head on the ground to see what openings that our foot could "see." I do the same thing with my stick, because what is apparent from the tip is different from what I see where my head is located.



Here I'm facing forward once again, but I'm guarding against an attack from my right, closing off the low line off attack from the tip of an opponent's weapon. Compare the stick position to that in the picture next to it. There my opponent's weapon is directly in front and so my angle is more direct.



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Interview with Master Vince Palumbo and His Student, Dr. Andrea Wheatley

By Bill Kneitingner



Master Vince Palumbo

In keeping with the theme of this issue on training, I recently conducted an interview with Master Vince Palumbo and his student, Dr. Andrea Wheatley, both of whom are training for the upcoming 3rd World Eskrima Tournament. The interviews were conducted via e-mail due to time differences, but both Master Palumbo and Dr. Wheatley were eager that FMA Digest readers get an insight as to how they prepare for an event. It was truly an honor to profile both of them and I hope you'll enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together.

Q. Master Palumbo, why would you as a Master in the Filipino Martial Arts under Grandmaster Cacoy Canete want to train to compete yourself, especially as you're training your students to compete?

A. Personally, I like to lead by example and wouldn't even think of asking my students to do something that I would not do myself. For example if they're out running, so am I! It's so important for us as a school, as well as in my role as their coach and chief instructor to complete this journey of preparing for competition together as one. Regardless of the outcome, they as individuals and as members of the school are winners in my book just for gutting it out for training to compete. I still enjoy competition myself and as long as the body holds out, I will push it and continue to lead the troops for as long as I'm able.

Q. There are those who feel it's selfish for Masters to compete as they could take qualifying spots from their own students, and have almost nothing left to prove to the world as a competitor. Do you think that the tournament format should be changed to allow for Masters to compete within their own divisions, much as karate tournaments already do and why would it be a good thing for the Filipino martial arts to follow suit?

A. It's disappointing to know that so few Masters and others who have been in the Filipino martial arts for many years feel there's nothing left for them other than to seminar and teach. I think we as teachers and leaders have an obligation, duty, and honor to set the bar high for our students who will one day replace us as the leaders within the Filipino martial arts movement. One has to wonder if some individuals are simply afraid that if they compete and lose, their students will think less of them. There is no shame in losing in competition and I respect and salute those who recently competed in the 9th WEKAF championships who were winners regardless of how they placed. Count me in, as one who thinks the quality of Filipino martial arts tournaments would be much improved if there were a separate master's division.

Q. Master Palumbo how much preparation would you say is needed to get yourself or a student of yours, ready to fight? If someone has never fought, what's the realistic

timeframe that's needed to get them to basic proficiency and a chance to succeed in the ring?

A. In my school, you're looking at a good ten weeks of solid training to include cardiovascular work, weight training, sparring and drills'

Q. *What type(s) of drills would a student of yours expect to endure while they're getting into fighting shape?*

A. I would be working on their speed and ability to apply the various combinations that you need to use in the ring, as well as the ability to attack and defend.

Q. *I think you agree that training needs to take place outside of the school as well. What is a student of yours expected to do on their own to help them prepare?*

A. One thing that they or anyone else can do at home is run, jog or swim if they have a pool or access to one. Any of these are helpful in keeping ones weight down.

Q. *In many sports, diet is considered the most important thing necessary to capture peak performance. Do your students make temporary and hopefully permanent diet and lifestyle changes to capture their peak performance? Does it last?*

A. Eating right is crucial, especially if you are fighting in a specific weight category. Who wants to spend their time and money preparing for a fight and flunking the weigh in and not competing or in a category you're not prepared for? My own students commit themselves to following my instructions as to what they should be eating for at least 60 days before an event.

Q. *Unlike many Filipino martial arts instructors, you also run a fitness center as your full time occupation. Which do you place more focus on, endurance and cardiovascular well being or the ability to attack and defend in the ring?*

A. Glad you asked, the following statement sums up my own beliefs that have served me well all these years: "FITNESS IS A FIGHTERS BEST FRIEND!" So yes, I place plenty of emphasis on conditioning as the ability to defend means nothing if you don't have the endurance to last three rounds.

