

Podcast #175: Ground Fighting – Nik Farooqui

Jeff: Eighty percent of all fights go to the ground. Ninety percent of ground fights are fatal. A hundred percent of statistics in this podcast have been made up on the spot. Whatever that fantasy number might be, the fact is that gravity happens.

If you ever find yourself defending against a real close quarters attack you very well could find yourself hitting the parking lot pavement hard, and be flat on your back with potentially a bigger, stronger, and possibly even armed, attacker on top of you. When your ability to fight on your feet has been compromised, what tactics can you rely on to avoid being choked, pounded into the cement or transformed into a human football for your attacker's buddies to kick around while you lie there immobile? Well, that's what we're here to find out.

Hello, everyone. This is Jeff Anderson, Editor for *Modern Combat and Survival Magazine* and Executive Director of the *New World Patriot Alliance* with another podcast to help you better prepare for any threat you may face in your role as a protector and a patriot.

Today here to talk about real street-based ground fighting tactics is the newest member of our training network, Nik Farooqui. Nik, welcome to the program man.

Nik: Thanks for having me, Jeff.

Jeff: You've been somebody that we've kind of had our sights on here, and I'm looking forward to really getting your information out to our audience. Listen, everyone. This is probably the first time you're listening to Nik on our podcast and anywhere on our channel. Nik is a Chicago-based instructor, author and expert in Personal Defensive Tactics who just became a fellow Texan, I might say. So I'm excited about that.

His more than 25-year background in martial arts studies, over 15 years of teaching/training and over 150 seminars around the globe have earned him international acclaim in the industry. Nik's expertise and above-the-rest approach earned him a published spotlight in magazines such as *Black Belt Magazine*, *SWAT Magazine* and more several times over. He's also one of less than a dozen experts around the United States who have had the privilege of working with the most elite law enforcement agencies, Military Special Operations groups and CEOs of global corporations. To learn more about Nik and his training go ahead and visit him online at his website at www.s2strategic.com.

All right, Nik. Let's go ahead and get started. Nik, there are so many people out there who claim that the best way to avoid a ground fight is to not get into a ground fight. Just basically stand up on your feet. We know that isn't always possible. But obviously, the last place you want to be in a real fight is on the

ground, because of all the dangers that are associated with that, from other people jumping in or just being immobile. Not being able to use all of your body weapons, necessarily. So you can't really say just never go there.

But let me ask you, from your experience with training people. What is the best tip, trick, tactic, technique, or whatever, that somebody can use to prevent, as much as possible, the possibility of ending up on the floor, the parking lot, wherever?

Nik: Jeff, this is a really interesting subject and it kind of hits at home for me. Here's the deal. There is no magic. There's no secret one thing that you could do. We already know that violent encounters have infinite variables, and when you have infinite variables there's not going to be just one solution that solves every single problem. So you need to understand the dynamics of every particular situation, which means you need to be familiar with a bunch of different dynamics that you can now have some information to pool from.

When you talk about counter grappling, or counter ground fighting tactics, a lot of people have been using that term, avoid the ground, you're assuming that you had the opportunity to prepare for that particular violent encounter. But the fact always remains that, hey listen, if you're prepared for a fight prepare to not be in the fight. That's the game plan that we want to have. When somebody else attacks you, you're on their timeline. You're on their game plan. So you have to be able to not only respond to their level of violence accordingly, but also deal with the environmental problems, that mental and emotional shock that everybody's going to have for a moment.

If you want to have a few handful of things that you really want to think about, as part of being able to avoid the ground, let me give you a quick two or three tips. The first tip that I always preach out is, if you want to avoid the ground learn how to be on the ground. So that way it just doesn't matter to you. It's just another lineage. It's something you're familiar with. You're not afraid of it. It just is what it is. If the fight takes you to the ground, you're competent there. If it doesn't take you to the ground, you're competent there. So learn how to be on the ground.

The second thing is what I call range management or range dictation, which simply means this. If you have an intended takedown, so the bad guy plans on pulling you to the ground—punch, kick, single leg takedown—punch, kick, double leg dump—if you have these kinds of things going on those things need to be launched at a particular range, meaning a distance from one person to the other. If you're not in that distance, that takedown is now a null and void particular thing. So if you understand how the ranges of combat work, then you can avoid many of those takedown attempts simply by the manipulation of distance.

