

HSFA Insider

Houston's Martial Arts News Source

Every Issue is Filled With

- Martial Arts Insights
- Editorials & Personal Perspectives
- Training Tips
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Aliveness

"...stick with the progress, and do not go backward. Stay and walk forward not backward." – GM Leo Giron.

What makes the Filipino martial arts so popular with law enforcement, military personnel, and civilians looking for an effective self-defense system? One answer is aliveness. Aliveness is the concept of continuing to update and modernize your art so that it fits your current needs and environment. Aliveness means your art continues to grow like a living organism, evolving with the times and meeting the new challenges you may face.

A major factor in the aliveness of Filipino martial arts is its closeness to real world applications and to its founders. Many fighting arts of the past were canonized, stopped evolving, and became effectively dead arts. The founders of these dead arts may have died centuries ago and the firsthand knowledge of their arts real world applications died with them. In the Filipino martial arts we have the advantage of being historically very close to those masters who used their arts in both deadly challenge

matches and in the battlefields of World War Two. The Bolo Battalion used their blades to great effect against the Japanese invaders much like their ancestors had done against invaders for hundreds of years before. These masters were able to pass down their techniques to a new generation of students firsthand just as their masters had done for them. The long history of struggle has kept the Filipino arts from becoming stagnant and kept them moving forward and alive.

Outside of deadly challenge matches and battlefields there are other ways for us to continue to keep our arts alive. One of the most effective methods used for aliveness is pressure testing. All we need for pressure testing is some protective gear and a willing partner, and we can put our techniques to the test. An uncooperative training partner can teach you more about a technique in one session than months or years of just going through the motions. For someone who is new to pressure testing there is a natural progression for you to follow. First, you simply per-

form the same technique over and over again but with increasing speed and power with each repetition. After you become comfortable with that, you can make the drill free form by combining multiple techniques together or by adding different angles of attack. Finally, your pressure testing can take the form of hard sparring matches. These matches will offer you the most insight into your arts ability to function practically, outside of true life and death situations.

It's important that you find the right balance between the force needed to successfully test a technique and the amount of protection needed to keep everyone as safe as possible. After you have been through these matches, you will gain new insight into your arts methodology and structure. When your students and training partners ask you, "Why do it this way?" instead of relying only on secondhand knowledge to answer, you can tell them from experience why. For me, that's worth the effort of keeping it alive.

- Billy Atwood, Davis Martial Arts

School Spotlight — North American Self Defense Institute

Curt Doyle offers instruction in Seito Ryu karate, Japanese Ju Jitsu, Combat Submission Wrestling, Indonesian Silat, Filipino Kali/Arnis/Escrima, Tae Kwon Do, the 5 Animal Styles of Kung Fu, Wing Chun Kung Fu, and Muay Thai Kickboxing is offered.

Group classes are Monday and Wednesday evenings from 7-9pm at 4963 Louetta Rd. Spring Texas, 77379. Classes are also

offered Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 8-9:30 at 12218 Jones Rd, Houston Texas, 77070, with private lessons throughout the day.

For more information, call 281-236-5676 or email NASDIO1@aol.com.



"I simply add the mindset of being in the moment..."

Carenza as Meditation

Before my journey started in Kali I practiced a few forms of internal martial arts namely, Tai Chi and Qigong. I focused on Qigong as I was fascinated by the concept of moving meditation. I studied many types and practiced for years becoming a big fan of standing Qigong as well as the classic Ba Duan Jin.

Now that Kali has become a major focus of my daily training, I have found a way to combine

my Kali with meditation. Carenza is a free flow of footwork, strikes, and relaxed movement. I simply add the mindset of being in the moment and allowing the body to move based on continual practice of the basics.

Start each carenza with slow movement and a emphasis on relaxed breathing. Then gradually pick up speed to where you are flowing with attacks and blocks. I like to picture a oppo-

nent moving in unpredictable patterns. This combination carenza meditation has evolved my kali as well as my standing Qigong.

I practice daily sometimes multiple sessions during the day. Most of all, stay relaxed and have fun as you move. The benefits will manifest in many ways!

- Doug "Hipcore" Hardeman, Hipcore Fitness Training

Learn To Play

One day I was sitting in Leo Gaje's home with his family. He was in the kitchen and I was sitting on the couch watching one of his young daughters playing with a Balisong knife. His son kept asking me if I wanted to learn their language, and I thought, "Shut up kid. I'm watching this."