Q. *Stick fighting has many formats to choose from: live stick, padded stick, full gear, limited gear, or no gear. In your opinion, which is the hardest type of fighting to train for and why?*

A. I think the minimal armour competition with live stick is the most difficult and painful for one's body to endure.

Q. *Depending on the competition pool and their skill/luck, fighters might fight just once or multiple times during an event. Three minutes or so split into rounds can feel like eternity to some, how do your students acclimate themselves to wearing the gear?*

A. We run in the gear, we train as much as possible in it and if they owned their own gear, I'd tell them to sleep in it too! Let's face it, the padded vest gets hot quickly and the helmet is heavy and restricting, so if you're used to it, it will feel like a second skin to you when in the ring.

Q. Just as professional athletes sometimes are pulled for muscle pulls/tears, do you see this much in the local, regional, national and world events where you've competed?

A. Any athlete who pushes their body to the extreme will almost always experience pain or an injury of some sort. That's why it's important to stretch before you begin and if possible, get a massage post event or if you have access to one, use a sauna. Those aches and pains in your muscles are a result of your body excreting lactic acid, and the sauna or a good hot spa or home tub soak will help to ease post workout pain we all experience. One thing that I also do after a hot soak is to take a very cold shower as I find it rejuvenates the body.

Q. If one wishes to avoid these themselves, what should they be doing to prevent it?

A. In addition to the heat therapy, consider taking supplements to speed your recovery. As always, check with a medical professional before you embark on your own vitamin/mineral supplement program.

Q. While the overwhelming number of tournament competitors are men, women have been coming out and making strides within in their own fighting divisions. Is there a need for adjustments to be made when coaching women?

A. As long as women wear all of the prescribed fighting gear along with any necessary personal protective gear, there's no need for limiting their involvement in the training process. That's EQUAL OPPORTUNITY!

Q. Tournament organizers in Europe have long had male/female open divisions in some of their events. Is this something that needs to be discussed as to its feasibility to all tournaments and it's relevance to the growth of Filipino martial arts as a spectator friendly sport?

A. I'm sorry, but due to insurance liability issues that could come into play in some countries, I think it's asking for trouble to have open divisions. I don't see a problem with it within a training context, as that's a situation that can be controlled by the instructor.

Q. Some of the readers of this interview no doubt live in small spaces or lack the funds for fancy training equipment. You've traveled the world somewhat, what have you seen people use that meets the theme of this issue, affordable equipment/training aids for the budget conscious?

A. If you have any space outside your home or spare space within it, you too can have a gym as basic or fancy as your means allow. I hit an old tyre I've attached to a tree with a rope. No tree? Stack tires to a level you're comfortable with and hit them. For lightweight training to the forearms and hands, I use a steel pipe and practice my forms with them. I work my Amarra drills with an old baseball bat. No baseball bat? You can substitute a cricket bat or take a piece of wood about 80-90 cm's long, add a bit of weight to it so that you end up with about 500g-1kg of weight to it and use that. Of course, running is the best way to get fit in my opinion and besides the price of a good pair of shoes; it's easily done in most places. If you scrimp on the quality of shoe, you'll also lose the motivation to train so buy the best your budget allows for.

Q. Master Palumbo, do you use homemade training gear when you get ready for a tournament yourself? If so, what might we find if we paid a visit to your home?

A. I mainly use a stack of car tyres to hit, and I also use the heavy metal pipes when I do the Amarra drills.

Q. Living in the Southern Hemisphere as you do, your seasons are the polar opposite of those of us living north of the Equator. When you or your students travel to climates different from your own, do you make adjustments during the training cycle to account for time or temperature changes?

