

MASTERCLASS PACKET FOR CHOREOGRAPHING A FIGHT SCENE

With Jonathan Maberry

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- **Action takes many forms.**
 - Literary agent and nonfiction author Donald Maass is famous for insisting that there needs to be “action on every page”. He is not saying that there needs to be violence on every page.
 - Two people talking as they walk down a hall is action. So are incidental moments like taking a dip of coffee, getting into a vehicle, etc.
 - In this workshop, we use **ACTION** to refer specifically to some kind of conflict.
 - Action can be a chase, a fight, or a battle.
- **Action Scenes have a purpose.**
 - They can be used to excite.
 - They can be used to define the nature and level of threat.
 - They can be character modifiers –showing good and bad aspects of all kinds of characters in the story
 - They should advance the narrative.
 - They can be used to add tension.
 - They can be used to increase pace.
 - They can reveal strengths or flaws.
 - They can set the stage for larger action scenes to follow.
 - They can establish uniqueness to your story.
 - For visual mediums like comics they are often critical set-pieces.
 - They should always have consequences (good or bad) that impact the ongoing narrative.
 - They can be fun.
 - They can be emotional devastating to characters and readers.
 - They should **never** be gratuitous.
 - They should never be used to prop up weak plotting.
- **Timetable**
 - How big a fight do you want? Is it a quick slap-fight or a battle to the death?
 - The less skilled the combatants the longer the fight
 - If one combatant is more highly skilled than the other, the fight is likely to last a few seconds.
 - If both combatants are highly skilled, the fight can last longer (though not as long as movie fight scenes).
 - Would the fight scene benefit from a deliberate slow-down so the reader can be informed on what’s happening?
 - John D. MacDonald used this to great effect in his 21 *Travis McGee* novels.

- This works best in a first person narrative, but can be done very well in deep third-person narration.
- These are usually insights on how a fight feels/sounds/etc, to explore the emotions present leading up to, during, and immediately following a fight.
- Brief but essential information on the type of technique, its use/delivery/etc, and the type of damage it's intended to do all work well in this kind of scene.
- That said, don't turn the fight scene into a TED Talk.
- How long a fight do you *need* it to be?
 - Sometimes a fight needs to fit into a plot-necessary timeframe such as a countdown on a bomb, a plane about to crash, to outpace the effects of injuries sustained, to get past one enemy in order to rescue someone held by other bad guys, etc.
 - Sometimes a fight should be very short in order to make a point. In the first episode of season 1 of *Reacher*, the fight in his jail cell was done in a heartbeat, and the effect was we see what the character is capable of, and that sets tone for every character involved.
 - Conversely, in that same episode of *Reacher*, when he is attacked by a gang in the prison showers was drawn out to show how commanding a fighter he is.
 - Again, this is a statement piece. That scene isn't important in terms of the mystery underpinning the season-long arc; but because of it we have trust that this character may have what it takes to solve the mystery and triumph in the end.
 - **EXERCISE:** Next time you're watching a movie or TV show that has interesting action scenes...time them. See how long it takes them to play out. Pay attention to what happens and write down descriptions. Then reverse engineer them by trying to write those scenes as if they were your own. It's very instructive to put real movement into words.
- Does the fight need to fill one chapter, or will it be spread out?
 - The more complex the battle, the longer the fight scene typically takes.
 - A field battle between Napoleon and Lord Wellington would hardly be given full measure in a single paragraph.
 - Some of these scenes need time to develop, advance, or resolve character arcs.
 - In such cases—as with the various big battles in the *Lord of the Rings* movies—cutaways to different characters allow each to shine. If so, give them their moment.
 - Some fight scenes move a big part of the overall narrative, and that might require multiple scenes.
 - A long fight might be intercut with other scenes to amplify reader tension.
- **Consequences of the Fight / What is the level of perceived threat?**
 - This matters in every single action scene.
 - What does the antagonist want to accomplish?

- Murder, robbery, a beating, kidnapping, sexual assault, torture, punishment, etc.
 - What does the protagonist need to accomplish?
 - Escape, victory, defending someone else, preventing personal harm, preventing abduction, making an arrest, revenge, vigilantism, following orders, avoiding an arrest, winning an important match, slaying the monster, etc.
 - Who is in danger?
 - What level of personal harm is implied by the lead up to the fight?
 - What level of personal harm can all participants in the fight want to inflict?
 - What level of personal harm can all participants in the fight want to avoid?
 - Does attacker or defender have a pre-existing limitation? (Age, disparity of size/strength,
 - **EXERCISE**: Search the Net for reports of violent conflict and then experiment by writing those incidents out, including as much action as you can infer from the details provided. This teaches you how to frame 'real world, hence realistic' fight or action scenes.
- **What will happen if the fight is lost?**
 - Knowing these stakes helps determine what kind of scene to write.
 - Losing a fight to an attacker often sets the stage for the character needing to find ways to level up for the next battle.
 - Losing a fight can also add deep complexity to the character's experience.
 - Loss of confidence
 - Being seen/perceived by others to be weak
 - Letting someone down
 - Empowering the bad guys
 - Failing to save someone
 - Failing to prevent other kinds of harm
 - Loss of respect
- **What are the consequences of the fight?**
 - **Legal**: Most countries, cultures, groups, businesses have strict policies involving violence.
 - It's worth doing research in the era and location of the planned fight to see whether self-defense is permissible, and under which specific circumstances. These rules and laws will vary greatly.
 - Also, even when attacked on the street, the antagonist can actually file either criminal charges or a personal injury suit.
 - This can greatly complicate the protagonist's life, and therefore adds more dimension to the story.
 - Also, laws vary. A criminal on probation and a civilian who has never been in trouble with the law have different rules imposed on them (such as ex-cons being prohibited in most places from owning firearms, etc)
 - **Medical**:

- Few people get through a fight without injury.
- Those injuries are baked-in plot tension. Research the nature of those injuries –diagnosis, prognosis, physical and emotional aftereffects, etc.
- An inexperienced character who loses a fight might suffer from short-term PTSD.
- A combat vet, a world-weary cop, or someone who was abused is likely to have PTSD. It's more common than you think and is an excellent vehicle for exploring the human condition under crisis.
- Most fight scenes in movies/TV/books disregard basic anatomy.
 - Hand bones are smaller than jaw or cheekbones and far more fragile. Punching someone in the face hurts both people in nearly all cases.
 - Unless insanity, heavy intoxication or drug use, or rage can temporarily insulate people from feeling the injuries they have received.
 - Adrenaline is always in play. Read up on it –how fast it enters the bloodstream, its physiological effects, its duration in the symptoms, etc.
 - When I was a bodyguard, one of our team –a very tough kid in his 20s who was a boxing and kickboxing champion but who'd never been in a really serious street fight—was so rattled by the after-effects of adrenaline (the shakes, teary eyes, etc) that he assumed those feelings meant he was a coward. Despite the more seasoned operatives trying to explain basic biochemistry to him, he quit the following day, believing he was weak. Very sad, but not uncommon.
- **EXERCISE:** Read up on PTSD as experienced by military who have been in combat, real police in action, and nonfiction articles on how PTSD manifests, how quickly it can change personal behavior, and what can be done to deal with it. This will help you draft very realistic characters.
- **Emotional/Psychological**
 - Fear is always in play. No matter how tough or seasoned, there is no way to completely shut off emotional reactions. Use that.
 - Nervousness leading up to a fight, or shock from a surprise attack, can lead to someone overreacting during a fight. This can lead to doing too much damage relative to the level of threat.
 - Crushing someone's throat is in no way a justifiable response to an attempted purse-snatching or pickpocket.
- **Using the Force Continuum to Plan Your Action Scenes**
 - The Force Continuum is a kind of thermometer for deciding which action is appropriate to a potentially violent confrontation. Although this is intended for police or military, the structure is useful for writers planning on writing a fight scene.
 - **Key Levels of the Use of Force Continuum in Law Enforcement**
 - While models vary, the standard continuum generally includes these levels:

- **Officer Presence/Uniform:**
 - No force; simply being on the scene.
 - **Verbalization/Commands:**
 - Calm, non-threatening commands, progressing to firm commands.
 - **Empty-Hand Control/Soft Techniques:**
 - Physical techniques like grabbing, joint locks, or pressure points to restrain.
 - **Less-Lethal Methods/Hard Techniques:**
 - Pepper spray, batons, or stun guns (tasers) to subdue active resistance.
 - **Deadly Force:**
 - Firearms or actions likely to cause death or serious injury, used only in extreme, life-threatening situations.
 - **EXERCISE:** Do research on correct and incorrect uses of force by military or law enforcement.
- **Key Principles and Application of Force**
 - **Subject Behavior Dictates Force:**
 - The officer's response is dictated by the subject's behavior, which ranges from cooperative to passive resistance, active resistance, or, ultimately, assaultive/deadly threats.
 - **Continuous Evaluation:**
 - Officers are trained to escalate and de-escalate their response in seconds based on changing circumstances.
 - **Reasonable Officer Standard:**
 - Actions are judged by what a similarly trained officer would consider necessary in a similar situation, as established by [Graham v. Connor 490 U.S. 386 \(1989\)](#).
 - **EXERCISE:** Write a brief scene of a confrontation between officers and a suspect. Do it several times, each time angling the scene toward a different rung on the force continuum ladder. This exercise helps you decide the best *entry point* for you to start your own scene.
 - **Criticisms and Nuances of the Force Continuum**
 - **Misleading Terminology:**
 - Some argue "continuum" implies a rigid, sequential, step-by-step process, whereas encounters often require skipping levels instantly.
 - **Limited Application:**
 - It is sometimes criticized for not reflecting the chaotic, unpredictable nature of real-world police work, leading to the adoption of more dynamic, situational, or behavioral-based models.

- **EXERCISE:** Take the scenario you used for the previous exercise and redraft it from the point of view of different characters within that scene – officer, suspect, eyewitness, victim, EMT, etc.
- **What Happens Next?**
 - Here are some key questions to ask yourself both *before* and *after* drafting your action scene:
 - What does the protagonist learn as a result of the fight?
 - What does the antagonist learn as a result of the fight?
 - How does the fight affect the overall plot?
 - How does the fight affect the character(s) arcs?
 - In what way will that fight become a plot point (echo) later on?
 - What physical limitations exist as a result of the fight?
 - **EXERCISE:** Make lists and keep them handy. These are often as –or more— useful than the standard character profile.
- **What increase in skills are gained as a result of the fight?**
 - Better understanding of one’s own skills
 - Decide how based on the characters in your story.
 - Better understanding of the antagonist’s skills and/or motives
 - How will this influence actions and thoughts going forward?
 - **EXERCISE #1:** Make a timeline of the protagonist’s growth as someone capable of eventually saving the day in the end.
 - **EXERCISE #2:** Keep a record of what the character last learned, lost, and earned as a result of action within the story.
- **How will that fight change the dynamic between protagonist and antagonist?**
 - Violence always leaves a mark –physical or psychological
 - Violence also impacts all relationships that it touches.
 - These are things to plan for and use with enthusiasm as the story unfolds.
 - They also allow you to escalate the stakes in future conflict.
 - **EXERCISE:** Make a list of things the antagonist learns about the protagonist over the course of the novel, particularly as regards action. This may suggest character evolution for the antagonist.
- **Putting the Reader in the Middle of the Action**
 - Sensory Details –what the five senses tell us, is a useful way to create ‘contact points’ between the reader and characters.
 - The smell of sweat, the taste of blood, the sounds of impact, the sight of blood & damage, and the things said/shouted/screamed in a fight all create a kind of reality.
 - If you don’t know how a fight feels, reach out to friends/connections on social media and ask to interview anyone who’s been in a fight. They will have details you could likely never imagine.

- **EXERCISE**: As often as you can, pause in whatever you're doing and focus on which of your five senses is currently engaged and why. Some of these moments can be transferred to character experiences.
- **Location, Location, Location**
 - Decide where the fight should take place
 - Get a sense of the terrain:
 - If in a room, what are the furnishings, wall-hangings, loose objects, chairs, etc.?
 - If in a car, then what kind, how roomy or cramped, parked or in motion?
 - If in a building, what kind? What's its purpose? What's the general layout?
 - What advantages are there?
 - What disadvantages are there?
 - Consider using the location itself as a complication.
 - A fight in a clean, dry, spacious room can be fun, but it could also be more dynamic.
 - Consider shifting the action to a more challenging environment—a sandy beach, during a blizzard, in a shower, on a set of stairs, in microgravity, in a dungeon, on a steep slope, in utter darkness, etc.
 - **EXERCISE**: Try to cultivate the habit of doing these awareness/observation exercises. Get into the habit of evaluating any place you find yourself as a possible inspiration for action right there. For example, a fight scene on a city street and one at a church wedding would be vastly different. Consider what's *going on* in any place you place this thought game.
- **Dressed for Battle (or not)**
 - Change the circumstances:
 - Having a protagonist in a wheelchair or on crutches changes the fight.
 - A capable fighter with his leg in a cast and using crutches changes the fight.
 - Having the protagonist fight while injured or sick offers new opportunities
 - Clothing is key.
 - Too many fights happen when the character is properly dressed and ready for it. Life, alas, is seldom as accommodating.
 - A tight dress or tight jeans can hamper someone skilled at kicking.
 - A tuxedo, suit, dress, or other fashionable garments seldom allow for full range of motion. Those limitations increase vulnerability and therefore amplify tension.
 - A fight scene while a character is naked (in a bathroom for example) not only increases physical vulnerability since there are no clothes to pad blows; but more importantly it makes the naked person feel even weaker. That feeling of exposure tends to shift someone to the defensive, which can be a losing strategy.
 - On the other hand, some clothing has advantages.

- Clothes with pockets allow for hidden weapons or commonplace items (keys, cell phone, coins, credit cards, etc.) to be used as weapons.
- Leather jackets and heavy winter coats can cushion blows and even lessen the damage from knife wounds.
- Shoes can be a liability (slippery on a polished floor; high heels putting balance and leg joints at risk) or a bonus (heavy work boots, sneakers with complex soles, shoes with pointy toes), etc.
- **EXERCISE:** Try doing different kinds of movement (throwing a punch, drawing a fake gun, etc) while wearing different kinds of clothes. It's very instructive on both advantages and limitations.

▪ Setting the Stage

- Each individual action scene needs its place.
- What you want to avoid is what we call a “white room” fight—one where the environment plays no meaningful role. Yawn.
- Make a cheat sheet for the scene.
 - If it's a place you can step into (somewhere close that can serve as a model for the location in the story), then take cell-photos and maybe some rough measurements. If you measure your walking step-length and use that, the math is simple.
 - If it is a real location elsewhere, check online for photos and maybe a floorplan.
 - Use props: a sketchbook; a piece of poster board with Post-It notes to represent furniture, doors, and people; a chessboard with some math done to approximate it to a real world room; toys as stand-ins for characters; etc.
- Walk a space that approximates the room/place. You'll be surprised at the differences between perception of distance and actual distance.
- If in a real place (using it as a model for your fight scene location) look at the objects there: furniture, wall-hangings, things on tables and shelves, carpet vs area rugs, windows and doors, etc.
- Using a real space as a model helps you grasp how much space the characters have.
 - For example, no one is going to do fancy jump kicks in an elevator, a walk-in closet, a household bathroom, etc.
 - The bigger the room, the less immediate threat and the shorter the time is for escape.
 - Sit in the front seat of your car and experiment with range of motion for hands and feet when the “bad guy” is beside you as a passenger, beside you as the driver, in the back seat on one side or the other, trying to force their way into the car, etc. Each separate variation offers different opportunities to amplify threat or provide resources.
- If the fight is between groups such as clashing armies, then look for maps of famous battles, particularly those that show the terrain and placement of troops.

- You can also tap into gamers who do board-game reenactments of famous battles.
 - RPG game players often have a useful sense of layout.
- **EXERCISE 1:** Go through any room in your house or office and try to assess how various pieces of furniture can be used for defense, as an obstacle, or as an impediment.
- **EXERCISE 2:** Do the same with any objects in the room –books, pens/pencils, cups, staplers, extension or charging cords, flowers, random shelf items, cookware, pillows and linen, clothes (folded, hung, or in the hamper), wall-hangings (paintings, framed photos, tapestries, curtains, etc), and so on.
 - How could each be held in order to provide defense or to inflict injury.
 - What are the strengths or weaknesses of each object (can it pound, cut, stab, wrap, deflect, distract, bind, etc.)

FIVE KEY ACTION SCENES

NOTE: Each of the next five sections provides notes and questions to ask yourself in order to better conceptualize and therefore visual your action scenes.

