

# **Master At Arms Curriculum**

**TW. Smith**

# Master At Arms Curriculum by TW. Smith

July 15, 2018

If Colonel Baden-Powell said,

"TW Smith, I need a Martial Arts program that could be taught in 20 countries, that 300,000 boys, 11-15 could learn, it will be practical, and a candidate able to be proficient in 4-6 months, what can you do?"

TW. Smith would respond, "Sir, this is my first shot at it, but here is what I have. I will make edits and the video is coming."

Let's see what I have...

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  - Master At Arms Overview
  - Guidelines
  - One Objective
  - What To Expect
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      - 3 Phases Of Sprawling
      - Pins And Locks

[Master at Arms Podcast](#)

## **Master At Arms Overview**

Martial Education and Skills

### **EXCELLENCE STARTS WITH KNOWLEDGE**

Candidates Will:

1. Give Evidence of Training in Martial Skills for no less than 6 months. a. Strikes b. Covers c. Sticks d. Staffs e. Grappling f. Escaping g. DeBriefing
2. Demonstrate a knowledge of recognizing Personal Confrontations and Bullying
3. Exhibit emotional control when struck
4. Show Skills in pre-emptive attack, defensive and offensive techniques
5. Have BSA resources on how to report incidents

Assessments : Most skills are designed to measured at a 75% range to demonstrate learning, not high proficiency. During the 6-9 months of training, higher proficiency (85-95%) is pursued.

### **Contents**

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### **When Parents Are Not Around**

Jamie Clubb : Excellent Resource for Self Defense Considerations

[When Parents Aren't Around: A Young Person's Guide to Real Self-Protection](#)

## **Guidelines**

The Boundaries of Training

Mutual Respect : All Scouts will demonstrate respect toward their classmates. The only way that we progress is through working with others. Disrespect is not tolerated. Disregard for the safety of your classmates, whether you are the aggressor or receiver, is not tolerated.

No Candidate will receive their badge if they demonstrate a lack of respect to a classmate.

Emotional Development : During the course of teaching Scouts, they will demonstrate emotional control whether they are delivering techniques and not abusing the chance of demonstrating power, or when they receive a technique.

Progressive Training : Scouts will have the ability to learn in the air, mits and with classmates. All three will be our toolset of measuring the candidates performance.

## **One Objective**

The only objective of this curriculum is to give the Scout the best opportunity to get home with least about of injury and emotional trauma as possible.

The goal of this Martial Arts Program IS NOT to win a fight, it is to escape without being harmed or emotionally abused.

## What To Expect

3-6 months

Within this program, we want the Scout to develop fundamental martial skills, a confidence and understanding of various engagements.

In general circumstances, if we used a skill level, saying level 1 is beginning White Belt, and Level 10, is a Black Belt. We are wanting our scout to be a minimum 4 and work toward a 5/6 level.

The Scout's previous training will influence much of what they initially accomplish. However, the skills within could be worked on for many months for greater expertise.

Color Code

Scout will describe 4 levels of environmental alertness

1. Clueless and Oblivious : Face stuck on iphone with earbuds in.
2. Aware : Glancing around surrounding including an occasional peek behind (like if one was driving a car)
3. Alert : Spidey Senses go off. Something feels or looks out of place
4. Engaged : The Spidey Senses were right, the aggressor's attention is noticed, there distance may or may not be close, but you will need to manage the situation.

### **"Be Prepared" - Protect The Scout**

Bullying, Kidnapping, Assault

In the original Master at Arms Handbook, there was several pages dedicated to fencing, wrestling and boxing. This handbook is designed to focus the scout on self-protection and confrontation management (ie. bullying) rather than sports.

The BSA does not support many activities any longer that are sports, are activities that it deems too dangerous. Martial Arts are deemed too dangerous. Yet it continues to advocate against bullying, and many argue do not supply any tools on

how to address it for the Scout.