A. My students train in all conditions, heat/cold/rain and no; we don't get snow in Adelaide where we live. In this way, their bodies get used to performing in any type of environment they find themselves in. When possible, we try to get to events held outside Australia as early as we can to help us acclimate to the time/weather/venue conditions we might face.

Q. In the 17 years that the World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF) has been in existence, more and more youth are getting involved to include those children of former/current competitors and system heads. Have you experienced the same interest in your own school and is society changing or even ready to embrace the thought of kids learning the Filipino martial arts as hopefully a life long activity?

A. To date, I've competed in over 200 full contact competitions and with my 30 plus years in the Martial Arts, I've been through the fads too! But now, it's the stick-fighting craze and the whole family wants to get involved!

Q. What is the age range of your students who do prepare for tournaments? What is the earliest age that you would start a child in the Filipino martial arts provided they have the ability/maturity to learn?

A. I will let my young students start competing in Karate events at the age of 8 and then at 12 if they decide they'd like to try Eskrima stick fighting. Today's children are driven by technology so they are more advanced than even those of just a generation ago. If they set their mind to it, they can achieve anything if they want it badly enough, to include winning at competition.

Q. If you could foresee the future of Filipino martial arts, do you think that the focus on training for competition will grow, level off or drop from what you see today?

A. The only thing that needs to change is the perception that many people now have that's real or imagined, is that many competitions are marred by the politics of style over talent and the lack of a consistent scoring standard that can be applied to all competitors regardless of Filipino martial art system. Unless we all strive to keep our emotions on the doorstep, people will become less inclined to compete if they feel they don't have a fair chance to do so. Without the infusion of new talent, the evolution of Filipino martial arts from what we know today will also suffer greatly.

Q. Have many of your own students abandoned ship so to speak, for other than the obvious reasons of lack of time or the financial means to train?

A. I can honestly understand when anyone puts their training on hold while they address work and other considerations as it's part of life and the challenges we all face. However, I can't understand it when a student has no outside issues and can train, compete and win then decides to just walk away after many years of a Guro's commitment to them. I'm sure many Guro's know of a student(s) who walked away without even acknowledging those who got them to where they were, or even thanking them for getting them there.

Q. *Some of the more hard-line/traditional instructors of Filipino martial arts do not believe in having their students train for or participate in tournaments. Do you think that something is missing in a student's training program when they don't get the exposure to other styles/people that a tournament experience can bring?*

A. Tournaments are a great testing ground for a student's technique as well as the quality of their instruction. Let's face it, if a school has students who go to tournaments and do poorly overall on a regular basis, the quality of their instruction should be questioned. Of course, you have to balance the quality of instruction with the thrill of the experience of competition. None of us can win EVERY fight, but even when we lose, we win some experience!

Q. *Last question for you Master Palumbo, where do you see the tournament scene 5 or even 10 years down the road? Will there be more venues for people to train for and play in? Will the live stick give way to padded stick and will the tournament scene become evermore youthful? Will training be more or less important and how will it change with it?*

A. I think the Filipino martial art tournament scene will expand when we resolve the issues I noted earlier. Like it or not, the future of the Filipino martial arts is dependent on if and how we all work together and grow the arts and all of our supporting organizations. It's unfortunate that the hard stick's days are likely numbered due to the injury factor and growing concern of liability. However, the padded stick that will replace it may encourage more people to learn the Filipino martial arts and compete themselves. What concerns me though is that it will take away from and dilute the combat effectiveness of the real weapons that we train with. However, there will still be those who will work albeit more privately than now, to continue to improve upon the realistic combat applications of the Filipino martial arts. I'm happy to see groups such as the Dog Brothers and others doing their thing as their contributions go along way towards keeping Filipino martial arts effective for the world we face today.



Equally interesting as an interview subject is Master Palumbo's student, Dr. Andrea Wheatley, who is a Doctor of Osteopathy. I learned that while she does use the title of Doctor, she's not a doctor in the medical sense of the term. Unlike in the United States and other countries where Osteopaths hold a medical degree, in Australia it's similar to one being awarded a Ph.D. in a non-medical discipline. As you'll see, some of the questions are identical to what I asked Master Palumbo, but the perspective in many cases is certainly not.