Then the last thing is awareness. Environmental awareness. You've got to watch out for those tables, those curves, those cars, that kind of thing. Situational awareness. Just to

see if there's one person, ten people. Is there a mop that you can grab, can you get your firearm, is there lights, are you in snow, are you on gravel? I mean, I don't know.

Then the last thing is having the awareness to be able to pick up those small precursors that somebody might show you prior to attempting a takedown.

So if you can do those three things, you'd be much happier off. But there is no secret one thing that avoid the ground, because you don't have a choice most of the time.

Jeff: Yeah. That's great information also, because a lot of times the reason why fights go to the ground is because people get up close. So many people are used to punching away at each other, just trying to get that haymaker lucky shot in there for a knockout. When things get really up close, in the bad breath zone, then people don't know how to fight in close quarters. So they end up just holding on to each other, wrestling around, and then somebody falls down. So that's great information. Know your ranges, but know how to fight in those ranges so that you can take that person out from a distance. You don't have to get in that grapple zone. That makes a lot of sense.

Nik: Range dictates tactics. So you punch and kick from a certain range, you grapple from a different range, you throw from a different range, you use a knife in a certain range, you use an impact weapon in a certain range. I mean, range dictates tactics.

Jeff: So Nik, let me ask you. What if I'm on the ground and my attacker isn't? So whether I was falling backwards, I hit a curb, I hit a table or something, I fall down. Now I'm at a disadvantage here, and I've got this guy kind of closing in on me. What's the best thing for me to do to be able to get back up on my feet as quickly as possible, so that this guy just doesn't start stomping on my head?

Nik: The objective of street-based grappling or ground fighting is always to be back on your feet as quickly as possible. Which means at some point you're going to end up having to stand back up, right, because you just said you're on the floor and that guy's not. You have to stand back up.

The way that we stand up as human beings typically means that we lean our head forward to gain some momentum and balance, and we stand up forward. Essentially the product of that, the result of that type of standing up, is you put your head, your throat and your lungs into the batter's box. Which means that even every time we try to stand up, this person is going to be swinging at you. So we have to understand that there isn't a way to stand up where you're moving [rearward 00:07:57] or straight upward and not putting the vital targets into the fight. You've taken them away from the fight. So you give yourself a little bit of a margin of safety. That's one aspect of things.

The other aspect of things is you have to read the situation. What is that person doing? Are they staying away from you? If they're staying away from you, they've given you that opportunity to stand up. If they're jumping right on top of you, standing up is not even an option. Maybe they're standing over you, and you pulling them to the floor before you

stand up might be the right option. So what's the right situation, or what's the right answer, is going to depend on what's happening **[in front of you 00:08:34]**.

Keep a few things in mind. Protect the head. Protect the throat. Protect the lungs. Consciousness is very important to combat. So if you're not even awake, you're letting somebody swing on you, whether it's a baseball bat, whether it's fists, whether it's kicks, if you can't be awake you're not going to be effective no matter what happens. So those are the three things that you have to protect at all points in time, no matter what you do.

Jeff: **Awesome. All right. So we've been talking with Nik Farooqui of s2strategic.com about ground fighting tactics that you can use to survive a real street fight. We have a lot more coming up including: the fastest way to prepare for a ground attack, without months and months of expensive complicated martial arts classes; the weapons factor in surviving a ground pounding; and dealing with multiple attackers, when you're on the ground and facing eight pairs of steel-toed work boots headed toward your cranium. All that and more coming right up, but first check out this special message.**

Okay. We're back with Nik Farooqui of s2strategic.com, getting his best strategies for surviving a real ground fight in the street. Now is where we get into a lot of the juicy stuff. So let's go ahead and jump back in now.

Okay, Nik. So the worst has happened. Right? Let's talk about some tactics now. So I've hit the ground. I've been taken down by my attacker. I've got this big, giant behemoth on top of me now. And my goal is to take this guy out, using whatever possible weapons or tactics I can use at the time. Forget about weapons. I'm going to ask you about weapons here in just a minute.

But what I want to know is—a lot of people that are out there don't necessarily have the time or the money, or even sometimes the opportunity to go to these fancy mixed martial arts classes that might teach very complicated arm bars, twist this, rub this, whatever it is. But they still—look, we all have to go to the ATM machine, or go to the parking lot, or pick our kids up, whatever it is.

So what I'm looking from you is what are some very basic but brutally effective things that somebody can do when they're on the ground, they've got somebody on top of them, to be able to try and escape that predicament as quickly as possible?