THE ONE-TO-ONE FIGHT

- **Who is fighting?**
- **Why are they fighting?**
- **Could the fight have been avoided?**
- **Can the fight still be stopped before it goes too far?**
- **For each combatant, make these decisions:**
 - **Physical description that includes:**
 - **Age:** The very young lack size, mass, and experience; the very old are more vulnerable to injury, they're slower, but they have more experience in life and with judging people.
 - **Height:** This matters because tall people have greater reach for strikes and kicks, but there is more of them to move, so they are not as nimble in evasion; shorter folks are harder to hit, but they may lack reach and mass.
 - **Weight:** This plays into move quickly they can move for attack, evasion, and defense. A heavy person has more mass to generate PSI when hitting; but they may not be fit enough to endure punishment.
 - **Build:** Someone with an athletic build has natural advantages; however a very fit person may also believe they're ready for anything, and that's an assumption that could come back to bite them (very good for character development).
 - **Health** (The presence of anything from a bad cold to arthritis will impact how a person moves, reacts, etc. Each unique detail will affect the choreography)
 - **General Fitness** (this is key because out of shape people lose breath very quickly in a fight or chase).
 - **Previous Combat Experience:** Win or lose.
 - **Previous Fight Training:** Martial arts, police, military, sport fighting, street fighting, etc.
 - **Skill with Weapons:** The introduction of one or more weapons can radically change the potential choreography. A barehanded fight and a knife fight are very different, especially if only one person has the knife.
 - **EXERCISE:** Pick any two people you know and draft a fight scene involving them. Then switch who is protagonist and who is antagonist. This is an exercise worth doing with folks of similar size and those who differ wildly from each other.
- **Are they armed?**
 - If so, with what?
 - What's their skill level with that weapon?

- Are they unskilled but have a weapon? This could be a bonus or liability. It can create false confidence and overconfidence.
- It can also escalate the fight past legal safeguards for self-defense.
- **Where is the fight taking place**
 - The previous section on location provides a lot of useful detail for this.
 - When in doubt, make that location a challenging one.
 - Seldom use the same location over again.
 - Make your map of the room.
- **EXERCISE**: Do a walk-through of the fight scene using a real place. You'll discover all kinds of storytelling opportunities this way.
- **What is each person wearing?**
 - Again, check previous notes.
 - Look for opportunities for the clothes to play a role.

EXERCISE: Draft the scene, then re-walk the room and make decisions about whether you missed opportunities to use the environment to best effect.

ONE-TO-ONE SCENARIOS

- **Self-defense**: Argument, Shoving Match, Unskilled Brawl, Sexual Assault, Gang Attack, Armed Attack, Mugging, Motivation-unknown Attack, Threat-level Unknown, Authorized Fighting (police, guards, military, etc), Solo Response, Group Response, Group vs Group, etc.
- **Attack**: Pre-emptive, hunt-and-attack, Seizing Control of the Moment, Assassination, Uncontrolled Emotion, etc.
- **Sport Combat**: Boxing, Mixed Martial Arts, Fencing, Kickboxing, Paintball, Wrestling, Jousting, etc.
- **Duels**: Unarmed, armed but nonfatal, to the death, etc
- **Fighting Nonhuman Opponents**: Dragons, Vampire Hunter, Demon Slayer, Werewolves, Aliens, etc

Here are some exercises useful in understanding basic fighting movements. (Some of this material is excerpted from a textbook I wrote back in 1985 for the Women's Self-defense Program I taught at Temple University. **Always be careful when practicing any physical activity, and take personal stick to make sure you are able to do so safely!**

Evasive Stepping

There are three kinds of evasive steps:

1. **CLEAN EVADE:** Where you just simply get out of the path of a blow. These are used most often when you are surprised and have no time for anything but a purely defensive movement to get out of harm's way.
2. **EVADE AND SPRING BACK:** This is a Clean Evade immediately followed by a step back toward the attacker so that you can hit him or kick him.
3. **EVADE AND HIT:** This is the best defense, where you hit or kick while you are evading.

The difference between the second and third method is a full beat of time. No matter how fluid a fight seems there are actually beats to it that form a pattern. Ideally you want to defend in as few beats as possible because each beat is also an increment of time. If an evasive step takes a beat lasting half a second and a step-back takes another half-second to full second, then you've used a second to a second-and-a-half of time. That is a lot of time in a fight; whereas an evade and hit takes a single beat of about a half second. This gives the attacker no time at all to think, or analyze what you're doing, or organize a response. It just throws his aggression right back in his face. Literally.

EXERCISES:

To get a feel for certain moves, here are some methods useful in understanding evasive footwork with tips on how to practice them. It's best to have a training partner who fully understands that this is low-speed simulation only. This allows you both to take turns learning the skills and role-playing the attacker so that there is always the human element in all your training.

CLEAN EVADE:

EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES: A Nerf® bat, length of soft foam, or rolled up bath towel. Choose a room that has plenty of space to move and no breakables or obstacles.

- To practice this have your training partner hold the soft target (foam, towel, etc.) Position yourself about four feet away from her.
- With no warning your training partner should try to trap you with the soft bat very fast. For safety sake she should aim for your shoulders, the top of your head, your stomach or other area that would not be injured by contact.
- Avoid all contact with the eyes, ears, nose and throat.
- As your partner swings the soft bat, step or jump to get out of the way.
- Make sure you step with knees bent and your weight canted slightly forward so that it rests on the balls of your feet rather than the flats. Do not keep your weight on your heels at all. The ability of a body to move suddenly and accurately is based on where the weight rests at the moment the decision to move has been recognized. If the weight is on your heels you'll have to shift forward onto the balls in order to lift and

- move. Next time you watch tennis look at how the players are always on the balls of their feet. Boxers do the same thing.
- The goal of this drill is to evade contact completely.
 - **NOTE:** You don't have to be good at this. What matters is doing some movements to get a sense of how these things are done in a fight.
 - Have your partner swing the soft bat faster and faster but in no particular order. If she moves in a pattern or a rhythm it makes it too easy for you to evade, and the drill should be a challenge.
 - **VARIATION:** Have your training partner hold two soft bats...that way it'll be harder for you to know which direction the touch is likely to come from, and therefore the evasion skills you develop will be that much better.

EVADE AND SPRING BACK

EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES: A Nerf® bat, length of soft foam, or rolled up bath towel and a cushioned hand target.

- Though this is not the preferred response it is still a good one. The drill is similar to the Clean Evade exercise except that your training partner has the soft bat in one hand and the cushioned target in the other.
- As she swings the soft bat you should do an evasion by taking a *single step* out of the path of the blow. Do not step away with both feet and you'll have too far to come back.
- As you evade make sure you step back only onto the ball of your foot.
- As soon as the soft bat passes you immediately step back toward your training partner, striking the target with one or both hands.
- The process of stepping back and then stepping forward again should be exactly like stepping back onto a stiff spring: you should bounce right back into close range.
- Try to hit light and fast rather than striving for great power. Speed is the most essential element of good fighting, and speed makes every strike land with greater force anyway. Also, it's harder for the attacker to block or evade a very fast blow.
- **VARIATION:** Have your training partner move around you in a wide circle, swinging the soft bat every once in a while but not according to any pattern or rhythm. It's important for her to keep the target up and away from her face and throat at all times.

DUCK AND DODGE:

EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES: A Nerf® bat, length of soft foam, or rolled up bath towel and a cushioned hand target.

- Stand facing your training partner about four feet apart.
- Your training partner should have the soft bat in one hand and the cushioned target in the other. She should have the bat held down at her side but the target raised.
- Keep your knees slightly bent and your weight canted a bit forward so that your heels are just barely touching the ground.
- Without any warning your training partner should try to tap you on the shoulders with the soft bat. It is important for her to try and surprise you.

- Watch her shoulders. You should be able to see the shoulder muscle move slightly before the arm lifts. This is how boxers and martial artists can tell a punch is coming. The shoulder lifts the arm and there is always some telltale movement.
- As soon as the shoulder twitches, you should duck down and move slightly forward, hitting at the same time.
- The goal is to get in under the swinging bat (or, in real Self-defense, a punch or hard slap) while moving slightly forward and counter-attacking with a fast hit.
- Try it over and over again, varying the angle of your duck (lean down and in to the left, or to the right, etc.) and the hit you use to counter-attack.
- **VARIATION:** Move around with your training partner while doing the drill. It's important for her to lower the bat to her side between each hit to maintain the element of surprise for you, and to allow you the chance to practice the skill of looking for the shoulder movement before a hit.

EVADE AND HIT

EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES: A Nerf® bat, length of soft foam, or rolled up bath towel and a cushioned hand target.

- This drill is very similar to the Duck and Dodge exercise except that you are not starting from a neutral standing position. Both you and your training partner should be moving around so that the whole drill has an element of randomness.
- As soon as the shoulder twitches, you should step slightly to one side (opposite the incoming bat) and slightly toward your training partner, hitting as you step.
- The goal is to be able to step and hit the moment you perceive an attack, and also to learn how to “**close the gap**”, which is the concept of getting close enough to your opponent in order to deliver a truly effective counter-attack.
- The perfect Evade and Hit involves stepping to one side and in so that you are just about touching body to body. At this extreme close-quarters (called “Zero Distance”), his longer reach makes it harder for him to hit you and your shorter reach makes it far easier to land multiple blows.
- NOTE: Moving to Zero Distance also frequently encourages an attacker to grab and hold rather than hit, which diminishes his overall threat and creates a serious combative advantage for the defender. If he is grabbing, then he is not hitting; and his grabbing hands are no longer able to block whatever strike or kick you throw.

POSTURES IN SELF-DEFENSE

The way you stand during Self-defense contributes a lot to your ability to effectively defend. Balance, angle, the distribution of weight to each foot, the distance from your opponent --all of these are important factors.

BASIC BALANCE

Balance is crucial in Self-defense. If you are off-balance physically you are often off-balance mentally and that means you are vulnerable. On the other hand, if you're balanced physically you are better equipped to handle a variety of threats with effective physical and mental agility.

The most useful posture is the BASIC DEFENSE POSTURE:

- If you are right handed, stand with your left leg slightly back and your right hip turned slightly away from the attacker.
- Bend your knees slightly. Don't bend too much too soon however because any extreme bend will show that you are poised either for fight or flight. The bend should be enough to put some spring in your legs. If you are already in the midst of a fight, then more bend is a good idea.
- Tilt your weight a bit forward so that the primary body weight is supported on the balls of your feet.
- Your heels should not bear any body weight. Ideally there should be a few millimeters off the ground.
- Keep your hands up to about the level of your ribcage, palms turned outward. The effect should look calming or even placating; but the hand position is actually quite useful for blocking and striking since the hands are halfway to the targets and close to the areas of your body you may need to defend (eyes, face, throat).
- This posture has several advantages:
 - It keeps you balanced and mobile.
 - It allows you to move forward, backward and to sides and angles with equal ease.
 - It doesn't look threatening, but is actually a very efficient fighting posture.
 - It allows for the quickest and most efficient blocks and parries.
 - It reduces the weight shifts that "telegraph" when you are about to throw a punch or kick.

Other useful postures for defense include:

WALL BRACED POSTURE:

- If you are in a situation where your back is near or against a wall, this is NOT A DISADVANTAGE. The solidity of a wall will give you tremendous advantages when defending against attack.
- Lean your shoulders against the wall, with more weight on your weakest side.
- Keep your weight almost entirely on the leg of the side that is bearing the most weight against the wall. If you are right handed, then the left shoulder should be against the wall and the left leg should be supporting your body weight.
- If the attacker is more than four feet away and rushing at you, raise your right leg and place the sole of your foot lightly against the wall. This allows you to deliver a very fast kick if he charges you.
- If the attacker is closer, hold the right leg loose and relaxed with the ball of the foot barely touching the ground and the heel a bit off the ground. This allows you to kick quickly if he attempts to grab you or tries to pin you to the wall.
- Keep your hands loose. The further away he is the more you should keep your palms on the wall so that they can help you brace for a hard kick against a rush.
- If the attacker is close, keep your hands more to the front of your body around the midsection so they are ready to block, parry, grab or strike.
- If the attacker is pushing you back to the wall, keep your chin pulled down as you hit so that your head doesn't hit the wall. Stamp backward with one foot to arrest some

of the force of the impact, and exhale as your body hits the wall. All of this helps you lessen the shock of impact and keeps you ready to fight back.

- If you're already pinned to the wall, bring one foot up, knee bent, foot flat on the wall with the stress on the ball of the foot. This position allows you to redirect your attacker's weight without much effort.

FLOOR DEFENSE POSTURE:

- If you wind up on the floor because of a shove, slip, or because you happen to be lying down when confronted (in bed, at the beach, etc.) make sure you get onto your side as quickly as possible.
- Prop your weight on the forearm of your weakest arm.
- Keep your legs bent and feet slightly off the ground. This allows you to deliver fast kicks and makes it much harder for the attacker to pin your legs and limit your mobility.
- Keep your strongest hand off your body, ready to block, parry or grab.

FLOOR GRAPPLING POSTURE:

- If you are attacked while lying down, endeavor to get onto your back.
- Bring your knees up and keep your feet flat on the floor, with the weight emphasis on the balls of your feet.
- Keep your hands open (fists are inefficient) and above your stomach/ribcage area.

SEATED FIGHTING POSTURE:

- If threatened from the front, push the small of your back against the chair.
- Place the ball of your weakest leg on the floor beside your chair.
- Keep your hands open and just above your lap.
- If the attacker is sitting next to you, turn as much as you can in your seat to face him. This allows you to use both arms and even your legs in the fight.
- If the attacker is behind you, sit forward on the edge of your seat, wrap your weakest leg around the leg of the chair and turn as much as you can to face him.

BLOCKING SKILLS FOR SELF-DEFENSE

There is bad news and good news about blocking a punch from a man. The bad news is that most women can't block a man's punch. The good news is that you really don't have to.

A "block", in the strictest sense, is a defensive movement that stops the punching arm, and that means using force against force. Never a really good idea. Even a strong men have trouble blocking full-speed and full-power punches. But smart fighters don't even try to stop the punch - they take a page from bullfighters and side step or deflect. You never see a bullfighter try to actually stop the bull.

Evasions were covered earlier in the Movement section, so let's talk about parries and deflections. A parry meets an incoming punch at an angle so that it warps the flight path of the blow, knocking it just a bit off course so that it misses its intended target. It doesn't require great

force to deflect something that is moving in a straight line because all of the power of the punch is in the forward thrust --there's no sideways resistance. A tap will make a punch veer. This is the principle behind fencing, where the defender's blade meets the attacker's blade at about a 45° angle, causing the attacker's sword to slide along the defending weapon and thrust into empty air.

Self-defense parries can be done with one or both hands, your forearm, elbow, or a Surrogate Weapon like a book, towel, purse, videocassette case, etc. Parries work best with you evade the blow by shifting the body out of the path of the attacking arm. This can be accomplished by sidestepped, stepping in, stepping back, ducking, or even falling down. As the blow is delivered, the defender shifts away and slaps at the limb or pushes it with a forearm, altering the flight path of the punch by a couple of inches.

There are several kinds of parries, and each one will be explained in this section.

SLAP PARRY

Slap Parries are the easiest to learn and use. Essentially they are light slaps or swats, using the same basic motion you'd use to swat a mosquito.

- Keep your hand and wrist upright but relaxed.
- As the blow comes in, shift your body away and slap at the outside of the attacker's arm, hitting the wrist a few inches above the little finger.
- Don't try to parry the hand itself (it's too easy to miss), and don't parry the elbow (it's too bony and hard).
- While parrying, try to kick or hit with the other hand. This puts you in charge of the fight.
- To practice, have your training partner jab at you with a Nerf® Bat or pool noodle. For safety sake she should not actually try to hit you in the face (a close jab is good enough).
- Your training partner should vary the speed, rhythm and angle of the blow to make them unpredictable. The idea is to learn to parry unexpected blow.

FOREARM PARRY

This variation is much stronger and will deal with almost any kind of attacking blow.

- As the blow comes toward you, bring your closest arm up and swing it toward the outside of his arm.
- Ideally you should parry away from you using a motion similar to pushing open a sliding door. If parrying with your right arm, swing your arm from left to right very hard.
- Generate power by turning your waist toward the arm as you parry. This puts body weight into the motion.
- For added strength, parry with both arms at the same time. If parrying primarily with your right, the left arm will act as a support, length mass and muscle to the movement.

- As soon as the attacker's arm has been parried, either kick him or reverse the swing of your parrying arms and hit him repeatedly.
- For practice have your training partner thrust at you with a Nerf® Bat or pool noodle. For safety sake she should not actually try to hit you in the face (a close jab is good enough).
- Have her step forward and thrust with both hands with her arms extended nearly straight in front of her. She should aim near (but not at) your face, chest, or stomach.
- The practice blows should be varied in speed, rhythm and intensity.
- Once you are able to do the parry easily then practice stepping out of the way as you parry. Evasions while parrying are always a good way to increase safety.

ASSISTED PARRY

As "assist" in fighting means to do something violent at the same time as you do something to protect yourself. In other words, as you parry --hit or kick the guy.

- Assisted Parries require more coordination and timing than parries alone. Extra practice time is needed to help you get good at these moves --but that pays off really quickly.
- Always choose the assisting strike or kick that requires the least amount of movement or effect.
- Always choose a fast technique over a powerful one. Speed is always better.
- Hit for effect. If assisting a parry, attack the most vulnerable available targets (eyes, nose, ears, throat, knees, toes, instep, groin)
- To practice this your training partner should have the jab at you a Nerf® Bat or pool noodle in her fastest hand and a small, padded target in the other.
 - Your training partner should hold the target up but away from her face, with her arm $\frac{3}{4}$'s straight and her arm muscles locked.
 - As she jabs at you with the noodle you should try to do three things at once:
 - Step to one side, but toward the attacker
 - Parry with your hand or forearm
 - Hit with the other hand, or kick
 - Try NOT to parry and THEN hit. Simultaneous is better, and its more confusing to the attacker.

WEAPON-ENFORCED PARRY

This is an even easier method of parrying that uses either a Surrogate or Intended Weapon.

