

## Conclusions

Hopefully this zine will have you better prepared to choose effective martial arts to study, locate a convenient gym that offers them, train in the correct ratios, and be mentally and physically conditioned for a variety of scenarios.

It is also important to do your own research, adapt these lessons to your own unique needs, and learn from other knowledgeable martial artists and anti-fascists. We must establish and maintain revolutionary discipline so that we can train long term in a sustainable manner. Martial arts and fitness is a lifelong journey.

Most importantly, we must keep our goals and values in mind for they are our greatest priorities. We must put aside machismo and our egos and focus on building strong, militant movements capable of dismantling capitalism and white supremacy while also defending our spaces and each other.

## Additional Resources

Additional martial arts and anti-fascist information, including a complete training resource guide, can be found at:

<https://Twitter.com/SweetSciSavArt>

**Stay safe, stay dangerous**

## Training Martial Arts for Anti-Fascism

**What to train, how to begin,  
what to focus on, and how to prepare  
for real world community defense.**



**By: *Sweet Science,  
Savage Art***



**Introduction:** How should anti-fascists train martial arts for self and community defense? This has been common debate for some time now. Many say, "Just train MMA". However, it's a bit more complicated than that. To answer this question we must approach the subject in a way that can be measured and replicated. To do so we will judge our conclusions through the follow criteria: **Effectiveness, Convenience, Training Ratios, and Conditioning.**

## Effectiveness

The first and most important criteria to consider is effectiveness. Do practitioners regularly compete using full contact and spar against actively resisting partners? Can they prove that a technique or tactic works against a variety of opponents and styles? Are there videos of people using it successfully for self-defense, in major fight promotions, in brawls, etc? Can it end a fight quickly? Can it be easily and efficiently learned by the average person? Will it be applicable in the situations you anticipate or potentially dangerous in chaotic moments with no rules? By considering these questions we can come to the following definition of effectiveness: Tested and proven art forms that are easy to learn, deal fight ending damage quickly, and that can be safely applied to a variety of real world scenarios.

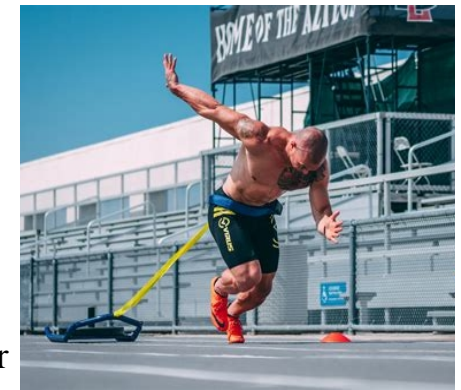


## Physical Conditioning

Last but not least, we can't forget about physical conditioning. Training in the above arts will get you in phenomenal shape and have you far better prepared for conflict than the average person or even athlete. However, there are aspects of anti-fascism that require unique conditioning.



Most street fights are shorter than average competition fights and most large scale direct actions last far longer. You will need to have both burst and endurance conditioning. Train in both explosive and power lifts and High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) as well as high rep lifts, calisthenics, and endurance runs. In streetfights size and weight is often a decisive factor. Put on as much functional weight and muscle as possible and invest in protein and creatine supplements. You should also condition your fists, shins, and forearms (look to Muay Thai and Lethwei for how to do this correctly) since you will not have the luxury of gloves and may face batons, bats, and other impact weapons.



Other than slams, your wrestling should be defensive. The goal is to prevent takedowns, stay on your feet, and engage in offensive striking. This strategy is commonly referred to as "sprawl and brawl" and solid wrestling will be your foundation.



The slow ground game of BJJ can be downright dangerous in many scenarios. Focus on defending and escaping from bad positions, getting back to your feet, and low-risk submissions such as standing chokes. An exception to this is if you are more likely to encounter physical de-escalation scenarios such as low-level safety work or responding to mental health crises in which case you should also practice restraints.



