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AWARE

PREPARED

CAPABLE

**Dealing With Multiple Assailants.
A CQB Presentation
by Lee Morrison.**

The priority in any potentially violent situation is always to avoid and escape. Being switched on and aware will allow you to spot most confrontations before they start. In a multiple assailant situation where escape is not available your only option is to be pre-emptive. If you wait to be attacked in the hope that you will be able to defend and then counter you will end up hospitalised or worse. Every second that you delay you will end up fighting on more than one front. When they attack, it will be all at once and it will be ferocious.

Your only chance is to hit first and to keep hitting until there is no more threat. You need to be single minded in your attacks and target selection, attack the eyes, throat, jaw and groin with vicious intent. Though the odds are stacked against you, don't succumb to negative thinking, determined tenacity is the order of the day. Remember as a group, numbers alone give them the advantage that they need to overcome a single defender. The overall confidence of the pack/group mentality can be destroyed when you effectively incapacitate one or more of the pack very quickly.

Using your options:

Awareness is the greatest Self-defence tool that we have at our disposal. As said before your best option is always avoidance and escape. You need to be street smart when you are out and about. The following scenario will give you a good idea of how being aware and street smart could really save your tail in a mass attack type of situation.

- Picture yourself in a crowded, noisy bar. The first intelligent thing to do is to position yourself where you can only be approached from the front an example might be to place your back to the bar or seat yourself with your back to the wall in a position where you could see a potential threat ahead of time.
- The next thing is to know where your exits are as they offer you an escape route.
- Make a mental note of who is with whom. A casual glance over a rowdy group of people can tell you a lot about their body language, who a potential threat could be and who is with him/them.
- Also make a mental note of the location of anything that could be used as an improvised weapon. An ashtray, a bottle, chair or bar stool all make excellent equalisers should such a desperate need arise.

Here's the scenario;

You've just witnessed some bloke head butt another patron unconscious at the end of the bar. As soon as he hits the floor the attacker and his mate proceed to kick the man senseless and the whole affair is over in seconds. From here the initial aggressor starts to look around the room to see whose looking and just happens to make eye contact with you. He now considers the fact that because you have had the audacity to make eye contact with him that you are now a suitable candidate for a second victim. He makes his approach which can only be frontal as you have positioned yourself with your back to the bar. After what you have just witnessed, you are aware that this is the start of a potentially violent confrontation. No dialogue is necessary. You must act now! You have already scoped the exit, if you can escape then now is the time. If not, act as soon as he approaches. Most fights will start with talking, as soon as he is in range he will be running his mouth off just before he attacks. Whether this is the case or not, don't talk, yell, cuss or push, just attack and hit first. In this case you smash him in the face with the heavy ash tray that you noticed earlier placed next to you at the bar. This was a good shot.

The first bloke is completely out of the game. Now if his mate starts, the encounter will now be a one on one, much better odds than the earlier two on one option. In this case you have managed to catch a hold of ash tray face before he hit the floor, using him as a barrier between you and his mate you ram him straight into the second aggressor shoving him backward into the nearest sharp edge. From here you do a 50-yard dash straight to and through the nearest exit to make your escape. This is only possible because you were aware and street smart.

This scenario was fictional, but a plausible account of how having a game plan can save your hide in such a situation. We're not talking about being paranoid here, just street smart. If you practice this line of thinking when you

are out and about it will soon become a habitual and natural part of your behaviour just like relaxed awareness.

Practical drills : two against one

In any situation where you are facing more than one individual it is absolutely vital that you gain a priority position. In the early interview stages of a confrontation (those vital few seconds before the physical starts) it is most probable that one of them usually the mouth, will engage you with some kind of introductory dialogue from a frontal position while his accomplice will move out to your flank in an attempt to blind side you with the classic sucker punch. Once you add the side effect of tunnel vision bought on by adrenal stress, you won't even realise this is happening until it is too late and you have been punched. From here the second aggressor will join in almost instantly and the situation will quickly become critical.

The obvious answer is to control both of them by using your fence. Understand that when doing so your fence is now divided and is only fifty percent as effectual due to the fact that you are now controlling on two fronts. This is why the need to be pre-emptive is so vital, every second that you delay you risk fighting on more than one front. Fighting two people at the same time is very difficult even if you possess the skills needed to do it. But fighting one person twice, by taking each one out with a clinical pre-emptive strike is relatively easy if you have the minerals, i.e. the confidence and aggression to be first and hit hard.

Priority positioning drill:

The ideal when dealing with two individuals is to keep them in front of each other so that you are all positioned in a single line. You do this by positioning yourself to the flank of your frontal aggressor just as the second individual attempts to move to the side of you. This will allow you momentary control of the one in front whilst allowing you to keep the other one in plain view. Of course this movement for control should only happen once, before action is taken, that being to either posture aggressively in an attempt to end the situation without violence or to hit first and follow up as needed before making your escape at the first available opportunity.

The first drill that we practice with this aim in mind involves three students, one playing the defender against two potential aggressors who will use verbal role play with frequent attempts to get to the defender's blind side as the defender counters this with the above mentioned method, accompanied by strong verbal commands in an attempt to create a verbal boundary. No physical contact will take place other than an occasional shove if one of the aggressor's touches your lead fence hand. The sole purpose of this drill is to develop this priority positioning that will allow you to take pro-active action to control the situation. The student's would then switch roles so that they all get to practice.

□ = Aggressor.
■ = defender.