- One approach is to parry with the hand holding the weapon, which works if the weapon you're holding is small and light. A cell phone, rolled-up magazine, or something like that works really well.
- The other approach is to parry just with your arm while simultaneously striking the attacker with a weapon held in your other hand.

- For practice, always use sponges in place of real weapons and only aim for padded targets. Don't hit your training partner even with a rolled sponge.
-

A-FRAME BLOCK

This technique is more a Block than a Parry and is used when you have no choice but to rush the attacker.

- The Basic A-Frame is formed by holding your elbows 90 degrees apart while touching your closed fists together.
 - Keep your arms high, elbows out, fists forward.
 - As a blow comes in, duck your head down under your fists and rush forward, letting the blow hit on your bent and raised arms.
 - This may hurt, but the structure should protect your face, head and neck.
 - Move forward toward the attacker as fast as you can.
 - The A-Frame combined with the rush should easily get you past his hands so that he hits your arms with the insides of his wrists or forearms instead.
 - As soon as you are in range, use your bunched fists to deliver repeated Hammerblow strikes.
-

A-FRAME PARRY

This is a two-hand parry using the A-Frame to keep your head and face safe while accomplishing the initial defense.

- Hold your arms in the basic A-Frame position.
- As someone reaches for you or tries to hit you with a straight punch, step in and slightly to one side.
- Bash the arm aside with you're A-Frame as you continue to step toward the attacker.
- Close to "Zero Distance" as you complete the parry.
- Swing the A-Frame back toward the attacker's face and hit him with the sides of your fists (Hammerblows) or your forearms.

BEAT PARRY

This method of parrying requires more speed and strength but is vital for defense against knives.

- As a knife is thrust toward you, evade backward while at the same time striking down at the attacker's wrist or forearm with a Hammerblow.
- A hard downward shot to a thrust should drop the attacker's arm downward in a less dangerous angle.
- As you parry simultaneously hit with the other hand.
- NEVER kick while defending against a knife.
- To practice this your training partner should jab at your stomach with a Nerf® Bat or pool noodle with her fastest hand while holding a padded target in the other.
- Your training partner should hold the target up and out at head level but away from her face.

THE ABCs OF SELF-DEFENSE KICKING

There are dozens of basic kicks and hundreds of variations. In this section you'll learn the ABCs of kicking as well as the practical step-by-step method of delivering a number of reliable and effective Self-defense kicks. To pick the best one for the job, consider these basic rules-of-thumb:

- **KICK LOW.** High kicks are for the movies. They are weaker than medium or low kicks, more difficult to do, they leave you vulnerable, they are slower and they are more easily spotted and blocked.
- **KICK FAST.** Slow kicks miss.
- **KICK HARD.** You may only get one chance, make the most of it.
- **USE POWER WISELY.** Don't put all your power into a kick until you are just about to hit the target...and then pack it all in. Conserve power for hitting the target, not for moving through the air. The power of a kick is the combination of your weight and the speed at which you deliver the kick. You have little control over your weight. Thus the only thing you can control to increase the power of your kick, is the speed at which it is delivered. Tension in your leg during the kick will rob you of speed, thus decreasing the ultimate power you deliver on impact. To practice this, visualize your leg as a whip that is snapped out at the target. Only at the last moment is the whip pulled tight, delivering its full force.
- **KEEP YOUR LEG LOOSE.** Throughout the kick you want your leg to be as loose and relaxed as possible. Only at the point of impact should you tense the muscles, exerting all your energy.
- Thus for most kicking techniques, visualize your leg as a whip that is snapped out at the target. Only at the last moment is the whip pulled tight, delivering its full force.
- **KEEP YOUR LEG BENT.** Even at the full extension of a kick your knee should be slightly bent. This aligns the muscles more efficiently and reduces stress from impact. A straight leg is fragile; a bent leg is strong.
- **KICK OFTEN.** Almost nobody will be stopped with a single kick, or even two or three; give him the works. This is also important since you can't always trust that your first kick will hit the target just right.
- **KEEP KICKING (and hitting)** until he is down for the count.
- **BE ACCURATE.** The tendency, especially under stress, is to randomly throw the leg at the target. This is okay provided the target is there to be hit. However, most targets are not stationary. They will be moving as you move, so practice your aiming drills at home so that in defense you'll hit exactly what you want.
- **AIM for what will stop someone.** A man who is really mad, stoned or drunk may be able to wade through a kick to the groin; but nobody walks away from a broken leg.
- **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** Don't try to impress anyone, including yourself, just win. Remember the Golden Rule of Self-defense : Fancy is fatal; simple is safe.
- **WHEN IN DOUBT, KICK HIM AGAIN.** Never assume he's had enough -make sure!

- **BE PRACTICAL.** Use what you can use right now. Don't worry about changing angle to use your favorite kick: use the one you are in position to use at the moment.
- **FAKE HIM OUT.** Use your hands to fight and/or distract the opponent while kicking.
- **DON'T TELEGRAPH.** Don't advertise your techniques...move smoothly, efficiently and very fast.
- **OVERWHELM THE ATTACKER.** The idea is to distract him while fighting, in order to seize tactical control of the fight. So, let him cope with hands, feet, Surrogate Weapons, yelling -anything and everything which might confuse him, distract him and keep him so busy trying not to get hurt that he doesn't have time to hurt you.
- **KICKING IS EASY.** Most kicks are simply the straightening out of your leg. Thus the kick comes from your knee. Your knee should always point towards your target. Your kick must stop when your knee is 4/5ths of the way straight (see illustration). Never straighten your leg completely while kicking.
- **ALIGN YOUR BODY in a Straight Line.** At the point of impact, you want to have your kicking leg in alignment with the target. Imagine your kick being the line connecting the two points of your body and the target area. You want this to be the shortest distance, that of a straight line.

Two reasons exist for aligning your body in a straight line. First, you want to use more than just your leg for the kick. A successful kick will include hip rotation and upper body balance. If these are not properly aligned with the target, you will lose energy. Falling off balance at the end of this kick normally manifests this. Some of the energy that could have been channeled into the kick is lost by you trying to maintain your balance at the end of the kick. When you kick, you will only have one leg to stand on, so to speak. Shifts of weight, even subtle, will be exaggerated. Thus it is important to maintain good balance over the supporting leg. This minimizes the likelihood of needing to expend energy controlling your balance. More energy is devoted to where it should be the target of your kick.

Second, when you hit an object with your kick you are transferring energy through your body, out your leg, and into the target. If you are not aligned, there is likelihood that some of that energy will ricochet back at you via recoil. You will lose maximum power by not having proper alignment. Part of this includes have the largest possible base as your support.

- **NEVER 'TELEGRAPH' YOUR KICK.** Part of a successful application of a kicking technique is to limit the reaction your opponent has to avoid or block the technique. Don't twitch your hip or shoulder before kicking, and try not to take a step with your standing leg before kicking....it is the clearest sign of an incoming kick.

STRIKING AREAS OF THE FOOT

The foot has five distinct striking areas. Each area is suited for different targets and different types of kicks. Each has different abilities to transfer the energy created by your kick into the target. Each also has different abilities to absorb contact with the target area.

- BALL OF THE FOOT: The ball of the foot is the area of the bottom of the foot, right beneath the area where the toes join the rest of the foot. Due to this area's relatively soft nature, targets this area should aim for should be soft areas of your opponent's body. Targets include, the groin and stomach region. You can kick higher, but as you do, you will more than likely not hit with the ball of the foot. The ball of the foot tends to be used in vertical kicks. However, this type of kick will not penetrate the chest. Instead, it will slide along the surface. It will impact, but not with maximum effect.

Kicks using the ball of the foot include the snap kick (both front and back legs). Make sure you curl your toes backwards, thus fully exposing the ball of the foot. The alternative is to jam and possibly break the toes. Kicks using the ball of the foot as the impact area tend to be very linear in nature. The force of the kick extends nearly straight out in an alignment from the knee.

- HEEL OF THE FOOT: The heel of the foot has two different striking areas. One is the bottom of the foot. The other is the back of the heel. Both areas are extremely hard and are effective when used in a kick. Almost any target on your opponent is vulnerable to a kick using this area. Kicks utilizing this striking area include: the Stamp kick which uses the bottom portion of the heel; and the Deer kick which uses the back portion of the heel.

Because of the relatively hard nature of this area of the foot, this part can be used against almost any target area, with equally good results. This area of the foot is relatively stable, with the only real motion coming at the ankle. The ankle has a relatively limited range of motion. Thus kickback is significantly, if not totally eliminated.

- TOP OF THE INSTEP: The top of the instep is the area on the top portion of the foot, between the toes and the ankle. This area is somewhat hard and bony. However, this area should only be used against soft and medium hard areas. There are many bones in this area of the foot. Also, there is not a lot of muscle or fat tissue to protect the bone. The toes should be pointing straight away from the leg (just the opposite of the ball of the foot). An example of a kick that uses this area is the Roundhouse kick.

Potential targets include the mid-section of the body (when used with a round house). Also coming up between the legs, you can target the groin with a Snap kick.

- OUTSIDE EDGE OF THE FOOT: The outside edge of the foot is the area from just below the little toe to the base of the foot. This area is sometimes called the knife-edge of the foot. There are definite similarities with the knife hand of the hand. This area is hard and can be used against almost every striking area. Typical kicks include: the Side Thrust and Side Snap kicks.

Of all the kicks, the knife-edge has the smallest striking area. Because of the small striking area, you will get maximum energy transference using this kick.

- INSIDE EDGE OF THE FOOT: The inside edge of the foot is commonly known as the arch of the foot. This is the area below the toes up to the ankle. It is not quite as hard as the outside edge because of the bones in this area and the natural inward curve of this part of the foot. Kicks that use this area include the Inside Sweep kick.

THE BEST KICKS FOR SELF-DEFENSE

- **FRONT SNAP KICK:** a rapid upward kick using toes, instep, ball-of-the-foot or shin to attack the groin. In all its forms, this is one of the most widely used and versatile kick. To use the Front Snap:
 - Shift your weight onto your non-kicking leg, making sure to keep your knee bent and your weight shifted toward the front of your foot.
 - Raise the knee of the kicking leg to about chest height. This is called “chambering” your kick. The higher you raise your knee the easier and better you’ll kick.
 - Whip your foot toward the target in an upward snapping motion, like a door swinging on a well-oiled hinge.
 - Strike under the target with your instep (if in bare feet), or with the toe (if wearing shoes). If you are really close you can use your shin to deliver the kick; or if further away you can pull your toes all the way back and hit with your heel (especially if wearing extended heels).
 - Immediately recoil your leg. This is called re-chambering.
 - If you can, follow the kick with another just like it or use a number of quick, hard hand strikes.
 - The best target is the groin, but if you are wearing shoes with a sturdy toe you can kick the shin or under the knee-cap. From behind you can kick the calf muscles or the backs of the thigh.
 - If the opponent is bent over double, and you have the flexibility, you can kick him in the face.
 - When training, use a sturdy target. Whereas home-made targets are okay for hand strikes, a more durable commercial target is often required for the heavier demands of kick training.
 - For practice, your training partner should hold the target as shown.
- **FRONT THRUST KICK:** a powerful pushing kick which uses the ball-of-the-foot, flat or heel against any vertical target, such as groin, thigh or hip. The intention is to push away as much as to injure. This is another widely-used kick, and is excellent for stopping an attacker literally in his tracks.
 - The set-up is the same as the front snap up to the point where you raise your knee.
 - Tilt your foot back so that you can hit either with the ball of your foot (the easiest and fastest version) or the heel).
 - Instead of snapping your foot upward, thrust it out from the chambered position, driving the ball of the foot directly into the target as if you were going to push it away with your foot.
 - The faster you kick, the harder you’ll hit. A fast kick hits rather than shoves.

- The primary target is the groin, but kicks to the knee, thigh or hip can jolt, injure or over-balance your opponent.
 - If a man closes his legs to avoid an upward kick to the crotch, he is still vulnerable to the Front Thrust since when the legs are closed the testicles are in front of the thighs, not between them.
 - In practice, it's important to work on accuracy (at low power) with a training partner holding small targets that she can move around to make you constantly change angle and distance.
 - When training, a durable commercial target is often required for the heavier demands of kick training.
 - For practice, your training partner should hold the target as shown.
- SIDE THRUST KICK: a kick using the flat foot, or flat-of-heel primarily to attack the leg. This kick can easily break the knee, force the knee to bend, rupture the muscles of calf or thigh, smash the bones in the ankle or foot, and shove an opponent back. This is an exceptionally versatile and powerful kick. Some martial arts teach a version of this that uses the tilted edge, or blade, of the foot; but this version of the kick requires extremely strong ankle muscles and tendons. Anyone who does not have exceptional leg strength risks a broken or sprained ankle when using the edge-foot side thrust.
- Stand at a right angle to the target with the knee of your standing leg bent slightly and standing foot turned further away as shown:
 - Chamber your leg by raising the knee to above the level of your own hips.
 - Thrust outward and down toward the attacker's knee, striking the joint with the flat of your heel.
 - Aim the kick so that it hits through the target rather than at the surface. It takes depth of penetration in order to damage a joint as large and strong as the knee.
 - Rechamber your kick as soon as you have reached 5/6ths extension of the leg. Do not straighten your knee.\
 - The side thrust will injure the knee from almost any angle. Straight on and slightly above the kneecap can easily break the joint; hitting to either side can tear the knee; hitting from behind will buckle the leg. All of this is useful in defense.
 - Practice the kick against a firm but yielding target. Never practice kicks against an immovable or dense target as this can injure your knee.
 - For practice, your training partner should hold the target as shown.
- SIDE SNAP KICK: a lighter and faster (but less damaging) version of the Side Thrust, this kick is used for expediency's sake. The target is most often the kneecap, and can sprain, jam or crack the cartilage.
- The basic delivery is the same as the Side Thrust, but the kick is more like a stamp than a thrust.
 - Hit with the flat of the heel and rechamber your leg immediately.

- When practicing, imagine that what you are kicking is red hot: you must hit and pull away instantly to avoid being burned.
 - Concentrate on speed and accuracy rather than power.
 - Never straighten your leg while kicking, whether you are hitting a target or practicing in empty air. This is very bad for the knee.
 - For practice, your training partner should hold the target as shown.
- KNEE RAISE: a classic of Self-defense , the knee is excellent for inflicting great pain and damage to the groin. Used in conjunction with a pull to bring the head down, this is an excellent attack to the face. From behind, a hair pull will allow the defending to kick the attacker in the spine, which can cause crippling injury.
- Stand as you would for the Front Snap Kick, but much closer to the target.
 - Reach out with one or both hands and pull the attacker toward you. If you pull his hair it will bend him over facedown to the kick; if you pull his shoulders it will move your bodies together close enough for a kick to the groin.
 - Aim upward through the target --never aim for the surface as this makes for too shallow and light a kick, and one that is easily evaded.
 - Pull the attacker toward you as you kick.
 - Yell or exhale forcefully as you kick to maximize your kicking power.
 - In training, your partner should a sturdy target as shown.
- STAMP: a useful kick from any angle or proximity, the stamp uses the flat of the heel, edge of the foot, ball of the foot or raised heel of a shoe to smash the toes or instep. A caution: when stamping, always *keep the legs well bent* to accommodate the shock of impact.
- THE REAR STAMP is used when the attacker is behind you.
 - Raise your knee and swing the EDGE of your foot back against his shin. (The horizontal line of your foot is excellent for locating the vertical line of his leg while kicking backward.)
 - Press the edge of your foot against his leg and scrape downward very sharply until your heel lands on the top of his foot.
 - Grind your heel into his instep. This is also called the Scrape and Stamp, for obvious reasons.
 - THE EVASIVE STAMP is done while ducking or dodging away from a grab or hit.
 - Lean back and down under the reach of the attacker's arm, but don't take an evasive step.
 - As you lean away, raise the foot closest to him and stamp sharply down on his toes or instep.
 - FORWARD STAMP, also known as the Lunge Stamp, is used when you are face-to-face with the attacker. As he makes his

move, or if he has already grabbed you, stamp sharply down onto his toes or instep with your heel or the ball of your foot.

- BIG HEEL STAMP is used mostly as a finish off. It is more powerful than the other stamp variations, but requires more visible body movement. This is why it's saved for a point in the fight where the attacker is less likely to do anything to evade or block it.
 - Raise your knee very high while maintaining good balance on your standing leg.
 - Bring your heel sharply down on your fallen attacker, aiming for soft tissue or light bones (ribs, kidneys, knee or ankle joints, etc.) Avoid heavily muscled areas such as the shoulders or thicker bones such as the hips or skull.
 - Make sure your standing leg stays very bent throughout. Never do a stamp with either knee straight. The shock will damage your knees.
 - For practice, stamp quickly and very lightly on a target made from paper, cloth or rubber. You can attach it to a string or long handle and have your training partner move it in and out quickly to provide you with a challenge. Remember the safety rule about keeping your knees bent, even when training with light low-power stamps.
- ROUNDHOUSE: a lateral snapping kick using toes, instep, ball-of-the-foot or shin to attack calf, knee, thigh, groin or stomach. The Roundhouse can also be used to sweep an opponent's leg and knock him down.
- Stand on one leg as you would for a Side Thrust, but closer to the target. The knee or groin are the most useful targets.
 - On the leg closest to the attacker, raise your knee to a chambered position above the level of your own waist.
 - Angle your lower leg so that it is at a 45° angle as shown.
 - Whip your leg outward so that your foot hits the target with a snap. Do not straighten your leg. The kicking leg should never be more than 5/6ths straightened.
 - Immediately rechamber your leg.
 - When kicking to the back of the knee, use your instep or lower shin.
 - When kicking to the groin, use your instep, ball of the foot, or toes (if wearing shoes).
 - Do not kick hard bony areas like the front of the knee or shin.
 - Don't kick above the waist.
 - For training, have your partner hold a light target as shown.
 - When practicing harder kicks, you'll need to use a sturdier commercial target and it should be held as shown.