Most of their documentation discuss how a Scout is supposed to behave, or how adults or supposed to handle Scouts internally, for bullying (ie. Don't contact the parents of the bullying child) or sexual abuse. The BSA Youth Protection program, I thought was, by it's title, a seperate self-protection module for the Scouts, but it isn't. It is a mandatory, volunteer module to make sure the adults can identify and knows the BSA policies on how to handle sexual abuse and bullying. Nothing in all the pages about empowering or 'preparing' the Scout on handling a confrontation in the moment. Remember this all US, other main branches continue to support the Scout in direct confrontation.

After reading the US BSA documentation on how to handle bullying, it is sad to say that a Scout that is experiencing or witnessing a bullying occurrence is not given tools to standup for themselves in the moment, except call 9-1-1. As if the bully is going to allow the Scout to take out their phone, make a call, and discuss the problem in front of the bully. Not to mention, that if the Scout was able to make this miracle call, average response time is nearly 10 minutes throughout the US. With the best being 7 minutes, most bumping close to 12-15 minutes. Whatever is left of the Scout, I assume, is supposed to be interviewed.

This is not acceptable. It flys in the face of the Boy Scout Mantra, 'Be Prepared'.

### **Directly from the Boy Scouts Handbook**

"Do not encourage physical retaliation ("Just hit them back!") as a solution. Hitting another Scout is not likely to end the problem, and it could result in your child being removed from Scouting or escalating the situation."

"Someone is at immediate risk of harm because of bullying - Call the police 9-1-1"

Other than Bullying, the Scouts are not providing any of their previous teaching for the Scouts on how to stop bullying, kidnapping or direct assault, like Colonel Baden-Powell originally engineered.

*The Boy Scouts Bullying Page:*

<https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/bullying/>

## Confrontation Management

### Step 1 Recognize, Acknowledge and Ignore

The Scout will be able to answer the following questions, (verbal or written) The Personal Confrontation Flow

What is the One Objective of the Scouts Martial Arts Curriculum?

What is, and When, does the personal confrontation begin? What are the two approaches to managing the confrontation, when it is recognized? What are the advantages of each?

We practice ignoring (do not give the aggressor the satisfaction of knowing you know, but IGNORE does NOT equal Disregard)

What are two paths that allows you to carryout each approach?

<http://kungfupodcasts.com/2018/05/31/command-physical-confrontation/>

### ***Positioning***

Recline to Ready

Candidate demonstrates the casual posture and reclines to ready posture.

This should be done smoothly, without fidgeting and done so in a subtle manner when practicing. Hands at ready.

### ***Footwork Drills***

Fundamental Box Step

Martial Box Use the box to advance, withdraw, step left and right, without crossing feet. The foot that is closest to the box you are moving into, moves first. Maintain ready position. Rotate through the box, without changing lead foot, in both directions. Then rotate through with the other lead.

Assess: move through each rotation twice (8 boxes) without more than 2 mis-steps per rotation, in a fluid (not necessarily fast) pace.

Pivot Step : Lead foot in center, pivot to corner in ready position

### ***Confrontation Education***

#### 5 Fundamentals of Managing a Personal Confrontation

##### Overview of 5 Fundamentals

1. Be Prepared to 'Physically' act in a Fraction of a second
2. Institute a fence through engaging comments and talking with your hands, without escalating.
3. Be in the moment. Do not analyze. Denial ('this shouldn't be happening') will only get you hurt. You are there.
4. Confidence to Act Swiftly. Negative thoughts will hinder your ability to act and think.
5. Improve Striking Ranges

1 The key issue here is – “be prepared for a physical response at a fraction of a second’s notice.” These types of engagement do not always progress in a ‘linear’ fashion, where a series of ‘escalator’ steps are taken by both parties and where dialogue drives that progress. You could get someone walking towards you – not stop in front to engage verbally, but simply walk up and strike. Don’t automatically expect dialogue and be ready for one thing and one thing only – Protect Your Space.

