

How to Train Alone in the Combat Arts

by D'Arcy Rahming (Senior Instructor Miyama Ryu)

First the Warning

The material included in this special report is for educational purposes and to promote continued self-defense training. The self-defense methods in this report are not guaranteed by the author to work or to be safe at any time.

In some situations, applications may not be warranted or allowed under local, state, or federal laws. No representations are made by the author regarding the appropriateness or legality of their use.

Before trying any of these techniques, which could cause injury, you should consult a doctor. The author and Modern Bu-jutsu, Inc. are not responsible if any such injury occurs.

Now that that's over with, let's get down to busines. I have someone I want you to meet.

Have You Ever Really Wanted a Good Self Defense Workout But Couldn't Find a Qualified Training Partner?



Meet One of My Good Friends and Training Partners - Mr. Coat

“No matter how hard I choke him he never complains.”

Even if you practice Karate with a qualified teacher you may find training alone in self defense to be a tedious task. Yes, it's true that one man Kata as practiced by most Karate styles contains many self defense techniques.

And of course when you are practicing solo Kata your mindset should be such that you are in an actual fight. But can training ONLY in Kata really prepare you for self-defense. I personally doubt it. And this is after practicing Karate for 27 years. In fact, I recommend Kata for self-defense training and as President of a National Federation for the WKF I fully endorse Kata training. So please, no silly emails telling me I am against Kata.

But the fact remains that Kata is not a complete answer to self -defense training. Also there are many combat arts that use limited solo Kata training, if at all. For example most Judo, Jujutsu and Aikido are typically practiced with a training partner. And preferably a qualified training partner.



Why I Wrote This Report

I'm always telling my students that you should spend some time practicing everyday. But unfortunately for many of them this is an impossibility because they can't get to the dojo everyday. Also the general public already considers most people who practice the martial arts "different". Finding a workout partner is not exactly like finding a workout partner to do some aerobics or lift some weights with you.

In fact without a qualified instructor I would never suggest that you use someone untrained in the martial arts to practice with.

Also, as the author of the *Secrets of Combat Jujutsu Books* people write me from all over the world asking how they can train alone in the combat arts. So I developed this report based on my experience in Go Ju Ryu Karate, Miyama Ryu Jujutsu and Kodokan Judo.

These are exercises I picked up from various people over the years. I would love to give credit for each individual exercise, but it is impossible as I do not know where I first learned them.

Will this Report Replace a Real Training Partner?

Of course not! The fact is no book, videotape or any kind of report will ever replace a qualified Instructor with training partners for self-defense training. However, if you use these tips as described here you will get a pretty good workout and enhance your self-defense skill set.

What is a Combat Art?



Sorry Guys I'm Not Talking About Combat Sports

"I am defining a combat art as an art that prepares you realistically to defend yourself, your family or your possessions."

Many of you will have different philosophies regarding this question. I feel qualified to speak on this matter having successfully taught many people who have actually defended their lives. Also being a survivor of violent encounters I can state on personal testimony that what I do works.

I am defining a combat art as an art that prepares you realistically to defend yourself, your family or your possessions.

In my experience, a combat art must have some kind of unifying principle. For example, In Miyama Ryu Jujutsu it is *how not to become the victim of a violent crime*. Another component of a combat art must be some



kind of strategy to achieve that objective. For example, Miyama Ryu Tactics and Strategy breaks down into five components:

- Mind-Set
- Scenario Based Training
- Awareness and Threat Assessment
- Response
- Analysis and Feedback.

So if your art is lacking in what we discussed above. And you are practicing for the purpose of self-defense, I would consider finding a qualified Combat arts instructor that can demonstrate and talk effectively about most of the components above.

What Type of Techniques Make up a Combat Art?

I would suggest that any responses that you develop against realistic attacks should have the following areas that are addressed.

- Body Positioning
- Striking Techniques
- Throwing Techniques
- Wrist Locking Techniques
- Joint Locking Techniques
- Strangulation Techniques

So this report is ordered around these types of techniques. I would also suggest to you that if these factors are absent in your everyday training you should consider adding them to your practice routine.