- DEER KICK: a rear upward snapping kick, using the back-of-the-heel or flat of the foot to rise sharply upward while an opponent is standing close behind. This kick is useful in a variety of attacks involving holds such as chokes and bear-hugs from behind, hammerlocks, half-nelsons, rear hair pulls, and even in situations where the attacker has grabbed and lifted the defender from behind.
 - The Deer Kick gets its name from the upward snapping motion of a deer's hooves as it bolts away.
 - The kick is generally used from rear holds, such as the Bear Hug or Rear Wrapping Choke.
 - Keep your standing leg slightly bent and let it bear all of your body weight. NOTE: If the attacker is holding you from behind he will also be bearing some or all of your body weight, which makes the Deer Kick even more effective.
 - Bring your heel sharply upward behind you. Aim for a spot about three to five inches behind the middle of your belt line.
 - Don't kick straight up and back since in a rear grab the attacker's groin is on a line with your spine, which is easily reachable by aiming toward the middle of your belt line.
 - If you are having trouble reaching...or if the attacker is leaning back to keep his groin out of kicking range, bent as far forward at the waist as the hold will allow, tilt your hips backward and swing your foot up and further back. That usually does the trick.
 - One way to trick an attacker into positioning himself for a perfect deer kick is to try and stamp on his feet. Generally the attacker will spread his feet very wide, which lowers his pelvis making the groin a much easier target.
 - If the attacker picks you up, swing your leg forward about ten or twenty inches and then do the Deer Kick. This gives you the momentum and power to kick with great effect.
 - A Deer Kick can also be used in much the same way as the Evasive Stamp by dodging away from a hit while bringing the heel closest to the attacker up sharply into his groin.
- KNEE DROP: a combative kneel in which the body drops knee (or knees) first onto an opponent who has already been taken down. Used primarily as a finish-off technique, the Knee Drop can attack the head, neck, face, chest, ribs, kidney's, groin and other sensitive spots.
 - During a Takedown you should try to control the attacker's angle of fall so that he lands at your feet. The section on Takedowns for Self-defense will explain how this can be done.
 - Once the attacker is down, drop down knee-first onto his ribs, chest, stomach or back.
 - Pivot your knee as it hits to maximize the effect.
 - Use the other leg as a stabilizer to maintain balance.

- If the attacker is still grappling with you and tries to pull you down as he falls, drop dead-weight with one or both knees onto the softest part of him that is within reach.
 - Avoid heavily muscled areas such as the shoulders or dense bone such as the hips.
 - To practice the Knee Drop, stack a couple of fluffy pillows and while leaning one hand on a wall or chair or balance, drop knee-first onto them.
- **HELPING HAND:** a specific type of stamp wherein the arm of a downed opponent is pulled upward (perpendicular to the ground) as the heel is smashed down either on the mastoid process (on the side of the neck below the ear), or on the collarbone. This is generally used as a finish-off kick.
- The Helping Hand is used at the end of a Takedown and the starting position is the same as that for the Knee Drop.
 - Holding onto the attacker's arm, as shown, lift your leg into a high chambered position.
 - Smash downward with the flat of your heel while pulling up on his arm or wrist.
 - Exhale or yell while you stamp.
 - Aim for the temple, side of the neck, ear or any other flat surface. Avoid the cheekbones, shoulders or hips.
- **CROSS THRUST:** an inverted Side Thrust, used to attack the knee from extremely close quarters, and to redirect a lunging opponent.
- When grabbed, held, or confronted in a way that invades your personal zone, you can easily shift your weight onto one leg and raise the other in a close chamber.
 - Turn your knee to the outside so that your foot turns with the inner arch toward the attacker.
 - Thrust out and down, making contact either with your inner arch or the flat of your heel.
 - The ideal target is just above the knee joint.
 - Keep your knee bent throughout the kick.
 - To practice this kick, use a Nerf® Bat or pool noodle held at an angle so that one end lightly touches the floor. Use tape or a marker to indicate where the "knee" would be. Have your training partner hold it so that you can kick without touching her.
 - Practice kicks should be quick and light. Don't over kick and don't straighten your leg.
- **V-KICK:** a two-foot kick, useful when sitting or lying down. Delivered with both heels touching, and the feet connected side of heel to arch (forming a Y). Targets include ankle, knee, groin, throat, etc.

- When the attacker rushes at you, lean back so that your weight is supported in one elbow.
 - As he gets close, chamber your legs and bring your feet together so that they form a Vee.
 - Kick out at the attacker's knee, crotch or throat (depending on how close he is by the time you are ready to launch the kick).
 - Keep your knees bent throughout the kick.
 - For extra force, yell or blow out a big chestful of air.
 - For practice have your training partner hold a commercial kick shield as shown. She should advance toward you, bracing herself for each kick.
 - Practice kicks should be light and fast. Concentrate on speed, accuracy and proper placement of your feet rather than power.
- BACK KICK: a mule-kick using a heel or the flat of the foot, stamping backward into the opponent's leg, groin or stomach. Useful when dodging punches, pressed up against a wall or off-balance.
- Like the Deer Kick, the Back Kick is useful when the attacker is behind you, or when you are turning away from him to dodge a blow or evade a grab.
 - To deliver the kick, chamber your leg by drawing your knee toward your chest.
 - Angle your foot so that the toes are pointed downward and the heel is pointed toward the ceiling.
 - Kick sharply backward so that you hit with the flat of your heel.
 - Never straighten your leg.
 - Rechamber immediately after the kick has landed.
 - To practice, have your training partner hold the target the same way she would for a Front Thrust Kick.
- KICK ASSISTS: using a kick and a pull, push or hit to overbalance an attacker. A good example would be kicking to the back to the knee while pulling on the hair; or stamping on the foot while striking to the side of the head.
- Any kick may be used to "assist" another technique.
 - The key is to kick at the same time as you strike with your hand or arm; or at the same time you strike with a Surrogate or Intended Weapon.
- REVERSE KICKS: employing a rapid and very tight 180° spin in order to bring the back leg (the one furthest from the attacker) into immediate play. This is useful when being pulled by the wrist or when dodging to evade a punch.
- The easiest Reverse Kick is the Reverse Roundhouse.
 - Raise yourself onto the ball of your non-kicking leg, which will be the leg closest to the attacker.

- As you raise your kicking leg into the chambered position, swing your hips around so that you pivot toward the attacker.
 - As your kicking leg swivels around on the pivot, snap out with it, aiming your toe (if wearing shoes), instep, or ball of the foot at his crotch.
 - An alternative is to swing around and kick him behind the knee with your shin.
 - To practice, have your training partner hold the target as shown. To judge the correct angle, position yourself so that you cannot see the flat surface of the bag. Done right, your stomach and the flat surface will be on a line, facing the same way.
 - To judge distance in practice, reach out and lay your hand lightly on the bag. If you can easily reach the target without completely straightening your arm, then you're close enough.
 - Make sure you lift your heel for your pivot; and keep both knees bent.
 - Yell or exhale forcefully with each hit.
- KICK-OVERS: a tactical maneuver using a falling or rolling motion of the body while pulling the opponent to the ground. Kick-overs force the opponent over the defender's body to prevent the attacker from landing atop the defender, and also to increase the damaging force with which the attacker is smashed into the ground.
- If you are being rushed or forced to the ground, you can easily turn the tables on the attacker and use that maneuver against him.
 - When being pushed backward or down, grab the attacker with both hands.
 - Sit down and lean back. This will jerk the attacker forward off balance.
 - As you lean back, bring up one foot into his crotch or stomach. You can either use a Front Snap under the groin, or a Front Thrust against the front of the pelvis. Either way it will act as a spoke to lift his body.
 - As you roll back the attacker will fall over you and crash to the ground beyond. Unless he knows how to do a very advanced gymnastic roll, the impact will injure or stun him.
 - Counter-attack immediately.
 - This can only be practiced with a professionally training Self-defense instructor or one of her/his assistants.

Fancy kicks, such as jumping, spinning, or advanced combination kicks are best saved for martial arts practice and competition. They are generally too difficult and time-consuming for the average person to learn, and they are generally inappropriate for street use. Self-defense kicks are simple, direct, very fast and as hard as possible. No other adornments are useful.

STRIKING

Most of the rules of simplicity and directness that apply to kicking also apply to striking. Here are some addenda:

- MOVE FAST. Slow strikes are useless.
- DON'T BE OBVIOUS. Fake the guy out and then hit him by surprise.
- DON'T MUSCLE HIM. Hit areas that are always vulnerable: nose, eyes, groin, ears, etc.
- HIT FOR EFFECT: hitting the eyes does more good than splitting the lip.
- DO MORE THAN YOU HAVE TO. When in doubt, hit him five more times. Then kick him for good measure.
- DON'T PUNCH. Punches are weak and you can do more damage to yourself than to him. Use a palm, fingers, nails or the edge of your hand. It takes an extremely strong person to throw a useful punch; and besides, they don't do as much damage as fingertips or palms.
- KEEP YOUR ELBOWS BENT. Straightening your arm while striking weakens the blow and can injure the tendons of the elbow joint. A bent arm is far more powerful.

Here are some common hand strikes:

- PALM HEEL: a spectacularly powerful and useful strike, using the bone and muscle of the heel of the hand to attack the nose, chin, jaw, cheek, temple, eyebrow, eye socket, forehead, base of skull and other targets.
 - Curl your fingers back to expose the heel of the palm.
 - Hit either with a snap or a thrust.
 - The harder you hit the more of your body you should put into the blow. Bending both knees and pushing with the back foot helps double or triple the force of this blow.
 - For practice, any moderate size padded item will serve as a target.
- HAMMERBLOW: a fist technique using the bunched muscles on the side of a tightly closed hand to pound at the nose, lips, brow and other fragile targets.
 - If your nails are short, fold your hand into a proper fist. If you don't know how, ask someone trained in martial arts.
Hit the target the way you would pound on a door: quick, repeated overhand blows.
 - Short chopping shots to the nose or lips are also good.
 - You can hit downward to the groin from several different angles, including when the attacker is behind you.
 - Practice the blow by hitting padded targets from a variety of angles.
 - Practice both hands, singly and together.
- EDGE-HAND: a precise chop used to attack the nose, throat, wrist, lips or other sensitive spots.

- Make sure you keep your primary knuckles straight. The secondary and tertiary knuckles may bend without affecting the blow.
 - Aim for the bridge of the nose or the Adam's apple for the quickest and surest effect.
 - The Edge-Hand can also be used to the groin.
 - For practice, place a thin piece of tape on your target so that you have to aim more precisely. This increases overall skill very quickly.
- SECONDARY KNUCKLE PUNCH: sometimes known as Leopard's Paw or Flat Fist, this strike uses the stiffened second set of knuckles to attack the nose, eyes, and throat.
 - This is a much safer knuckle punch than a standard fist in that it doesn't endanger the wrist.
 - Bend the secondary knuckles and tighten the hand so that it matches the shape shown here.
 - Deliver a short-range, snapping knuckle blow to the nose or throat of the attacker. These are the two best targets for this blow.
 - Do not hit any bony areas. Don't bother hitting heavily muscled areas, as the blow is not powerful enough to penetrate.
 - Practice by hitting a softly padded target.
- FINGER JAB: a poke with one or more fingers to soft areas such as nose, eyes, throat, ears and nerve centers.
 - Finger jabs require precision but need little strength to make them effective.
 - Curl your fingers slightly and stiffen them for strength.
 - Jab at the eyes, the side of the nose or the throat for the best effect.
 - Practice by hitting very soft targets, such as pillows.
- TIGER CLAW: a raking technique wherein the hand is held curled and stiff, as if you were holding a grapefruit, and used to claw across the face, attacking the eyebrow, eyes, nose and lips all at the same time.
 - Shape your hand as if you are holding a grapefruit. Now tense your fingers to lock them into this position.
 - By thrusting forward you can jab with the fingers at the same time as you hit with the heel of your palm.
 - By raking sideways, you can injure the eyebrows, eyes, nose and lips simultaneously.
 - Don't rake downward as you most likely will only scratch the brow and the cheeks and do no real damage.
 - Practice by striking into and sideways as a soft pillow.
- THUMB GOUGE: a ripping or poking technique using a curled and stiffened thumb tip.

- Curl your thumb and stiffen it as shown.
 - Thrust your hand forward and slightly off-center so that most of your hand misses the attacker's head but the thumbs jab at the eyes.
 - As an alternative, box the ears with one or both cupped palms, but keep your thumbs curled so they jab at the eyes at the same time.
 - Practice this with a small round pillow or a ball of soft foam.
- THUMB NAIL: a precise attack to pressure sensitive areas such as the lips, eyebrows, nose and fingernail beds.
 - Extend one thumbnail out with the thumb supported by the curled index finger.
 - Press the nail into a pressure point such as those shown here.
 - Practice by making indents onto the skin of an orange, grapefruit or uncooked potato.
- TIGER MOUTH: a grabbing/squeezing/pushing technique using a hand position similar to that used while holding a small cup. The target is the trachea/carotid arteries.
 - Hold your hand open and make as wide a Vee as you can between your thumb and index finger.
 - Curl all of your fingers slightly.
 - Strike to the throat by aiming with the side of the primary index finger knuckle.
 - As you hit, let the wrist bend so the heel of your palm strikes a split second later.
 - Practice by striking and simultaneously grabbing a length of pool noodle or Nerf® Bat.
- SLAP: a deceptively powerful technique using massive hip and shoulder torsion to generate whiplike force in an open handed-blow.
 - The combative slap differs significantly from an ordinary slap in that your fingers are pointed upward rather than outward. This changes the primary point of contact from the flats of your outstretched fingers to the outside edge of the flat of your palm.
 - Strike with a big swing of your arm.
 - Bend your knees and turn your waist to put more body weight behind the blow.
 - Whereas an ordinary slap with sting, the combative slap can easily cause whiplash because it jerks the chin hard enough to cause a rapid rotation of the head on the neck.
 - Practice by slapping and handheld target.
- FOREARM SMASH: a sweeping/chopping blow using any bony section of the lower arm. Targets include the face, throat, groin and ears.

- Either make a fist or stiffen your hand open and flat.
 - Step into the attacker and just off-center; bring your arm up so that your forearm strikes the attacker either across the throat, mouth, nose or eyes.
 - Keep your arm curled and locked as you hit.
 - Step deep and turn your waist and hit with as much force as you can muster.
 - Practice by hitting a target held in both of your training partner's hands.
- ELBOW: an obviously powerful technique using the knob of bone of the elbow to attack any soft or medium-soft target on the body.
- Elbows can be used forward, backward, upward and downward. Of these upward is the riskiest.
 - To strike forward, make a fist and step into the attacker and just off-center.
 - Rotate your hips forward so that the hip on the side of the striking elbow turns sharply toward the attacker.
 - Grab or pull with your other hand while striking to maximize the effect.
 - Yell or blow out a chestful of air with great force as you hit.
 - Practice against a very sturdy target held in both of your training partner's hands.
- SLAP CLAW: a hand, loose slap of the hand that immediately clutches into a tight claw. This is excellent for the groin, especially when attacked from behind.
- The blow can use used either facing the attacker or when he is behind you.
 - Keep your hand open, fingers wide and curled.
 - Swing your arm sharply as you hit, remembering to keep your elbow bent and locked.
 - The first point of contact should be the heel of your palm, but as soon as you hit make a fist so that you catch the attacker's testicles in your hand.
 - Squeeze and twist as forcefully as possible.
 - Practice by having your training partner hold a thick pillow against a wall or closed door.
- FINGERTIP FLICK: using one or more fingers for a fast whiplike tap to the groin, eyes, nose, etc.
- This blow is delivered using the same basic wrist flick you'd use to shake peanut butter off of your fingers. It's also similar to the way a Frisbee is thrown.

- While keeping your wrist bent and your hand limp whip your arm toward the attacker's face.
 - As your wrist gets to within eight inches of the target snap your index and forefingers out.
 - Strike with the inside edge of your extended forefinger. Your index finger will act like a brace to make the blow stronger.
 - Aim for the eyes, the side of the nose, the lips, the throat or the groin.
 - This blow is designed for high speed, not for power.
 - To practice, have your training partner hold up a sheet of paper, making sure she keeps it well away from her face.
 - Try to tear the paper with your flick. If you can easily tear a single sheet, try it with thicker paper or multiple sheets.
 - Do not try this with cardboard as it may bruise your fingers during repeated practice.
- CUTTING PALM: a devastating and very fast palm strike which resembles a slap, but the hand is angled with the fingers pointed up.
- Deliver the blow like a Palm Heel strike, aiming for the lower outside edge of the jawline.
 - Hold your hand so that the fingers are pointed upward.
 - As the heel of the palm hits, turn your hand on the wrist so that you are now pushing with the edge of your hand.
 - As soon as you start to rotate the hand, withdraw it sharply in a circular arc.
 - The motion of the arm resembles a 'fish-hook' or a tear drop. (DIAGRAM)
 - This technique is excellent for spraining the neck.
 - The power for this blow comes from bending the knees and rotating the waist very quickly as you hit.
 - Practice by hitting a sturdy target that has a restraining strap to hold it onto your training partner's hand.