2 No one is allowed inside the reach of your fingertips and whoever we are (police, security officer, civilian), wherever we are, and everything we do is in an invisible, protective bubble; this is the ‘Fence’ concept In a busy street, we expand and shrink the bubble as people walk by and who may even bump into us, but for whom our assessment and evaluation of them indicates no obvious threat. However, when we perceive a directed interest in us, then it’s ‘shields up’ and no-one – repeat noone gets through it.

The ‘fence’ concept is predominant in this situation and unless you’ve religiously practiced your fence as it should work for you (adapt, don’t simply adopt one you’ve seen someone else use), then you’ll probably just tip the other person over the edge, particularly if you bring your hands up in what is likely to look like a provocative move – palms forward - which simply says “I have a problem with you and I’m going to keep you at bay” – which is probably just going to be seen as a

challenge to the person in front. Your hands need to co-ordinate with your speech, emphasising what you say, in a manner that goes unnoticed, yet keep the arms long, defining your bubble and the limit of your personal space. "Talk with your hands."

3 We have to get into the 'moment.' By this we mean avoid analysing why you are where you are and why its happening to you, because this is the first paragraph of the chapter called 'denial'. Denial is your sub-conscious telling you that you shouldn't be here, that it's not fair and that you really are not part of what's taking place. It's a condition made worse if the events have unfolded quickly and you've been shocked - "shock is the fast route to fear". Its also the opening paragraph of the chapter entitled "I've lost the fight before I'm in it". You're there so accept it and get on with it. An American Service Service agent was quoted as saying -

"If you don't think it can happen to you, it will happen twice as fast."

4 Confidence to Act Swiftly :Your sub-conscious will also work overtime, flashing one word - 'CONSEQUENCES' like a neon sign. Under this sign are the jumbled issues of the law, potential injuries, lack of confidence in technique, what's reasonable, how much impact, etc etc. All the negative thoughts that start to steal our confidence.

It is now that defensive tactics and martial arts diverge. They diverge primarily in the arena of stances, martial arts versus western violence and techniques versus application which we'll consider in more detail in Unit 11.

5 "Ability to Improvise Striking Ranges" : You may hear people talk about a 'correct range' for striking, but often this isn't in your control, other than that you have tried to keep someone at arms length. If they move in, however, and a pre-emptive strike is necessary, they are no longer perfectly placed - therefore, impact from strike must work from few inches to a foot, or even if we have to reach out further than we would like.

### ***Footwork Drills***

Fundamental V Add Angles

Lay down to sticks in V shape. Candidate stands in ready posture at point.

### Sparrow Stepping

Candidate advances up right side in right lead, twice. Then withdraws back to point. Candidate quickly switches leads and advances up left side

### Sparrow Step Long Angle Withdrawal

Candidate advance up right side in right lead, once, then the left leg pulls back at 45-90 degrees from V, so candidate is still in right foot-hand lead

Assess: Candidate can repeat each pattern 4 times without more than 1 mis-step.

### Quarter Staff Strikes

The Quarter Staff Provides numerous transfers of skills, plus it will help the Scout stay engaged mentally.

Make use of staffs that are as close to chin high to just over head of Scout. This length will be good for the Scout to get a better sense of range, build strength and coordination.

The Scout will learn to hold the staff with inline thumbs, dominant palm down by hip, other up and in front. So a right hand person, quite likely will want the staff resting near the right hip, with left leg in lead. Left palm up, hip high.

Scout identifies the : 1) Point 2) Butt 3) Bar

Basic Techniques : Straight Thrust, Horizontal End Stroke, Vertical End Strike, Smash

Scout will learn each technique in the air, demonstrate control and target area's with a compliant receiver, and then on mits and another staff.

Footwork Progression : 1) Begin in a ready posture, step out slightly with a 'thrust' and 'smash'. Allow hips to rotate and heels to turn with weight transference during 'end strokes'. 2) Move through full steps.

### Confrontation Education

### ***Gestures and Threats***

The Scout will give at least 3 gestures and 3 Threats from the list.