How to Do This Cheaply

Now if you're like me, you want to train without incurring any more expenses than you have to. That's one of the reasons this report is free. So here's what you need to practice all of these exercises.



- An old coat
- A sturdy hangar with a swivel neck
- An extension chord
- A belt or some old rope
- A duffel bag
- A pair of shoes
- A broom
- A soft rubber ball



- A pair of gloves
- A tree (or a pole for those tree deprived areas)
- Some newspaper or old clothes for stuffing the various parts of the coat

All of these things can be found around any house or apartment. Of course you can get fancy and use devices such as hanging bags, wooden dummies, etc. But this report is geared around improving your skills for training without a partner as cheaply as possible.

Before We Begin... Some Words on Physical Conditioning

Whether you are a 98lb weakling, a 180lb fighting machine or a 350lb overweight guy who can barely make it up a flight of stairs, the fact remains that if someone tries to take your life today you MUST defend yourself. Try these exercises but don't worry if you can't do all of them right away.

Tip #1 Warm up

Before beginning any physical exercise be sure to warm up your body thoroughly, by employing a variety of cardiovascular exercises and stretches.

What follows is how I structure a typical 10 minute warm up. My warm up is broken down into 4 parts. I vary the amount of exercise depending on how I'm feeling or if I want to work on a specific body part. Examples of each category follow:

Light Stretching from head to toe:

- Neck twists
- Rotating arms over the head
- Waist twists
- Back stretches
- Knee rotations
- Ankle rotations



Cardiovascular/Aerobic Exercises:

- Jumping jacks
- Running in place
- Shadow fighting (kata)

Deep stretching:

- Side Split
- Hamstring stretches

Strength building:

- Knuckle pushups
- Chinups
- Situps

There are some great books and tapes on proper warm-ups so beat your way down to your local bookstore or library. Experiment continuously with your routine.

Tip # 2 – Jump Rope



The jump rope is great for building up your cardiovascular endurance. It also allows you to work on your footwork and helps your coordination. Use a leather jump rope, it's faster, with wooded handles. I like to tape the part of the rope that hits the ground a lot so that it doesn't fray. There are several ways to train with it.

Skip as long as you can. Some professional boxers will work the rope for 25 minutes. Skip in 3 minute rounds and then take a one minute break.

Although we don't intend a violent encounter to last 3 minutes, or take place in rounds, if you're in great shape at least you can run from the attacker. Another type of jump rope that develops phenomenal endurance is the weighted heavy rope. I've used the three pound rope before and it builds arm strength as well as coordination.

Be careful when training with a jump rope that you wear good shoes or work out on a matted surface. You don't want to damage your knees by jumping on cement.

Tip # 3 – Break falls

Break falls as described in the *Secrets of Combat Jujutsu* books are a great way to practice alone and to warm up. As you are first learning the falls always start from a lying down position, just to get your final body position correct. Next move to a sitting position, then to a crouching position, and finally to a standing position.

All rolls should be started from a kneeling position. In all techniques your chin should be tucked in.



Make sure that you always fall on a padded surface such as an exercise mat. A typical wrestling mat may be too hard for advanced falls but fine for basic falls. I have personally practiced on sandy beaches and grassy fields on many occasions.

In my dojo I use the Swain Sports Mat. These mats are on top of a Stage Step floor, which has rubber supports underneath it. This has led to great student retention and limits injuries.

I also have a great big 5" crash pad. It's almost impossible to get hurt in this device, and even beginners can practice their falls and gain confidence at the same time.

Tip #4 – Developing Power through a Striking Pad

About 25 years ago I was a green belt in karate and a "master" of punching the air. So I decided to test my punch on a punching bag hanging in the local gym. I almost broke my hand with the first strike. Then I tried an elbow strike into this swinging bag. I managed to give myself a black eye from the recoil.

Today, I use a makiwara (padded striking post) to develop knock down power in my basic punches. My Goju Ryu Karate Instructor Terou Chinen calls this device "the final hope" for traditional Karate. I do verily believe him. However, I am aware that not every one will have access to a device such as this.



