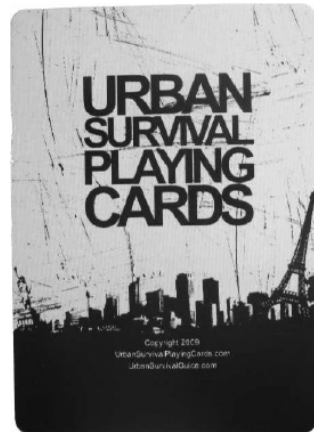




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In The Real World, Most People Don't Have A Fully Stocked Retreat They Can Escape To. Even If You've Planned Ahead And You Do, There's No Guarantee That You'll Leave In Time Or That You'll Be Able To Make It There.

Your First Plan Must Be To Survive In Place.

Welcome To The Lamplighter Report!

I wanted to take a moment to say thank you for your membership to The Lamplighter Report. This issue is packed with some powerful information that will help you to prepare you and your loved ones in the event of terrorist attack, natural disaster, economic collapse, or a pandemic.

In Future Issues, "Lamplighter Report" readers will get....

- My ESSENTIAL Survival "How-To's" (3 - 5 EACH MONTH)
- New "Off-The-Grid" Books, Videos, and Sites I've discovered
- My Private "Intel Report" on Global, National and Local Situations I'm Monitoring
- Real Life "Case Studies" of How other Families are Preparing
- "What Went Wrong" - My Analysis of COMMON Mistakes That Most Preppers are Making and much, MUCH more...

The Lamplighter Report



March Issue

THE LAMPLIGHTER REPORT INVITES YOU TO JOIN OUR OFF-LINE MEMBERS

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IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SURVIVEINPLACE.COM URBAN SURVIVAL COURSE AND WHY YOU SHOULD GET SIGNED UP, PLEASE READ THE COURSE DESCRIPTION AT SURVIVEINPLACE.COM.

Mental Rehearsal

Free and inexpensive firearms training techniques to dramatically improve your speed and accuracy ... part 4 of 5

Mental Rehearsal Secret weapon of Olympic Athletes, Special Operations warriors from around the globe, world class competitors, and YOU.

In the last 3 installments of this series, we've covered the fundamentals of training, the importance of dry fire, and how to properly use airsoft as a turbocharged version of dry fire.

The next set of skills that we're going to cover may be the most important of all. You can do them in your car at stoplights, in bed as you're going to sleep at night, or even as a way to stay awake during a meeting at work. It's mental rehearsal.

When I say "mental rehearsal" I'm specifically talking about envisioning a situation where you are going to engage a target with your firearm and going through it in your mind from start to finish. This may include backing up parts of the sequence like you would rewind a video, repeating sections, and even visualizing yourself in the 3rd person and going through the motion and imagining what you would look like if you had a camera filming you from various angles.

In case you have any doubts about the value of mental training, I want to tell you about four groups of Soviet Olympians who competed in the 1980 Winter Olympics.

- Group 1** spent 100% of their time doing physical training.
- Group 2** spent 75% of their time doing physical training and 25% doing mental training.
- Group 3** spent 50% of their time doing physical training and 50% doing mental training.
- Group 4** spent 25% of their time doing physical training and 75% doing

mental training.

You can probably guess that group 4 did best by the simple fact that I'm including the story, but the amazing part is that group 3 did 2nd best and the group that did 100% physical training did WORST.

And then, shortly thereafter in 1983, a study was done at the University of North Carolina where basketball players improved their freethrow shooting ability by 7% by simply visualizing themselves using perfect form and hitting every shot.

These weren't isolated incidents. Since then, Olympic athletes, professional athletes, special operations teams, and SWAT teams have used mental rehearsal in combination with physical training to dramatically improve their performance over physical training alone.

In fact, a dramatic example of an Olympic athlete successfully using mental imagery is US diver Laura Wilkinson. Before the 2000 Olympics, Laura broke her leg and couldn't dive for several weeks while her leg was healing. Instead, every day she'd climb up on the 10 meter board, shut her eyes, and go through her routine in her mind. When her cast came off and she started diving again for real, she was at almost the exact same place in her training and won a gold medal in Sydney.

Elite athletes use mental imagery because at the top levels of athletics, almost everyone is equal in their talent and physical abilities. The big difference is how strong they are mentally, how few mistakes they make, how they're able to deal with adversity during competition, and how quickly they're able to identify and capitalize on their opponents weaknesses and mistakes.

You can take advantage of these same benefits of mental imagery, but there are some additional benefits that are particularly important for individuals training to use a firearm to defend themselves in a lethal force encounter. You'll quickly see other applications to martial arts training as well as almost any survival skill you can think of.

In an era of increasing regulation, mental training will always be legal...even in a Federal Building.

As far as operational security and privacy goes, mental imagery will never give you away to your friends and neighbors as a prepper.

Working through mistakes in mental training doesn't "cost" as much as mistakes do in real life.

It's free, fast, and you don't have to clean your firearm afterwards.

You never need to find a willing "victim" to play a violent attacker and do it exactly the way you want them to.

You're less likely to find obstacles to practicing a skill in your head than in real life. Bad weather doesn't matter, illness doesn't matter, traffic doesn't matter, and finances don't matter. The only obstacles for mental practice are internal.

Injuries don't happen when you do mental training.

Recovery times are shorter with mental training.

It is easier to practice perfect technique for 25 physical repetitions than it is for 100 physical repetitions due to physical exhaustion. The remaining 75 repetitions that you do in your mind can be done to perfection because you have a clear image/memory of what the 25 perfect repetitions felt like.

You can do mental rehearsal while injured, sick, or separated from your firearm.

So, how do you do mental rehearsal? That's a million dollar question, and the answer can get as complicated and involved as you'd like, although I'm going to help you shortcut a lot of the learning process and tell you the techniques that will give you the biggest bang for the buck.

