

When Tapping Out Is **NOT** an Option!

Mixed Martial Arts

Is it the right choice for Self Defense?

With the rabid popularity of Mixed Martial Arts fighting, many men and women are flocking to that sport. Thinking that fighting in a ring using grappling as a primary form of fighting with the occasional haymaker or head kick would be the preferred method on the street.

The reality is there are no referees and no rules on the street, and you cannot “Tap Out” when you want to quit and expect your opponent to stop.

This does not mean that a “cage” fighter is not a skilled fighter. They are very skilled “at what they do.” As a rule, on the street, going to the ground is too dangerous, there are too many unknowns. Multiple attackers, weapons, bar stools and cement curbs. The last place you want to be in a real fight is on the ground.

Many will disagree in whole or in part with the above statements. You cannot argue with success. There have been many people that have used MMA type techniques in real situations and prevailed. But is that the norm?

Mixed Martial Arts very meaning is a mixture of different martial arts. In this case only two. Mixed Martial Arts essentially consist of Jujitsu and Muay Thai. There are some fighters that carry heavy training in other disciplines but end up punching and kicking very much like a Muay Thai, and employ Jujitsu or something very similar (Judo or Wrestling) when on the ground.

When training in any Martial Art, repetition of techniques and responses creates habits that many times cannot be broken without conscious thought. I have recently been informed that there are 33 things you are not allowed to do in the UFC. 33 things! I do not know them all but some are you cannot gouge eye, rip an ear off, break fingers (no small joint manipulation), strike to the groin or bite.

Allow me to ask a question. Don't you think that if you purposefully train to NOT do certain things (abiding by the rules) that it would be nearly impossible to change that response or lack of response in a real adrenaline filled situation? Now if you are fighting another MMA fighter on the street they will very likely have the same problem you have.

However, if you engage a person that does not partake in training that recognizes rules and only trains with a "I have to get in and do as much actual damage I can the moment I can". This means they would gouge eyes, the moment you grab them, or bite anything that is near their mouth. An attacker that is so vicious and focused on damaging you that while you are figuring out that this is a real fight and that the rules do not apply right now you are already blind in one or both eyes.

You will do, under stress what you are trained to do. Which it to say if you have practiced a single leg take down 200 times a week, you will very likely do that the moment something "real" happens. What are you trained to do, or not do?

In a nut shell, there are three forms of Martial Arts.

- 1. Exhibition** - Exhibition, or theatrical Karate, is like what one might see in the movie. The techniques are flashy, beautiful and graceful, but have little to do with the realities of street violence. (*Theatrical Martial Art is to self-defense what James Bond movies are to espionage: one is practical - the other is fantasy*)
- 2. Competition** - Competition, or Sport Karate is a little better than exhibition martial arts as far as self-defense is concerned. At least in competition, one actually fights. However, from a perspective of self-defense you are not engaged in a real life or death struggle. Rather, you are engaged in a fight that involves protective gear and **rules** of contact as well as conduct. With a referee to ensure your safety and compliance. In a street fight, there are no such **rules**.

3. Survival - A “Survival” or “Defensive Martial Art” stresses those elements that are useful in very violent confrontations. On the street, there are no referees and only one rule: **Survive at All Cost**. A Survival Martial Art focuses on this rule. The goal of this approach to training is your survival. Survival arts must deal with a much greater spectrum of knowledge than an exhibition or competition martial art. True survival arts must teach legal/moral aspects of the use of force, as well as how to deal with fear, how do defuse confrontations, and effective self-defense skills.

Reality Defense Training is a Survival Martial Art!

The bottom line is that we are more concerned with function over form. We do not train for aesthetics beauty or the ability to take punishment in the ring. We train to avoid and escape conflict and, if left with no other option, to use whatever force is necessary to survive or protect the innocent life of another.

In closing, if your passion is competition and fitness then I would encourage to find the best MMA/Competition based training you can. If you are **NOT** going to get the ring and compete, perhaps a **Survival Based Martial Art** would be more appropriate.