But you can easily create your own striking bag by taking a duffel bag and filling it with old laundry. Practice moving and striking it with all your combat art strikes. Remember the human body has give, so do not make the bag too compact.

Tip #5 – Punching Bag Endurance

You can also use the punching bag to develop endurance. By attacking 3 minute rounds followed by one minute rest. Build up gradually, and I recommend starting with a lighter bag so that you do not damage your hands. Without a partner to hold the bag it will move. This is good because you can follow it and practice your attacking attitude.

Tip #6 – Striking Pad Body Positioning

Use the bag as the body of an imaginary adversary. For example, Taisabaki 1 with a partner involves a block, followed by a punch. When using the bag pretend to block and follow immediately by striking the bag. You can practice the 10 positions of Taisabaki to develop this drill, as well as all of the different blocks and strikes. This differs from the earlier drill in that you are now concentrating on your footwork.

Tip #7 – Punching Bag Body Grabbing

After striking you will have loosened your partner up. He will now be ready for you to disable him with a major technique such as a full body throw. With the heavy bag practice the strike then follows with wrapping your arms around the bag. This prepares you for such throws as the hip throw. You can even wrap an old coat around the bag so that you grab under the arms or waist after hitting.

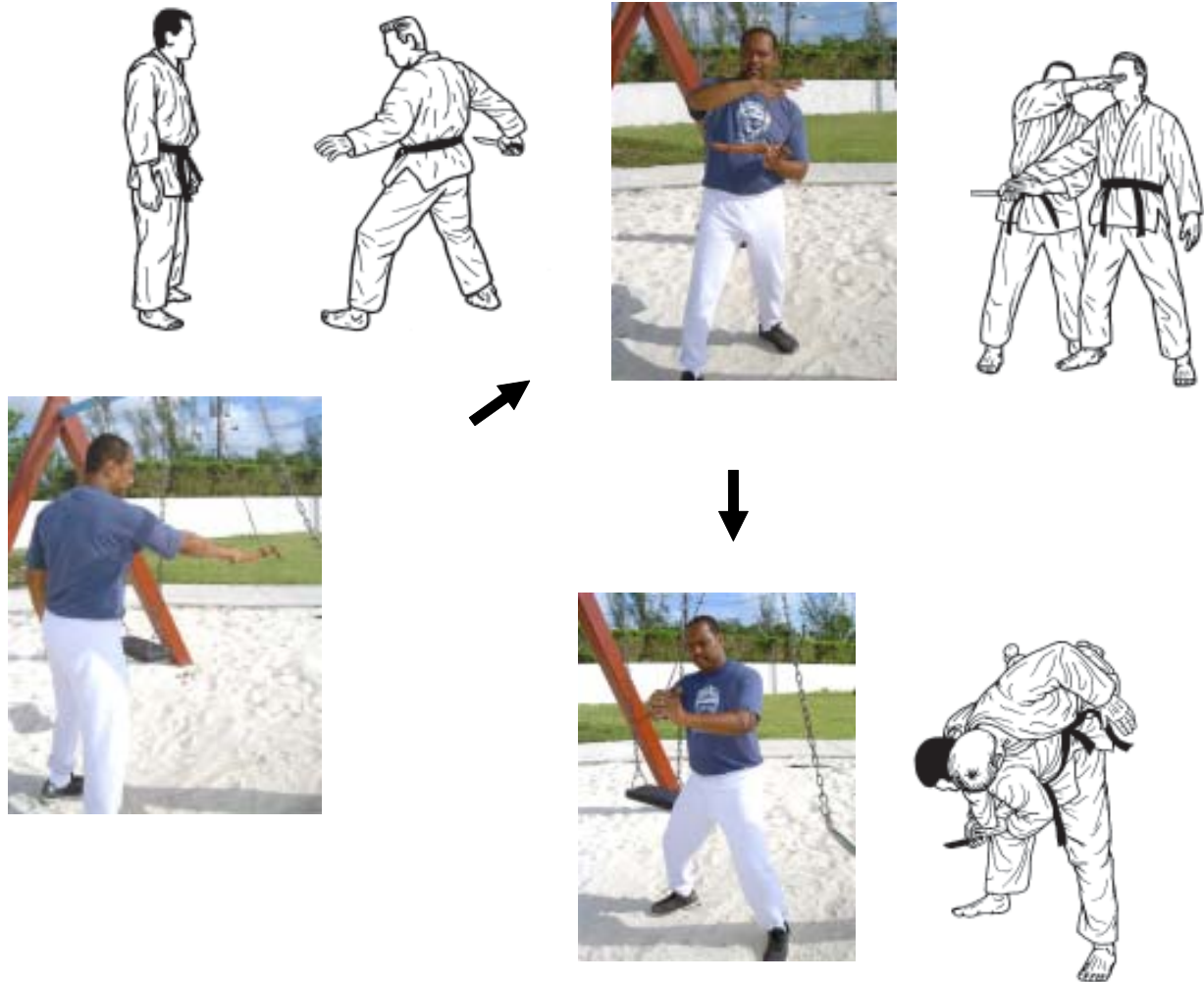
Many of these exercises will feel awkward at first, but if you use your imagination in a short period of time you will even be able to “feel” the attacker and his murderous intent.