Body Language Trainer Gestures : They can do it, but you can't go pre-emptive  
Pursed Lips Squint Red or Flushed Face Clench Jaw Finger Pointing Throwing  
Things Around

Threats : You better be ready to go pre-emptive Threatening Posture Invading  
Space Unwanted Touching Sudden Movements

What are the 2 Primary tools of a Criminal Act?

Bully's and Criminals will use two primary tools (not only these two, but you can usually expect one of them, always): 1. Taking of your personal space. They will not recognize your fence or request to stay outside your zone. 2. Sudden Violence. They feint or act swiftly to injure or shock you into fear.

### ***Quarter Staff Intercepts***

Parry/Intercepting

The Scout will demonstrate 5 Intercepting Techniques:

Over Head : From ready, scouts springs into a horse stance, staff is swiftly moved parallel to deck, prepared to intercept Left Flank - Lead Hand Top - Scout reclines into cat or hang stance, with left leg empty, moves staff vertically to left side with lead hand on top. The Point is up. Right Flank - Lead Hand Top - Same as left Flank.

Left Flank - Lead Hand Bottom - Same as Left Flank, except lead hand goes to bottom. The butt-end goes to top. Right Flank - Lead Hand Bottom

Assess Scout on all 5 Intercepting techniques before move into exercise. 7 out 10 on each.

Quarter Staff Form - Outline Form

Coordinate Offensive and Defensive Techniques

Go from a Left flank Intercept to rear thrust and forward thrust. Then Right Side

Increase Your Odds

Action Beats ReAction

Once two people are within touching distance, the one that strikes first, takes the dominant position 75% of the time. This means that the receiver has been knocked out, stunned, or is now in fear mode and dodging for their safety.

Your Pre-emptive strike does not need to be a hail mary, but it does need to be swift and accurate.

For example : Thrust kick toward knees

### ***Transferring The Staff***

Recognize built in Techniques

The Scout will take skills practiced in Staff to assist with learning the next strikes. This is an opportunity for the Scout to put things together. Learn how to use resources from one to be successful in another. As the instructor goes through the straight and curved strikes, query if the Scout recognizes any similarities:

Straight Jab - Thrust Horizontal End Stroke - Hook Vertical End Stroke - Uppercut Smash - Hammer Strikes (not in current curriculum)

Also, emphasize to Scout, that just like with the staff, the whole body, and both arms work together, it's not an isolated arm movement.

Straight Strike

Palm Striking

Purpose : Teach Scout how to strike with an open palm to either shock or stun the aggressor. Open Palm strikes are generally fast and can be used as a slap as well as a strike. Think inline of teaching an Atemi, to an area that may not cause injury, but will give Scout time to take charge of the circumstances.

Straight Palm Strikes : Target Chest and Shoulders.

Assess both the Jab and Cross version for hip rotation, and hand orientation for best power

Instructor Note: For all strikes straight and curved, have Scout practice in the air, then allow Scout to touch classmate lightly with good technique, then use focus mits. Then repeat, in the air and with compliant classmate, expect 90-100% accuracy in technique. With mits, expectation is 70-80% accurate.

### ***Protect Yourself Swiftly***

Unconfidence - Hesitation

### ***Excellence Starts With Knowledge Confidence is Built in Focus***

The Scout must be assured that their family, instructors and friends want them to stay safe. There may be consequences for taking action, but there maybe more dyer ones, and long term ones, if they do not.

My son was always taught, that if follows what I teach, he will never be disciplined by me. His first confrontation, he got trapped between lockers between a bully two grades ahead of him. My son went thru the protocol, but when the larger bully stepped into his fence, he slapped his face, tapped him in the groin, grabbed his bag and doubled-timed it down the hall.

A teacher happened to walkup near the end, with other students testimony, my son was expelled for a day, without a punishing record on his file. The bully was expelled for a week with behavioral discipline and probation as well.

When I was called, I respectfully acknowledged the Principle and his policies, as long as he understood that my son would not be left in hallways of his facility without the ability to protect himself from thugs. The bully never approached my son again, on or off campus.

