

## EVIDENCE IDENTIFICATION AND PRESERVATION

BY SGT. JIM WAGNER

In most martial arts schools, a fight is over the moment the instructor stops the action or one of the participants taps out. Not so in the real world. Whether the suspect has fled the scene or you're holding him until the police arrive, the conflict isn't over. In the reality-based martial arts, the moment hostilities end, the post-conflict phase begins.

An important part of the post-conflict phase is making sure the attacker is apprehended by the police and prosecuted by the courts. This may not be a high priority for martial artists if the

---

***Reality-based self-defense training should teach students how evidence is created and how it should be preserved, the author says. In this case, the blood originates from the head wound and is transferred to the club and possibly the wall, floor and clothing.***

---

conflict was nothing more than a minor bar fight, but bringing a criminal to justice is paramount if you or a loved one is the victim of a serious crime.

Whenever two people engage in combat, physical evidence of the battle is left behind. CSI fans know this area as the crime scene. Evidence, in its broadest sense, refers to anything that's used to determine or demonstrate the truth of an assertion. Physical evidence is any object that's collected at the crime scene to determine who's responsible for a criminal act. Knowing how to identify and preserve evidence is just as important in reality-based martial arts training as learning how to punch and kick.

Knowing what the police will want to collect after a conflict and preserving it until they arrive can mean the difference between a conviction and an acquittal. The following are the essentials:

Physiological evidence from the

PHOTO BY RICK HUSTEAD