Tip #8 – Swinging Bag or Ball Body Positioning and Timing Drill

With these drills you develop the ability to practice combat techniques that neutralize a charging attacker. Swing the heavy bag so that when it comes back if you don't move it will hit you. Practice moving out of the way at the last minute and following with a counter strike as in Miyama Ryu's basic Taisabaki drill. You can try pivoting and getting behind the bag, or even moving out of the way and using the momentum of the bag to push it further as in the floating knee drop throw.



Another version of this drill is to tie a yellow marker to a string and hang it from the ceiling. Swing the marker away from you. Try to avoid it as it comes back. Remember, most combat art moves require that you step obliquely toward the target at the last moment. If you are caught the marker will mark your clothes.



Later you can tie a wooden knife to the string or even a ball to simulate a punch. Shoes can be used to practice avoiding kicks. Vary the height to the string depending on the area you want targeted. The knife can become either a throat thrust or a stomach thrust.

Tip #9 – Shadow Fighting

These drills will develop visualization skills but only require your imagination. You can practice your movements against one adversary or many. Your imaginary adversary can be your worst nightmare, 320lbs, mean, armed and ugly or someone as skillful as you, so you have to counter his attacks.

I believe that this is a very underutilized form of training. When I practiced for my Menkyo (Teacher's license) I did not have a training partner who understood the two man Kata that were required. So it was all done with imaginary partners. I would first work the part of the attacker and then the part of the defender.



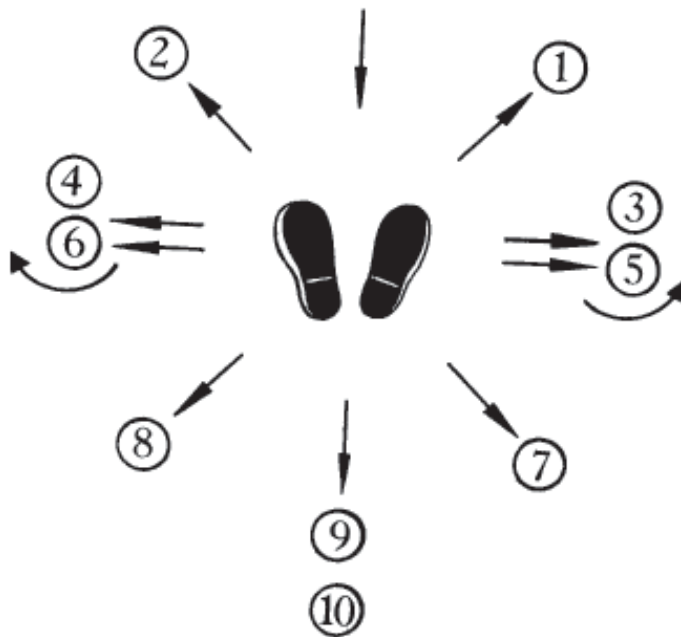
When I took the exam, the first time that I used a live partner for one of the advanced forms was during the exam. Because I had practiced with so much intensity, and my partner was so skilled, my score was nearly perfect. Many of the Senior Instructors wanted to know who I had trained with to develop my form.