She was twirling it around and throwing it up in the air closed and catching it as it fell, open, tossing it from hand to hand, under her arms and every now and then slicing or stabbing. I was amazed at the skill this little girl...maybe 8 or 9 years old...had with a knife. Then, as she threw it up to catch it, it

came down point first in her hand. At the time, we weren't using training blades that we have today. A training knife was floppy rubber or a short stick, and we normally just went slow as we trained with our Manila folders, sometimes putting electrical tape along the edge.

Not that it made any difference that is. The edges just sliced through the tape. As the point came straight into the palm of her hand, I started looking for a phone to call 911. The knife was falling fast, and those Manila folders had some weight behind them, but then I heard the click-ing of the knife again.

As I looked back, she'd never stopped the motion. I'm not quite sure to this day, how she caught the knife, but my eyes were good back then and I saw the point make contact with her palm. Somehow she'd snagged the knife by the blade and flipped it again. This was maybe 1984 or 1985...possibly 1983. I can't remember the exact year Leo moved himself, his family and a couple of his guys, to Houston.

I've always been curious about this little girls skills today, remembering what she was like with a deadly weapon as a small child. To develop this skill as an adult, in whatever martial art we

train, our system has to be played with. We have to practice constantly, not just in the gym. We have to use our feet as a second set of hands and our weapons as just another joint attached limb to our arms. We have to close cabinet doors with our feet or turn on light switches with our toes as we carry the groceries in.

Our movements have to be developed to the point where every move we make with our bodies is completely natural and flows into whatever we are doing. Our bodies have to play.

- Curt Doyle



The Connection Between the Brain and Body

In addition to training your body, martial practices train your brain as well. Repetitive movements coordinated with breathing and awareness strengthens neural connections, which enables one to activate the brain in ways one otherwise wouldn't. This shows itself when you're training allows you to move freely without thinking. This offers a martial artist a great benefit when placed in a stressful situation - he or she may respond swiftly and accurately without hesitation.

The brain and body are linked via the central nervous system, the spine and a collection of complex nerve tissues that extend throughout the whole body. One may think that the brain is limited to one's head only, but this is not necessarily

true. Think of the brain as a jellyfish, with the central oval part located in your head and the tendrils branching down as nerves do down the body. Bruce Lee once said, "Be like water...", implies that a fighter must keep the nervous system calm yet fluid, able to adapt and change to any stimuli. In order to move like water, one must move the entire body as one unit, stimulating the brain in all parts of the body. This is done through practice alone - there are no short cuts as you know.

The benefits of a balanced nervous system allow you to perform with focus under stress. Meditation is a tool to gain insight into one's habits and patterns. Through awareness, one can fine tune the nervous system into a calm yet highly adaptable system

that is not prone to always fight or flight mode. Mindful movements and breathing also support the building of a steady nervous system that can process incoming streams of information quickly. Additional health benefits include: better blood circulation, reduce inflammation, optimal digestion and quicker recovery times to name a few. Our bodies are composed of approximately 80% water, to move like water should not be a great task as long our bodies are functioning as they should. As the connection between the body and brain become stronger through practice, one comes closer to self mastery. As water flows throughout a rice field, let the benefits nourish all the aspects of your life.

-Kai Lewis, Houston Martial Arts Academy

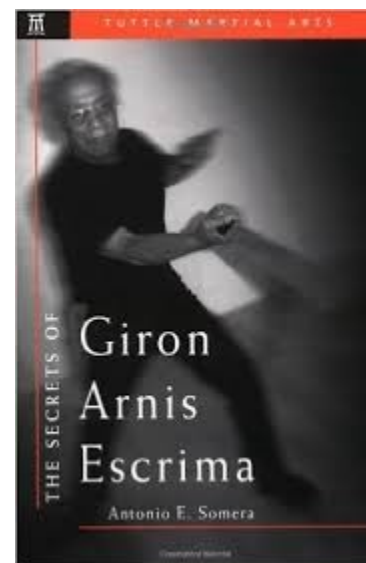
Recommended Reading — The Secrets of Giron Arnis Escrima

The Secrets of Giron Arnis Escrima was published in 1998. It was written by Grand Master Antonio E. Somera and is currently available on Amazon.

The following is the description from the back cover:

"*The Secrets of Giron Arnis Escrima* is an engaging biography of Leo Giron, a senior master of escrima and survivor of numerous hand-to-hand encounters in the Philippine jungles.

