



SELF DEFENCE & PERSONAL SAFETY

Preparation

"Forewarned is forearmed". By rehearsing possible options and techniques to utilize in the event of a personal confrontation we are effectively 'psyching' ourselves to deal with an incident prior to its occurrence. The formulation of a personal safety plan, prior to an incident occurring, will ensure that the individual has a range of strategies available to assist them in not only the prevention of the confrontation itself, but also to effectively deal with the situation.

Another preparation technique that can prove useful in preparing ourselves for confrontation is visual imagery. This technique is used effectively in many areas, as exemplified by the safety instructions given to passengers before an airplane takes off. As many people find it difficult to think clearly in panic situations, preparing them prior to an incident gives them automatic options to exercise if an incident were to occur. Accordingly, by mentally visualizing what we could do to stop an attack and escape, we have a greater chance of thinking clearly and automatically reacting, should an attack ever occur.

Robbery

If the motivation for the confrontation is to rob you, you need to ask yourself whether it is worth placing your personal safety at risk for the sake of property that can generally be replaced. It is recommended that you take whatever action you can to preserve your safety. This may mean handing over your wallet or mobile phone. In this instance you should also try and note the description of the offender, details of the attack (including how and in which direction the offender left) and report the matter to police.

Assault

If the motivation for the confrontation is to assault you, there are a wide range of different strategies available for you to consider. Firstly, it is good to be aware of some of the common characteristics of assault to determine what the most likely circumstances are for such a confrontation to occur.

Research has shown that the majority of assaults are committed by a person known to the victim. Whether the offender is known or unknown, they target the same thing - vulnerability. Therefore, confidence, assertiveness, trusting and acting on instincts and strong body language are extremely necessary in preventing or stopping any attack.

If you are attacked, there are a range of strategies that you can adopt. Above all, you should do whatever you believe will keep you the safe. If you can escape by any means, such as running away, it is highly advisable that you take this option and report the incident to police.

Self Defence Law

Wikipedia Search: *"The right of self-defence is the right for persons to use reasonable force or defensive force, for the purpose of defending one's own life or the lives of others, including, in certain circumstances, the use of deadly force. The rules are the same when force is used to protect another from danger. Generally, the defendant must have a reasonable belief that the third party is in a position where they would have the right of self-defence."*

Put simply you have the right to defend yourself from any form of harm or danger not only physical harm but also including verbal, psychological and also cyber. You must only respond with reasonable force, provided that this force is authorised, justified or excused by law. Each person has a survival instinct that acts to preserve their safety if threatened. The determining factor as to whether a person can successfully defend themselves is their commitment to their own personal safety.

There are 3 outcomes we have the ability to control: fight, flight or freeze. Freezing is not an option in any situation unless a weapon is involved and it is the only way to save your life.

Escape

With any verbal or physical attack, the best way to defend yourself, or even stop it before it begins, is to remove yourself from the situation. Being prepared can stop potential situations from occurring. If you feel uneasy, nervous, or know that something may happen then remove yourself immediately. If you are being physically attacked, then you do whatever it takes to get away. No matter how angry you are never stay and fight the attacker once you have the opportunity to escape. You never know who you are dealing with, what weapons they might have or how many others there are. Use the element of surprise.

Verbal Resistance

One of the most effective self-defence techniques is using your voice or screaming. This has the potential to achieve a number of results and is another option before having to physically defend yourself.

Firstly, yelling and screaming turns fear into anger, and in so doing produces an adrenaline rush. This will provide the defender with an instant energy and power burst. The adrenaline rush will allow the defender to move faster, think quicker and multiply their strength, in order to deal with the attack.

Secondly, the defender has unexpectedly turned from intended victim to aggressor and this is likely to temporarily 'shock' the attacker. This will not only allow a brief moment to execute further self-defence techniques but will also cause the attacker's body to tense up momentarily - increasing the effectiveness of any strikes executed.

The third reason is to attract attention. Even if people don't come running to assist you, the attacker will certainly be conscious of the possibility that someone may have heard you and may decide to discontinue the attack, rather than confront other multiple people.

Strategies

In an attack or confrontation there are a number of options available that do not require physical self-defence to fend off the attacker.

- * Faking a heart attack, asthma attack, epileptic fit, faint or mental illness;
- * Calling out to a fictitious person - if you are convincing there is no doubt that the attacker will look around;
- * Verbal response - negotiate with the attacker;
- * Tell the attacker that "Someone will be coming back in a minute";
- * Wait for the attacker's attention to be momentarily diverted and seek escape; and/or
- * Anything else that you can think of to stop the attack or create an opportunity to escape.

These options may be very useful to create opportunities for escape or to deter the attack, however many require further action as they will not generally stop an attack on their own. For example, calling out to a fictitious person will generally divert the attacker's attention, action then must be taken to either run away, or disable the attacker before seeking escape. It is also vital to note that to effectively utilise any of these options, you must be totally convincing to your attacker.

Areas of Vulnerability

If you cannot get away and there is no other option but to fight back then, along with yelling and screaming, there are 3 main vulnerable areas you should always aim for.

The three primary target areas are:

1. Eyes - if the attacker can't see you, they are unable to continue with the attack.
2. Throat - if an attacker cannot breathe, they will be unable to continue with the attack.
3. Groin - if an attacker cannot stand, they will be unable to continue with the attack.

No matter what the attack is or how the attacker is grabbing or holding you at least 1 of these primary target areas will be available.