Other parts of the body which can be used include these:

- HIP: butting; jamming; lifting.
- CHIN: pressing (against a choke); applying pressure.
- SPITTING: disgusting, but useful as a distraction.
- TEETH: biting; pinching, holding. However, try not to break the skin. With AIDS and other communicable diseases out there, you don't want to increase your own risk. Biting through layers of clothing to cause a painful pinch is the best bet.
- BUTTOCKS: Sitting sharply and heavily on an opponent's ribs, the attacker's straightened knee, stomach, etc.

Some Do's and Don'ts About Kicking and Striking

- NEVER STRAIGHTEN YOUR ARM OR LEG COMPLETELY. Limbs are brittle and weaker when straight. Always keep about a 15% bend in all limbs.
- NEVER MAKE DIRECT EYE CONTACT. Watch his chest or biceps, but don't lock eyes with him. He can use his gaze to intimidate or distract you. Direct eye contact can provoke an attack.
- NEVER ASSUME AN OBVIOUS FIGHTING STANCE. Stances, such as a boxing or karate postures look silly, and only demonstrate to the attacker that you aren't really very good at fighting. Good fighters try to look natural, so that when they fight, it comes as a complete -and unpleasant- surprise. It is ridiculous to alert the opponent to the fact that you are prepared to fight: it won't deter him, and it will only rob you of the element of surprise. The Basic Defense Posture shown in section...
- Never advertise your skill. Likewise, never tell him what you are going to do. Let him find out the hard way. Remember: surprise is a key element in Self-defense . One of the worst goofs you can make is to announce that you know Self-defense /martial arts. This is often interpreted as a challenge, and it never works. It ruins your element of surprise.
- Don't try to out-punch a stronger opponent. Use deception, kicks, anything but what he appears to be good at. In order to overcome superior strength, size, speed, or skill, the defender must be more devious.
- Don't think one hit is enough. If you really have to fight, then disable the assailant completely. Too many people get hurt assuming that the opponent was injured after the first punch. Make sure.
- Don't hang around after a fight. Get out of there. Seek professional Aid (police, security, etc.), and make sure you are not physically hurt. You cannot be sure if the attacker is alone, or that no one else will come along.
- Remember the golden rule of Self-defense : Fancy is fatal; simple is safe.

THROWS AND TAKEDOWNS

If the attacker is on his feet, he is still a threat. Even if he's woozy or injured, if he is able to stand, he is still potentially able to continue the aggression. All good Self-defense fights end with the attacker down on the ground.

Taking an opponent down is not difficult --it's really a simple matter of leverage. And in terms of Self-defense, it's a matter of leverage plus sufficient damage to prevent the attacker from regaining his balance. Takedowns are best attempted after you've delivered a great number of damaging blows.

The takedown is accomplished by establishing or exploiting a lever. A lever is composed of two parts: the fulcrum and the lever bar. Force is applied to the lever bar in order to turn the lever and lift (or otherwise shift) mass.

There are a few different kinds of grappling skills:

- TAKEDOWN: This is the generic form of grappling skill. Takedowns do not use much muscle, relying almost entirely on leverage and a little speed. In a Takedown the attacker

is pushed against a fulcrum and then induced to turn over or around it, usually by violent force such as a hit. Anyone can accomplish the basic Takedowns such as the Wheel.

- **THROW**: This is a much more difficult and advanced grappling technique that requires that you tilt the attacker against a fulcrum and then lift his weight over it, the motion being aided by momentum. Throws, per se, are not generally recommended for Self-defense.
- **PULLDOWN**: These are takedowns accomplished when you are already on the floor and the attacker bends down to grab you. Gravity is on your side since your center of gravity is lower than his, so most Pulldowns are as easy as grabbing and pulling, often using a little sideways body turnings for extra power and leverage. Pulldowns are also called Rollovers.
- **SACRIFICE PULLDOWN**: These are speed and gravity based throws that are very easy to do because the attacker provides half the power and gravity does the rest. The “sacrifice” referred to here is that of you voluntarily falling to the ground, and the pulldown happens as you land. By jerking on the attacker’s clothing or, preferably, his head, it’s easy to pitch him forward; the sudden dead-weight drop of your body provides excellent impetus, and before he can recover his balance he is falling over you and down to the floor. These throws are often very damaging to the attacker. NOTE: These throws are best used by women who have learned how to fall safely by taking a Self-defense course. See the following section for tips on safe falling skills.
- **COUNTER-THROWS**: If the attacker trips you or attempts to take you down, you can turn the tables on him by sacrificing (making yourself fall) and pulling on him very aggressively. This is very similar to the Sacrifice Pulldown except that the attacker initiates the throw and you use it against him.
- **REDIRECTS**: These are throws that break the “beat-him-up-first” rule of the Opponent Breakdown Method. In this type of technique the attacker comes at you in a rush, perhaps pushing you back toward a wall, or running at you in pursuit. Instead of fleeing, you turn toward him, grab him as he grabs you and then turn your body very quickly and sharply. The effect is like someone running at a revolving door --he goes flying around you and into the closest surface (wall, flight of stairs, traffic, etc.)
- **KNOCKDOWNS**: These are throws accomplished by hitting the attacker hard enough, or fast enough, so that his balance is lost. A knockdown does not guarantee a knockout, though, so you should continue to counter-attack just to make sure he has stopped his aggression..

In most confrontations, especially in rape attacks, there is a lot of grappling. This closeness can really work for the defender because close contact creates fulcrums. The simplest lever throw involves placing the leg behind the attacker’s leg, making contact at the heel, calf, knee or thigh. This contact point on the defender’s leg is the fulcrum. The attacker’s leg is the lever bar. By tilting the attacker toward the fulcrum, his mass can be overbalanced.

The power to do this comes from three sources:

- **TORSION**: The hip assembly can generate tremendous force, much more than is needed to accomplish a throw. The defender only needs to keep the knees bent and turn the waist sharply in the direction of the throw. A person of 100 lbs. can generate enough force through torsion to throw 600 lbs.

- IMPETUS: The attacker can be driven off-balance by delivering a series of blows. As the throw itself is being accomplished, the defender can hit the attacker in such a way as to make him fall toward the fulcrum. In this way, the attacker's own mass contributes to the power needed to execute the throw.
- GRAVITY: Once the attacker is actually turning over the fulcrum, gravity will seize his mass and jerk it sharply toward the floor.

It is important to remember not to try and take down an attacker who hasn't been injured first. Almost anyone can regain lost balance, and a person who is uninjured and attacking, will certainly fight to keep control of his body. An injured attacker has little to say about what happens to him, and is therefore more responsive and cooperative when a throw is attempted.

Also, when attempting to take someone down you have to spoil their balance. Balance breaking, as it's called, can be done in eight different directions, and often a takedown will require that you shove different parts of him in different balance-breaking directions at the same time. This sounds more complicated than it is, but let's take it a step at a time.

First let's explore how to break an attacker's balance.

BREAKING THE ATTACKER'S BALANCE

All takedowns have three basic phases:

- Taking the attacker off balance (usually by shoving him or hitting him)
- Setting your body to do the takedown (finding your own balance, bracing against the floor, turning or moving as the takedown requires)
- The execution of the takedown

Balance is controlled, and broken, in circular motions rather than a straight line. Balance can be broken in eight basic directions:

1. Forward: Pushing the attacker away from you
2. Rear: Pulling the attacker toward you
3. Left Side: tilting him to your left side like a steering wheel
4. Right Side: Ditto to the right
5. Left Forward Corner: Shoving and turning him toward your left outside corner.
6. Right Forward Corner: Ditto to the right
7. Left Rear Corner: Pulling and turning him as you pivot to your left rear corner
8. Right Rear Corner: Ditto to the right

Each of these directions indicated from your point of view (i.e. "your" left side, as opposed to the attacker's).

The balance break of each direction can be exaggerated by pushing down on the attacker or lifting up while turning. The turn of your waist is very important because the waist is your primary power source, much stronger than your arms alone, and it works in conjunction with your back and legs.

When you steer the attacker to a forward balance break you are not just pushing forward but lifting as well, and rocking him back onto his heels so that he can't maintain firm footing.

When jerking the attacker into your left rear balance break, you should yank down sharply with your left hand and lift with your right so that he is turned and tilted at the same time

Remember, gravity is the main power source in balance breaking. Torsion may start the ball rolling, but it is gravity that really does the job. The mechanics of each direction of balance breaking are designed to steer the attacker into the pull of gravity, at an angle and with such force that he can't maintain balance at all. The fact that you are hitting him at the same time makes it rather difficult for him to regain his balance.

SCIENCE 101: Before learning the techniques of balance breaking, it is important to bear in mind Newton's three laws of motion:

- 1) An object at rest tends to stay at rest and an object in motion tends to stay in motion, with the same speed and in the same direction, unless acted upon by an unbalanced force.
- 2) An object will only accelerate if there is net or unbalanced force acting upon it. The presence of an unbalanced force will accelerate an object -- changing its speed, its direction, or both speed and direction.
- 3) For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction.

Balance breaking teaches how to apply immediate unbalancing force, which allows you to use the attacker's own force against him. This is especially important when the attacker is strong enough or quick enough to make the first decisive move, which is almost always the case in attacks on women by men.

When breaking balance in a fight you are rarely going to have to start his weight moving from a dead stop. Which is good. Since the attacker is using his superior size and mass against you, you get to intercept it and steer it with one or more of the eight balance breaking skills. This is, as I mentioned earlier, aided by hitting him as often as you can.

PRACTICING BALANCE BREAKING WITH A PARTNER

To develop skill in balance breaking, two partners should begin by both you and your training partner hooking your right hands around the back of each other's necks (watch out for those fingernails!) and hooking your left hands into the crooks of each other's arms. From this position you can both practice the eight balance breaks with equal opportunity. Naturally you don't use exactly the same position during a defense --but you'll see modifications in the coming pages.

- Once in place, one of you should call the balance break direction to the other and the she will demonstrate it on you.
- Once you reach the end of the eight directions, it's the other person's turn.
- As you repeat the eight directions, mix up the order. It's important to know each one rather than follow a routine.
- If you have friends of different heights and weights, try the balance breaking skills on them.
- Understand that anyone can resist a simple balance break done by itself. This is why, in defense, you hit the person. With that in mind, remind your training partners to cooperate so you can practice.
- Another advanced drill combines or modifies balance breaking. In this exercise the person calling the techniques names two different balance breaking directions and you have to start one and immediately change into the other.

- Always turn your waist when breaking balance.
- Always exhale when breaking balance.
- If you lose your own balance, push off of the attacker to regain yours.

TAKEDOWNS FOR SELF-DEFENSE

Each of the following takedowns is explained briefly and then demonstrated in a Self-defense context. If you want to practice takedowns at home with a training partner, don't go any further than the beginning of the balance break as it's the fall that does a lot of the damage. Takedowns done all the way to the ground should only be done under supervision and with appropriate pads.

For convenience sake all takedowns will be described as if you are a Right Hander. Lefties need only do a little word replacement to have a guide suited to them.

- **THE LEG WHEEL:** This is the easiest and most useful takedown. Wheels are takedowns based on turning or knocking the attacker over an extended axle (your calf, knee, thigh, etc.). The easiest of all the wheels is the Calf Wheel, which works as follows:
 - If the attacker has grabbed you and pulled you toward him, grab him with your left hand...
 - ...sharply turn your right hip toward him...
 - ...step forward with your right leg and place it along the outside of his right leg. All this should be done while he is pulling you in.
 - As soon as the ball of your right foot touches the floor do the following movements simultaneously:
 - Bend both knees
 - Pull to your left rear corner with your left hand
 - Hit the attacker in the face or head with a Palm Heel, Cutting Palm or Hammerblow so that you are knocking him toward your left forward corner
 - Turn your waist sharply to your left.
 - Down he goes.
 - Once he's down, kick or stomp him --go for fragile areas like feet, ankles, knees, groin, kidneys, ribs, neck, face or ears.
- **KICK TRIP (REAP):** This takedown requires a bit more precision and is a better tool for those with good balance.
 - As you are being pulled in (or as you grab him and pull yourself in) step forward and to one side with your left foot. Try to step so that your toes are past his right heel.
 - Push your body forward by bending sharply at the waist, essentially hanging your upper body weight on the crook of his right arm.
 - Swing your right leg around behind his right.
 - Kick backward as hard as you can while continuing to lean your weight on his right arm.
 - Aim either for the space between his calves (a true reap) or kick him directly in the back of the calf muscles.
 - Shove forward, to the left and downward with both hands.
 - Kick him when he's down.

- **HOOK AND HIT:** Like the Wheel this is one of the easiest takedowns for anyone to do. Essentially it's a wheel without the sharp turn of the waist.
 - Put one your right leg behind the attacker's right leg.
 - Hit him in the face (nose, ear, mouth, eye socket or throat) as hard as you can, aiming the blow in the direction of whichever leg you've put behind him.
 - Hit repeatedly if once doesn't do it. Keep hitting until he falls over your extended leg.
 - Kick him when he's down.
- **HAIR PULLAROUND:** This Takedown is used to escape from attacks such as chokes from behind. It's a variation on the Wheel.
 - Once the attacker has grabbed you around the throat drop your chin into the crook of his arm. This will prevent his cutting off your air supply and protects your throat.
 - If the attacker is choking you with his right arm then use your right arm to reach up and grab the hair on the top or back of his scalp. Grab a whole fistful.
 - If the attacker doesn't have hair, then grab his ear.
 - With your left strike him hard and fast in the groin (a Hammerblow, Slap Claw or Edge Hand will do) and then grab his arm or sleeve.
 - Twist the hand that is grabbing his hair and pull around and downward. As you do so....
 - Tuck your right elbow into your body as you pull.
 - Twist your grabbing hand to generate more pain.
 - Bend your knees and turn your waist as you pull.
 - Pull your right hand all the way to the floor in front of your left foot.
 - Kick him when he's down, or use the hair grab to rap his head against the floor.
- **STEP-BEHIND SACRIFICE:** This devastating Takedown is used to escape rear wrapping grabs such as the Bear Hug. Most Bear Hugs wrap your arms so that they are pinned to your sides...but this in no way limits the ease and effectiveness of this technique.
 - As the attacker attempts to pin your arms to your side, immediately place your palms together and stick your elbows out to either side. This "skeleton jam" prevents him from squeezing the air out of your lungs.
 - NOTE: This Takedown will still work if you don't accomplish the skeleton jam.
 - Shift your hips sharply to your left side and turn your right hip toward your attacker.
 - Do the following simultaneously:
 - Release your skeleton jam and use your right hand to deliver a Slap Claw to his crotch.
 - Step around behind his left leg with your right leg so that the front of your knee is against the back of his knee.
 - Next do the following simultaneously:
 - Pull forward with your grabbing hand.

- Bend your right knee and push it hard into the back of his knee.
 - Tuck your chin.
 - Shove against his chest with your right shoulder and back.
 - Fall backward.
- This position creates a very easy and effective lever. As you bend your knee and lean back it establishes your right knee as the fulcrum and his whole leg as the lever bar that moves his entire mass. Down he goes with you on top of him.
- Don't try to move away from him as you fall. You want to fall on him so that your body lands as hard as possible on his ribcage.
- Keep your groin grab and twist as strong as possible throughout the fall.
- Keep your chin tucked so that the jolt of hitting the ground doesn't injure your neck.
- As soon as you both have landed turn toward him and hit him in the groin, face and throat. Use palms, the sides of your fists or your elbows to make sure he's down *and* out.
- HIP ROLLOVER: This is a defensive Takedown used when you are already down on the floor and the attacker is attempting to either pin you or lay on top of you. Tactically, the odds are in your favor because it's easier to fight from the floor (see Groundfighting) and because when he leans down gravity is pulling on him, whereas you are at a much lower and stable center of gravity.
 - Once you're on the floor, immediately get onto your back with your knees bent and feet flat.
 - As he rushes at you, put your palms together like you are diving and then thrust them between his reaching arms. Immediately spread your hands and grab his upper arms. This is called a "Clap and Grab" parry.
 - Use the flat braced position of your feet to lift your hips off the ground.
 - For a moment you will be supported only on your feet and upper shoulders.
 - As you raise your hips, turn the hip closest to the attacker toward him. Try to bump him with your hip (this establishes the contact point of fulcrum and lever bar).
 - Pull the attacker toward you and immediately roll in the opposite direction. If he is on your right side, roll toward your left.
 - As you turn he should easily fall against you and then over you.
 - Roll onto your hands and knees.
 - Your hands should still be holding his arms at the end of the Takedown.
 - You should wind up on your knees between his thighs.
 - Let go with your hands and start hitting.
 - Pull back your knee and kick him in the groin.
- KNEE ROLLOVER: This is a variation of the previous skill, used when the attacker tries to keep a bit of distance from you.
 - Use the Clap and Grab to prevent him from choking you and to establish a firm grip.