It is also a visual and descriptive survey of Giron's fighting art-a classical weapons and empty-hand self-defense system applicable in today's modern society. Included herein is an overview of the analysis of the *de fondo* and *cadena de mano* styles in particular. Packed with over 300 historical and instructional photographs, this book truly reveals the secrets of Giron arnis escrima."



Filipino Spear (Sibat)

Sibat is the term for the Filipino spear, used by the natives of the Philippine Islands as a tool or weapon.

It is usually made with rattan, bamboo, bahi or other hardwood with its tip sharpened to form a point, or a head made from metal (single-edged, double-edged or barbed). It was called sibat in Indonesian or Filipino dialects, but in the Negros islands (Visayas) it is also called bangkaw, sumbiling or palupad.

There are many varieties, varying in length and function. The style and function of the spear depends on what area of the Philippines it is found. Natives who hunt and fish on the beach may employ an entirely different spear than those in the mountainous or inland regions who hunt bigger animals.

Many of the fighting techniques taught for the Sibat are the very same motions translated from the hunting movements and it can be used either on hand-to-hand or thrown from a distance (projectile). On hand-to-hand combat, thrusts are used to puncture soft targets, such as the throat or neck, reinforced by crushing blows using the blunt portions of the weapon to incapacitate at closer ranges. These attack patterns are often used in conjunction; a strike with the blunt portion used to block an enemy's weapon being immediately followed by a thrust into the flesh.

Doing some research about the use of the sibat in different regions I found the following interesting references:

"Traditionally, Philippine spears were not used with the "helicopter" twirling motions found in Chinese arts such as Wushu and Indian Silambam. According to FMA instructor and journalist Daniel Foronda who

hails from the Mountain Province region, such twirling techniques cannot be used amongst dense pine trees, and basic utilization with the Igorot spear is more akin to rifle bayonet training."

"The Igorot and Aeta people in Luzon also have a spears with a detachable heads. The Aeta remove the heads when entering Christian towns to trade (during which the shaft can still be used as a staff weapon) and in the Igorot spear's case, the detachable head can be used as a dagger."

"In the Ilocano fighting arts of Kabaroan learned by Grandmaster Ramiro Estalilla, two spears can be used at the same time, with the second spear held with a grip in the middle and used as a shield. When one spear is thrown, the practitioner can then draw his blade and dual wield with a blade and spear."

As we can see styles vary according to function and origin, but regardless of the system the main benefit of training the Sibat for the FMA practitioner is that it is a weapon category that requires two hands for control and helps to develop good torque and body mechanics that will be used in other weapon categories since all the body needs to be synchronized to maneuver such a large weapon.

In Warriors Eskrima the use of the sibat is taught using three types of hold: normal hold, reverse hold and centre hold, each hold allows different long-stick methods. These are some of the various staff systems (from the Negros Islands) that can be found within the Warriors Eskrima curriculum classified by hold*:

Normal hold:

Taw-Taw : "This method I be-

lieved to have evolved from the movements made with the fishing rod. It favours the normal hold, and specializes in sliding strikes to the opponent's hands".

Tapado: "Tapado is one of the better known long-stick methods. It is an aggressive, attacking style characterized by simultaneous blocks and strikes. It favours blocking (meeting the force) rather than parrying".

Sciensa: "This is a long stick method that emphasizes parrying as the primary method of defence. It is characterized by thrusting and circular striking techniques".

Reverse hold:

Bugsay: "This is a style popular amongst the coastal areas of Negros. It is based on the movements of the fisherman paddling his canoe. The style favours the reverse hold, and prefers parrying as opposed to blocking".

Centre hold:

Tuwang-Tuwang: "This method was developed from the wooden pole, used to carry heavy objects that were balanced on one's shoulders. It is a close-in fighting system specializing in double-end striking, disarming and off-balancing".

The purpose of learning different methods is to allow the practitioner to fight in any distance and to be able to flow from one grip to another as the situation requires it.

*Source: "Eskrima, Filipino Martial Art" by Guro Krishna Godhanian

- Juan Cebadera, Westchase Warriors

"...and basic utilization with the Igorot spear is more akin to rifle bayonet training."

“Alignment through the legs and torso is critical but shares common points with unarmed fighting...”