Nik: I think the first thing that we should always do is establish a fundamental understanding of what it takes to navigate the ground. When we are upright, we're standing, we're walking, we're running, we're punching, we're kicking, we're on our feet. As human beings we're very competent on how to do that, right, because we do that all day long. Whether you're in a combative situation, or whether you're just doing dishes, you're always on your feet.

So we have a lot of flight time being on our feet, but we have very little flight time being on our backs. We do not understand as human beings how to effectively walk, crawl, roll using our shoulder blades and our hips. So you have to learn how to navigate the ground, how to just be mobile. I'm not talking like you've got to be some black belt Jiu Jitsu guy. You just have to understand how to move around on the floor effectively.

So the way I always see it is on our feet you and I might be a PhD, on the ground we're first graders. You know what I mean? So you have to educate yourself on how to do that.

Now that being said, there's a few things that everybody should learn how to do. I'm not talking about like, again, that black belt mixed martial arts guy. I'm talking about everyone who wants to start learning the basics of ground fighting. You have to learn how to bridge up with your hips because that bridging up is what gets people off of you, or keeps them off-balance, or it makes their hands come down on the asphalt. And if their hands are coming down on the asphalt, their hands are not on your face, or on a knife, or on a gun. Right?

We learn what's called shrimp or escape, which is move laterally side to side. That allows us to have distance and angles. Then we have the ability to roll, meaning roll over your shoulder, roll over your other shoulder, roll forward. Because that allows you to get away from somebody grabbing onto you. It allows you to help navigate.

We combine those things, bridge, shrimp, roll. These are very, very easy to do. It just takes time to practice. There's plenty of online courses out there that will teach you that. YouTube has a plethora of information. You can watch that if you don't want to sign on to school.

What you do is you take those three things—bridge, shrimp, roll—and then you learn how to capture somebody and control them. Capturing their arm. Capturing their neck. Capturing the top of their head. The reason why I say the top of their head is because that's going to give me so much leverage. And when you can now pull their forehead down to your chest, they're doing everything that they can to get out of there. But what they're not doing is they're not punching you, they're not kicking you, and you are able to control and contain them, because that's not a strength game. That's a leverage game.

When you take all of those things—bridge, shrimp, roll, control and containment—then you add in your 30 tactics—that's where your eye gouging, your throat chopping, your neck breaking and all that stuff comes in, the dirty tactics. Because now you can navigate the floor. You're familiar with how to move around over there. You can control and contain somebody. Then you can put in the dirty work to get them off of you, or be able to get them to completely stop their attack in general. Does that make sense?

Jeff: Yeah. It makes total sense. I think a lot of people don't think about necessarily those dirty tactics, like gouges and things like that. Because when you look at UFC matches or mixed martial arts matches, if you really watch those things from

a street point perspective, you'd almost be saying to the screen, "Why don't you shove your thumb into that guy's eye right now?" There's a lot of things that are so brutal that they're not allowed in the octagon. I think that people really need to start—if you really care about protecting yourself in a truly violent attack, where there are no rules, you really have to start looking at what those dirty tactics are that most people won't use.

In fact, I take Krav Maga classes, and I've got some of the best instructors I've ever had in my life, and we never learned those things. He talks about them, but we never actually show them or here's how you would do, or here's where you would use it. So what ends up happening is when we're all grappling on the ground, we're working on ground fighting or something, nobody ever even shows those things.

So again, it ends up kind of programming the wrestling match. We do get those things like the bridge, shrimp, roll and things like that, which are extremely valuable. When you can contain, though, it's those dirty tricks that sometimes are the most effective, that gets that person trying to get off of you as fast as they possibly can, rather than just trying to outwrestle you.

Nik:

We have to understand the context of that too. You're a hundred percent correct. First and foremost, there's an industry-wide myth that we relate street style grappling to mixed martial arts or UFC style grappling. They're not the same. Street grappling, where I'm asphalt, gravel, broken glass, snow, grass, there might be multiple attackers. We don't have a padded floor. We don't have a referee. We don't have three judges. We don't have three months to prepare for a guy that we got a chance to watch film on. There's no way prime us. That's totally different. However, that sportive, combative type of training allows us to have a training methodology that we can now put in and take out those dirty tactics [time 00:16:05].

The reason why a lot of people don't train them is not because they don't know them. They don't understand how to train them. That was something that I had to master for myself. How do I eye gouge somebody both times in one round without losing training partners?