I'll give you some fundamentals that will help you quickly enjoy the major benefits of mental rehearsal. I say that because the topic of mental rehearsal gets incredibly involved once you move past the basic

Hand and arm signals are a great way of communicating when you don't want to be heard. They are quieter and often more reliable than whispering into a radio mike. You should have a standardized set for your cell. When on the move, shoot an eye towards your cell members every ten or fifteen seconds in case they're trying to signal you. Get in the habit of passing the signals on: when one member of the cell uses a hand and

arm signal, everyone who sees it should repeat it. That will let the signaler know that his sign is acknowledged and increases the chance that the intended recipient (who may be looking away at any given moment) will get the message. These were just some of the most basic signals for field operations. They are absolutely essential for maneuvering you and your loved ones in case of a hostile situation.



Weapon Safety Around Kids

I recently received the following question from a gentleman taking the SurviveInPlace course:

"I will have little kids in the house so three weapons in each room will be a challenge especially to keep them out of view. Any suggestions?"

This was in response to the suggestion in the first lesson to identify three items in every room of your house that could be used as an improvised weapon in the event of a home invasion.

The trick here is to identify household items that you could use as weapons...not necessarily to actually place weapons in every room of your house.

As an example, if they're sturdy, table lamps, floor lamps, curtain rods, paper towel dowels, and shower curtain rods all make great improvised striking weapons that don't need to be hidden from children.

Another example is that if you holding a hard-cover book while you strike or slash at an attacker's face, it

can be much more effective than simply striking with your hands.

Also, if you have a chair that you can pick up and move with, you can use it to create distance between yourself and an attacker and possibly even charge them and temporarily disarm/disorient them by striking them with the chair.

Of course, in the kitchen, you have lots of great improvised weapons, including knives, forks, and small appliances.

The main takeaway is to train your mind to identify items that you could use to defend yourself from an attacker.

It might take a little effort at first, but this is one skill that quickly becomes automatic & your mind will become proficient at quickly identifying potential weapons, regardless of your environment.

Halt. Carry the hand to the shoulder, palm to the front then thrust the hand upward vertically to the full extend of the arm and hold it in the position until the signal is understood.



Freeze. Make the signal for a halt and make a fist with the hand.



Down, take cover. Extend arm sideward at an angle of 45 degrees above horizontal, palm down, and lower it to the side.



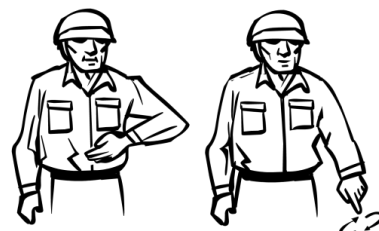
Double time. Carry the hand to the shoulder, fist closed rapidly thrust the fist upward vertically to the full extends of the arm and back to the shoulder several times.



Rally point. Touch the belt buckle with one hand and then point to the ground.



Objective rally point. Touch the belt buckle with one hand, point to the ground, and make a circular motion with the hand.



skills, and the marginal increase in effectiveness may mean the difference between silver and gold in Olympic level competition, most people will see incredible improvement by simply using the techniques that I'll share with you here.

Let's start by talking about sensory engagement.

That's a fancy way of saying that, as you're doing mental rehearsal, you want to think about what all 5 senses would be experiencing if you were doing physical training. One of the main reasons that you do this is to provide what's known as an "anchor" to your training. When you've repeatedly imagined a situation and then experience it, the more the actual experience matches up to what you've rehearsed in your brain, the more familiar it will seem. Your brain will basically say, "I've been here before. I've done this. I know how it goes and how it ends...and I know it ends well for me."

Here are some examples:

What do you smell? What does your firearm smell like before you shoot? How about after? When you're under stress, does your sweat smell different?

What do you see? How do your hands look wrapped around your firearm? As you're moving, does your sight picture bounce or stay smooth? What is in focus? Your front sight? How much space is on both sides of your front sight? What visual cues tell you that you should fire? What is your point of aim? A number on a target? The center of mass? Can you see what's happening inside your firearm as you pull the trigger as if you're looking at it with X-Ray vision?

Do you have a full field of view, partial tunnel vision, or complete tunnel vision? Does your muzzle rise straight up or does it cant to the side as it recoils? Does fire come out of the end of your muzzle? How quickly do you reacquire your sight picture after each shot? Do you see heat waves coming off of your barrel as you fire more and more rounds? If you've got a 1911, what does a stovepipe look like and what do you do immediately when you see one? How is your sight picture different when your slide locks back on an empty mag and what do you do immediately? Think

about what your reloads look like. Think about what your malfunction drills look like.

Can you imagine being a cameraman and watching yourself from somewhere else in the room? (1/3 of Olympians view themselves from both first person (as you normally see things) and third person (like a camera on the wall, watching you.)) Do you have an aggressive stance? Is your stance stable? When you move, are you moving efficiently? When you clear and draw your firearm, is there any wasted movement? Are you shuffling your feet instead of crossing them?

What do you taste? Is your mouth wet or dry? Is your throat tight or dilated? Do you taste burnt gunpowder after you shoot?

What do you feel? What is each joint of each finger touching? How is your weight balanced? What is your breathing like? Can you feel yourself breathing with your diaphragm and your stomach going in and out? Can you feel your heart beat? Where do you feel it on your body? Can you feel your breathing and pulse rate slowing slightly and your field of view widening as you do combat breathing? How does it feel to draw your weapon? How is it different depending on your holster, clothing, and position? If you've got a retention holster, how does it feel to disengage the retention? If the retention doesn't disengage immediately, what do you do? If your firearm has a safety, how do you disengage it? How does the trigger feel as you bring up the slack? How about as the trigger breaks? How far back do you release the trigger before it resets? If the firearm doesn't go "bang," what do you do? If you're transitioning from one target to another, do you pivot at the shoulders, at the waist, or do you keep your entire upper body still and pivot using your legs?

What are you and or anyone else saying? What does your draw stroke sound like? If you have a safety, what does it sound like as it disengages? Can you "hear" anything as you pull the trigger? What does a good discharge sound like? What does the sound of your trigger resetting sound like? What does the

sound of a malfunction sound like and what do you do immediately when you hear this? What does the sound of your slide locking back after shooting the last round of a magazine sound like and what do you do immediately? What does it sound like when your firing pin drops on a bad primer and what do you do immediately?