Arm and Wrist Alignment in Sword Strikes

Skeletal or body alignment is important in martial arts. Take the "kung fu straight" arm: When extending the arm, only straighten the elbow to less than fully straight. In sports terms, within your range of motion (ROM) from fully bent (0° or approximately 30°) to fully straight (100° or 180°), kung fu straight is approximately 75-95° or 135-160°.

Apply this to every joint in the body. It is easy to adopt for stability and strength when static, but harder to apply when in motion. For further learning, internal kung fu styles (taijiquan, baguazhang, xingyi) often emphasize alignment, as do all other styles both implicitly or explicitly. This article looks at how body alignment applies to sword fighting skills.

Generally, body alignment means keeping joints at more than half extension, relaxed, and strong. This permits efficient transmission of strength into the desired direction by minimizing forces and motion not aligned in your muscles' direction of strongest contraction.

Alignment through the legs and torso is critical but shares common points with unarmed fighting so will not be covered in this article for length.

Muscles wrap around and support joints. When flexed, they protect joints from overextension. Muscles recover far faster from minor injuries (days or weeks) than injured joints (months or years). You can minimize injury risk by relying on muscle engagement instead of locking out joints.

In swordsmanship, strike or block into good guard positions. This keeps the sword ready to defend or threaten without wasting momentary effort to recover the sword.

In a sword strike, the blade rotates around its center of balance (COB). The blade overall also moves forward. Slower, potentially more powerful strikes move the COB in an arc. Faster strikes move the COB in the shortest distance toward the target -- a straight line.

At the beginning of an overhand sword strike starting from the shoulder or overhead, the elbows and shoulders forcefully drop initially. The action engages muscles just as in explosive partial pull-ups, activating the latissimus dorsi (lats) and abdominal muscles (abs). Done correctly with relaxation, this slingshots the sword point down and forward. The arms straighten, carrying the entire sword forward.

The kung fu straight concept now applies. As the sword slams into its target, a blocking obstacle (opposing sword or shield), or completely misses, the muscles take the strain of halting the swing instead of passing the impact into the wrist, elbow, or shoulder joints. The muscles can most effectively do so around 75° or 135° extension of the elbow, while still permitting as much reach as your strength permits.

At the wrist, the metacarpals (hand bones) of the index and middle fingers align with the radius and ulna of the forearm (exactly as per good form in a punch). This aligns the bones and allows the muscles of the forearm to support the wrist joint, protecting it from the strain of ulnar deviation which the moving sword will induce. The fingers and hand grip must spread wider in a rifle or golf grip in order to extend the sword where the straight wrist reduces its reach.

These considerations will protect joints from injury, as well as keeping your weapon in line after each action. In mid-swing, a 3-lb sword can momentarily feel up to a perceived 20-30 lbs due to acceleration forces 10-15 greater than a Porsche 911 accelerating 0-60 mph.

- Dakao Do, SwordtoSword

Being Prepared Is Not Being Paranoid

Many are unaware of what Assault actually is. Let's take a look at what the Department of Justice defines as assault:

Assault is defined as an unlawful physical attack or threat of attack. Assaults may be classified as aggravated or simple. The severity of assaults ranges from minor threats to incidents which are nearly fatal. Assault is categorized as --

* Aggravated assault - Attack or attempted attack with a weapon, regardless of whether or not an injury occurred and attack without a weapon then serious injury results

* Simple assault - Attack with-

out a weapon resulting either in no injury, minor injury (for example, bruises, black eyes, cuts, scratches or swelling) or in undetermined injury requiring less than 2 days of hospitalization. Also includes attempted assault without a weapon

That is what the DOJ defines as assault. Now, ask yourself, "Am I prepared to defend against such attacks?" Men and Women both need to be able to defend themselves. Unfortunately, many men believe they are capable of defending attacks with little or no training. This is false. Training is necessary to be able to successfully defend yourself or your loved ones. Martial

Arts training is a way of not only training yourself physically, but mentally to be able to do this.

Assault is not a female issue. Assault is not a government issue. It is a bad people doing bad things to other people issue.

You played football in high school, so what. You took karate as a kid twenty years ago, so what. You go to the gym and lift weights or do CrossFit, so what. Self defense, like any other skill, needs to be trained and continually practiced in order to be effective and useful. As Rev Bart Stewart said, "Recognize the difference between TRAINING and PRACTICE. Knowledge and

skills are perishable goods, and knowledge has a much longer shelf life, so SKILLS need to be refreshed more frequently."