In the application side of things—so I gave you guys a handful of things—bridge, shrimp, roll—and then how to control and contain somebody. You then put in those dirty tactics. The reason why I say that is this. If you don't know how to control and contain somebody and you eye gouge them, they lean back, they're away from your thumb. Now they're free. They didn't get off of you. So are they more pissed off or less pissed off now?

The problem with it is—and I love this. I've got a friend of mine named Paul Sharp back in Chicago. He always says this one-liner, "If you can't beat me with rules, what makes you think that you can beat me without rules". You know what I mean? So the idea is that you first have to learn the rules, and learn what it takes to make those other

elements, the dirty elements, successful. If you can't control and contain somebody, then apply the dirty tactics with impunity. What you're going to do is just piss them off even more, and now you've elevated the level of violence instead of deescalating the level of violence. Get it?

Jeff: Yeah. It makes total sense. So Nik, let's talk about weapons real quick. Obviously any time that you add a knife or a gun, or any other type of weapon in a ground attack, you viciously raise the stakes on survivability from that point.

So what's the best way to keep an attacker from trying to get access to a knife or something like that? We'll kind of take it on both sides. What are the best ways to make sure that this person doesn't eventually do it? Because I think the longer a fight goes on, and if they're not taking you out—I always think in the fury of a fight you're not necessarily thinking about the weapons that you might have. Right? You're thinking about the attack that's actually happening. But at some point once you're all locked up and just getting tired it's like, "Oh, that's right. I've got a knife. Hey, I can reach my knife."

So what is the best way maybe to keep somebody from getting to a weapon? And then also, what's your perspective on weapons for yourself, just the dynamics of having a weapon, or getting to a weapon, or using a weapon in a ground fight yourself? I'll give you the opportunity to answer both of those.

Nik: Let's talk about the bad guy first as the attacker, because it's very simple. The bad guy typically puts all of his tools upfront. Right? Because the goal in a violent attack is to overwhelm quickly. They don't want the fight to go on for long periods of time. They want to accomplish their task right up front. Whether that's a sexual assault, whether that's robbing, whether that's killing somebody, whatever. All of the tools up front. They're not going to go through a Swiss army knife and be like, okay. The use of force tells me I can now use a baton, and then a taser, and then a knife, and then a twinkie. You know what I mean? It's not going to work that way. Usually they come with everything that they've got right up front. So we have to be able to deal with that right up front.

On the good guy's perspective that's always tough, because we don't walk around with our carbine out, a pistol and a knife in one hand. That's not the way you and I go through life. Right? Because again, we can't plan for our game plan to be the main goal. We have to deal with somebody else's attack. We're on the reaction, not on the action side. So I've always felt like—going back to what we talked about a little bit earlier, if you understand how to dominate a range, you understand how to shut somebody down in that range, which means you're limiting the opportunity. You know what I mean?

Let's just say that we are up close, five to six inches away, and we can push, shove. We can throw. We can do all kinds of things. We can pummel. We can tangle up. What if I head-butted you straight across the face, bumped you in the eye, grabbed one of your testicles, sling shot it from the floor to the ceiling, put an elbow right through your [optical lower rib 00:20:16]? Are you going to then be reaching for a knife? No. We've

completely changed the dynamics of this thing. Because what I've done was I have overwhelmed—I have overwhelming fire power here. I've beaten violence with superior violence. So when I have superior violence on my side that's how I overcome 1) your level of violence and 2) that ambush type of timeline. You know what I mean?

So if the question is how do I prevent somebody from accessing a weapon, I've always said put them down before they get a chance to access that weapon, and put them down hard.

Jeff: Yeah. You can't push an offense if you're focused on just defending yourself and it hurts so bad, or you have a bone that's breaking, a finger that's snapping or something like that. It's hard to even think about getting to a firearm or a knife or something like that. Yeah, absolutely.

Nik: The best definition of self-defense, true self-defense, is when the attacker becomes more concerned with their own personal preservation, rather than their original motive and attack. Right? So you make them concerned for their own safety, they're not going to be thinking about getting to a gun or getting to whatever. They're thinking about escaping. Because you're chewing holes in the side of their face, you're thumbing them in the eye, you're punching them in the throat, you're kneeing them in the groin. I mean, you make it so violent that they just don't want to be there.

Jeff: Yeah. I love that saying. That's awesome.

Nik: That's it. No secret. No magic here, man. I don't have a one technique kind of thing.