Q. Dr. Wheatley, why as a professional when you already have a demanding workload as an Osteopath, would you want to devote your limited free time to train? Also, in the course of your training are you training others?

A. To answer your question I certainly do have a demanding workload as an Osteopath running my own business. I am generally booked up with clients for between 6-8 weeks in advance so this tends to keep me pretty busy. I now have an associate working alongside me who has eased my workload considerably over the past 12 weeks but I previously worked between 8-10 hours per day and still found the time to train. Why? Because I love it! My two passions in life are Osteopathy and Eskrima! I leap out of bed before 6am every day to train with my Sensei, Master Vince, and our other training buddies. And, I still have a huge amount of energy for my work and then again for more training after my day of work. I think if you love to do something the energy is always in abundance! I am fortunate that I truly do enjoy both my chosen occupation and my Martial Arts training. In terms of training others, in a class situation the more experienced students always offer a helping hand to the newcomers, so there are instances where I may assist others in their training.

Q. Some have said that its plain selfish for Masters to compete as they take spots from their own students and really have nothing left to prove to the world as a competitor. Do you think that the tournament format should be changed to allow for Masters to compete within their own divisions, much as karate tournaments do already and why is it a good thing for the Filipino martial arts to do so?

A. Personally, I don't believe it is selfish for Master's to compete. I think that the competitive side to Eskrima is something that demands constant work in order to maintain the fitness, agility and skill that are required in a fight situation. I think that Master's are our role models and I know that for me personally when I see Master Vince compete, I am inspired to try and become the best fighter that I can be. I don't believe that the result of any fight should be the focus, but rather the journey along the way. To me, the martial arts and the fighting are purely vehicles to our own self-discovery. I think that it is helpful for me to see that my own teacher takes that journey regularly enough to know how to adequately prepare me for competitions. He's in touch with the requirements of the athlete on all levels: physical, mental, and emotional and if you're accepting, the dimension of the spiritual as well. I was not aware that in Karate tournaments Masters compete within their own divisions. I don't see any problem with

this option, however I think Master's should also be able to compete in the other categories because it is my belief that as a true fighter you will face your opponent, irrespective of rank, and take up the challenge as a mirror to your own level of skill. I once had to fight a 6th Dan Master in a tournament but I did not even think about the person's rank at the time, I just did what I had to do which was to maintain my focus in the moment at hand.

Q. On average, how much preparation would you say is needed to get yourself ready for a tournament?

A. Generally, we train all year around to maintain a baseline level of fitness, but we start to really crank that level up about 6 weeks pre-competition. This would involve running at least three times per week to maintain basic cardio-vascular fitness, sparring full contact and including several cross-training methods such as kickboxing, to add to our general fitness.

Q. When you first began your training quest, how long did it take you to feel you were even ready to compete to a proficiency that made you comfortable doing it?

A. My first competition was actually the 2nd Doce Pares World Championships that were held in Los Angeles in 2005 and I was really new to the game! I had only been training in Eskrima for 6 months when I entered that competition. I would have to say that now, after almost two years of fight training I think I feel comfortable with the idea of competition.



Q. In general, what types of drills have you endured while Master Palumbo worked to get you into fighting shape?

A. We undergo a huge variety of drills that focus on speed, fitness, power and endurance.

Q. Training of course takes place outside of the school as well. What have you as a student done on your own to help you prepare?

A. I try to do some meditation to keep my mind focused and my body centered. Also, I tend to eat a healthy diet and drink very little, if any, alcohol leading up to a competition. I try to get adequate sleep and relax with friends, as much as my busy routine will

allow!

