

Self-Defense For Men

Tips for avoiding, deescalating, escaping potentially dangerous situations

By Michael Linehan

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Self-defense for men is important, because many men experience threats to their safety and many men feel strongly about wanting to live a life without violence. Often in our articles about self-defense, what we say is slanted towards, or is specifically for, women. This is simply because women are more likely to be concerned about personal safety on a daily basis, and most of our adult class students are women.

As a man, I'm not worried about being attacked when I take the dog for a walk, go to the mailbox, return to our van in a parking lot, or notice a woman looking at me. But such common, everyday occurrences can be a time of anxiety for many women. The average woman going about her daily activities FEELS more concern about her safety, and rightly so, because she IS more in danger of violence than the average man.

However, many men are also concerned about safety, both their own and for their families. In some ways, they may feel reluctant to talk to others about self defense for men because of the social idea that they, as men, are already supposed to be able to take care of themselves and their loved ones. But many of us, of course, did not grow up in the circumstances where we would actually learn to fight other young men. So, we don't actually know what to do and don't have confidence in our natural abilities.

You are safest if you see fighting as a last resort and do what you can to stay safe without having to fight; this is true in self-defense for men as well as for women. Your safest choice is to try to use your awareness and intuition to avoid possible trouble. Your target denial and verbal skills can defuse most potentially dangerous situations. And it is important to know how to fight when you have no other choice.

A key difference between self-defense for men and for women comes in the reasons a man might attack another and in how men are trained to respond to perceived threats. A source of considerable danger for men is the tendency to fight over words, property or territory. You could be attacked because of this, or you may be tempted to start a fight for such reasons. Women often need to have their self-protective instincts, and their natural ability to fight, woken up. Men often need to have their tendency towards self-righteous anger and their tendency to fight throttled back and channeled in more effective and POSITIVELY

self-protective ways.

An insult, real or imagined, can be enough to precipitate a fight. One principle of self defense for men in any of these situations... don't! Don't engage in such fights, and don't start them. Don't give an attacker an excuse. Don't give that stupid driver the finger, tailgate him to show your impatience, or cut him off to retaliate against him for cutting you off. It's not worth the possible result of him pulling a gun and killing you. And don't instigate such a fight yourself. Don't fight someone because he called you a name or cut you off in traffic.

One really blunt way to think of this... You absolutely must avoid physical confrontation at any cost until the final line is crossed. That line might be a threat to your life, a sexual assault on you or a member of your family, or a threat to their lives. It might be a similar threat to a person you don't know – the final line is different for different people. But when the final line is crossed, you make your stand. You fight 100%. You must fight with a willingness to risk death. Would you be willing to take that risk if your six-year-old daughter was being hauled into a van by an abductor? Of course you would! You wouldn't even think about it for a moment.

IF YOU ARE NOT PREPARED TO FIGHT IN THIS SPIRIT, YOU SHOULDN'T BE IN THE FIGHT. If what you are fighting over is not worth risking death, you must just walk away. You absolutely should not be fighting because, in this modern world, this guy who attacked you may very well be prepared to kill you, or at the very least, he may not care if he does.

(Special note for most women reading this: this advice is not meant for you unless you have a tendency to escalate situations. This is gender specific advice about self-defense for men because the realities for most men and most women are different. Attacks on most women are most often predatory, and most women are likely to avoid confrontation when they can. Attacks on most men are likely to be competitive, and men often get sucked into fighting back when their safest choice would be to walk away.)

If it does become necessary to fight, unless you are quite highly trained, don't rely on punching. Your legs are much stronger, and the chances of you breaking your fingers or wrist are quite high. Fingers tightly squeezed together and jabbed full-force into someone's eye will do more to end a fight than most people's punching. Thigh smashes or kicks to the groin or head are far more powerful than your arms.

In real fighting, there are two kinds of blows – opening strikes and finishing strikes. If this is potentially a life or death situation, there is only one way to fight – 100%. There is no room for tactical strikes in a real fight, like punching someone in the ribs or the side of the head.

You can keep yourself and your loved ones safe in most circumstances. First of all, make safety plans with your family about how to handle possible danger from people in the same way that you should make safety plans about other dangers such as fire. Second of all, wisely avoid danger when you see or feel it coming. Do not fight over insults, property or territory. Treat fighting as a last resort, when you have no other way to escape a "final line" life or death situation. Anything short of that, you should swallow your pride and walk away. If you have to fight, then be ready to do so totally and without reservation until you have the chance to escape. Then, do not continue the fight – leave and get yourself and the people important to you to safety as quickly as you can. Taking a class in self-defense for men can help you develop confidence in these various skills.

Self-defense for men, like self defense for women and for children, includes a variety of skills that can help prevent, avoid, or deescalate problems most of the time. As with all skills, the opportunity to practice makes them stronger. Please contact Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower for more information on how we can help you or your loved ones develop these skills.