Do yourself a favor and make the time to find a suitable school or training facility to learn self defense. Keep practicing what you learn. Continue to learn new ideas, techniques, and philosophies on self defense. It is not paranoia to go and learn self defense, it is being prepared if ever you need to get out of a potentially dangerous situation.

- Jason Evans, Houston Martial Arts Academy

Instructor Spotlight — Daniel Arola

How did you get started in martial arts (what drew you to it)?

-Basically, I was already born drawn to martial arts. I even remember dreaming about doing martial arts as a toddler before I even knew how to walk and talk. Really-really! My first formal schooling in martial arts was in the Philippines when I was 9, almost 10 years old on the condition that I swore to never tell a single soul that I was training and with whom I kept my word. When I got into a fight at school among my peers, I had to play dumb and fight 'dumb' for sake of protecting a personal interest which sorely tested my ego and willpower many times over, but I still didn't break and tell. I was told that people still got challenged by other fighters in the provinces of the Ilocano-speaking peoples if word got out about anyone who was known to practice martial arts back in those days. Filipino males generally can become quite a bloodthirsty lot with an equal amount of attachment to superstition in their alpha male games. I grew up moving a lot as a kid and moved to the Philippines, to and from Texas two different times since age 4 until before I turned 14 years old when I moved back to Texas for good. Talk about playing dumb for that long! Being the incidental "New kid in town" during childhood until my early teens in every place that I moved to every 2, to 3 years at a time, was the main consistency in my life. That included getting into fights with local boys in my age range at the time, every time. Basically, before I formally began training in martial arts, I was already pretty experienced which made me a very easy person to teach and I did learn fast too. By experience, I got better at defending myself while disguising my skills from every time I got into a fight in the street or at school and I also didn't get hurt as much, which was good.

How long have you been training in martial arts?

I've been formally practicing since 1982.

How many arts do you train in & have rankings in and what are they?

I lost count with how many types of fighting cultures that I've been involved in, so I'm not even gonna bother, but what I do have as a list of legitimate credentials here in America via immediate memory are... 1st dan black belts in Tang Soo Do and in Hapkido through Master Chris Yaeger in Deer Park,

Texas in the early 1990's and a handful of years later I was promoted to (honorary) 3rd dan black belt in Hapkido by GM Larry Ordonio of Channelview, Texas.

I'm also a "certed" instructor in Jun Fan Gung Fu(JKD Concepts), Filipino Kali, Catch Wrestling, MMA and Muay Thai under Ajarn Tim Mousel at Mousel's Mixed Martial Arts Academy here in Houston. I've been a student and instructor under Tim since 1992 and I'm still involved with the school to this day.

Why do you enjoy sharing and teaching martial arts?

That I still astonish and amaze myself at what I can still remember from as far as 25 years ago as I'm teaching something that I learned from that past timeline! What I really enjoy most about sharing what I teach is when there's a student that does not have to be led by the hand to be told what to think and believe in order to get what I'm showing them. I like to instigate an activated bluntness of common sense, sense of empathy and compassion during training that through consistent practice, ultimately leads to the person allowing themselves the choice to learn more about who they truly are as individuals through training with me. Because to tell them who they are is not my duty. I talk to whomever I teach as people who already know what they came to me for. I even encourage them to question me too. I show what I teach and then I tell as little as I have to. Unless there's jokes involved. Which I do make enough of at random moments.

What is it you hope students get out of training with you?

For them to be seen as the result of their practice. Hopefully as one who vibrates and upholds their own atmosphere of Confidence wherever they go. Basically.

What motivates you to continue sharing the arts?

So that I can continue to practice what I teach. Because I still find ways to learn more about something that I've already had plenty of experience in just to see how far getting-better gets for me.

What do you feel is the key to being successful in martial arts & teaching

martial arts?

My use of the word "successful" as I answer this question is not the same meaning as for business persons in the trade like financial gain because I do not run a school. I don't have enough students for that and I like it like that because I can focus my attention on the few of them because I like to push the attention to the awareness of themselves from head to toe as they're moving while I'm observing. It has more to do with accomplishments achieved through training and improving, thus becoming the result of their focus and commitment which happened on their own initiative. One thing that I do encourage that would contribute greatly to one's own success as a martial artist on various levels is by consciously cultivating the ego in a whole different area of life outside of martial arts, like an alternate hobby, sport or other social activity where one can enjoy the attention and achievement that they're getting, and isolate it there as the playground for one's ego. Then when it's time to train, and in it's "minimized" form, the ego is really left at the door without even thinking about it. The mind then has more room for awareness and focus and whatever else counts for the time.