Jeff: It's a secret. I love the word secret. That's a secret. What are you talking about? That's a secret. We'll go with that. So listen. Nik, one of the biggest worries, I mean one of the biggest dangers, of actually being in a ground fight and being immobile on the ground, is when this guy's buddies come in.

I've done security before and I've seen little gang fights where a guy goes down on the ground. It might start out as a one-on-one attack, but as soon as he's down, that guy's buddy, it's their responsibility to jump in there with their steel-toed work boots and just start kicking away. There's just no thought. Once you're in that mindset, there is no thought about where I'm kicking. These people are kicking at the head. One strike could literally put this person out for life.

So when you're down on the ground—and you've got to assume it's always going to be a multiple attacker fight. There's going to be other people that might join in. So what is your best strategy for that worst case scenario? You're down. Other people are coming at you. What do you do?

Nik: So let me break this into two different categories for you. I always call it superior position or inferior position. Superior position meaning you're the person that's on top. Inferior position means that you're the person that's on the bottom. When we're talking about superior positioning, on top positioning, that's top of mount, on top of guard, on top side

mount, those types of things, make your attack very violent, very quick. Get to your feet as quickly as possible. While you're doing that, make your head swivel so you can see if anything's coming preemptively.

If you're in an inferior position, and you have to fight not just the ground itself but also that person that's on top of you, now friend number two and friend number three and the girlfriend and the mistress and the wife, they're all coming around to give you a good punch, you might be probably better off, by again, being able to capture that person's arm, their neck, the top of their head and bringing them down, and using that as an operation human shield. You know what I mean?

The idea—when we talk about mass attack, even striking, we talk about this concept of zoning. Meaning keep your feet moving to a point where you're stacking people up in one line. So if I have two attackers, I don't want one from the right and one from the left. I want to keep moving and circling until they're all in one line. We do that because the person in the back now has to come through the person in the front to be able to get to me. That's nothing different than being on the ground. I'm going to make them punch their buddy. What I'm going to do is control and contain that guy and tuck my head away until I get some help, and let them just chew up their own buddy. Maybe they're helping me out. I don't know. You know what I mean?

So when you're on the bottom, sure, do you want to get back to your feet as fast as possible? Yes. But there is a very realistic opportunity that sometimes you have to just stay on the ground and control and contain, and let that person become your shield. I know a lot of people are probably pissed off listening to that.

Jeff: **No. That makes a lot of sense. Again, it comes down to that containment and control, learning those techniques of leverage and things like that. They're not hard to learn. But like you say, most people aren't used to being on the ground and understand just the dynamics of movement down there. Other than being in bed, maybe doing a few crunches every now and then, people don't spend a lot of time on their back like that.**

So it's really getting used to that movement. Then once you get your own movement down and learning how to—when you grab something what do you do? Do you just hold onto dear life? No. How do you leverage that down? Again, you can find these on some of the videos.

Listen, everybody. Check out Nik's website. Again, I'm going to give it to you here. It's www.s2strategic.com. Check out all of his training over there. He's now down here in Texas. Are you going to be opening up a school down here now that you're down here, or working just the online thing, or what are you doing?

Nik: Sure. I'll let the cat out of the bag. First and foremost, I travel and do probably about 45 to 50 seminars a year, whether that's domestically or internationally. So I'm very busy

that way. That includes the civilian side, that includes my law enforcement side and so forth. So I travel quite a bit.

The second thing that I have is my online academy, where I'm now starting to put full-featured training courses, like edge weapons and unarmed combatives and that kind of thing. So that's available at S2 Online Academy.

Then as far as opening a facility here, I want to open an S2 tactical training center, which is going to be available for law enforcement and for civilian use. It's very different because I have an indoor shoot house there utilizing force-on-force simunitions training. Then we'll have a dividing wall on the other side, is all of our unarmed combatives, where we'll have ongoing classes and seminars and such going on at the same time.

My plan is to open that sometime in early to mid-2018. As you said, I literally just a week ago moved from Chicago down to Texas. Although my corporate office for S2 is still in Chicago, I'm going to open an office down here and then also a training facility down here. So that should be coming to the Dallas area sometime in early 2018.

Jeff: Cool. Nice. Well, everybody, you don't have to wait for that. And you don't have to live in Texas. You can go ahead and check out Nik's stuff online. Go over to s2strategic.com. There's going to be access over there also to the online academy. So you can actually see the videos and things like that for what Nik has been talking about. So go check that out now.

Until the next *Modern Combat & Survival* broadcast, this is Jeff Anderson saying prepare, train and survive.