Practicing alone without a partner feels very awkward at first, but after a short time you'll feel as if you're practicing against a live person.

Tip # 10 – Shadow Taisabaki (Body Positioning)

A core principal of the combat arts is Taisabaki. There are two major components to Taisabaki. The first is to move your body out of the attacker's way and the second is to be in a position to retaliate. One way of practicing Taisabaki alone is to mark off positions on the ground where you want to step to.

You can do this with chalk or with tape. Practice the Taisabaki, concentrating first on the feet, and lastly on the defensive blocks and strikes. Practice until the body movements become instinctive all the time visualizing your adversary.



Tip # 11 – Mirror fighting

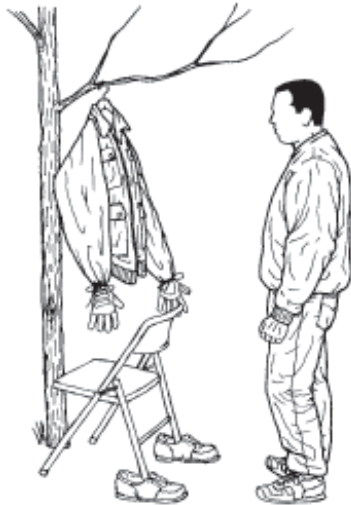
If at first you have difficulty visualizing an attacker, practice your techniques in front of a mirror. Here you can practice punches, kicks and body movements against an adversary who is about your size. You can also check your form to see that it is similar to the practitioners in the books.

Mirror fighting goes beyond this. You can also practice reacting to an adversary behind you by imagining his attack and how you would move your body to react to his. With this training method one Miyama Ryu Shihan was recently attacked in a parking lot while putting his keys in the car. He saw the attacker's reflection in his car window just in time, and turned, avoided an oncoming punch and then threw the attacker to the cement knocking him unconscious.



Tip # 12 – Create your own training partner

Tie or sew the gloves to the coat, lightly stuff the sleeves with newspapers or old clothes, and put the rear legs of the chair in the shoes. Assemble the training partner as pictured below and hang him from the pole or tree. Sometimes I use black electrical tape to identify the vital areas of the body. I always stuff the gloves to add some bulk to them.



Tip # 13 – Striking Practice

I use the training dummy to develop accuracy and speed in my strikes as opposed to power. As with the striking pad, you can practice a variety of strikes and kicks. The purpose of the swivel neck clothes hanger is to allow the training dummy to turn as you strike it.



One concept of the combat arts is that after you have evaded the attacker's strike or grab you immediately trap the adversary in some way and counterstrike (or misdirect). It is from the point of your trapping that you can execute your striking technique and follow up.

Tip #14 – Formal Joint-Locking (Kansetsuwaza)

To practice a joint lock full force is impossible even for highly skilled practitioners. However, with your training partner you can crank on his elbow as hard as you want to. The illustrations mimic the formal



basic joint-dislocation. Remember the key points here are to always attack in the direction of the knife edge of his hand and to bring pressure on his elbow with your armpit.

Tip #15 – Wrist Breaking (Kote Gaeshi)



The wrist breaking technique illustrated is a defense against a wrist grab. This movement is featured in the book *Secrets of Combat Jujutsu*. Wrist techniques are a powerful way of bringing an adversary to the ground with minimal effort.

The effect on the adversary is that he is thrown to the ground and unable to use the hand with the damaged wrist. This movement is particularly great when your attacker has a size advantage because you use all your strength against the bones in his wrist.

If the attacker is armed, wrist breaking movements often serve to disarm him. As usual use your imagination to develop the drills. You can practice the key points of wrist turning as well as positioning your partner's wrist.

