

GEORGE DILLMAN'S "To the Point"

with Chris Thomas **DECEMBER, 2003** REALISTIC TRAINING

Critics often say, "Yeah, pressure points may work, but you'll never hit them under the stress of a real fight. It's too complicated." Tell that to an airline pilot. Flying a plane is clearly a difficult and complicated task, so complicated that it should be impossible to actually fly under the stress of an in-flight emergency. Yet, airline pilots are able to. Why? Realistic training.

In realistic training, the practice-situations pilots deal with must be similar to situations they are likely to encounter in the air. So, it makes sense to practice what to do in the case of a catastrophic loss of an engine. However, it makes no sense to practice how to maneuver an aircraft underwater.

In the same way, it makes sense for martial artists to train situations such as being grabbed, pushed, thrown up against walls, threatened with guns, and so on. It also makes sense to train against attacks from obsolete weapons such as swords and spears, provided the attackers are using those weapons correctly. (The analogy for this last part is the training of astronauts. Astronauts are not scuba divers, yet they routinely train underwater because many of the skills are directly transferable to the weightless environment of space.) However, it makes no sense to train against an attacker who begins by dropping back into a *en garde* posture, then, emitting a mighty *kiai*, charges in with a lunge punch (*oi zuki*) attack which he then holds in place waiting for the defender to counter-attack. No one actually fights that way – and, despite constant claims to the contrary, no one *ever* fought that way.

This is one of the reasons why most martial artists have no idea what their traditional techniques are actually for. They practice those techniques on fantasy attacks that have no basis in actual human performance. Then, when they are faced with the kind of attack the real world is full of, they have no idea how to use what they have learned.

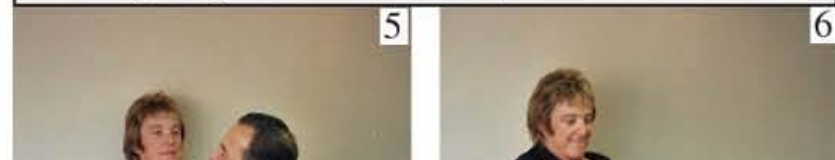
In realistic training the practice must also progress to the point where it *feels* as real as possible. What this means for pilots is training in flight simulators which are designed to approximate the sensation and intensity of an actual in-flight event. Likewise, mar-



1: In typical studio practice, the attacker shows no intent.
2: In realistic training, attacker Mel Abraham slams Kim Dillman into a wall, significantly raising the level of intensity in the session.



3-4: The natural effect of hitting the wall is the outward splaying of Dillman's arms. She then brings her hands inward, using her forearms to trap Abraham's arms.



tial artists must train against realistic attacks executed realistically.

In the typical martial arts studio, practice partners will, for example, “feed” a punch to the head so they can work on their response. They are not actually trying to hit each other, so there is no threat of harm. But, without the threat, intensity and intention of a real punch to the head, how is it possible to know if: a) the technique being practiced will actually work; and, b) the person practicing the technique can actually pull it off?

So, realism is a very important aspect in training. While working with a partner, it is (at some point) necessary to attack with meaning. Don’t just grab the lapel, and then stand there waiting for something to happen, grab like you are really an aggressor. Don’t just “feed” a two hand push, try to push your partner down. *(There are three cautions which must be made here: 1. Make sure there is agreement between the training partners before raising the intensity of the exchange; 2. Make sure to take appropriate safety measures, such as the use of protective equipment; 3. Make sure to practice only within the limitations of each person’s level of skill.)*

Two things occur when pressure point practitioners train in this manner. First, they get very good at using pressure points “for real,” as one might expect. Second, it turns out that the pressure points actually work better when someone attacks with real intent. This is probably the result of a trade-off as the body sacrifices protection of the pressure points in order to reinforce the musculature.

For more information, check out www.dillman.com



5-6: Because the attack was real, the response is real. Dillman presses with her right thumb on pressure point St-4/Dicang just beside Abraham’s mouth, while digging the fingers of her left hand into point St-12/Quepen behind his collarbone to drive him away.



This shows the method of attacking St-4/Dicang and St-12/Quepen.