

**METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING CLOSE COMBAT SKILLS IN MILITARY
PERSONNEL BASED ON HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT TECHNIQUES**

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Abstract: Close combat skills are critical for military personnel, allowing effective response in hand-to-hand encounters and situations where firearms or other weapons are unavailable. This study examines a structured methodology for developing close combat competencies based on hand-to-hand combat techniques. Sixty active-duty military personnel participated in a 12-week training program, focusing on technical skill development, tactical application, and physical conditioning. Pre- and post-training assessments demonstrated significant improvements in technical proficiency, reaction time, decision-making accuracy, endurance, and upper body strength. Participants also reported increased confidence and situational awareness. The findings highlight the importance of integrating hand-to-hand combat principles into military training programs to enhance both physical and cognitive readiness for modern close combat operations.

Keywords: Close combat, Hand-to-hand combat, Military training, Tactical skills, Physical conditioning, Decision-making, Combat readiness

Introduction

Close combat skills are essential competencies for military personnel, enabling them to effectively respond to threats in hand-to-hand encounters and situations where firearms or other weapons may not be available or practical [1]. The development of these skills relies heavily on structured training methods derived from hand-to-hand combat (HTC) techniques, which integrate both offensive and defensive maneuvers [1,2].

Hand-to-hand combat is not only a physical discipline but also a cognitive and psychological one. It enhances reflexes, decision-making under pressure, spatial awareness, and stress management, all of which are critical in military operations [2,3]. The methodology for developing these skills must therefore address both technical proficiency and tactical application, ensuring that personnel can perform efficiently under combat conditions [3].

Despite the growing emphasis on advanced weaponry and technological warfare, the importance of close combat training remains irreplaceable, particularly in situations involving confined spaces, urban operations, or scenarios where non-lethal force is required [1,3]. This study aims to explore effective methodologies for training military personnel in close combat techniques, emphasizing the integration of hand-to-hand combat principles with practical military applications [2].

Methods

This study employed a structured approach to develop close combat skills in military personnel based on hand-to-hand combat techniques. The research design combined both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the effectiveness of the training methodology. Participants

included 60 active-duty military personnel, aged 20–35 years, with varying levels of prior experience in hand-to-hand combat.

Training sessions were conducted over a 12-week period, with three sessions per week, each lasting 90 minutes. The curriculum was divided into three main components: technical skill development, tactical application, and physical conditioning. Technical skill development focused on offensive and defensive maneuvers, including strikes, blocks, holds, and knife-defense techniques. Tactical application involved scenario-based exercises simulating real combat situations, emphasizing rapid decision-making, situational awareness, and stress management under pressure. Physical conditioning included exercises to enhance strength, endurance, flexibility, and coordination, all of which are critical for effective performance in close combat.

Data collection methods included pre- and post-training assessments of technical proficiency, reaction time, and decision-making accuracy under simulated combat conditions. Performance was evaluated using standardized scoring criteria, and improvements were statistically analyzed using paired t-tests and descriptive statistics. Observational data were also recorded during training to monitor participant engagement, technique execution, and adherence to safety protocols. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, including informed consent from all participants and supervision by qualified instructors to ensure safety during all training activities.

Results

The analysis of the 12-week training program revealed significant improvements in the close combat skills of the participating military personnel. Technical proficiency scores increased from an average of 58.3 ± 6.2 before training to 84.7 ± 5.1 after training ($p < 0.001$) [1,2]. Reaction time in simulated combat scenarios improved by 22%, while decision-making accuracy under stress increased by 18% [3]. Physical conditioning parameters, including endurance and upper body strength, also showed significant enhancement.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Training Assessment of Close Combat Skills

Parameter	Pre-Training (Mean ± SD)	Post-Training (Mean ± SD)	% Improvement	p-value
Technical proficiency score	58.3 ± 6.2	84.7 ± 5.1	45%	<0.001
Reaction time (seconds)	1.52 ± 0.18	1.18 ± 0.12	22%	<0.01
Decision-making accuracy (%)	71.4 ± 7.5	84.3 ± 6.2	18%	<0.01
Endurance (number of push-ups)	32.6 ± 5.8	47.2 ± 6.4	45%	<0.001
Upper body strength (kg)	60.2 ± 8.1	76.5 ± 7.3	27%	<0.001

Parameter	Pre-Training (Mean ± SD)	Post-Training (Mean ± SD)	% Improvement	p-value
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The data indicate that integrating hand-to-hand combat techniques with a structured training methodology significantly enhances both technical and physical performance in close combat scenarios. Participants also reported increased confidence and situational awareness during simulated combat exercises, demonstrating the psychological benefits of the program [4,5].

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that a structured training methodology based on hand-to-hand combat techniques effectively enhances close combat skills in military personnel. The significant improvement in technical proficiency aligns with previous research highlighting the role of repetitive skill practice and scenario-based exercises in mastering offensive and defensive maneuvers [1,2].

Improved reaction times and decision-making accuracy observed in participants suggest that close combat training not only develops physical abilities but also sharpens cognitive functions critical for rapid assessment and response in high-pressure situations [3,4]. These results support the assertion that hand-to-hand combat is both a physical and psychological discipline, enhancing situational awareness and stress resilience, which are crucial for operational readiness [5].

The observed gains in endurance and upper body strength further indicate that integrating physical conditioning into combat training contributes to overall performance, allowing personnel to execute techniques more effectively and sustain performance over extended periods [6,7]. Additionally, participants’ subjective reports of increased confidence during simulated engagements underscore the importance of psychological preparedness in close combat scenarios [8].

These findings are consistent with previous studies suggesting that a comprehensive approach—combining technical skill development, tactical application, and physical conditioning—is essential for optimizing close combat readiness among military personnel [2,5,9]. Furthermore, the program’s success highlights the practical value of adapting traditional hand-to-hand combat techniques to meet contemporary military operational requirements [10].

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that a structured training methodology based on hand-to-hand combat techniques significantly enhances the close combat skills of military personnel. The integration of technical skill development, tactical application, and physical conditioning resulted in measurable improvements in technical proficiency, reaction time, decision-making accuracy, endurance, and upper body strength. Additionally, participants reported increased confidence and situational awareness, highlighting the psychological benefits of the training.

These findings underscore the importance of incorporating hand-to-hand combat principles into military training programs, particularly for scenarios where firearms or other weapons may not be available or practical. A comprehensive approach that combines physical, cognitive, and tactical components is essential for preparing military personnel for the demands of modern close combat operations. Future research should focus on long-term retention of skills and the adaptation of these methodologies to diverse operational environments.

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