



By Pendekar Scott McQuaid

When you stand before three assailants you have but two instincts... fight or flight.

All serious martial art styles should teach students to consider multiple opponents. The student should maintain the awareness of these multiple assailants even when training in their solo exercises.

In today's urban jungle, the attacker has friends and like a pack of wolves they will naturally work together to bring their victim down.

There were over 356 crimes of physical violence in England last year and all the victims stated that they were attacked by more than one person.

More than half of what we do in the classroom would not be viable in the real world—although the techniques are sound and the training just, theory and role play is no substitute for reality. Attacks and counters are never as clinical and effective as when they are applied in the controlled environment of the class or *dojo*.

Typically one student stands before another and each carry out their drill, but if you were to add an unknown element being another opponent then the student will have to adapt. Instantly you will find the techniques are less precise, rushed, sloppier and additional strikes will instantly be added as the threat level has been raised. This is all due to the factor of another attacker being involved.

To exercise the reality of war, Indonesia's Minangkabau Pencak Silat styles employed the method of the *kerajok*. The name implies 'a fight of one against many'.



The Harimau (tiger) Pencak Silat system was developed out of the necessity for combat on wet and highly slippery surfaces. Their groundwork and combat approach are revered throughout South East Asia.

These silat techniques are a mixture of grappling and hitting. The grappling is of the loose kind where the applications are used for take downs, off balancing, sweeps and tying up the opponent momentarily, for no lock upon an opponent will hold indefinitely.

For your own protection and self-defence, it is vital that you have the full commitment to do what is needed to render the enemy useless, readying yourself for the next opponent without fear of a comeback from the previous adversary.

Having the flexibility to disengage from one person in order to move to another is essential in fighting multiple attackers.

One or two strikes or breaks seldom finish the job. Therefore a variety of back-ups are built into Harimau Silat—the trainee's reflexes follow up technique has its own back-up. This can result in an overkill approach that can leave your assailant in critical condition or dead, but when the adrenaline is pumping and it all happens in a blink of an eye it is simply him or you.

Your reptile instinct for survival will switch on as soon as you fear for your life. During this period you have to be in the 'now', that is to say you are in the moment reacting to each action as it happens and not trying to predict any attack or outcome.

Most fights end up on the floor and this is the home for a Harimau Silat player—being able to take down one opponent and still attack from the ground is the strongest part in this system's arsenal. However, the concepts of fighting multiple opponents apply to any combative system—the many opponents can not engage in an attack together as body space limits them which leaves you to deal with the first assailant and then swiftly move onto the next. Continuous movement is important as this not only makes it harder for the enemies to pin you down but it also presents options for you and upsets the range and timing of whom of your many opponents should attack next.

Once engaged in combat with one of the opponents, it is vital that you are aware of his back-up around you. Positioning your body behind your attacker will create a human shield and give you a clear visual of your next target.

Your environment will play a big part in aiding your defence against multiple attackers. If you're cornered in an ally, the wall behind you will act as a weapon, slamming the assailant into it. In open surroundings, such as a car park, the obstacles of vehicles can be utilized to obstruct the many opponents.

None of this knowledge or feel for the fight can be obtained within the four walls of a padded classroom. There are no certainties in combat but we can make ourselves better prepared for

those guilty many that will attack one.

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