Anything else you want to let people know about you as a martial artist and instructor?

I have one unbound, radical sense of humor when I teach, train, spar and "co-verse" with students. We play and laugh while we train dynamically to keep our focus challenged. I do cuss often too when we're not around kids as we practice. I also don't take it too seriously. That's kinda like my "secret" to success as a martial artist. Because learning is far easier and fun that way when the mind is calm and relaxed as I also share this perspective as I'm teaching and I can appreciate my own errors that way so that I remember what mistake to avoid repeating just in case.

Daniel Arloa can be reached through his Facebook page DAMAG-INC

***"Always move
from the core
first..."***

Hipcore's Fitness Corner

Weighted Stick/Pipe Training

I use this technique to make my strikes more powerful. The benefits of adding this practice to your regular training are numerous. Here is the way to do it.

1. Use a weighted stick or a pipe that is heavy enough that you are forced to move slow and with complete control.
2. Start by connecting strongly with the ground. Your base is rooted.
3. Always move from the core first using full body mechanics.

4. Stay as relaxed as possible and when you get fatigued stop and recover before starting again.

5. Work on individual strike patterns as well as flowing in carenza. The more you practice the better your nervous system improves.

6. Enjoy and have fun!

Doug "Hipcore" Hardeman
Hipcore Fitness
hipcoretraining@gmail.com

Past Events



Bahala Na Houston had its second testing event under Guro Rick Stalons. Three students tested for level 2 in Gi-ron Arnis Escrima and all passed.



HSFA's second quarterly Gathering was held on June 4th at Gracie Barra Westchase in Houston, TX. Over 20 participants had 29 matches. Making it an amazing event full of incredible matches and the sharing of knowledge and love of weapons based martial arts.

Upcoming Events



HSFA's 3rd quarterly Gathering for 2016 will be held Sunday September 11th from 12—2 pm at SwordtoSword, located at 1212A Cedar Post Houston, TX 77055



Westchase Warriors Presents Guro Krishna Godhania for a two day seminar at Ground Dwellers in Spring, TX on July 9–10. For more info contact babi_tudo@hotmail.com



Bahala Na Houston Presents Master Kirk McCune for a one day seminar at Ground Dwellers in Spring, TX on July 30th. For more info visit grounddwellers.com



Ground Dwellers BJJ Presents Guro Harley Elmore for a two day Sayoc seminar at Ground Dwellers in Spring, TX on August 6–7. For more info contact bmajul@gmail.com

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www.houstonstickfighting.org



Houston Stick Fighting Association



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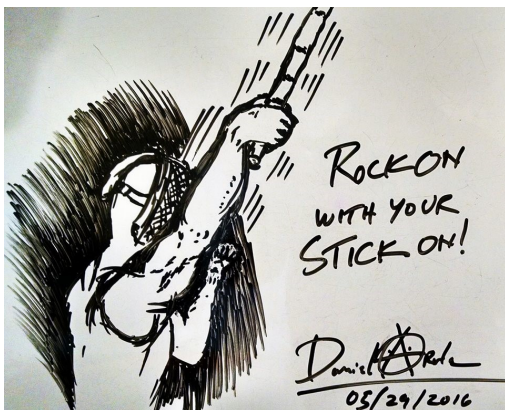


htownstickfights



JasonREvans

The Houston Stick Fighting Association ("HSFA") founded in 2006 is an association for like-minded martial artists that engage in simulated combat to test and improve their skills in the blade-based and stick-based fighting arts. Membership in HSFA is open to martial artists of all styles, all systems, of all ages, from beginner to advanced levels. Members of the HSFA are striving to develop and improve their skills through simulated combat to see what works and what does not with a resisting opponent. Along the way, we build friendships and camaraderie with our sparring partners and share our respective arts with each other.



Graphic by Daniel Arola,
DAMAG-INC

Schools - Associated with Houston Stick Fighting Association

Houston Martial Arts Academy

Ground Dwellers BJJ

DAMAG-INC Kali Combatives

Combat Nation

Texas Jeet Kun Do

Southeast Texas Escrimadors

Westchase Warriors GB Westchase

TX 3rd Coast MMA

North American Self Defense Institute

SwordtoSword

Davis Martial Arts