



Taking Self Defense To The Next Level

By

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I hope you have read our previous four newsletters about Self Defense Weapons For Women. It will be a big help to any woman or child who wants to defend themselves. I emphasized the use of 'environmental' weapons in that series. You'll also find many other previous self-defense newsletters in our Self Defense section.

I'd like to move on to help anyone who wants to take self defense to the 'next level.' What I mean by that is getting specialized training in martial arts which can lead to ranking in the martial system you choose to study.

Where to Begin

1. Select a good teacher
2. Select a good school
3. Select an effective self-defense style

The martial arts teacher you choose will have a big influence on your life, practice, and ability to defend yourself. Reputable martial arts instructors will usually allow you to watch one or two classes before deciding whether to study with him or her. Some even offer one or more free lessons. That's another way to get a feel for how a teacher leads his or her classes.

The martial arts school includes the students who will influence your ability to learn. One of my instructors often said that the most important person in any martial arts class is 'your partner.' Watch how the students interact with each other. Do they respect each other? Do they respect their instructors? Are these people with whom you would like to influence your ability to defend yourself?

The martial arts style should be demonstrably effective as a system of self defense. Attending demonstrations at various martial arts schools should give you an idea of whether the techniques in each style would be effective in a real 'street attack.' My belief after teaching self defense for almost 65 years is that a student should be able to end a confrontation in two to five seconds. Any attack that lasts longer usually means the victim of the attack will be seriously injured — possibly overpowered and under the control of the attacker. Five seconds — max.

Self Defense Styles

I have studied more than a dozen martial arts styles since I began training in the Spring of 1961. Each of the styles had techniques that are effective in self defense. It's important to know how to defend yourself from a variety of positions —

1. Standing
2. Sitting
3. Lying down (prone, supine positions, and on your side)

It's important to know how to defend yourself from a variety of attack locations —

1. From the front
2. From the back
3. From the right side
4. From the left side
5. From above
6. From below

It's important to know how to defend yourself from a variety of attack 'types' —

1. One attacker
2. Multiple attackers
3. Attacker(s) with weapons (e.g. stick, knife, gun)

A good martial arts style will focus on all of those potential positions, locations, and attack types. I've had the privilege of teaching and studying with many military personnel. One of the things I like about how they train and execute hand-to-hand techniques is that they want the confrontation finished in less than two seconds. They will use anything on or near them to win a fight. I've addressed that in previous parts of this series and invite you to read them again as reminders.

A real attack, whether in the street or a building, will not be fair. Your attacker will use every dirty tactic necessary to accomplish his purpose in attacking you. At some point in your self-defense training your instructor should make that clear. Respect is important in the martial arts school — but that's a different situation than a real attack. An attacker doesn't respect you and deserves no respect in return. Though compassion should guide you at some point (especially after subduing the attacker), you may have to use everything you have ever learned about self defense to stay alive.

Here are some of the martial arts to consider studying —

Yon Ch'uan Martial Arts

Jujutsu Self Defense (sometimes spelled Jiu Jitsu)

Judo Self Defense

Okinawa Karate Self Defense

Shaolin Kung Fu Self Defense

Krav Maga

There are hundreds of other martial arts styles you can study, but the important thing for you is to make sure the time, effort, and money you put into training will teach you how to defend yourself quickly and effectively during an attack.