

Explorer

'Way of the Thousand Masters'

Time Out's Nick Jarvis just got into a fight. Six fights, actually. He wasn't walking down the street leering at people's wives, though – he was in a training class for Senshido Self Defense.



Fighters, not lovers Senshido will teach you how to protect your life... and gouge out a man's eyes.

Senshido (a Japanese word which means 'Way of the Thousand Masters') is a 'Reality Based Self Defense System', which means it takes elements of all different kinds of martial arts and applies them in a way that's practical in a real life fight situation. As my gregarious instructor Georges Fahmy explains, 'If a real bad guy wants to fight you, is he going to come over and strike a karate pose? No - he's going to do this'. Here Fahmy slams his hand into my chest, grabbing a fistful of my t-shirt – I flinch at the shock and the sound of clothing stitches popping.

'See what did you do there?' Fahmy asks. 'You flinched, which is the body's natural response, and it's the most effective way to defend yourself, once you've been trained how to use it'. Fahmy explains how the passive stance – hands palm out in front of your chest – is not only good for demonstrating that you don't want to

fight, it's also the ideal position from which to defend yourself physically or to launch an attack.

We've been through the theoretical training by this point, and Fahmy has explained the methodology behind Senshido as

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well as the various causes of violence, the warning signs and how to avoid a situation degenerating into violence. We've workshoped verbal ways of calming an aggressor down ('Do I have a problem? Oh man, I've got problems for days. Let me buy you a beer and

we can talk problems'). But now the talk is over - it's time to don the protective helmet and try to defend myself as Fahmy and his cousin attack me with fake knives, guns and fists.

Senshido is, in essence, the art of dirty, no-holds-barred street fighting. It was devised in 1994 by Canadian self defense expert Richard Dimitri, and it teaches you how to defend yourself and subdue an attacker as quickly and brutally as possible, by practicing being attacked in simulated situations until you come to understand and control your body's reactions when paralysed by the 'fight or flight' reflex. This 'no hold's

barred' strategy means going for the soft spots – the eyes, throat and testicles – and utilising instinctual moves and tactics, including my personal favourite, the Shredder®.

After a heavy session of pretending to have the crap beaten out of me, I'm feeling much more confident in my fighting abilities. Fahmy explains how he could have me fully trained as a self-defense machine in only 40 hours of training and I'm raring to go... just as soon as I've changed my torn t-shirt and washed off the fear-sweat.

For more on personal or group training in Senshido call Georges Fahmy on 03 499712 or visit Senshido.net