Figure 1. Shows the defender engaged from the front as the second aggressor makes a move to his flank for the blind side attack.



Figure 2. Shows the defender after the adjustment in positioning that will then place all three individuals in a line, giving you just enough time to deal with them one at a time.

Clinch & relocate position drill 1 : footwork only

This drill again requires three people and is worked from the same starting position as our last two on one scenario. This time you have not had the chance to be pre-emptive by attacking first instead one of your aggressor's has made the first move against you. This may be by either of them and their aggressive action might be an attempted ambush in the form of a shove, grab or sucker punch, the thing to bear in mind is that as soon as the physical starts the second aggressor will attack immediately, therefore your response should be to drop your head and cover by raising your arms as you rapidly close with him tying him up in a Thai style neck clinch.

The clinch may be on the one that has made the move toward you or you might clinch the other guy, whoever you can get hold of first is fine. From the clinch you will now zone away from the second aggressor again placing you in a position where you are dealing with one whilst watching the other. This drill is performed as a progression by first practicing the foot work by clinching and zoning away from the second guy who pursues you by moving around in an attempt to get behind you. Zone away from both positions shown then switch roles with your partner.



Working off the fence, clinch the neck of whoever is closest to you and zone away from the second aggressor so that you are dealing with one whilst looking at the other.



In reality as soon as you zone to relocate your position, you would head-butting and kneeing the guy you are holding but for this drill just zone away from the 2nd man as he tries to close in on you 2 or 3 times just to get the idea of positioning.

This drill should be worked from the two positions shown below.

□

□ ■

Figure 1.

□ ■ □

Figure 2.

□ □ ■

Figure 3.

Clinch & relocate position drill 2 : Add striking

It is from this zoned position that you would be mauling your clinched aggressor with rapid head butts, knees and elbows the whole time that you have him in the clinch. From here you would shove him into the second aggressor in order to escape or re-engage. The pressure is added by having the aggressor throw all out punches at your head wearing boxing gloves or whilst wearing a pair of focus pads, as you cover your head and close for the clinch. All the while you should be throwing rapids shots into your clinched body armoured aggressor. Zone away 2-3 times as you practice your verbal boundary and posturing skills such as "STAY BACK, STAY WHERE YOU F**KING ARE!! " Then from here you shove one into the other and make good your escape.

2 on 1-impact drills :

Here we are practicing our basic strikes on impactive equipment in a pre-emptive fashion with two partners, one in front and one off to the side. Assuming that we are in the dialogue stage of those vital few seconds just before the physical starts and have already worked out who the immediate threat is, we will now strike him first with a single clinical pre-emptive strike before immediately turning to attack the second aggressor following with further strikes if needed.

It is important to remember that you will only have an instant in which to take control of the situation therefore you only have only one shot to spend on the first aggressor before the second guy makes a move. So the deal is that you go from this first strike straight into the second aggressor with a continuous attack until the threat subsides. Work with your partners attacking the one in the flank first then attacking to your previous front and vice versa. Use the following examples to get an idea and feel free to interchange whatever your preferred main artillery strikes may be.



From the above position turn to your flank with an elbow strike to the first assailant then turn back to the one in front as you fire in with multiple Ax hand strikes to the head and neck area.



In this example the guy in front is taken out with an elbow strike then you turn to meet the second aggressor with a face smash and follow up with cycling hammer-fist blows into the second pad.



Sucker punch drill

For this drill you will need three people, two of which are pad holders the defender is told to close their eyes as they are turned in a circle ten times until they start to feel dizzy, this action simulates instability and disorientation similar to the effects of being sucker punched from behind.



From here the defender is let go of as he tries to clear his head, as the feeders attempt to close on him with the pads. The defender strives to respond as best he can with single impact strikes and again priority positioning. Be sure to have an extra person available for safety just to catch the defender should he fall over. If he does fall the drill should continue and the defender must now fend from the floor and strive to get up on his feet quickly.

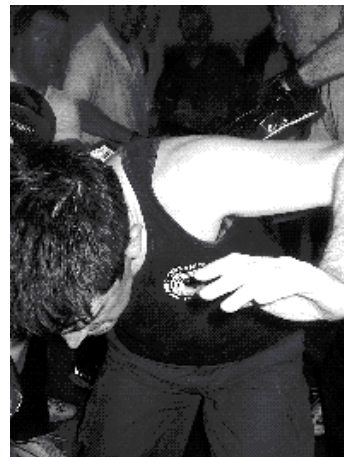


Gang simulation drill:

This drill requires a minimum of 7 people and a maximum of 15 all wearing focus pads, the defender is in the middle of the rest of the group who strive to keep the defender closed in from all directions. The objective of the defender is too continuously move and cover his/her head so as to present as little target area as possible, the method used to

do this is what we call the wash your hair defence. Simply place both open hands on your head and raise your elbows then move your arms and hands vigorously over your face, head and neck in order to protect this vital area from a continuous assault from the entire group who attempt to slap you from all directions with the pads.

The idea is to keep damage and blows to your person to a bare minimum and your sole objective is to escape. Find a gap and blast through it verbalising and striking out as you go. Once you have been through once switch roles and let some one else have a go. This drill will quickly show you just how limited your options are in such a situation. Damage limitation is the key as you prioritise your escape. This is the only sensible decision in such a scenario.



Here we see a number of feeders holding the pads as one defender covers and move until he finds a gap to escape through.



Just cover your head and keep moving. Focus on any gap you can find and escape through it.