Q. In some sports, diet is considered the most important thing needed to capture peak performance. As a Doctor though you work mainly with young children, you must have seen the results of those with poor diets and how it affects their health in a negative way. Have you made any temporary and or permanent diet and lifestyle changes that have helped to capture your peak performance level? Has it lasted and how long has it been if it has?

A. Diet is a very important part of our health, and as I say to my clients, “Food is Medicine” We really are what we eat, so it is important to put good fuel into the body, especially as high-performance athletes. My own diet is very specific, but this is not strictly related to my athletic performance. I am gluten-intolerant and yes I know it’s ironic that I am with a name like Wheatley, so I don’t eat any foodstuffs that contain gluten-grains. By choice, I only eat fish and no meat products. Therefore, I have a very specific diet with a lot of fresh fruit and vegetables, a lot of fish and yogurt and nuts and seeds as well for additional protein sources. Imagine my surprise when I learned that my diet is very similar as to how Grandmaster Cacoy Canete’s eats!

Q. *You're fortunate in that your instructor also runs a fitness center. Have your own training priorities placed more focus on endurance and cardiovascular well being or wanting the ability to attack and defend in the ring.*

A. My training priorities are balanced between having good cardio-vascular fitness but also good fighting techniques. To quote Master Palumbo: “Fitness IS a Fighters Best Friend”

Q. *Stick fighting of course has many formats to choose from: live stick, padded stick, full gear, limited gear, and no gear. Which types have encountered in your training? In your opinion, which is the hardest type of fighting to train for and why?*

A. In competition, I’ve only experienced full-contact single and double stick with full armour. In my training however, I’ve been fortunate enough to experience full-contact, limited armour with a padded stick, which is great fun and a great adrenalin rush. It feels to me a bit like having a water-pistol fight as a kid! You imagine that it’s real, but really it’s not so you just end up having a laugh when it’s over. I never have experienced full contact no armour with a real stick, but I would imagine that this would be the toughest type to train for out of the options you noted.

Q. *Depending on the competition pool and their skill/luck, fighters might fight just once or multiple times during an event. Three minutes or so, split into rounds can feel like eternity to some, so how do you acclimate yourself to wearing the gear?*

A. We spar a lot of rounds in our practice and we never use the air-conditioner at the gym! We also train outdoors as much as possible on the hottest days! Adelaide is hot for about 6 months of the year, so we’re fortunate in this regard. Sometimes, we run with the armour on us just to get used to the feel of it and the rising body temperature one experiences while competing with it on.

Q. *Just as professional athletes sometimes are pulled for muscle pulls/tears, do you see this much in the local, regional, national and world events where you've competed? What advice do you have for others who wish to prevent these themselves, from your own experiences?*

A. I think it’s inevitable that any athlete will experience injury at some time. I have seen stick fighters go through many different kinds of injuries from fractures to muscle and tendon injuries to simple bruising. The most frequent kind of injury associated with the sport would have to be contusion (or bruising) as a result of a direct blow from the stick. However like anything in life, we must learn to carry on despite our personal

circumstances. This may include finding the best method of healing efficiently so that we can continue to train without risk of re-injury. There is a fine line between allowing proper healing to occur and not favoring an injury to the point of creating secondary compensations in the body. We're fortunate that in our gym, Master Palumbo has studied Hilot, the ancient Filipino system of healing massage that actually contradicts traditional Western medical approaches! It's my personal opinion that this is a highly effective system of accelerating a more complete healing after suffering a damaging blow from a stick. Regarding injury prevention, my advice would be to always warm up adequately before competition or sparring. Because fast twitch muscle fibers are used in stick fighting, I would recommend making sure the warm up includes the use of these muscles in the appropriate manner. Obviously wearing adequate armour is also very important as a preventative measure.

Q. While the overwhelming number of competitors are men, women have been coming out and making strides within in their own fighting divisions. Do you feel there is a need for coaches to adjust their training methodology when they coach women?