How important are these drills? VERY important if you want to improve your firearms performance. Especially when you realize that your firearm is simply a tool and that your biggest weapon is your brain. The more you train your brain, the better it will be able to use the tools you have in your hands. These drills will help you improve your skills rapidly while saving you HUNDREDS of hours of range time and THOUSANDS of dollars in ammo and range fees.

OODA Loops

OODA Loop stands for Observe, Orient, Decide, Act, and the concept was formalized during the Vietnam War for fighter pilots. Between WWII and Vietnam, our Air Force became sloppy, relying more on the superiority of our jets than the skills of our pilots, and it cost us lives.

With the increasing speed of the jets in combat, the victor in air to air engagements was usually the pilot who could observe what was going on, filter it through their "orientation" or preconceived thoughts, decide on a course of action, and act the quickest.

Everyone in every confrontation goes through these four steps before taking action, whether it is a conscious process or not. The trick is to try to do it enough quicker than your opponent that by the time they have decided what to do, you have already acted and are no longer where they expect you to be.

By doing mental rehearsal, you can train your brain to identify threats and opportunities quickly. You can also train your brain to know that the situation is survivable and that you will be victorious. By running through several options in mental rehearsal and pre-deciding on the best course of action ahead of time, when the real situation comes, you won't have to waste time making decisions under stress...you'll just replay a script that you've already run in your mind.

The end result is that with proper mental rehearsal, you'll quickly go through your OODA loop and be taking action while other people are still standing flat footed with their mouths agape.

Mental Rehearsal for Self Defense

As we talked about earlier, many people reading this will be using mental rehearsal specifically to train for using a firearm for self defense. Obviously, shooting someone in self defense is not something that you can train at full speed or even half-speed. You CAN train for it with simunitions, lasers, airsoft, or paintball, but in order to do it effectively, you really need to train your brain for what is likely to happen in a firearms incident so that it won't surprise you when it happens.

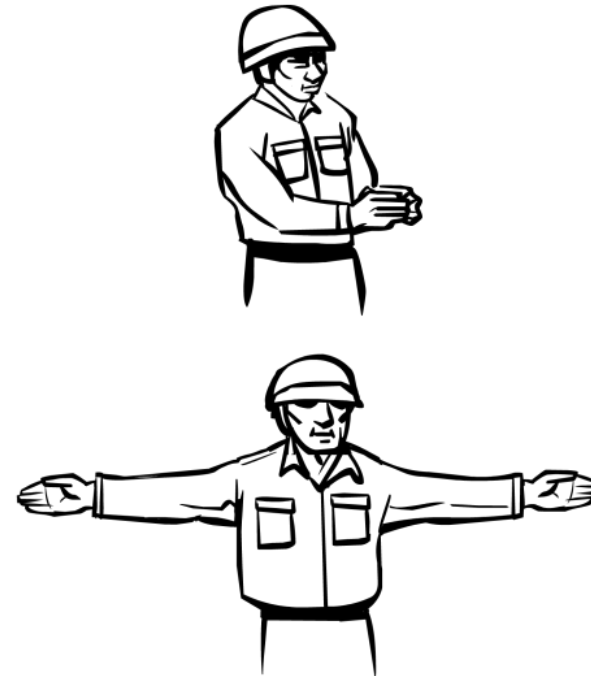
One of the first things that is important to realize is that if you get shot with a firearm or are forced to shoot someone with a firearm, there is a 93-97% chance of surviving a gunshot wound. In TV and the movies, people die quickly and quietly after the first shot. The real world isn't so quick or clean.

When you're going through your mental rehearsal for self-defense scenarios, you need to keep this in mind. You might even want to run through scenarios in your head where you DO get shot/cut/hit and visualize yourself fighting through it and STILL eliminating the threat and being able to go home that night.

I go so far as to run through scenarios where I am out with my wife and sons and one of them gets shot. In these scenarios, instead of focusing on tending to them and eliminating their last line of defense (me), I run that 93-97% stat through my mind and immediately take out the threat and then tend to any injuries. It should go without saying, but I ALWAYS train successful outcomes.

Will this always work? No. One famous example of not being able to separate tragedy from performance was when US Olympic speed skater, Dan Jansen, fell in the 1988 Winter Olympics after his sister died. But an example of mental training paying off happened right before the 2003 Pan Am Games when US Pentathlete Anita Allen lost her best friend in Iraq. She was devastated, but went on to win gold and qualify for the Olympics. Again, it may not ALWAYS work, but

Open up or extend. Start signal with arm extended in the front of the body, palms together, and bring arms to the horizontal position at the sides, space palms forward.

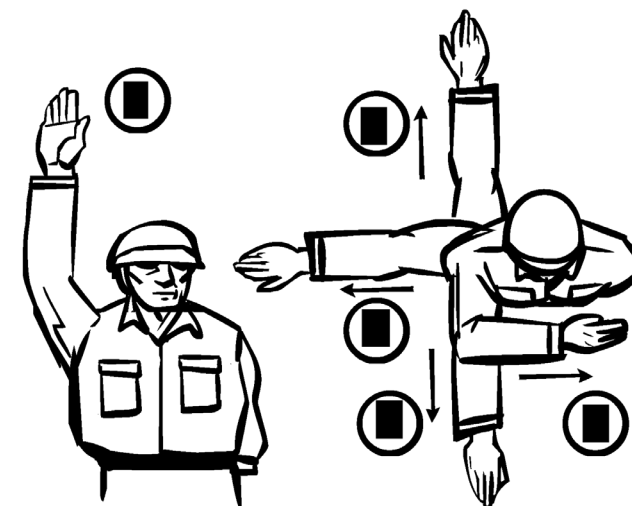


I do not understand. Raise both arms sideward to the horizontal at the hip level, bend both arms at elbows, palms up, and shrug shoulders in the manner of universal "I do not know."



Forward. Face and move to the desired direction of march, at the same time extend the arm horizontally to the rear, then swing it overhead and forward in the direction of movement until it is horizontal, palm down.

Disperse. Extend either arm vertically overhead, wave the hand and arm to the front, left, right, and rear, the palm toward the direction of each movement.



Vee. Extend arms at an angle of 45 degrees above the horizontal forming the letter “V” with the arms and torso.



Platoon. Extend both arms forward, palm of the hand down and describe large vertical circles with hands.



