

## The Art and Science of Staff Fighting: A Complete Instructional Guide

**Joe Varady**

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*Expertise shines through this detailed coaching text, which imparts clear instructions, a sense of motivation, and a can-do attitude.*

*The Art and Science of Staff Fighting: A Complete Instructional Guide* by Joe Varady offers all the know-how needed to master this martial art.

Varady provides history and instruction for every element of staff fighting. As with most of the martial arts, each element of staff fighting—from forms to training processes to combat—has deep history and significance. Varady equips people not only to *do* staff fighting but to *understand* it. While external action takes center stage for most of the book, it is always undergirded by the foundation of internal growth and mental focus. This book covers everything from the most basic information (“What is staff fighting?”) to involved, technical instruction (fighting multiple opponents). It is organized from simple to complex so that each section logically and practically builds on the last, walking people from their current skill level all the way to mastery. A comprehensive table of contents guides staff fighters of all skill levels to the information they need right now, and sample workouts for each level help take the information off the page and into practice.

Sensei Joe Varady has been involved in martial arts for decades. His expertise comes through in the detailed nature of the book and in his coaching voice—clear instruction, compelling motivation, and can-do attitude. His energy keeps the momentum of learning moving—a must when training gets tough, as the skills grow in complexity—and his expertise makes sure those who follow his lead are empowered and safe.

This book is accessible to staff fighters of every skill level, but it's most valuable for beginners in staff fighting who have some experience in other martial arts. Varady's step-by-step instruction, along with their own physical confidence, will jump-start the learning process. Advanced fighters and those who are teaching or coaching others will find this book polishes their skills, gives them tools and language to explain the process, and pushes them to excel at higher levels.

The book's step-by-step images are helpful, though sometimes a bit small, using arrows to show motion and direction for each posture and motion. The stick figure illustrations, however, don't add much understanding to the text. The stop-motion-like photos that show all parts of a complex action (such as a shoulder roll/somersault while holding the staff) in one photo are impressive as well as helpful.

*The Art and Science of Staff Fighting* deftly guides potential staff fighters from step one to successful combat.

MELISSA WUSKE (June 28, 2016)

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