A. I don't believe that the methodology needs to differ in the teaching of women versus men. We're all people and as a fighter, I don't see that my gender is relevant when it comes to the psychology of fighting. As humans we are capable of experiencing the same types of emotions and fighting definitely brings up lots of different emotions. It is a great "playground" or forum if you like to learn about yourself and develop yourself as a person.

Q. Tournament organizers in Europe have long had male/female open divisions in some of their events. Is this something that you, as a competitor would like to see yourself?

A. On a regular basis, I spar against men and I also had the opportunity to compete against men in a tournament held earlier this year in Wollongong, New South Wales. I personally enjoy the challenge of fighting against men. I think that some limitation should be placed on weight however because physiologically, men have 2/3 more muscle mass than women so there is a physiological advantage to begin with and add to that, increased size or weight and there is a definite advantage.

Q. Some of the readers of this interview no doubt live in small spaces or lack the funds for fancy training equipment. You've traveled somewhat so what have you seen people use that meets the theme of this issue, affordable equipment/training aids for the budget conscious?

A. Training can happen no matter where you are or how little equipment you have. General fitness work can be done with very little. Training shoes, are an asset but even they are not essential. Skipping rounds for cardio-vascular fitness can be done without a rope, and simple strength drills such as push-ups, crunches and leg raises are all done without equipment. Stick work can be done on a tree (preferably a dead one!) or with a partner in partner drills. Alternatively, simply sparring into the air is a great workout. I've worked up a good sweat on many occasions by just sparring into the air!

Q. Do you use homemade training gear when you get ready for a tournament yourself? If so, what might we find if we paid a visit to your home?

A. I have a tyre hanging from a tree out in the backyard and I occasionally use a punching bag to practice my stick sparring. The tyre is great because it creates a “bounce” that’s similar to hitting the helmet or jacket of the opponent.

Q. Living in the Southern Hemisphere as you do, your seasons are the polar opposite of those of us north of the Equator. When you travel to climates opposite of your own, do you make adjustments at any time in the training cycle to account for time or temperature changes you might experience?

A. Definitely it’s important to acclimate yourself with the climate you’re competing in. Before the fights in Los Angeles last year in June, we were heading into winter and L.A. was nearly in summer, so we trained with more clothing just to get used to losing a lot of perspiration. Again, running in the armour is very useful in this instance.

Q. In the 17 years that the World Eskrima Kali Arnis Federation (WEKAF) has been in existence, more and more youth are getting involved to include those children of former/current competitors and system heads. Have you seen the same interest yourself and is society changing or even ready to embrace the thought of kids learning the Filipino martial arts as a life long activity?

A. I have seen some younger people with the keen desire to learn Filipino martial arts. We have a few junior members at our gym who are as well. I think it’s a wonderful discipline-building tool for children to be involved in martial arts, and it’s a great way for them to learn about themselves and develop confidence and belief in their own abilities not just in sport, but in life as well. I think that our society has no choice but to accept this as a beneficial factor in contributing to the growth of a child. I would hope that in all cultures we can embrace this and remember that in some cultures, such as in the Philippines, children have been learning the martial arts from a very young age for centuries.

Q. What do your young patients think when they learn, if they do, that their Doctor has a high degree of proficiency in the martial arts? Has your example encouraged them, if and when they are physically able to do so, to want to train themselves?

A. Most of my clients do not know about my “other life” (dedication to the martial arts). However, the screen saver on my computer has a picture of Master Palumbo sparring with me in armour, which occasionally attracts questions. Some of my clients and their parents read an article about one of my fights in the newspaper a while back, so some of the parents and kids have inevitably found me out. The kids generally smile and get shy at the idea, all at the same time. I did have one young boy patient, about 9 years of age and is a karate student, come in for a consultation after there was some publicity in the newspaper about one of my fights. Imagine, he asked me for my autograph on a cardboard cutout of the article! That was a pretty humbling moment when I was looked at as a hero in his eyes. I had a more humorous episode recently when I was treating a 6 year old girl while her mother was reading a story to her about “wild warrior wasps wickedly waving war-like weapons” and the girl said of her own volition: “they are Filipino wasps”! I was momentarily astounded but also highly amused at her recollection

of my other pastime! I think all kids should be involved in some form of exercise, be it martial arts or some other kind of sport. Our culture is becoming increasingly lethargic and I would hope that my training is an inspiration to others, whether children or adults, to become more active in their lives.