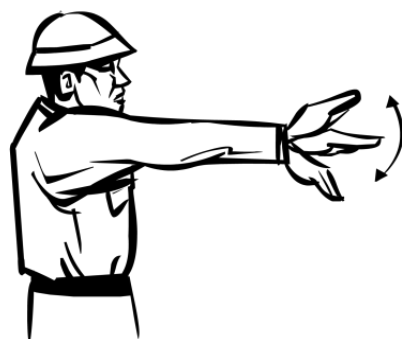
Fireteam. Place the right arm diagonally across the chest.



Close up. Start signal with both arms extended sideward, palm forward, and bring hands together in front of the body momentarily.



Squad. Extend the arm and hand toward the squad leader, palm of the hand down, distinctly, move the hand up and down several times from the wrist holding the arm steady.



you hopefully won't need it to work more than once in your lifetime.

At a minimum, you want to make sure that as you're running through scenarios in your mind where you're eliminating lethal threats, you envision the possibility that it will require multiple strikes or shots to stop your attacker. If the time ever comes where you have to use lethal force, you don't want to be surprised and stall unnecessarily when your first strike/shot doesn't stop your attacker. If the first shot stops the threat, that's great, but there's a good chance that it won't.

What Will You Say?

One of the benefits of mental rehearsal is that you can dialog with an attacker and have them say anything you want them to. You can also go through what you'll tell them:

“Drop your weapon NOW!” (instead of “Drop your gun NOW!”)

“Lay face down and look away from me!”

“Cross Your Legs”

“Arms Straight Out”

What if They Comply?

A very difficult scenario for people who have only trained for lethal force encounters on a range or even doing force on force is what to do when your attacker actually listens to you. If you engage a home invader in your living room and you've got them laid out on the floor but your phone is in the kitchen and you're not sure if they're alone, what do you do?

Tase or pepper them to subdue them? Ask them to lay there like a nice home invader? Stomp on their ankle, wrist, or floating ribs? Strike them in the back of the head to subdue them? Cuff/plasticuff/zip tie them? If you decide to restrain them, what do you do first to insure that you don't end up in a wrestling match? Have THEM restrain themselves? The time to figure this out is during your mental rehearsal...not when your life depends on it.

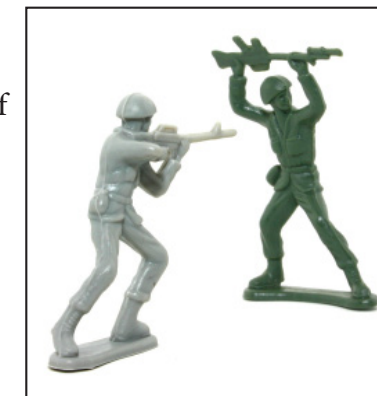
What if you're a woman, you're out in public, and your

phone is in the bottom of your purse? Can you get to it, unlock it, and dial 911 without taking your focus off of your attacker? Would you be better attacking them first, and then calling 911?

In any violent confrontation, what is your strategy for staying aware of your surroundings while you have your attacker laid out?

What If They Comply...partially?

One set of scenarios that you need to run through in your mind is what you will do if your attacker listens to your command to drop their weapon but then nonchalantly approaches you. Should you shoot them? Should you pull out pepper spray or a Taser and engage them? Keep in mind that if your attacker



has intent to kill you, they may bet on you not shooting an unarmed person and walk right up to you. In other words, just because they've dropped their visible weapon doesn't mean they still can't rush you and kill you with their hands or your gun.

You also need to keep in mind that your attacker could change their mind at any point...if they detect that you have a weakness, that they have an advantage, or if they see a “friend” coming.

Mental Rehearsal for Combating Stress, Tunnel Vision, & the Shakes

Chances are good that you will get an adrenaline dump during a violent encounter or immediately afterwards and possibly before the police arrive. This is a VERY vulnerable time and you must stay switched on. In fact, Muslim armies have taken a page from Sun Tzu's tactics and have allowed their enemies false victories since the 7th century. In short, they know that there is a psychological letdown after a violent encounter from the medicine cabinet of hormones and brain chemicals that are released when someone thinks they've escaped death and won.

It's not uncommon for fighters to have a hard time staying awake in this state and many armies have purposely caused this effect by sacrificing small forces against enemy forces simply to get their enemy

into this lulled state. Once their enemy's brains have started releasing their post-fight chemicals and hormones, the armies attack with their main force. It's smart and brutally effective as proven by a 1300+ year use of it.

If you find yourself in a lethal force encounter, regardless of whether your attacker listened to you or you had to subdue them in one way or another, you need to be aware of this and stay alert and aware so that you don't slip into the vulnerable post-fight state too soon.

When you're practicing mental rehearsal, carry the scenario out in your mind until law enforcement arrives, you're a safe distance away, additional attackers attack, or friendly backup arrives.

Mental Rehearsal Routine of a Career Operator

When I interviewed internationally known firearms instructor, Randy Watt, for this course, he described his mental rehearsal routine. To put things into perspective, until recently, Randy was the Assistant Chief of Police in Ogden Utah. He's an internationally sought after SWAT instructor. He's a Colonel in the 19th Special Forces Group with multiple combat tours. AND, he's one of the elite few who have the critical combination of skill at arms and the ability to teach at a high enough level to be selected as an instructor at Gunsite.

Randy has decades of experience as a tactical operator and almost unlimited access to ammo and range time. Even so, Randy STILL uses dry fire and mental rehearsal. In fact, he considers them to be a vital component to his training.

Part of Randy's routine is the same, regardless of whether he is dry firing or on the live fire range. He'll start out with 5-10 minutes with his eyes closed, visualizing his body doing what it needs to do. The goal here is to bridge the gap between what the brain is focusing on doing and what the body is performing.

He goes further and breaks his presentation down into his component parts: Stance, grip, sight picture, sight alignment, breathing control, trigger press, follow through, and recovery.

This is similar to what Jeff Cooper, founder of Gunsite, taught when he told shooters that they could improve their shooting drastically by simply starting off their range time by doing 25 repetitions of getting a proper grip on their firearm. Even if that's the only part of your presentation that you focus on, everything that follows will improve.