All of the advance Kote Waza can also be practiced with this method. Remember, formal position requires that the defender not resist as you are learning the techniques. In fact sometimes it is more difficult to learn the correct hand positions with a live attacker because he will resist you and slow your progress. When we actually use these techniques against street attackers we MUST strike him or distract the attacker in some way to take his attention away from the wrist.

By combining your striking practice with the formal joint locking and wrist turning you can begin to practice applications. For example, you can practice the lapel grab from the point that you trap his arm and strike. Remember, the key points here are the same as for the formal applications with one important exception. Strike strongly to a vital area to distract him so that he will be unable to resist your wrist or elbow breaking technique. Practice these techniques until they become second nature.

Striking or misdirection before applying a joint lock is an important criterion of the combat arts. If you practice with an untrained friend, and do not strike or misdirect first, the techniques will not work. The combat arts are for self-protection, so use them only in life threatening situations.

Tip # 16 – Developing Throwing Techniques

Famed fighter Judo Gene Lebel is credited as saying something along these lines, "I know a lot of fellows who can take a good hit, but not many of them can take being thrown on their heads."



By using your gym bag and belt you can develop good form in many throwing techniques. With the aid of the chair you can practice getting low, waist beneath the chair. You must also be between the adversary's feet. By slinging the bag over your shoulder you can practice the correct form.

Tip # 17 – Developing Foot Sweeps

Foot sweeps are among my favorite fighting techniques. There is nothing more disturbing to a street attacker than to suddenly find himself on the ground with a pair of size 11s about to stomp his head in.

One major problem with foot sweeps is that students tend to hack rather than sweep. With the use of a broom and a shoe, you can make good progress in foot placement and even correct form.



Tip # 18 – Practicing Strangulation Techniques

The effects of a strangle hold are now widely known for their effectiveness due in a large part to UFC type events. However, they also serve a purpose in defending your life on the streets because if properly applied they will render an attacker unconscious in 8 – 12 seconds.

For the strangulation drills, all you need is a jacket and a hanger. These drills are ideal for developing good entrances and form. Again, practice striking before entering.



What's Next?

Please send me feedback on this report. I would love to hear from you. Maybe you have a few ideas that you'd like to share. You can reach me at jujutsu@coralwave.com .

And if you want a great set of books on the Combat arts consider ordering the *Secrets of Combat Jujutsu Books* found at www.miyamaryu.org .If you're not satisfied with them I'll refund your money personally. And as my old Judo Instructor Shunichi Namba would say, "in the dojo, injury is our only enemy". So practice safely.

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Special Thanks to Sandra and Jayden Kemp for the photography

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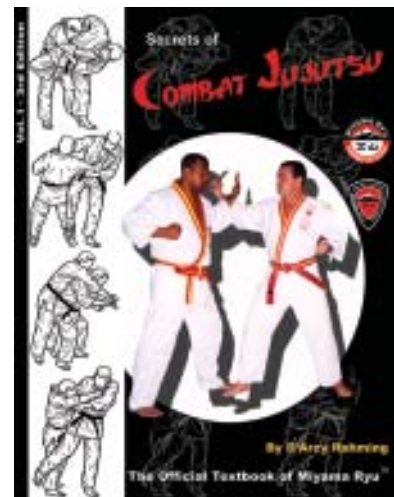
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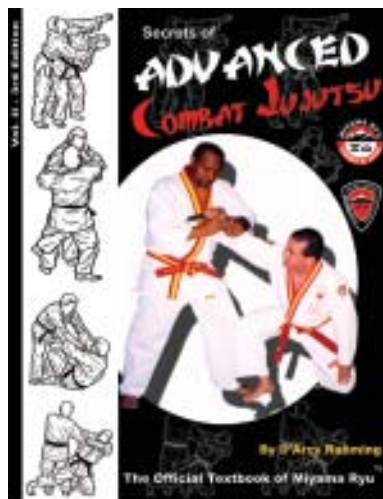


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