- If you can't establish hip contact with the attacker, then bring your knees up and place one or both against the attacker's hips, stomach or chest.
- Pull the attacker against your knees and shins.
- If the attacker is on your right side, then roll immediately to your left.
- Maintain your grip during the roll. This should pull you over onto him as he hits the ground.
- Once the roll has ended immediately let go and start hitting him.
- **SACRIFICE ROLLOVER:** This variation on the Hip Rollover is used to counter the attacker's attempt to throw you.
 - As the attacker grabs you, grab him in turn. The idea grab is to wrap your arms around his neck, but grabbing his shirtfront or upper arms will do nicely.
 - As he turns you to force you to the ground, use your grab to pull him sharply toward you. Since you'll be falling when this happens the pull will make him bend over so quickly and sharply that he will fall toward you.
 - As you fall, begin to turn away (still pulling). This creates a rotation that prevents him from falling on you. As he falls, his shins will come up against your side and that establishes the contact point of fulcrum (your side) to lever bad (his legs).
 - Keep turning until he has hit the ground.
 - Immediately let go and start hitting him.
- **LEAPING SACRIFICE:** A more advanced and aggressive variation of the Rollover is used to initiate a
 - As the attacker moves in to grab you, move toward him and wrap your strongest arm around his neck.
 - If you can use your other arm to grab your own wrist, that's even better.
 - If you can't grab your own wrist, then try to grab his clothes or hair.
 - As you wrap your arm around his neck, jump sideways in front of his body with both feet off the ground.
 - Pull forward and down with your arms and start turning away from him.
 - The drop of your body will yank him forward and down.
 - Even though you are making him fall, his mass and skeleton will slow your fall so that you won't get hurt on the sudden drop. In a sense he acts like a parachute.
 - He, on the other hand, tips forward headfirst.
 - As soon as he lands, start hitting and kicking.
- **SACRIFICE KICKOVER:** This sacrifice defense is used when the attacker is pushing you backward and is a devastating throw.
 - When the attacker has already grabbed you and is shoving you backward (or back and down), the first thing to do is grab him by the shirt, upper arms, or around the neck.
 - Do a One Leg Back Breakfall
 - As you begin to fall backward use your leg to kick him over. There are three good ways to do this:

- Place your foot against his stomach or hips
 - Kick upward into his groin
 - Brace your knee/shin against his inner thigh, groin, or stomach
- As you fall, pull the attacker toward you but raise your arms so that his body is aimed over your head.
- Your leg will act as a spoke and his body will be the wagon wheel turning on that spoke. By pulling your arms in and over your head you'll throw him beyond you.
- Unless he's a competitive gymnast he's going to hit the ground very, very hard.
- Even so, scramble to your feet and go after him. Hit and kick to make sure he stays down.
- RIPPLING TAKEDOWN: This Takedown uses a combination of grabbing and kicking to drop the attacker.
 - When the attacker confronts you and attempts to grab you, use the Clap and Grab to get inside his arms and grab him in turn.
 - Grab his shirtfront, around his neck, or his upper arms.
 - Immediately chamber your leg and deliver a Front Ball-of-the-Foot Thrust kick.
 - As you kick pull the attacker toward you and then immediately jerk your hands down with the kind of motion used to shake out a heavy rug.
 - The combination of the outward push with the kick and the inward and downward pull with the hands should drop the attacker on all fours in front of you if not on his face.
 - Immediate kick him or grab his hair and slam his face against the floor.

FINISH-OFF TECHNIQUES

After a throw has been accomplished, the defender is left with the option of delivering one or more finish-off blows. This does not mean killing the attacker. It refers to inflicting enough additional harm so that the attacker cannot renew the attack; and hopefully enough that he will be still there when the police arrive. A good finish-off is one that is delivered without pause as soon as the throw is accomplished. There is no time to wait and see if the finish-off is necessary -assume it is! And, the finish-off should contain several blows, not just one. Never assume the attacker can be easily defeated, always do more to him than appears necessary.

FIGHTING MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

Fighting multiple attackers is not easy. In real life they don't form a circle around you and then wait their turn to be attacked. In reality they try to crowd you and basically fall on you like a collapsing wall.

MULTIPLE PLAYER FIGHT SCENE FORMS

- **Defense against Multiple Attackers:** Gang Attack, Uneven numbers, Law Enforcement, Military, etc
- **Group Fights:** Pre-emptive, hunt-and-attack, Seizing Control of the Moment, Assassination, Uncontrolled Emotion, etc.
- **Mass Attacks:** Zombies, Invasions, Aliens, etc.

NOTE: As always, consider the location and use that as the canvas on which to render your scene.

The common sense approach to defending against multiple attackers is all based on movement. You can't hold your ground and fight more than one opponent. In the movies the attackers all form a circle and then rush in one at a time so the hero can dispatch them with quick, clean techniques. On the street that just doesn't happen. The one thing you absolutely cannot do is remain stationary. Allowing the attackers the chance to form a ring increases your risk, and allowing them to get close to each other also bad.

To understand how to defend against multiple attackers, the first thing to do is to identify the different kinds of attack patterns.

- **THE CLOSE V:** In this classic confrontation situation the attackers come in from two sides, their positions limited the avenues of escape. This allows both attackers to strike at once and is extremely dangerous.
- **THE CONVERGING V:** Sometimes the situation starts with the attackers at a greater distance, but the closer they get the easier it is for them to use both sets of hands.
- **THE SKIRMISH LINE:** If the attackers are allowed to close ranks they can create a wall of threat, often set up so that you do not have the option to turn and flee.
- **THE TRAP:** This is where one attacker confronts you while his partner comes up quietly from behind. Being blindsided is a fast way to lose right at the beginning of a fight. Though this attacker is cowardly, it is no less dangerous.
- **THE PINCH:** A step up in threat from the Trap is this variation, where the second attacker has already secured a restraining hold.
- **THE BOX:** One of the most dangerous of all self-defense positions is this one, which combines the threat of the Close V with the dire limitation of having no chance of flight.

Your first consideration is movement. Letting the attacker's close at their own pace and in their own way is dangerous, so the fight must be carried to them. Shifting abruptly to use one attacker as a temporary barrier is smart because it creates a one-on-one fight and at the same time presents an obstacle for the other attacker to negotiate.

- When making such a movement, you must be very harsh in his selection of techniques.
- A simple hand strike is seldom enough.
- An attack that uses circular footwork to grab the attacker and pull him off balance is always a good start, but the strikes and kicks selected must be those that have the best chance of doing the most damage in the least amount of time with the minimum effort.
- A Fingertip Flick strike to the eye, an Edge-of-the-hand Chop to the throat, a Palm Heel to the nose or temple: these are all good, fast, and highly damaging strikes.
- Kicks such as Stamps, Knee Raises to the groin, and Side Thrusts to the knees are all good.

In the Pinch attack the person who grabs you is less of an immediate threat than the man whose hands are free. Kicks can be used here to great effect, and the solidity of the hold can help steady the kick and give it more force. Of course, once the first attacker has been stunned or injured, then the second attacker should be dealt with immediately, either by attacking while the hold is still in place, which techniques like Stamps and Deer Kicks.

Once the attackers have been separated, you have to really take charge of the fight. Even with one attacker wounded and used as a shield, you cannot stop and just wait for the second attacker to close. Instead you should carry the fight to him while using the first attacker as both weapon and distraction by simply shoving him at the other man, and then following that movement up with an aggressive rush and as many strikes and kicks as you can launch.

When trapped in the Box, you can use that as an advantage, either by using the solidity of the wall to help push-off into a harder hit, or by redirecting one of the attackers into the wall -- hard and fast-- and then counter attacking from there.

When confronted with multiple attackers, Avoidance is of course the best option: spotting trouble and getting out of harm's way. Failing that, the next stage is to try and Prevent the situation from turning violent by cooperation, placation, even giving up your purse, jewelry, or purchase to avoid a fight. Only if these defusing strategies fail should you resort to a violent response...but if it does come to that, your response must be very aggressive and very violent. Half-measures won't work. People who attack in pairs or groups do not deserve mercy, and any quarter shown them will only weaken the chances for you to survive the confrontation.

AGAINST AN ARMED ATTACKER

Self-defense Against Weapons

It is difficult enough to defend against an unarmed attacker, but if he/she is armed, the threat increases substantially. Sometimes the threat becomes so extreme that there is no likely defense, such as when attacked at gunpoint. On the other hand, there are tactics and strategies which have proven themselves useful in defense against weapons.

Before we continue, it is important to make clear a few truths about weapon defenses. These often apply to defense against unarmed attackers as well.

- There are no guarantees. No technique is infallible.
- Survival depends upon timing, skill, awareness and action.
- Survival may also depend upon inaction if the situation cannot be handled any other way.
- Do not fight at all unless you have no other choice.
- If you do choose to fight against an armed attacker, then fight the attacker and not the weapon. A weapon by itself cannot harm you - it is the skill and the will of the assailant that harm you; the weapon is simply his medium. Stop him, and the weapon becomes irrelevant.
- If you decide to fight, fight wholeheartedly.
- If you plan to co-operate with the attacker and not fight, make that intention clear.

Different weapons indicate different attitudes for the defender and require different choices for defense. The best defense when confronted by someone with a knife or gun is to prevent any physical attack. If all you lose are your valuables, then you still come out ahead.

Most people have a distorted view of weapon defenses, probably due to the frequency of unarmed defenses against weapons seen on TV and in movies. In the movies, heroes disarm attackers armed with automatic weapons. In the real world this does not happen.

Also, it seems almost everyone knows a martial artist or police officer who has supposedly disarmed one or more armed assailants. There may be a few incidents of an unarmed person successfully defending against a gunman, but they are so rare as to be statistically useless. It is more common and more likely for a person to defend her/himself against an attacker who has a knife, but this is not as common as people think.

Following are some tips on coping with attacks and/or threats by weapons.

SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST GUNS

AWARENESS:

Attempting to defend against a gun is usually a losing proposition. A fast punch can travel at over a hundred miles an hour; but a bullet can move thousands of feet per second. If you know beforehand that trying to take that gun is a dangerous, stupid risk, then you will be less likely to try any heroics when attacked.

AVOIDANCE:

It is almost impossible to predict whether or not someone will pull a gun on you. No one will advertise that they are carrying a piece. The best advice is to live the 'safe' life by developing safe habits as described in the other chapters Street Safety, General Safety, etc.

PREVENTION:

If you suspect that someone is carrying a gun, just walk away and notify the proper authorities. If you are at the scene of a robbery in progress, don't get involved.

If you are being robbed at gunpoint, give up the goods. You don't want to risk your life for whatever personal possessions or cash you might lose.

If someone is trying to rape you at gunpoint you are in a more serious dilemma. Some women would rather be killed than raped; others would rather be raped than risk being shot. There is no best choice. And the choice is entirely up to the individual. Just understand that if you do decide to resist, then your chances of survival are greatly reduced. That is a sickening fact

of life, but it is a fact. However, if you decide to defend yourself, there are a few techniques a qualified instructor can teach you to give you at least a fighting chance.

PHYSICAL ACTION:

Aside from rape at gunpoint, there are some other situations in which you might feel compelled to try to take that gun: you are certain that the person is going to shoot you; or if the gunman is about to shoot someone else, such as your child, spouse, etc., and you would rather die trying to prevent it than let it happen.

A lot of Self-defense classes teach gun-disarming techniques. Some are fairly reliable under the right circumstances, but most are laughably ineffective. Because they are taught in class under more relaxed situations, using fake gun, these techniques can instill a dangerous false sense of security. Even if a student can disarm his/her training partner eight times out of ten, that still leaves a 20% certainty of getting shot. And in a class situation, the gunman is not nervous, stoned or angry; he isn't desperate. His finger probably isn't tight around the trigger, and he certainly doesn't intend to kill. Defending against a cap pistol, water pistol or even a paintball gun is not the same as dealing with a real gun. Even the best attempts at simulating tension cannot generate the kind of riveting fear which a person feels when a real gun is pointed at them by a real person.

So what can you do? Some skills may be taught in class, but it is not the intention of this text, or its author, to advise a person to try and take a gun. Ask your Self-defense teacher for advice.

FOLLOW THROUGH:

If you are attacked at gunpoint, try to get a good look at the attacker, but don't make it obvious. Don't do anything to spook him. After he takes off, call the police immediately. Appendix I describes how to make a police report.

SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST KNIVES

AWARENESS:

You are far more likely to encounter a knife-wielder on the street or in a rape situation than a gunman. Knives are easier to acquire, easier to conceal and quieter. The psychological reaction of the victim is different as well. With a gun, there is the clear threat of immediate death; with a knife, there is the added terror of intense pain, blood, disfigurement, torture and suffering.

Most rapes do not happen at knife-point because most women are attacked by a person they already know, and those persons are less likely to be armed, but many rapists who are strangers to the victim use knives.

Knives are very common in street crime, such as muggings. Be aware of how dangerous they are. never underestimate the threat.

AVOIDANCE:

See GUNS above....the same common sense advice applies.

PREVENTION:

If someone really wants to kill you, then he/she will most likely succeed. There is no Self-defense against murder. Killers do not advertise their intentions: they attack silently, unexpectedly and with a high likelihood of success. Luckily most people never have to deal with someone trying to murder them. More often it is robbery with the weapon, or physical/sexual attack. The weapon is a negotiation tool: if you comply then you won't get hurt. At least that is the most common bargaining strategy.

There are always factors which suggest the proper response. For example, if the attack is a knife pressed to the throat, the best defense is none at all. It only requires a small cut on the throat to kill. On the other hand if the knife wielder is holding the knife a few inches away from the victim's body, it is relatively easy to disarm and/or disable. (See Physical Action below)

But be clear on one point: defense against knives is only recommended as a last resort. If it is the intention of the attacker to rob, then let him. If it is rape, then violent physical action is called for. (See STREET SAFETY for more details)

PHYSICAL ACTION:

Defense against knives is more likely to succeed than against guns, but knives are still extremely dangerous weapons. The likelihood of defense depends on the skill and motive of the attacker.

A really good knife fighter can be as dangerous as a gunman. A good knife fighter knows how to discourage disarming techniques, and knows where to cut for the right effect. For instance, good knife fighters rarely stab, knowing that the knife blade can get stuck in the body. Experienced knife fighters use fast circular cuts, trying to inflict multiple wounds rather than one lethal wound. These wounds, rarely serious in themselves, result in pain and blood loss, which terrorizes a victim into acquiescence.

When defending against a knife wielder, some injury almost always results for both parties. The defender, even if she/he is successful, usually receives at least one wound. Even experts in knife defense receive wounds, which suggests how efficient and dangerous the knife is. However, it is possible to defend against a knife attack.

Factors to Consider:

- Most knife wounds are not fatal.
- Most knife wounds are not incapacitating.
- Most knife users rarely try to kill immediately.
- Knives are not good killing weapons.

When confronted with a knife attack, the defender should endeavor to:

- Evade the knife.
- Stay well clear or close to zero body distance.
- Grab, restrain or check the knife-arm.
- Inflict immediate and multiple injury.
- Disarm only after the knife wielder has been incapacitated.

Blowing the defense is easy. Here are some things to avoid:

- Never try to kick the knife out of the attacker's hand.
- Avoid all fancy techniques.
- Never cut the knife-wielder a break.
- Don't grab the blade unless there is no other choice.

- Never forget to disarm the attacker, even if he is unconscious.
- Don't be a hero. If he just wants your cash, don't escalate the situation into something it isn't.
- Don't wrestle for control of the knife.

The six major elements which make knife defense possible are:

- 1- Speed
- 2- Timing
- 3- Accuracy
- 4- Determination
- 5- Ruthlessness
- 6- Lots of Damage

FOLLOW THROUGH:

If you have been cut during a knife attack, make sure you see to your own immediate first aid. That includes applying direct, firm pressure to any bleeding cut. If you have been stabbed, and the knife is still in the wound, leave it there! The suction of the body often forms a temporary seal around the knife. Wrap some cloth around the wound to slow the bleeding, but do not touch the knife. If you pull it out it would be like pulling the plug in a tub: everything will drain out. Keep the knife there and get immediate medical help.

Make as complete a report to the police as you can.

If necessary, seek counseling. Any kind of attack can cause deep and serious psychological harm, whether you were robbed, raped, threatened, hurt or even if you successfully defended against the attacker. Counseling will help. If that is not an option you feel you can explore, then find a friend and talk it out. Don't bottle it up inside. This can hurt you as severely as had the attacker.

SELF-DEFENSE AGAINST OTHER WEAPONS

There are many weapons with which an attacker can harm you, and often these are not weapons per se. Baseball bats, car antennas, chains, bottles, sticks: these are all common weapons in armed street attacks, but are not Intended Weapons. Of course, that doesn't make much difference to you whether it is a knife or a broken beer bottle cutting your throat.

Compared to guns and knives, a baseball bat or chain is fairly easy to defend against; but that doesn't make them less lethal.