Then next thing that Randy does is create an image around a situation that he is shooting. In other words, in his mind he isn't shooting at a paper target. He has created a situation in his mind and the paper target has turned into a 3 dimensional person who has entered the room where Randy is. The goal of this is to put the emotional component of a violent force encounter into static training.

This step helps a person make the jump from "shooting" to "training."

Randy does what good military, law enforcement, and other switched on people do and uses mental training in his daily life. As he's going up to his bank, he quickly games hold-up scenarios in his head so that he'll be able to react instantly if something happens. When he's with family and sees an unsavory character approaching, he games his response in his head. And when he approaches his home with his wife and puts his key in the door, he games potential threats that might be waiting for him on the other side.

He used these techniques as a member of SWAT, as a SWAT team leader, as a Special Forces door kicker, and as a Special Forces team leader. They worked and saved lives in those situations and it only makes sense to use them in everyday law enforcement and in off duty and civilian situations.

The more scenarios you game out in your head and the more often you do it, the deeper your response groove will be and the easier it will be for your brain to quickly pick an effective response in a crisis situation.

At this point, you appreciate the value of mental rehearsal, understand the most important fundamentals, and simply need a blueprint to follow. I'm going to keep it simple in this issue and build on it in the next issue.

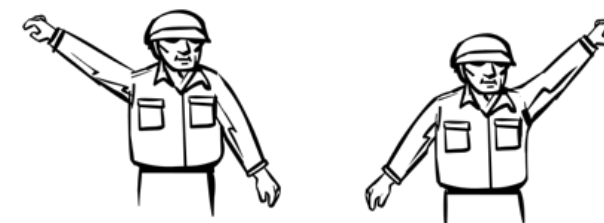
I am ready. Execute the signal, are you ready.



Shift. Raise the hand that is on the side toward the new direction across the body, palm to the front; then swing the arm in a horizontal arc, extending arm and hand to point in the new direction.



Echelon. Face the unit being signaled, and extend one arm 45 degrees above the other arm 45 degrees below the horizontal, palm to the front. The lower arm indicates the direction of echelon.



Skirmisher. Raise both arms laterally until horizontal, arms and hand extended, palms own. If it is necessary to indicate the direction, move in the desired direction at the same time.



Wedge. Extend both arms downward and to the side at an angle of 45 degrees below the horizontal, palms to the front.



your kill zone.

Tactical interior design

When it comes to arranging our homes and offices most of us place a priority on appearance alone. I'd also suggest that you start to look at these areas from the perspective of a potential battlefield. Then consider how you can arrange things for an optimal strategic advantage.

What do you have to work with in your environments like your home or office? Consider your couches, chairs, desks, end tables, plants, floor lamps, decorative objects. What are they constructed of? What can be used for cover, for concealment? Also think of them as chess pieces that can be moved to force someone to take a particular path or stand where you want them to.

Look at the construction elements involved. How is the room laid out? Is there a wall, partition or supporting element like a column to work with?

The variables to consider are virtually endless. The possibilities are unique to each individual's environments. Summarily the points to be made are these:

- You want to be able to channel the target into your kill zone.
- You want to have good cover and concealment and a good field of fire.
- You want to be able to strike and withdraw quickly.
- You want to deny or restrict the target's freedom of movement or escape.



Combat Signals Continued

This month I wanted to finish our discussion on combat signals.

Are you ready. Extend the arm toward the leader for whom the signal is intended, hand raised, fingers extended and joined, raise arm slightly above horizontal, palm facing outward.



There are two major types of mental rehearsal that I do. Focused rehearsal and “current situation” rehearsal. I spend the most time doing focused rehearsal as I'm going to sleep at night, while waiting in line, or before shooting a stage for a competition. When I do focused rehearsal, I do several “repetitions” per session. I alternate between focusing on specific parts of my technique and the tactics of the situation. Sometimes it's all the same scenario, like before I shoot competitively, but I usually run several different scenarios in a row.

Current situation rehearsal is completely different and I do it throughout the day whenever I enter a new environment. It is focused more on tactics rather than technique. Here's an example. When I unlock my office and turn on the lights, I always game out what I would do if there was an attacker waiting. I take into account what I'm wearing, who's with me, what I'm carrying, and anything else unique to that day. The whole scenario takes from the time I remove my keys from my pocket until I turn the key in the lock—a couple of seconds at most—but it warms up my brain in case there actually is someone on the other side of the door.

So, here are a few specific mental rehearsal routines that you can do:

1. In bed before going to sleep, spend time going through the fundamentals of shooting—Stance, grip, sight picture, sight alignment, breathing control, trigger press, follow through, and recovery. Don't introduce a scenario at this time—just shoot targets. This should not cause your heart rate to increase or your breathing to change. Remember to involve all 5 senses and be as specific as possible with your mental pictures.

Just like fundamentals should be the core of your live fire training, they should also be the core of your mental rehearsal. Run your drawstroke forwards & backwards in your mind, both as if you're looking out of your own eyes and as if you're watching yourself with a camera.

2. In bed before going to sleep, go through a few home invasion scenarios. How do you get out of bed? What do you grab first? If you have a lock/

safe, what if it malfunctions? Can you tell if your firearm is in battery in the dark? Make sure you challenge and identify your home invaders as a legitimate threat...even during mental rehearsal. Sometimes you'll want to carry out the situation until police arrive. Sometimes you'll want to envision running into a relative. Other times, you'll want to envision finding everything's fine.

If you find your heart rate starts going faster while you're doing this, it means that your mental rehearsal has enough detail that your brain is responding as if the situation is real. This is good for realism, but bad for sleeping. You can either use this as an opportunity to practice lowering your heart rate and blood pressure with combat breathing techniques, you can switch to mentally rehearsing fundamentals without scenarios, or you can stop running scenarios before going to sleep until you don't have as much of a response.

You'll find that the more you run through these scenarios in your mind, the more calm you become when you respond to “bumps in the night.” Part of what you're doing is desensitizing your mind so that it doesn't over-release adrenaline if you actually do need to perform in a violent force encounter. So if you're having a hard time getting to sleep after running scenarios, start running the scenarios during the day until you don't have a psychological response to them. At first, you might even be able to mentally rehearse exciting scenarios as a tool to wake yourself up in the morning or when you're getting sluggish throughout the day.