MMA is the most well-rounded art of them all and will help prepare you for a majority of confrontations. Just don't treat self-defense scenarios like an MMA fight and train it accordingly. Remember, there are no rules to abide by or judges to give you a decision win in anti-fascism; be ruthless and go for the finish.

## What to Train

**Striking** should be the focus for anti-fascists. It allows for quick engagements, can be used against multiple attackers, and can deal damage instantly. However, it does have a steeper learning curve meaning it takes time and dedication before you have a decisive advantage over most people. Below are the two most effective striking arts based on our definition of effectiveness.

**Boxing** is a specialist martial arts called the “sweet science” with a straightforward approach to training. Since folks are more coordinated with their hands, punches are easier to learn and will be a majority of strikes you throw and have to defend against.



**Muay Thai** is the “art of 8 limbs”. It utilizes punches, kicks, knees, and elbows while allowing for standing grappling (the clinch) and sweeps/trips making it the most well-rounded striking art. It is important to have a wide range of tools to choose from in a fight and Muay Thai has you train all of them.



**Grappling** is also important to train. It allows you to control your attacker, restrain them if they don't pose a threat, finish the fight safely via chokes, or wreck their world with slams and joint locks (breaking limbs). However, it does struggle against multiple attackers and edged weapons. Below are the two most effective grappling arts based on our definition of effectiveness.

**Wrestling** is an explosive style known as the “savage art” which focuses on mental and physical conditioning. It allows you to take attackers down to restrain them or prevent others from taking *you* down. When combined with slams, submissions (catch wrestling), or strikes (ground-n-pound) it is truly terrifying.



**Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ)** is very popular and is known as the “gentle art” due to its methodical and stoic style. It focuses on technique and leverage to win via submissions (chokes and joint locks) and is one of the few arts versed on fighting from the bottom and other bad positions.



Another part of mental conditioning is training each art in a manner that better prepares us for street fights and adjusting it to our needs. This is important because in stressful situations we revert to muscle memory and instincts. How we train is how we will fight.

Boxing is a perfect example. One should focus on the fundamentals, punching power/accuracy, and footwork. However, you will need to alter the stance to prevent takedowns/leg kicks and how you block since you won't be wearing big gloves in a streetfight (instead focus on head movement and pillars/helmet guard).



Muay Thai roundhouse kicks to the body and head are legendary, but are not appropriate when one could be taken down or is wearing tight clothing. Also, the slow, methodical starting pace doesn't translate well to quick street fights. Instead, focus on leg kicks, knees, elbows, clinching and frames, and train with a more aggressive, fast pace.



# Conditioning

Mental and physical conditioning are important criteria when training for anti-fascism. This will allow you to train more efficiently for your time and more effectively for the types of scenarios you are likely to encounter.

## Mental Conditioning

Fights are scary and it is easy to freeze if you're not prepared. Sparring will help calm your nerves and teach you to take a punch without panicking. No flinch, phone booth, and other live drills will help with confidence, composure, and getting up close and dirty.



It is also important to train unique scenarios outside your gym with your crew. These included multiple attackers, group scenarios (brawls), sparring near loud noises/flashing lights and other distractions, foam weapons, and surprise attacks.



## Others:

**Mixed Martial Arts (MMA)** combines various styles (primarily the ones above) to create a well-rounded skill set that can be adapted to a



variety of situations and opponents. The training tends to be results-focused and drills the fundamentals while leaving space for innovation.

**Military Combat Systems** are taught to armed forces members and adapt the basics of multiple martial arts to prepare for battle. The most popular of these systems is Krav Maga. They differ from other arts in that they teach situational awareness, strategic planning, have no rules or limitations, and are some of the few martial arts to teach multiple attackers and weapon scenarios. However, they focus on scenarios over technique which can lead to sloppy training. Also, since they're not uniformed styles the quality of training can vary wildly between schools (with some teaching fake or non-effective techniques) making independent research all the more important.



# Convenience

Convenience is another criteria to consider when starting a training program. If it's not convenient to train there then you will not be likely to stick with it long-term. Convenience includes quality of training, distance, affordability, schedules, and enjoyment. Use this criteria in your search for a gym.

