



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

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## Giving safety a fighting chance

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When you hear “combatives training,” safety probably isn’t the first thing that comes to mind.

The mental image more often involves two Soldiers exchanging blows while wrestling on the ground, each trying to gain the upper hand. Doing that to win requires training, and if it’s not conducted safely, Soldiers could become casualties before ever meeting the enemy.

Sgt. 1st Class Kevin D. Rice, master trainer at the U.S. Army Combatives School, Fort Benning, Ga., is adamant about the importance of safety.

“Safety is incorporated into every aspect of combatives training,” Rice said. “Examples of this are our progressive system, which allows Soldiers to master basic skills before advancing to more difficult techniques. Additional measures include training on mats and requiring Soldiers to wear protective gear for any type of sparring.

“Soldiers are also given safety briefs before conducting live training.”

The 20-hour Level I course, taught during basic training, serves as Soldiers’ first introduction to combatives. Three additional levels comprising 140 training hours are available for Soldiers to complete at their duty stations, if qualified instructors are available. Each level is progressively more challenging and hazardous, motivating instructors to use risk management to avoid training injuries.

Training Circular 3-25.150, Combatives, released in September 2012, devotes an entire chapter to the composite risk management process. Rice said that’s because safety allows combatives students to train in a realistic environment for the possibility of hand-to-hand combat, while remaining ready for the fight when called.

“Safety is an important aspect of combatives training because Soldiers cannot withstand injuries and be expected to conduct their missions downrange,” he said.

More information on combatives training is available at  
[https://armypubs.us.army.mil/doctrine/DR\\_pubs/dr\\_f/pdf/tc3\\_25x150.pdf](https://armypubs.us.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_f/pdf/tc3_25x150.pdf).