3. Any time you're waiting in line, run through one or two situation specific scenarios.
4. When you're at a stoplight, run through one or two situation specific scenarios, taking into account your clothing, your seatbelt, your vehicle, and the vehicles around you. As a hint, many times the best “solution” in these stoplight scenarios is to simply punch the gas, avoid confrontation, and escape.

Remember to always picture yourself walking away

victorious. It's fine to imagine yourself getting shot, cut, or hit, but make sure that they don't affect your performance or the outcome.

In the next issue, we're going to tie all of the training



Tactics of the Crescent Moon

I'm an avid reader...and I usually read at least 5 books per month. I've spent a lot of time taking courses and learning how to speed read, so it doesn't take as much time as you might think.

One of the books that I want to recommend to you is called, "Tactics of The Crescent Moon: Militant Muslim Combat Methods." It's written by H. John Poole, who also wrote "The Last Hundred Yards: The NCO's Contribution to Warfare," "One More Bridge to Cross: Lowering the Cost of War," "Phantom Soldier: The Enemy's Answer to U.S. Firepower," and "Homeland Siege: Tactics for Military and Police."

This isn't a survival book, per se, but it is a great book on tactics and what most Westerners would consider non-conventional, or guerilla, approaches to problems. As the title implies, the book deals with the combat tactics of militant Muslim armies, how many of their tactics come directly from Sun Tzu, and how consistent they've been throughout history.

There are two major reasons why I recommend this book. The first one is that it is one of the easiest to read books on tactics that I have ever read. The reason for this is that Poole not only describes the tactics that militant Muslim armies use, but gives examples of when they used them and how they could have been countered. I love Sun Tzu's "Art of War" but stories really make the lessons come alive. If you are a fan of military history and tactics, this aspect alone will make

methods that we've covered over the last few months and go over a few specific regimens to help you get the most benefit out of the time you have for training.

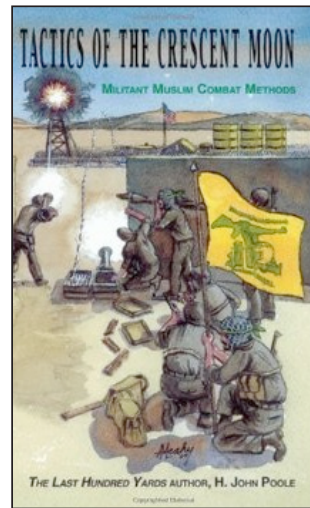
"Tactics of the Crescent Moon" one of your most dog-eared books.

One example is Poole's analysis of the wars in Afghanistan throughout history and how similar the militant Muslim Afghan guerilla fighting style is to what the French and US forces encountered in Vietnam. In both cases, the guerilla forces tried to avoid large scale direct conflict and focused on cutting communication and supply lines, sniping, booby traps, harassment fire, and anything else to try to keep their attackers in a "switched on" defensive mindset with no outlet for their anger and frustration.

Poole also goes into the militant Muslim's methods of training, the use of religious beliefs and chants, their willingness to become martyrs, historical applications of "The Art of War," and their emphasis on training to fight up-close and personal rather than using standoff weapons.

Hopefully, there will never be a military reason to benefit from these lessons on US soil. But there is another component to the lessons in this book that ARE applicable in preparedness situations.

The second reason why I want to recommend this book to you is to stretch your mind and give you another way to approach problems in survival situations. Survival is all about improvising, adapting, and overcoming obstacles and if you'll be more likely to do just that if you have multiple ways of looking at problems.



ambushes, and other potentially bad situations rather than being stressful. Like most people, I don't have actionable threats that put me at risk of being targeted for violence, so taking the "action hero" approach allows me to practice a higher level of situational awareness than what I need so that when the need does come up to be switched on, it's not a new experience.

The second reason is because taking the "action hero" approach allows me to stay in a relatively high state of awareness for longer periods of time. Since it's fun to have an action movie running in my head rather than a constant source of stress and fear, I don't burn unnecessary mental energy staying aware. I'd guess my pulse rate and blood pressure stay lower as well.

Third, when I made this switch, I noticed that I was more fun to be around. I am still able to be the guardian for my wife and sons, but I can do it without being on edge.

These little "action hero" snippets play out MUCH faster in the mind than they could in real life. A sequence that might take 1-3 minutes in real life only takes 1-3 seconds to play out in your mind, so this technique is very efficient from a time perspective and it allows you to be fully engaged with the people you're with while still being aware and having a plan.

As a note, I've found it VERY easy to switch from "action hero" mode to real life mode and have done so several times. I've done this when I realized that I was in a situation that was escalating to a critical point.

Several switched on police officers have shared with me that they practice this technique on a daily basis. As they pull up to a stoplight, they'll envision someone in another car getting out and opening fire, carjacking another car, or kidnapping a pedestrian. While the light is red, they may run through 2-5 scenarios in their mind...sometimes building on recent incidents and other times building on how to handle a particular scenario with a weakness that they have. They run through these scenarios because it helps keep them sharp and safe. I feel that my life is just as valuable, so I do it too.

Turning the tables

While an attacker's kill zone is the last place you want to be, a kill zone you control is your first choice of places to encounter a threat. Planned for and

used properly, a kill zone will give you an enormous advantage in dealing with and taking out a threat, even when they have a firepower advantage. What would otherwise be a decisive win for the attacker can be turned into a complete and utter defeat.

But first you have to have a kill zone to get them into. Start thinking of the settings and environments you control in terms of how they can be used for cover, concealment and field of fire. Remember, the "kill" in kill zone doesn't have to mean "kill." Your home, your office, your travel paths to and from your car, your walk to the mailbox, your favorite restaurant - all the places you appear or occupy on a regular basis should be examined for ways you can set them up to control them.



Applying this to a home invasion or active shooter situation, try to pick out choke points that an attacker would have to go through to get to you and then figure out the best place for you to be to engage the attacker when they get to that point. The choke points could be doorways, hallways, stairwells, intersections of halls, etc. This is a very powerful concept because it completely reverses the interaction, turning you from intended prey to ambusher. Instead of having to hunt down your attacker, you simply get in covered or concealed position where you can cover a choke point that your attacker will have to go through and wait.