## Quality of Training

Training takes time and dedication. If the training offered isn't effective then you will be spending more time than is necessary to achieve your goals (if you achieve them at all). Look for gyms that teach the martial arts listed in the effectiveness section above. MMA gyms are more likely to offer them all in one place.

## Distance

Distance and travel time is important because we all have hectic schedules. The more time you spend commuting the less you'll spend training and are more likely to skip days when you are tired or stressed. Search for gyms that are 30 minutes away or less; the closer the better.



MMA should be the remaining 15% of your training. It will integrate your striking and grappling so that they complement each other and you can seamlessly transition between styles



depending on your needs. It will also teach unique scenarios such as ground-n-pound and wall work. In addition to this, it's one of the few arts that practices with small gloves which better prepares you for bare knuckle fights.

You can also incorporate **Military Fighting Systems** into your training if they are available in your area. However, the amount you train in them will vary depending on your overall martial arts experience. As stated before, these styles sometimes neglect technical fundamentals. It is important to focus on the art forms above when starting out in order to establish a solid foundation that you can build off of. Once you have mastered the fundamentals and are overall competent in the above styles you can then start training in Military Fighting Systems in order to learn how to better apply them to real world situations.



**Grappling** should only be 25% of your total training because it's less effective in brawls. With that said, we still need it to prevent being taken down, defend ourselves if we end up there, and to get back up to our feet. Also, we don't need to spend as much time training it because it has a lower learning curve making it easier to pick up and dominate.

Wrestling should be half of your total grappling training. It allows you to control the fight, prevent takedowns, use slams and throws, scramble, and be explosive when need be. Wrestling is an often overlooked aspect of self-defense and shouldn't be neglected.



The other half of your grappling time should be spent on BJJ in case you are ever taken down. This will allow you to protect yourself in a bad positions, safely restrain a non-threat, or choke out larger attackers (preferably while staying on your feet). The exception is when interpersonal or 1-on-1 violence is more likely for you. In this case it makes sense to have BJJ be a higher ratio of what you train.



## Affordability

Affordability is another factor. Though you may need to make some sacrifices to afford training, a gym membership should make you less stressed out, not more. Find one that fits your budget. Inquire about drop-in fees, work/trade options, limited memberships, and price breaks for paying in advance.

## Schedules

Make sure the schedule fits yours, that you can take the classes you're most interested in, and that you have a work/life/organizing balance. Some gyms focus on morning classes and others in the evenings. Gyms which offer both are usually more expensive, but may fit your needs better.

## Enjoyment

Enjoying your gym is vitally important. You should look forward to going and feel better after each session. Look for gyms with supportive teammates, helpful coaches, and an overall welcoming environment. It's going to be hard work so we might as well have some fun along the way.



Of course, machismo and right-wing views are present at many gyms. You will need to figure out what level of this you are able to tolerate and navigate while still enjoying it. Take advantage of free trial memberships and find what works for you.

## Training Ratios

Now that we've established which martial arts are effective and how to pick a convenient program we can talk about training ratios. This is an important criteria because the unique types of scenarios we are likely to encounter. The ideal ratio for anti-fascists to train is **60% Striking, 25% Grappling, and 15% MMA.**

**Striking** should be your priority because it allows you to deal damage quicker, remain mobile, be used for 1-on-1 or brawls, and avoid the ground where multiple attackers can kick you. Striking can be further broken down with half of it focused on boxing and the other half Muay Thai.



As said before, you are most likely to use your hands in a fight so punches are the most important to learn. Nothing teaches it better than boxing and half of your



striking should focus here. You will learn defense, range, endurance, hand conditioning, power, and pinpoint accuracy.

However, punches aren't the only strike you can throw or will encounter. That's why Muay Thai should be the other half of your striking training. It will



teach you punches, kicks, knees, and elbows. Plus, the clinch is a game changer whether 1-on-1 or against multiple attackers.