THE CHASE

- **On Foot:** On a Street, Inside a building, At Home, In the Dark, In Severe Weather, On Unsure Footing, In a Confined Space, While Injured or Limited, etc
 - Make all the above decisions first.
 - However don't be afraid to modify your scenes as you go. Often ideas will come in the telling.
 - As with all fight scenes, location matters. That includes everything from access and egress, floor surfaces, location of doors, distance to exits, presence of things like fire alarms, passersby, etc. will matter.
 - Avoid cliches like every street being empty or a person fleeing quickly and the attacker strolling and yet keeping up. Seen this too often in bad slasher films.
 - Remember, people in crisis moments will already be breathing poorly. A chase will exacerbate this. Try running around the block a few times then stop and immediately do a crossword puzzle, play a video game on your phone, etc. Hands will tremble, sweat will sting the eyes, etc. Write characters that are like real people.
- **Car Chases:** Pursuit, Escape, In Heavy Traffic, On Lonely Roads, Against a Coordinated Search, As Part of a Coordinated Search, etc.
 - Again, make all the above decisions first.
 - Even getting into your car has several steps. Allow those to confuse the situation and increase the threat level to your character, even if they're the one doing the chase.
 - Drive the route if possible. If not use Google maps or a similar APP so that you have a real set of turns, and those turns are correct. Also, the mapping apps allow you to know exact distance and approximate time.
 - City streets are rarely empty. More often than not traffic gets in the way of a high speed chase. Write accordingly. (I've seen too many car chases in, say, New York City, that seem to never hit traffic or gridlock.)
 - *Use* heavy traffic and gridlock to ramp up tension.
 - Nearly everyone has a cell phone. Have your character use it.
 - If you don't know much about high speed driving, ask any police officer. They're trained in that. All police departments have public relations officers –so reach out and ask. They might even offer a ride along. If so, ask LOTS of questions.
 - Cars run out of gas, get flats, etc. Those are all plot-useful.
 - Car crashes in movies seldom seem to stop the car from going. Modern cars are far less durable than older ones, and it doesn't take much for a collision to make them fail. Use that.
- **Aerial Chases:** Aircraft Dogfight, Nonmilitary Aircraft, Outer Space, etc
 - These often require specialty knowledge.

- For true aerial battles (meaning in air), ask among your contacts on social media if anyone flew military aircraft. Ask to interview them about what modern planes/jets can –and very importantly *cannot*—do.
 - Ask these folks for anecdotes, and see if you can draw elements from them.
 - Just as with handheld firearms, planes and helicopters do not have endless supplies of gasoline or ammunition. Let that inform how you craft the scenes.
 - It is much better to write a scene with high stakes and heavy risks than to have your character merely win all the time.
 - We cover space battles in the next section (next page)
- **Fantasy World Chases:** Horde of Orcs, Castles and Dungeons, On Alien Worlds, In Microgravity, Flying Dragons, etc.
 - These kinds of stories are typically set in exotic places. Do some of the same world-building or world-analysis that you do with real places. There will always be some similarities on which you can build your fiction.
 - When crafting these scenes, try to bring in elements from the fantasy world you've already built. If there is a Flegel-flame Tree in your story, let it play a role. That way the chase scene is sewn more fully into the fabric of the story.

SPACE BATTLE

The key to any kind of action taking place in outer space is science. Get it right and the story comes alive. Get it wrong and readers won't be able to trust you enough to suspend disbelief.

Here are the some of the most common things writers get wrong about space:

Sound and Explosions:

- **Sounds in a Vacuum:** The most common mistake is hearing ships roar, laser fire, or explosions. There is no air to transmit sound waves.
- **Fiery Explosions:** Fireballs require oxygen. In space, an explosion would be a sudden burst of debris rather than a lingering, roaring fireball.

Physics and Movement

- **Maneuvering Like Airplanes:** Ships are often shown banking and turning like airplanes in an atmosphere. In space, there is no air resistance, so turning requires thrusters to change momentum, not aerodynamic flaps.
- **The "Stop" Fallacy:** Many films show ships powering toward their destination for the entire journey. In reality, acceleration and deceleration take equal amounts of fuel and time.

Gravity and Environments

- **Zero Gravity = Slow Motion:** Zero gravity does not mean slow motion; in reality, objects can move incredibly fast, and maneuvering can be chaotic, not gracefully slow.
- **Inertia Issues:** Characters are often shown accelerating or stopping instantly without experiencing the massive G-forces that would crush them, or they are shown moving in ways that defy Newton's laws of motion.
- **ALSO:** It's 'microgravity', not 'zero gravity'. There is some kind of gravitational pull everywhere in the universe.
- **Artificial Gravity Everywhere:** Almost every ship in sci-fi has "down" set to a 90-degree angle to the direction of travel, usually powered by unexplained gravity generators.
- **The "Space Cold" Myth:** While space is cold, it is a vacuum, which is an excellent insulator. You would not instantly freeze solid, as heat takes time to radiate away.

Asteroid Fields:

- Movies often depict asteroid fields as densely packed, requiring expert maneuvering to avoid collisions.
- In reality, asteroids are usually millions of kilometers apart. The average distance between asteroids in the main asteroid belt is approximately 600,000 miles (about 965,000 to 1 million km). This vast separation means the belt is mostly empty space, making collisions between asteroids rare and allowing spacecraft to pass through without incident. The distance is roughly 2.5 times the distance between the Earth and the Moon.
- **Key Details Regarding Asteroid Spacing:**
 - **Density:** Despite containing millions of objects, the immense volume of the belt means individual asteroids are very far apart.
 - **Visual Misconception:** Contrary to popular media portrayals, the asteroid belt is not a dense, crowded field, but rather a sparse, lonely region.
 - **Collision Probability:** The likelihood of a spacecraft colliding with an asteroid in the main belt is less than one in a billion.
 - **Scale:** The width of the asteroid belt is approximately 1 astronomical unit (AU), or 92 million miles (150 million km).

Single-Biome Planets:

- Writers frequently make planets one-biome (e.g., "the desert planet," "the ice planet") for convenience, which is rare in real planetary science.

Human Physiology and Safety

- **Instant Freezing/Exploding:** Contrary to popular belief, exposure to a vacuum for 10-15 seconds won't make your head explode. While dangerous, you would have time to act before losing consciousness, as shown accurately in 2001: A Space Odyssey.
- **Spacesuit Helmets:** Filmmakers often light up an astronaut's face inside the helmet so the audience can see them. This would blind the astronaut with glare, making it impossible to see out.

Communication and Scale

- **Communication Lag:** Writers often ignore the speed of light. Communicating in real-time with someone on Mars or in another star system is impossible; there is always a delay, sometimes lasting years.
- **No Sense of Scale:** Writers struggle with the sheer, emptiness of space. They often fail to grasp the enormous distances between stars and the time needed to travel between them, often ignoring the immense energies required for interstellar flight.

Alien Life

- **Anthropomorphism:** Aliens are almost always humanoid (two arms, two legs, one head) because they are played by human actors and must be relatable, rather than evolved for their specific environment.

- **Instant Translation:** Aliens often speak perfect English or have technology that instantly translates, ignoring the monumental task of communicating with a non-human intelligence.

Given all of this, a space battle is seldom close-quarters unless the fighters deliberately get close to engage in dogfights. If you've established that you have craft capable of this, then fine. Do your homework and avoid looking like you learned your astronomy and astrophysics from old *Flash Gordon* serials.

Here are the most common things writers get wrong about space battles:

- **Silent Battles:** Contrary to popular cinema, space battles would be entirely silent because there is no air to carry sound waves from explosions or engine noise. The only noise would be radio chatter (if in a group battle) or sounds occurring inside the ship.
- **Dogfighting Mechanics:** Spaceships do not fly like airplanes. In a vacuum, vessels do not need wings, and they would not "bank" to turn. Instead of "dogfighting," movement involves continuous, often straight-line motion at constant velocity (conservation of momentum) until deceleration is applied.
- **Massive Distances:** Space battles would likely take place at enormous distances, with ships appearing only as blips on a radar rather than visual dogfights. Weapons would involve long-range missiles rather than close-range energy blasts.
- **"Up" and "Down" are Non-Existent:** There is no universal "down" in space, yet ships are often depicted in the same orientation. Realistic combat would involve vessels approaching each other from any angle.
- **The Problem of Speed:** At high velocities, human reaction time is too slow for manual targeting. Lasers, moving at the speed of light, would hit instantly, making "dodging" impossible.
- **Gravity Issues:** Humans can only withstand limited G-forces. Violent maneuvering or accelerating fast enough to evade weapons would turn human crews into "pink smears" without fictional "inertial dampeners".
- **AI Dominance:** In reality, computers can react faster than humans. A realistic battle would likely be entirely managed by computers and AI, leaving humans to watch the results, rather than piloting fighters.

In terms of actually fighting, there are some other scientific realities to consider:

Based on physics and common critiques, here is what writers often get wrong about space phasers/lasers/ion cannons/etc:

- **Visibility of the Beam:** In the vacuum of space, a laser or energy beam should be completely invisible unless it is scattering off dust, gas, or thick smoke. Writers show bright, glowing beams (commonly red or blue) because a totally invisible weapon makes for boring television, but this violates the physics of light propagation in a vacuum.
- **Beam Speed and Travel Time:** Phasers are often depicted as glowing bolts or beams that travel at slow, visible speeds, allowing characters time to dodge. In reality, any energy-based weapon—whether a laser or particle beam—should travel at or very near the speed of light, making them impossible to dodge.
- **The "Pew-Pew" Sound Effect:** Perhaps the most common mistake is hearing phasers fire. Sound cannot travel through the vacuum of space because there is no medium (air) to carry sound waves.
- **Overpowered Utility:** In many stories, phasers are treated as all-purpose tools capable of doing anything from stunning a target to completely vaporizing a human or destroying ship armor. This lack of consistency makes them seem more like "contrivium" or "handwavium" (a magic plot device) rather than a disciplined weapon system with finite limitations.
- **Ignoring Energy Limitations:** Writers often ignore the massive power requirements needed to produce a high-energy beam. A hand-held device capable of vaporizing matter in one shot would realistically require an unimaginable energy density (often hand-waved by "dilithium batteries") and would likely produce extreme heat, endangering the user.
- **Range and Spreading:** Early sci-fi often showed beams spreading out, which is not how concentrated, coherent energy beams behave. Furthermore, the effective range is rarely consistent, often determined by the tension of the scene rather than the technical limits of the weapon.

FIGHTING MONSTERS

The first and most important thing to do when writing about monsters is to research the critter.

FOLKLORIC MONSTERS:

- These include witches, vampires, werewolves, ogres, trolls, sprites, ghosts, revenants, and so on. These are creatures people once believed were real.
- Because of landmark books like *Dracula*, the reading and movie-watching public has a certain view of the powers and weaknesses of vampires. However, little of this is based on what people actually believed. The versions of vampires in folklore are radically different and wildly varied.
- Less than a third of folkloric vampires are *hematophagous* drink blood. Most are *Essential Vampires*, meaning they feed on some critical essence like breath, faith, life force, sexual essence, etc. The smallest category are *necrophagous*, meaning they eat flesh as well.
- Every country has vampire legends, and each has its own unique take. Some, of course, are variations on beliefs from neighboring countries, but overall the differences are great.
- Here are some examples of folkloric vampire subtypes:
 - **OBAYIFO (also called Asiman):** The Obayifo of Ghana is the supernatural spirit of a living person witch or sorcerer who is able to leave his/her body and flit through the air as a malicious spirit in the form of a ball of light. The Obayifo preys primarily on infants and young children, drinking blood and sometimes leaving the victim alive but horribly diseased. When it is unable to get human blood, the Obayifo will feed on the juices of fruits and vegetables. In places where it feeds on crops it often causes blight, and if the Obayifo is fraught with great hunger it may wind up destroying an entire field, leaving the fruits withered to dry husks and the plants diseased and inedible.
 - **RAMANGA:** One of the strangest vampires in the world is the Ramanga of Madagascar. Ramangas (which means “blue blood”) are living men who are employed by village elders and nobles to eat discarded nail parings or spilled blood. It is the pervading belief in Macedonia that items like nail clippings and blood possess vast magical powers and, should they fall into the wrong hands, can be used to work evil magic against the person from whom they came. Since some people believe that a person’s soul resides in their blood, this extreme custom can somewhat be understood. Nobles maintain one or more Ramangas to collect and ingest these items so that no one else can gain access to them. Nobles who can afford it utilize a traveling Ramanga to accompany them on every journey so this grisly task will always be handled quickly and efficiently, keeping them safe from sorcery
 - **MA CÀ RÔNG:** One of the most disgusting vampires of the world is the Ma Cà Rông of Vietnam who, like the ASUANG of the Philippines and PHI SONG NANG of Thailand, and the Malaysian PENANGGALAN appears as in the form

of a head and floating entrails but no other body. Unique among all of the world's vampires, the Ma Cà Rông feeds only on cow dung, which –even for a supernatural monster- is pretty nasty. If the Ma Cà Rông is disturbed in its feeding, or if it is prevented from getting to its food, it will attack humans and tear their throats out. Not to feed on them --just to kill.

- **TLACIQUE:** A race of vampire-witches among Mexico's Nahautl Indians. They possess a variety of supernatural powers that help them attack their prey and elude capture, including the ability to transform into blazing balls of flame. They can fly like fireballs across the sky, or dance through the woods like a Will-o'-the-Wisp, and often attack their prey in these fiery shapes. For some unknown reason their touch does not burn their victims, but mesmerizes them. The victims then slip into a stupor while the Tlacique drinks their blood. If pursued, Tlaciques sometimes turn into ordinary animals, most usually fowl like turkeys. In this innocuous form they can blend in with farm animals, going unnoticed while feeding a bit here and there from animals as well as farmers.
- And there are hundreds of others.

The same is true of werewolves. It's worth getting one or more of the books on folkloric vampires (J. Gordon Melton's excellent *The Vampire Encyclopedia* is an excellent start. And I've written several nonfiction books on the subject myself: *Vampire Universe*, *The Bite*, and *Wanted Undead or Alive*.)

MYTHOLOGICAL MONSTERS

- These are giants, titans, harpies, hydra, cyclopes, and other dangerous beasts from the pantheons of older religions such as ancient Greece, Egypt, etc.
- Mythology itself describes a variety of encounters with such creatures, as in the Labors of Hercules, Jason and the Argonauts, etc.
- Best way to choreograph a fight against one of these monsters is to read about how it was done and make the necessary adjustments.
- For example, if you're protagonist isn't as strong as Hercules, then providing him/her with a magic weapon is useful; but giving your character good problem-solving skills is better. That way, you have can a hero devise a new way to accomplish the goal, thereby putting your own stamp on things.

URBAN LEGENDS

There are a lot of urban legends, which are more or less *new* myths or new folktales added to historical body of such stories. Common and famous urban legends includes these popular ones:

- **Bloody Mary:** Appearing in a mirror when called three times, often a staple of sleepovers
- **The Hook:** A killer with a hook for a hand terrorizes couples in a parked car.
-

- **Sewer Alligators:** Stories of alligators, originally bought as pets, thriving in New York City sewers.
- **The Killer in the Backseat:** A driver is warned by a stranger about someone hiding behind them.
- **The Vanishing Hitchhiker:** A ghost who disappears from a car after being picked up.
- **The Choking Doberman:** A pet saves its owner by choking on an intruder.
- **The Mexican Pet:** A small, cheap dog bought on vacation turns out to be a giant rat.

Urban legends often overlap with the belief in Cryptids –animals that some believe to exist but which have never been formally proven. Among these are:

- **Bigfoot (Sasquatch):** A large, hairy, ape-like creature said to inhabit forests in North America, with sightings often involving large, human-like footprints.
- **Loch Ness Monster (Nessie):** A legendary creature reported to live in Scotland's Loch Ness, often described as a long-necked plesiosaur-like animal.
- **Chupacabra ("Goat Sucker"):** A creature originating in Puerto Rico, known for attacking livestock and described either as a reptilian, spined creature or a hairless dog-like beast.
- **Mothman:** A winged, humanoid figure with glowing red eyes, famously sighted in Point Pleasant, West Virginia, during the 1960s.
- **The Jersey Devil:** A winged, bipedal creature with a horse-like head that allegedly haunts the Pine Barrens of New Jersey.
- **Yeti (Abominable Snowman):** A bear-like or ape-like creature reported to live in the Himalayan mountains.
- **Champ (Champy):** A lake monster reputed to live in Lake Champlain, bordering the US and Canada, similar to the Loch Ness Monster.
- **Mokele-mbembe:** A creature rumored to live in the Congo River basin, described by local legends as a small sauropod dinosaur.
- **Thunderbird:** A massive bird reported in North America, with wingspans rumored to be large enough to carry away prey.

- **Jackalope:** A North American folklore creature, depicted as a rabbit with antelope antlers.

Quite often there is more storytelling juice—at least in terms of combat—in cryptids than in Urban Legends.

With all monsters, though, there is usually a learning curve fraught with attrition as characters learn the strengths and weaknesses. In some of my own fiction, notably *The Pine Deep Trilogy*, none of the monsters my character encounter are the Hollywood versions, which confuses the math for how to fight them. So, basically it comes down to a case-by-case basis, which we will explore during the workshop.

MARTIAL ARTS & SELF-DEFENSE

THE THREE CATEGORIES OF MARTIAL ARTS

SPORT MARTIAL ARTS

- Includes Boxing, fencing, judo, taekwondo, most forms of karate, many forms of kung-fu, etc.
- Also includes kickboxing, MMA, and other forms of entertainment.
- Most are adapted from fighting systems, but with significant portions of techniques removed
- Most use 'safer' versions of combat moves to allow safe practice
- The allowed target areas of the opponent's body are limited
- The degree of damage is severely limited, often with penalties for fouling.
- Advertising hype distorts the combat effectiveness of these arts.
- Some arts/schools teach select versions of older, combative techniques
- Sport arts need to be modified for actual self-defense.
- Teachers often mislead students into thinking these arts are street effective without modification.