Planning a kill zone

You need to set up excellent cover and concealment for yourself in planning a kill zone. In addition to providing you with protection, these elements can also give you the advantage of surprise over your attacker.

You also need a good field of fire to have an effective kill zone. This is the area where you can open fire upon the target at will, using the advantage of cover and concealment, with minimum risk to anyone other than the intended target.

Keeping these elements in mind, start trying to arrange your environments in such a way that potential threats will be forced into your kill zone. This can be accomplished by assessing from which direction a potential threat would most likely come. It could be a back door, a window, a lobby, down the hallway, whatever. Having made this assessment, you can then strategically place barriers or devices in the threat's most likely path which will force them into

Being aware simply means being vigilant and always on the lookout for settings, locations, persons and situations like those mentioned above. You should also always be checking your surroundings before committing yourself to them.

This doesn't mean being paranoid when no active threat exists or letting your vigilance have a negative impact on your anxiety level or your relationships. It just means paying attention to your surroundings.

Check the area surrounding your home before you walk out the door. This is easy to do from a door peephole or through the blinds. Look for things that are out of the ordinary like loiterers, door-to-door salesmen, parked cars and so on. When you step out, look around again and listen.

In office buildings and such, use elevators whenever possible. But avoid getting into elevators with suspicious people. An easy ploy is to pull out your cell phone, look at it, and say that you'll catch the next one (elevator.)

I love using stairwells and seek them out as an alternative to elevators, but they do make great kill zones. The numerous door and hallway access points, along with numerous blind spots make them excellent kill Zones. If you have to use a stairwell, try to use one centrally located in the building to cut down on isolation.

Look around when you enter lobbies of buildings. Make mental note of the people there as well as the layout. Do the same in parking structures and every place you move about. Stop, look and listen. Above all, never dismiss your own gut feelings about safety at any given time.

I will oftentimes be overly courteous and hold a door open for several strangers so that I can get a quick snap picture of the inside of a building and the general mood of the people inside. This lets me look around at least half of the inside of a lobby/store before going in so that I don't have to do the 180 degree swivel-head as I go in the door. I love people watching and this is one of the most obvious “tells” of situationally aware people...whether they are good or bad, so I try to avoid doing it obviously.

If you're caught in a Kill Zone

Spending time in kill zones is unavoidable. It's going to happen if you live any kind of “normal” life. The important thing is to identify them, listen to your gut, and have a plan in place for if you sense danger or something begins to happen.

Military and civilian security experts agree, if you get caught in an area that someone is using as a kill zone, the advice is this: get out of the kill Zone anyway you can. Do whatever it takes - drive, run, crawl - to get out. It doesn't matter how courageous you are, or want to be, your first objective is always to survive. When you're trapped in a kill Zone, your attacker has the advantage.

Remember that kill zones provide cover and concealment for the attacker while limiting the amount of cover and concealment available to the target. The only way you can turn that around is to first get yourself out of the kill zone.

It is vital that you condition yourself to react immediately. Part of being in the proper state of awareness should include thinking ahead. As you go about your day encountering new surroundings and situations, learn to recognize potential kill zones, and have a plan as to what you will do if there is

trouble.

By constantly going through these kinds of mental rehearsals, you will gradually condition yourself to where the correct response becomes second nature. At that point, your reactions can be counted on to occur immediately.

Let Your Inner Jason Bourne Out

I am continually doing this type of mental rehearsal, but I don't take myself too seriously unless I know or sense that I'm in a serious situation. My normal way of thinking about it is along the lines of picturing myself as a character in an action movie. There's three very serious reasons why I take such a light hearted approach.

One of the biggest reasons is that it allows me to stay aware without being paranoid or overly keyed up. It becomes fun to pick out kill zones, potential



The concept of “going with the flow” is a perfect example. During severe water shortages, you can stretch a limited supply of water by recycling urine, mixing one part urine to 4-5 parts water, or desalinating it by running it through a solar still. This is “crazy talk” in a time when you can get fresh water out of the door of your fridge, but just the kind of unorthodox, out of the box thinking that could save your life in a survival situation.

Another application involves fire. Author Ragnar Benson talks about how city survivors regularly report going through as many as 750 matches per month. By simply keeping a coal going and learning how to blow it into flame, that number could be cut by 90-100%. If you go with conventional practices, pretty soon you have to trade items of value for matches. If you let fire do what it wants to do (burn) then you will need few, if any, matches.

But the biggest reason why I think this book is great for preppers has to do with the fact that I look at recovery after a disaster through a special operations lens. In very simple terms, one aspect of special operations warfare deals with a party in power, an insurgent force fighting against the party in power, and a counter-insurgent force trying to help the party in power.

For survival and recovery after a major disaster, I view “order and structure” as the party in power, the main disaster and any follow-up disasters as the insurgent “force” and independent preppers like you as the counter-insurgent force.

To be clear, the counter-insurgency role that I see preppers playing is a “hearts and minds” and rebuilding role and not a violent role. And the enemy is the disaster and not the government. The conversation about “government as enemy,” UN armies, or Chinese armies is completely out of the realm of this article. But on that note, I will say this—If there came a time when the US government was the active enemy of the people, I don't have a single friend in government, military, or law enforcement who wouldn't be among the first to get rounded up. As bad as things may be, there are still a LOT of good people in government, military, and law enforcement...people who go to work every day because of their belief in America, life,

liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

In short, after a disaster, preppers scattered across the affected area have the ability to create stable micro-environments for order and stability to grow out of. It might be as simple as a neighborhood banding together, blocking the routes of ingress and egress and patrolling so that the rest of the neighborhood can sleep soundly at night. That SOUNDS simple, but the difference between going through a stressful survival situation with sleep as opposed to without sleep is dramatic.



Once that neighborhood is stabilized, there will be a natural desire to create “buffer zones” between the neighborhood and bad elements. The best way to create these buffer zones is to, in a sense, export peace and stability by helping surrounding neighborhoods by helping them do the same thing.