1. The fear of getting hit
2. Consequences if you act

Will get you hurt. We must "BE PREPARED" to overcome them.

The Scout will state the two factors that can severely slow them down.

Curved Strikes

Hooking Palm Strike and Uppercut

Side Palm Strikes are hooking strikes with an open palm. Primary target ribs.

Uppercut is a closed hand strike, primary target abdomen

Assess : Good hip rotation, weight transfer from ready poster.

Combine Upper And Lower

Coordinating Upper and Lower

Combine strikes with box stepping Combine strikes with pivot stepping Combine strikes with V Stepping

Candidate performs minimum of 4 reps with each technique and step.

ie. Box steps with all 4 strikes = 16 reps Then repeat for pivot and V steps.

Assessment : >75% proficiency

Improvise

This program is built around "Be Prepared" with one objective.

Being able to adjust striking ranges of techniques:

1. Hands become forearms
2. Forearms become shoulder
3. Kicks become knees
4. Knees become bumping hips
5. Stick become backpacks
6. Backpacks become books
7. Books becomes cell phones

The Scout will reflect on the ability to maintain their objectives, and improvise their techniques to meet it.

The Scout will state options to the long staff:

Long staff can become brooms, mops, smaller lamps, umbrellas, canes, pipes, pvc, closet rods, shower rods, and vacuum tubing.

Covering

Comb Hair

Protect Chin and Temples primarily, since these are shutdown signals for the brain.

Absorb with further recline, Comb Hair with Hand. Chin tucks into shoulder rotating away. Watch aggressor thru triangle of arm, rotate hips, deliver a crossing palm strike

LowerBody Strikes

Kicks

The Scout will be able to execute 2 good kicks,

Thrust Kick Low-House Kick

Thrust kick is directed toward the knees or thighs. I like for students to practice with toes back, using the sole of the foot so they can miss a little, toward the ball or heel of the foot. An instructor may also advocate a ball of foot or heel only technique.

Low-House Kick is a kick directed toward the inside or outside of the lower leg, maybe the thigh. Practice using the lower leg as the contact point.

The Scout will demonstrate the ability to move from a ready position, through a step (box, pivot, or V) and swiftly execute both kicks.

Fear Into Aggression

## The Fuel

When the point of managing the situation has spiraled downward, then the Scout will need to be able to channel their fear. In the upcoming session of 'The Cover', the Scout will be reminded to turn his fear into power, each time they come out of the cover. They will have the greatest chance of meeting their One Objective, if they do so.

## Single Stick

### Versatile Weapon

Using a single stick, that is generally 16-26 inches long, dependent on Scouts size and strength. Standard kali sticks, cut broom handles, are bamboo rods can be used.

The purpose is prove the Scout with versatile skills that could easily be translated to other objects. A backpack or umbrella leap to mind.

Holding the stick in the dominant hand, in a ready position, the stick is in line with shoulder, just as if Scout was going to throw a straight palm strike. The Scout slashes stick down to opposite hip with framework as if they were cutting with a single edge sword, not swinging a rock on the end of string. The stick should move swiftly in line, finish at the opposite hip. The hand, (not so much the shoulder rises) and the stick slashes back from other ear to hip, finishing just outside hip, not more than 6 inches from body line (leaving scout exposed).

Once the Scout has demonstrated proficiency from a ready position, (checking for hip rotation, weight transfer and framework) (15 out 20 reps are correct), then have Scout same technique with Box Stepping and V stepping. Scout should demonstrate 75% of combined lower and upper body technique, prior to being checked off here.

## Break Falls

Scout will demonstrate a safe break falls from a standing position:

Forward - Back - Left and Right Side

Progress Training : Start on Knees, Fitness balls, tumbling pads, etc. Help candidate overcome fears first, skills second.