Q. If you could see the future of Filipino martial arts, do you think that the focus on training for competition will grow, level off or drop from what you see today? Has it ever crossed your mind to abandon ship so to speak, due to the lack of time needed to train?

A. I would hope that in Australia as well as in the rest of the world, there would be an increase in the number of people interested in training for competition. I think more people are becoming interested in Filipino martial arts as they are exposed to it. I do express some concern that in other places such as the Philippines; focus on the Filipino martial arts is slipping away. Only time will tell if things will pick back up. You asked whether or not I would abandon ship due to the lack of time needed to train. Well, I'm dedicated to the Martial Arts and I find that the training balances my life in so many ways, therefore rather than "abandon ship" so to speak, I make it a priority to train! Most of my time in the clinic is spent sitting down and I'm naturally a very energetic person. I find that if I train before work, my concentration is better for the entire length of the day. Mentally, I'm calmer when I have expended some energy physically. It is like my yin and my yang!



Q. Some of the more hard line instructors of Filipino martial arts do not believe in having their students train for or participate in tournaments. Do you think that something is missing in a student's training program when they don't get the exposure to other styles/people that a tournament experience can bring?

A. I can understand why philosophically, that some trainers may not wish for their students to undergo competition. I think it is detrimental to us, not just as Martial Artists, but also as people to always focus on winning and forget the bigger picture of why we are doing this activity in the first place. By constantly focusing on the outcome we forget to enjoy the experience of the journey along the way. As a wise man once said: "With one eye fixed so firmly on the destination, there is only one left to guide you along the journey." So, the journey may take twice as long! Personally, I think if you can learn all of the lessons in the grand scheme of things then competing in tournaments offers invaluable experience, but again to me this goes back to self-discovery. When I am faced with an opponent, it is not for my ego to relish in the potential of a victory but rather it is my responsibility to myself to feel gratitude towards this person because without them how can I ever be challenged, and how can my skills ever be truly put to the test? I love the practical expression of the art and what better forum to experience this than in a fight situation?

Q. Last question Doctor Wheatley, where do you see yourself within the tournament scene 5 even 10 years down the road? Do you think that you'll continue to seek out live stick events or will you look towards padded stick or what?

A. Five to ten years is a hard way to put a question to me! I walk day at a time and so far in my life I have never been able to look ahead for more than 12 months! However, if my burning passion for Eskrima is what it is today in 5-10 years time, then yes, I do see myself still seeking out tournament events, and definitely no padded stick for me! Real sticks, but with full armour, as I gotta protect those Osteopathic fingers! Manong (Grandmaster Cacoy Canete) is my role model and as I age, I hope to be a graceful and yet as much of a fighting spirit as this truly great man himself.



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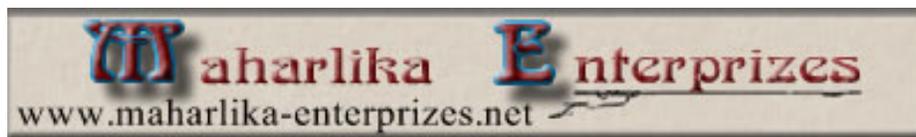
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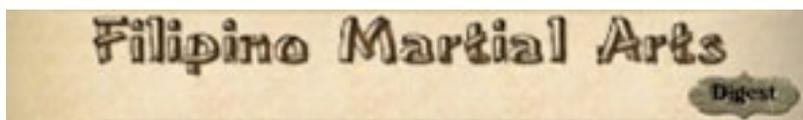
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