

The Essence of Self-defense

The absolute foundation for learning and improving your self-defense skills
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Introduction

The objective of this paper is to convey concepts and ideas fundamental to self-defense. In the process, I will discuss the essential knowledge you need in self-defense and the best way to improve your self-defense skills.

Remember, when you can protect yourself, you can help others who love and depend on you. When you finish reading this article, you will be one step closer to solidifying your foundation for self-defense.

Disclaimer

The concepts and techniques discussed and shown here, are educational and illustrative in nature. The reader shall not hold the author and anyone related to this article liable for injuries incurred or suffered by the reader in an attempt to apply these concepts and techniques. This article is in no way, shape, or form intended to replace live training. It is advisable that the reader seek a professional in self-defense training, to achieve desired results.

If you happen to be around the Central Valley Area, check out my school at www.koryoftc.com. It is a Tae Kwon Do school which focuses on the martial arts aspects of the art.

Essential Knowledge

Defending yourself requires that you understand some very basic yet essential knowledge about self-defense and the nature of self-defense. They will help you understand the many reasons why you do the things you do in self-defense training, and help you understand the situations you may find yourself should an attack happen.

These are the key points:

- Attacks can happen when you least expect it
- Your body will react the way it was trained
- You are a walking weapons arsenal
- There are no rules in street fighting
- You only need to know minimal but effective self-defense skills to protect and evade

Attacks When You Least Expect It

Whether you like it or not, attacks against you can happen when you least expect it. This is just a fact of life. There is no getting around it.

If you are part of the lucky group who has never been attacked, then good; but if you aren't, then you'll want to stack the odds of you surviving and escaping to your side as much as

possible.

Although you cannot control when it happens, you have some degree of control on a few things. These things will either help prevent the attack from happening, or help improve your chances of deflecting or avoiding an attack. Here are some things you can control:

- Position and location where you are attacked
- What you are wearing and what you have
- Who is with you

Position and Location

You have control of your position and location when you are attacked. For example, you never want to walk down an isolated and dark alley at night--instead, chose a path that is well lit and open. Another example is to park your car in a well lit area; then when returning, have your keys ready; check the surrounding areas before making the final approach to your car.

What You Wear and Have

You also have complete control of what you wear. Your clothes should be comfortable and should not restrict your movement. Your shoes should be comfortable as well, and it should not restrict your ability to run effectively. Always know exactly what you are carrying in your wallet or purse. You don't have to bring cash; in this day and age, you can get everything using credit cards. Most credit card companies have some form of protection. This way, if you held up and end up having to give that away, you can call your bank or credit card company to cancel or freeze the account.

Who's With You

If you can help it, get someone to go with you. At work, you can always request an escort to the parking lot from security guards or from coworkers. When possible, bring a friend, a relative, or your significant other to events or places you need to visit, especially to areas that aren't well known to be safe or have a history of crime.

Body Reacts the Way It Was Trained

Believe it or not, there are things your body will do in response to particular external stimulus.

For example, if someone grabs your wrist and pulls you, your normal reaction is to pull back. This isn't the best way to get out of that grip, but if you train yourself to bend the pulled arm so as to pivot close to where the grip is, you can escape with very minimal effort; on top of that, if you trained yourself to kick your assailant in the groin, then bend your arm, your chances of escape is almost guaranteed.

In the above example, the secret to making your body react that way is through repetitive and realistic training. By simulating the attack stimulus, responding a certain way, and repeating that response many times, you are putting into effect muscle memory. When muscle memory kicks in, you don't have to think, your body just moves and does its thing. When this happens, you've

ingrained your self-defense response into your instinctive reaction, and that is the aim of any effective self-defense program.

Instinctive reaction is fast, and doesn't require thinking. Thinking takes forever, and in a life and death situation, can cause delay which could be detrimental to your safety.

Repetition is your friend when it comes to self-defense training; but make sure you are executing your technique correctly, as repeating something incorrectly many times and ingraining that into your reaction is something you don't want to do. In other words, doing something wrong and repeating it, makes you excellent at doing it wrong. Not good.

Bottom line: Correct and repetitive self-defense training is your objective in order to achieve your goal of ingraining self-defense into your instinctive reactive response.

Your Are a Walking Weapons Arsenal

Most people don't know this, but your body is a walking weapons arsenal.