This is a much more effective approach than the top-down approach represented by refugee camps, shelters, and martial law...and, in fact, could prevent martial law from being enacted in your area, even if it is declared.

There are obvious issues of food, water, and waste, but those are issues that will have to be dealt with on an individual basis anyway.

Here's the tie-in with Poole's book. If you buy into the idea that you, as a prepper, have the ability to have a stabilizing impact on your immediate area after a disaster and see that as being better than waiting for

help from FEMA, the Red Cross, or some other organization, you're going to need to think of solutions to problems from a guerilla's point of view and not from a top-down (government) point of view.

"Tactics of the Crescent Moon" will help you do just that by exposing you to guerilla tactics that have been used for thousands of years. In addition, in many cases, the guerilla tactics are compared to their conventional counterparts so you can see what made them work as well as they did.



"Kill Zone"

A concept that can mean life or death to those who use it and those who ignore it

"The Art of War" was written by the ancient Chinese warrior-philosopher Sun Tzu over two thousand years ago. Today it remains one of the foremost authorities on conflict and strategy and is studied not only by military leaders but also by politicians and top executives. One of my upcoming books, "The Art of Survival" takes Sun Tzu's lessons and applies them to survival. If you're a student of Sun Tzu, you've probably picked up on a lot of his teachings in my writings already.

In essence, "The Art of War" teaches that the ultimate goal is invincibility. It tells us that we should strive for victory without battle.

Put another way, Sun Tzu's advice encompasses the idea that battles should be won before the actual engagement begins. The ambush is the perfect illustration of putting this advice into practice.

Ambushes have been used for thousands of years. It is one of the oldest tactics known to man. It was most likely a hunting technique that made its way into battle early on in the development of warfare. Throughout history it has, at times, been viewed with disdain as being a less-than-honorable way to

I've found that the more I've studied guerilla warfare, the more I've been able to identify and implement non-conventional solutions to everyday problems. The applications go so far beyond warfare that I consider this to be a book that everyone could benefit from.

You can get "Tactics of the Crescent Moon" through Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and I'm told you can get it through AAFES.

do battle. Nevertheless, it has remained a staple of military tactics for one reason - it works. And as long as the object of war continues to be to take out the enemy, it will continue to be used.

The Kill Zone

Just to be clear, even though we're talking about the kill zone in terms of life and death interactions, the concept can be used in negotiating, bartering, sales, debate, interrogation, profiling, sports, fighting, and even in love. The concept is so useful that I either use it or identify someone else using it on a daily basis.

By definition, an ambush is a tactic whereby cover and concealment are used to surprise the enemy in a kill zone.

Of course, it takes all of these elements to carry out a successful ambush. However, the kill zone is what can make the difference between it being a surprise harassment or a surprise victory.

The kill zone is the area the target is in when the ambush is sprung. It is an area that the target is either induced or naturally channeled into by means of

terrain, obstacles or deception. Furthermore, a good kill zone has barriers, either natural or devised, that hinder the target's ability to flee, and it provides a good field of fire for the ambusher.

As part of the ambush tactic, kill zones have been used for centuries. Knowing how to select and set up a kill zone is an intrinsic part of guerilla warfare. Nothing demoralizes an enemy quicker than to come under sudden, heavy attack with no quick or easy way out. In this sense, the ambusher relies as much on the shock value and confusion created as on the actual destructiveness of the attack. The ambusher is banking on the idea that, inside a good kill zone, the target will panic or freeze or both.

Not just for soldiers

While the concept of kill zones developed out of the ambush tactic, their use is not restricted to ambushes, nor are they used only by the military anymore.

Kill zones are used by terrorists and revolutionaries all the time as well as by common street criminals. Targets of ambushes include ordinary citizens along with government officials and corporate executives. And many violent crimes are committed in what could be classified as kill zones. (We will continue to refer to them as "kill zones" even though the street criminal may more often use them for robbery, rape, kidnapping, or assault.)

Kill Zones are a subject you should know about if you are serious about tactics and survival. It's the last place you want to be if you are the target of an attack. Conversely, it's the place you want to draw potential threats into. In addition to killing, you can use them to create a situation where your subject has no viable option but to surrender or interact with you peacefully. The "kill" of your kill zone could also be a position that you have under direct or video observation and you're simply using it to observe and identify.

How to recognize Kill Zones

To avoid being caught in one, the first thing you have to be able to do is recognize a kill zone. In simplest terms, these are areas where you would or could be trapped if you were attacked.

Some good examples include one-way streets or cul-de-sacs, elevators, stairwells, parking structures, construction zones, structures or rooms with only one entrance/exit and so on. For people familiar with

clearing structures with a firearm, "fatal funnels" and "T" intersections of hallways.

Of course, much depends on what preparations the threat to you has taken. You may think you have a clear avenue of escape or retreat only to find that the attacker has planned in advance and has you completely covered. To this end, you have to look beyond the obvious in assessing the potential danger of a location.

This means looking at a location in its entirety. You want to be aware not only of pathways or routes in and out, but also objects and features that can provide concealment and cover for the attacker. At the same time, there will be a noticeable lack of objects and features which can provide you with such protection. This kind of setup indicates a good field of fire for an attacker.

Be aware of being forced into an area or direction by virtue of obstacles, both natural and man-made. For example, maybe a crowd or a design feature blocking your path forces you to take an alternate and more vulnerable path.

The bottom line in recognizing kill zones is to think about where you are going, both walking and driving.

Be on the lookout for areas that force you to become isolated and that limit your options as to ways to enter and exit and seek cover if necessary. Also be aware of persons that try to maneuver or induce you into a position or location.

How to avoid Kill zones

Being deceptive and being aware can go a long ways toward preventing you from walking into a kill zone.

Being deceptive in this case means becoming unpredictable. Many victims of crime wind up that way because their attacker is able to set up and wait for them. They do this based on the knowledge of the victim's regular routine or patterns of movement.

It is always a good idea to vary your schedule somewhat. Also take different routes to work and home. I don't have any identified or perceived threats and I still do this. Why? Because taking different routes between my regular destinations makes me more aware of what's going on in my "areas of operation." This is beneficial for several reasons including finding faster routes, identifying potential threats and assets.