Friend Iain Abernethy has a good string on Falls:

<https://iainabernethy.co.uk/content/various-techniques-breaking-fall>

### ***No Increase Of Harm***

A Scout will avoid an altercation if at all possible, they will even take a physical action to give way to the altercation, unless it:

1. Increases their risk of harm
2. Does not secure other people they care about
3. Abandon someone who will be in the range of the aggression

Pummeling

Under Hook - Over Hook : Chest to Chest, each hooking and countering, first to three underhooks wins. <https://youtu.be/1fz-duVr-vY>

Elbow and Neck Gripping - Iain Abernethy has best video on this, how to grip, and how to counter. <https://youtu.be/peTXFjuQoUM>

### ***Grappling***

From Pummeling to Grappling

Pummeling is the component of gripping and bumping for position. Once your opponent is off balance, execute some type of technique :

Arm bar Standard Palm Up Arm bar Palm Down Kamara Head lock

From these techniques the scout will be able to get the aggressor to the ground.

### ***Escaping***

Not Winning a Fight

The Scout will demonstrate the ability to escape when the possibility is anticipated:

With the aggressor down, the Scout will demonstrate a step back to safe distance (unable to touch) with hands in front, then turn and quickly find safety.

With the aggressor stumbling, the Scout may attempt to shove the aggressor and escape out a side door.

Game : Safe Zone : Scout will strike and move through mitted class mates till he arrives to safe mat.

### ***3 Phases Of Sprawling***

When Aggressor is Shooting Legs

When someone try's to shoot into Scout's lowerbody, I break down into 3 distinct phases:

1. They are coming, but haven't touched you yet
2. They are touching you, hands are getting around legs, their head is close to you or touching you.
3. They surprised you, they are on you, and your legs are about to/or starting to buckle, you are going down.

Candidate will demonstrate 1 counter to each lowerbody attack

1. Sprawl back and press their face/chest into ground
2. Apply a strike (hammerfist or elbow) to their back, or less violent, sprawl back, drive forearm across face, turning head.
3. Curl your knees into your chest as you are falling back, forcing aggressor to take knees into face.

Sprawl must be executed with a simultaneous thrusting and spreading of feet. Scouts chest pushed forward to apply weight to aggressor.

Trips / Throws

Ankle Trip : Originally in the Master at Arms handbook. This technique is used in combination of pummeling and bumping. When you get a grip on side, recline back with a pull on neck, collar, sleeve, or wrist, as aggressor steps in, sweep the ankle with sole of foot.

Side Throw : Originally in the Master at Arms handbook. Step back and to the left with your right foot. As the aggressor steps forward with his left foot for balance, immediately step across it with your left foot. Pull with right hand, push with left.

You can also practice this by stepping into the aggressors flank, step with your right foot up to his side, place your left foot behind his, pull with right, push with left.

The aggressor (receiver should practice their side break falls).

The Hock Throw : Step behind and throw. The Back Throw : Work behind, grip, and throw.

Iain Abernethy executes this throw much better than what is explained in the original manual. <https://youtu.be/peTXFjuQoUM>

### ***Pins And Locks***

Once Aggressor Down

Once your opponent is down, if escaping isn't an option yet, then to have success, you may need to lock him down till "he has enough or recognized your superior position" (Boy Scouts Handbook, 1925).

Ideal Circumstances : Require the Aggressor to turn facedown.

Scout will be able to motivate aggressor to turn facedown through wrist and arm manipulation. Once down, apply one of the following techniques:

Arm bar across own knee

Chicken Wing with knee pin

Confrontation Education

The Personal Confrontation Flow

Phase 1 What is, and When, does the personal confrontation begin? What are the two approaches to managing the confrontation, when it is recognized? What are the advantages of each?

What are two paths that allows you to carryout each approach?

<http://kungfupodcasts.com/2018/05/31/command-physical-confrontation/>

Phase 2 What are the 5 Fundamentals of Managing a Personal Confrontation?

Phase 3 What are Body Languages Cues, the difference between Gestures and Threats

Phase 4 Action Beats Reaction : Pre-emptive Strike

Closing

This is a Living Document, that I intend to make updates to both the written and video components.

Thank you for being part of Kungfu Podcasts.

TW. Smith

[Master at Arms Podcast](#)