Here's an inventory of your weapons:

- Top and back of head can be used to hit face of attacker
- Fingers can be used to poke eyes of or scratch attacker
- Cupped hands can pop your assailant's ear drums; will impact their ability to balance
- Elbows can attack at close range; hit vital points of human body (most are located on the center-line of the human body--philtrum, throat, solar plexus, groin)
- Forearm can be used to attack softer targets on the human body
- Shoulder can be use to push (just like football players) attackers; if you hit at the right spot, it can interrupt an attacker's momentum.
- Hips and rear can be use to push and improve one's position against an assailant.
- Knee is excellent for attacking anything that is within the low section (e.g. groin).
- Foot can attack knee shin, instep, or anything low.
- Sheen can attack anything low and soft like the groin.
- Fist can punch, strike like a hammer, or back fist at soft targets (e.g. groin, temple, solar plexus)
- Heel of palm can be used to strike hard targets (e.g. chin,nose, jaw); it can also be used on soft targets like the solar plexus.
- Knife of the hand can be used against throat or neck.
- Teeth: In worst case scenario, you can bite like a wild animal; the bad thing about this one is that you can contract blood-borne diseases from a sick assailant, but that is why I noted this as a worst case scenario where this may only be the option to save your life.

The above are the most obvious weapons available to you.

No Rules in Street Fighting

In fighting sports, there are rules; and most of the rules say you can't do this or that.

In the streets where your life can hang in the balance, there are no rules. Do what you have to in order to save your life. Your family depends on it.

When it comes to saving your life, you need to fight dirty--enough to stop the attack and escape. Again, your basic objective is to stop or deflect the attack and escape. There is no need to hang around and stand toe to toe with your assailants. Just escape. Fight dirty in order to achieve that objective.

This is basically what you need to remember.

Minimal Self-Defense Skills Needed

You don't need to be a black belt or a martial arts master in order to become a proficient self-defender. However, it requires that you practice some basic defenses in order to be fast and effective. Each defensive technique should target easily accessible human vital points.

When you practice, create most likely scenarios and practice the defense against that over and over--to the point that it becomes second nature to you. This is necessary so that the defensive application of that technique becomes part of your instinctive reaction. When this is achieved, the execution of the technique will not require you to think about what you need to do. You, as Nike says, "*just do it*".

For example, if someone tries to grab your arm or wrist, simply lift your wrist up and out to get it out and simultaneously do a kick in the groin. Or if you are being choked from the front, palm heel strike to the face and kick the groin at the same time; that should give you the opportunity to escape. If you practiced these enough times, you'll be able to apply them with no thinking required. Thinking about what and how you will do something add seconds to your reaction. When it comes to life and death situations, every second counts.

Anyway, the human body is robust for the most part, but it does have some serious vulnerabilities. These are the ones you need to target in defending you life. These vulnerabilities, or vital points, are generally in the center line of the body or are symmetric in their location. Here are some the most obvious and basic ones. You know these because you've felt discomfort or pain when hit there, be it by accident or on purpose.

- eyes
- nose
- throat
- philtrum
- solar plexus
- groin

Knowing that you have these targets available, your staple weapons are your:

- fingers: grab the groin, scratch or poke at the eyes with these; make sure your fingers are bent slightly so as not to jam or hyper extend it when trying to poke at the eyes
- fist knuckles: aim at philtrum (don't need to hit hard here lest you like to injure your hand), solar plexus, groin, temple

- palm heels: strike the chin, nose, solar plexus, groin,
- cupped hands: pop both ears
- elbows: strike the chin, nose, or solar plexus
- knees: hit the groin, solar plexus or face
- foot: kick the groin or knees; stomp on the instep

This article isn't intended to teach you the actual techniques, but the concepts behind self-defense techniques and how you train for them.

However, here is an example of a technique--[the front kick](#). It is a simple kick, but can be devastating when delivered to the groin or solar plexus.

Here's another video on how to do a simple [double punch](#). Aim both of these to a soft vital point, and the impact can be very effective.

Summary

As you can see, there are some very essential knowledge you need to know in order to understand self-defense and the nature of self-defense. I hope you can use them to help you improve your skills.

And always remember:

- Attacks can happen when you least expect it (that's just a fact of life)
- Your body will react the way it was trained (very very true)
- You are a walking weapons arsenal (most people don't know this)
- There are no rules in street fighting (fight dirty)
- You only need to know minimal but effective self-defense skills to protect and evade (remember, don't stick around, you just need to escape; do what you have to in order to achieve this)
- I want to put emphasis on this. The key to improving your self-defense skills is using repetition. Correctly repeating a technique, and repeating them against a realistic attack, can go a long way towards ingraining your response into your instinctive reaction.

If you have any questions you wish to post directly to me, just email me at juancho_forlanda@yahoo.com. Just put "essense of self-defense" as the subject of the email.