ESOTERIC MARTIAL ARTS

- Includes arts like Tai Chi Ch'uan, Aikido, many forms of Kung-fu, etc.
- Goal of practice is improved health, reduced stress, inner calm, post-injury body restoration, achieving harmony with inner and outer forces
- Movements are often stylized versions of combat skills
- Movements have to be heavily modified for street use.
- Students are not always told that the moves are not directly street effective.
- Achieving mastery levels may take decades.
- Extremely good for people with ADD, ADHD, stress, PTSD
- Extremely beneficial for older practitioners.

COMBAT MARTIAL ARTS

- Generally based on older forms of real combat
- Difficult to practice safely without protective equipment
- Not directly useful for competition
- Higher risk of injury
- May conflict with local laws regarding violence
- Least popular of the three categories
- Not suitable for most children except when heavily supervised

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MARTIAL ARTS AND SELF-DEFENSE

- Time Commitment
- Skill Level
- Variety of Learned Skills
- Focus of Training
- Expectation of Performance
- Variations on Self-defense Styles and Goals

FIGHTING FOR REAL:

- Perception of Intent
- Being Hurt on Many Levels
- Fight or Flight
- Brittle Bones
- Chemical Enhancement
- The Reality Check of Real Combat
- The Second Fight
- Taking the Heart

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MARTIAL ARTS & SELF-DEFENSE:

- What's Possible?
- What's Not?
- The Black Belt
- Chi / Ki: The Myths and Truths of Internal Power
- Hard and Soft
- Wounds and Injuries
- The Day After the Fight
- The Death Touch
- Knife Throwing
- Dodging Bullets
- Sustaining Injuries (and Can they Be Shaken Off?)

THE FIVE STAGES OF SAFETY AWARENESS

1. Awareness
2. Avoidance
3. Prevention
4. Physical Action
5. Follow through

THE OPPONENT BREAKDOWN METHOD

1. Neutralize the Attack
2. Hit to Stun
3. Hit to Damage
4. Hit to Disable
5. Takedown
6. Finish
7. Follow-up

WHO IS YOUR PROTAGONIST?

- What Kind of Hero
 - Untrained Human
 - Trained Human
 - Superhuman
 - Nonhuman
 - Inhuman
 - Supernatural
 - Possessed
 - Otherworldly
- Skill Level
 - Already in place
 - Recently Acquired
 - Learn by Doing

- **Reason to Fight**
 - **The Unexpected / Caught Up in Events**
 - **The Rescue**
 - **Personal Defense**
 - **Defense of Others**
 - **On the Job**
 - **Happen to Be There**
 - **Called to Action**
 - **Requirement of the Job**
 - **Born to It**
 - **Chosen for It**

WHO IS YOUR ANTAGONIST?

- **What Kind of Hero**
 - **Untrained Human**
 - **Trained Human**
 - **Superhuman**
 - **Nonhuman**
 - **Inhuman**
 - **Supernatural**
 - **Possessed**
 - **Otherworldly**
- **Skill Level**
 - **Already in place**
 - **Recently Acquired**
- **Physicality**
 - **Age**
 - **Gender**
 - **Height**
 - **Weight and Build**
 - **Clothing**
 - **Prepared Weapons**
 - **Available Weapons**
 - **Familiarity with Environment**

WHERE IS THE FIGHT?:

- **Street**
- **Home (where?)**
- **Environmental Vulnerabilities / Threats**
- **Environmental Advantages**
- **Weather**
- **Surface**
- **Confined Area**
- **Seated**
- **In Motion**
- **In Flight**
- **Armed/Unarmed**
- **Time of Day**

FIGHT COMPLICATIONS:

- **Uneven Match**
- **Gunfight**
- **Knife or Edged-weapon Fight**
- **Environmental Exploitation Fight**
- **Multiple Attackers & Gangs**
- **Pickpockets & Purse-snatchers**
- **Animal Attacks**

THREAT LEVEL:

- **Motive for the Fight**
- **Attack**
- **Duel**
- **Robbery**
- **Sexual Assault**
- **Murder**
- **Torture**
- **Escape**
- **War / Raid / Battle**
- **Kidnapping**
- **Captured by the Enemy**
- **Supernatural or Superhuman Enemy**

THE ARSENAL OF SELF-DEFENSE:

- **Intended Weapons**
 - **Intended Weapons: Pro and Con**
 - **Commercial Self-defense Weapons**
 - **Weapons Required for Job (from Cops to Knights)**
 - **Exotic Weapons**
 - **Alien Tech**
 - **Weapons vs Weapons**
- **Natural Weapons:**
 - **What Are Natural Weapons?**
 - **Kicking**
 - **Striking**
 - **Some Do's and Don'ts About Kicking and Striking**
 - **Throwing**
 - **Blocking**
- **Surrogate Weapons**
 - **CUTTING WEAPONS**: includes credit cards, combs, folded plastic straw, crumpled plastic cup, wire hairbrush, laminated I.D. card, kegs, a broken bottle, coat hanger, car antenna, broken branch, etc.
 - **POUNDING WEAPONS**: blunt sticks, a roll of coins, nail polish bottles, comb-ends, wallets, capped pen, soda can, roll of coins, paperback book, text book, book bag, briefcase, rolled-up magazine or newspaper, umbrella, cane, crutches, radio, lamp, tire iron, flashlight, etc.
 - **DISCHARGING WEAPONS**: perfume bottle, insect repellent, hair spray, shaken can of soda, any aerosol product, etc.
 - **BINDING WEAPONS**: rope, dog leash, extension cord, plastic trash bag, towel, shirt, belt, jump-rope, etc.
 - **PUNCTURING WEAPONS**: pointed nail polish bottle, rat-tail comb, pen, pencil, letter opener, kegs, paper clip, pipe cleaner, pipe stem, toothpick, hat pin, etc.
 - **DISTRACTING WEAPONS**: loose-leaf paper, towel, rag, clothing, stuffed animals, cotton balls, coins, matches, etc.
 - **PARRYING/BLOCKING WEAPONS**: books, purses, briefcases, thick jackets, frying pans, chairs, crutches, casts, etc.

- **ASSEMBLED WEAPONS** (objects which need to be changed in some way in order to be used more efficiently as weapons): paper clip, plastic straw, large ring of keys, AAA batteries, quarters, toothpicks, etc.
- **Self-defense and Your Environment**
- **Self-defense Against Weapons**
 - **Guns**
 - **Knives**
 - **Other Weapons**

THE COMBAT MIND-SET :

- **Shock -Immediate and Reactive**
- **Fear**
- **Rage**
- **Paranoia**
- **Guilt**
- **Passivity and Necessary Violence**
- **Intent and Reaction**
- **Heroism and Courage**
- **Cowardice and Confusion**

SELF-DEFENSE GLOSSARY

ABUSE: physical or non-physical violence inflicted on another.

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT: an assault committed with any weapon that might be considered deadly or dangerous.

AIKIDO: (lit. "Way of Spiritual Harmony") Japanese martial art stressing passivity and a tranquil spirit.

ARMED ROBBERY: stealing from a person with the implied threat of using a weapon.

ARROW BLOCK: a parrying/grabbing movement used to intercept and redirect a punch or weapon attack.

ASSAULT (SIMPLE): an unlawful apparent attempt, by a person having the apparent ability, to commit bodily injury on another person.

ASSIST: any strike or kick which aids in taking an opponent down.

AVOIDANCE: the second phase of defense; taking steps to ensure that vulnerabilities in one's lifestyle or environment are compensated for or eliminated.

AWARENESS: the first phase of defense; the process of recognizing potential dangers in one's lifestyle and/or environment.

AXE KICK: a type of kick which drops the heel onto the opponent generally while lying on the floor.

BACK KICK: a mule-kick type of stamp used in off-angle defense.

BATTERY: unlawful contact made on a person by a voluntary physical act of the aggressor against the consent of the victim.

BLOCK: a defensive tactic where a stiff arm is used to intercept and stop a blow.

BODY DROP: a fall or squat where the body is allowed to sag with dead weight. Used for overbalancing or throwing an opponent.

BODY TOOLS: See Natural Weapons.

BRIDGE-OUT: (1) A position where the arms are bent and locked to prevent a bear-hug; (2) A type of ground-fighting skill which uses a high arch of the body to dislodge an attacker who is attempting a pin. Also known as HIP LIFT.

CENTER-FIGHTING: remaining within the attack circle of a gang or multiple attackers. A serious tactical error.

CENTER LINE: the imaginary axis of the body that is perpendicular to the ground. All balance is considered in relation to the center line.

CENTER OF GRAVITY: the point at which weight stresses relate to the center line.

CHECK: (1) a type of block used to stall or restrain a limb during a fight; (2) a restraining touch used to prevent a body from turning.

CHOP: (1) an edge-hand blow; (2) a variation of the Wheel take down.

CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS: See Intended Weapons.

CORNERING KICK: an inverted Hook Kick.

COUNTER: any technique which prevents another technique from being successfully completed.

COUNTER-ATTACK: the attempt to strike or kick during the opponent's attack. Considered to be the best method of fighting.

COUNTER-FIGHTING: see COUNTERATTACK.

COUNTER STEP: a movement of the defender's body away from the direction of a block or parry for the purposes of evasion, balance, or bracing.

COUNTER THROW: any grappling technique which intrudes on an attempted throw and uses the momentum to take the attacker down.

CRIMINAL HOMICIDE: murder or manslaughter.

CROSS THRUST: an inverted Side Thrust kick.

CUTTING STRIKE: an off-angle deliver with a fish-hook parabola delivered of the arm and a quick snap-turn of the wrist.

DECAYING CIRCLE: a method of torsion an opponent so that his body rotates and falls in one continuous movement.

DEADBOLT/DEADLOCK: a highly rated type of household door lock which is not spring-operated and therefore a greater security risk.

DEER KICK: a perpendicular rising Hook Kick.

DEFENSE CIRCLE: the imaginary line drawn around a person in a defense situation. Circle is broken down into quadrants, Forward, Rear, Left Side and Right Side.

DEFENSE ZONES: four quadrants of a Defense Circle.

DOUBLE LOCK DEADBOLT: a deadbolt which must be key-operated from both sides of the door.

EDGE-HAND: See CHOP.

ESCAPE: a self-defense technique which allows a person to break a hold or lock.

EXCUSABLE HOMICIDE: a killing that the law normally considers illegal, but which, under certain circumstances, is excused. This is the category under which most deaths resulting from legal self-defense fall.

EXPRESSED MALICE: when a person makes known, either through words or actions, the intent to kill another person. This is a basis for first degree murder.

EXTORTION: the crime of obtaining valuables, compliance or services through threat of violence.

FELONY: a serious crime, such as murder, robbery, arson or rape, which is tried in a state or federal court, and is punishable with either death or a prison term.

FELONY MURDER: a criminal homicide which occurs during the commission of a crime.

FINISH-OFF: any technique used to render an attacker unable to continue aggression. Generally used as the last technique(s) delivered in a fight.

FIRST DEGREE MURDER: killing with expressed malice, making intent known beforehand.

FOLLOW-THROUGH: the fifth phase of defense; compensating for any events which occur after phases 1-4 have been attempted.

FREEZING: the state of immobility caused by shock, fear or uncertainty.

FRONT KICK: any kick delivered while facing an opponent. Generally uses instep, ball-of-foot or heel. May be used in a snapping, thrusting or pushing manner.

FULCRUM: the support on which a lever turns.

GROUND FIGHTING: defense while laying down, kneeling or crouching.

HAMMERBLOW: a strike using the side of the balled-up fist.

HELPING HAND: a finish-off technique combining a perpendicular pull of an attacker's arm with a stamp to the head or mastoid.

HIGHWAY ROBBERY: stealing from a person, usually by threat or implication of violence, on a street or public place.

HIGH YIELD STRIKING: hitting targets which are extremely vulnerable (eyes, throat, etc.).

HIP LIFT: a throwing technique; see **BRIDGE OUT**.

HOMICIDE: the killing of one human being by another. Divided into criminal and non-criminal.

HOOF BLOCK: a block to a kick performed by raising the defender's leg and receiving the blow on the bunched muscles.

HOOK KICK: a lateral sweep of the leg which wraps partially around an opponent to strike or pull.

IMMOBILITY: dangerous hesitation caused by doubt, fear, shock or lack of defense training.

IMPLIED CONSENT: in traffic law, the state's assumption that a person will automatically agree to testing for alcohol or drug influence when stopped on suspicion of driving while under the influence. Refusal to comply results in automatic suspension of license.

IMPLIED MALICE: When a person does not express any malice, but its presence can be deduced. A basis for second degree murder.

INOPERATIVE SELF-DEFENSE: a situation where homicide occurred which normally would be self-defense except for a factor which cancels the excuse of self-defense.

INTENDED WEAPONS: items such as guns, knives and tear gas which can be used in self-defense.

INTENT: a state of mind whereby a person wants a certain outcome to occur.

INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER: unintended homicide (or unpremeditated) committed while engaged in an unlawful act less serious than a felony.

JUDO: (lit: Gentle Art) A Japanese sport similar to wrestling. Not generally accepted as a method of self-defense.

JUJUTSU: (lit: Way of Gentleness) A Japanese form of self-defense widely recognized as logical, artistic and street effective.

JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE: a killing which the law considers legal to commit, such as those by law officers and soldiers.

KARATE: (lit: Way of Empty Hands) A Japanese/Okinawan form of martial arts. Highly stylized and largely sportive; often has to be modified for use in street defense.

KICK ASSISTS: using kicking techniques to aid in throwing or overbalancing an attacker.

KICK-OUT: using a kick to break away from a hold or grab.

KICK-OVER: using a kick in concert with a sacrifice in order to throw an attacker.

KNEE DIP: a finish-off kick used by dropping the knee onto a vulnerable point of a fallen attacker's body.

KNEE RAISE: a sharp upward thrust of the knee.

KUNG-FU: (lit: Hard Work) A classical Chinese martial art required years of intense study.

LIMIT OF INTOXICATION: the legal standard for blood-alcohol level of licensed drivers.

MAIMING: the act of permanently crippling or disfiguring another person during a fight.

MANSLAUGHTER: criminal homicide which is not premeditated and categorized either involuntary or voluntary.

MALICE: premeditated intent to commit a crime such as murder. Same as **MALICE AFORETHOUGHT**.

MARTIAL ARTS: any of several thousand system of organized fighting, mostly of Oriental extraction. Largely sportive and rarely directly effective in self-defense.

MAYHEM: The crime of maiming.

MURDER: any premeditated or intentional illegal killing of a person. Criminal homicide.

NATURAL WEAPONS: the hands, feet, legs, etc., as they can be used for self-defense.

NEGLIGENCE: utter and complete disregard for the safety and well-being of others. An act which an average, reasonable and prudent person would not commit, and which is so dangerous that a death results.

NONCRIMINAL HOMICIDE: a killing which the law will not prosecute because no guilt is placed upon the killer; categorized into justifiable and excusable.

OBVIOUS WEAPONS: See: Intended Weapons.

OVER FIGHTING: in multiple-attacker defense spending too much time fighting one person and ignoring the other(s).

PARRY: a self-defense technique wherein a person uses a sweeping motion of the arm to deflect a blow.

PREMEDITATION: a degree of planning and forethought sufficient to show intent to commit an act.

PURE DEFENSE: the attempt of a defender to block or evade attacks without attempting to strike back.

RAPE: any sexual contact which is made against the will of the victim.

ROBBERY: the criminal act of stealing property from a person.

SACRIFICE: (1) taking a minor injury in order to deliver a greater one; (2) allowing oneself to fall in order to employ a combat tactic.

SECOND DEGREE MURDER: killing with implied malice intent deduced from actions.

SELF-DEFENSE: any person fearing death or serious bodily harm from the assault and/or battery of an attacker has the legal right to defend him/herself using a reasonable amount of force but may kill the attacker only if necessary to save his/her own life.

SELF-DEFENSE KEYCHAIN: a legal Intended weapon made from a bar (metal, wood, acrylic) which is attached to a key ring. Used for self-defense. See KUBOTAN.

SEXUAL COERCION: sexual contact accomplished through intimidation emotional blackmail or harassment.

SHORT POWER: generating combat force at close-quarters. Relies heavily on torsion and body shifting.

SNAP: a type of kick or strike delivered in a whip-like manner.

SOFT POWER: combative force generated by rapid movement of the body and great depth of penetration.

STAMP: a kick delivered with a hard stomp of the foot onto a vulnerable part of the attackers anatomy.

SURROGATE WEAPONS: commonplace items such as pens, combs, keys, etc. which could be used for self-defense.

TAE KWON DO: (lit: To strike with the Hands and Smash with the Feet) A Korean form of Karate; mostly sportive.

TAKE-DOWN: a grappling technique which employs various types of fulcrums and overbalancing skills to knock an opponent down.

TANG SOO DO: (lit: Way of Chinese Hands) A Korean form of Karate similar to Tae Kwon Do. Largely sportive.

THEFT: the criminal act of stealing property.

THROW: a grappling technique which lifts an opponent over a fulcrum and redirects him to the ground.

THRUST: a type of strike or kick delivered with maximum force and depth of penetration.

TORSION: a rapid and abrupt rotation of a mass on its axis. Useful in throwing, striking and kicking.

VOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER: homicide committed while under the influence of excessively strong emotions.

WHEEL: the most useful and common take down. Relies on a slanted fulcrum and abrupt overbalancing.

ZERO DISTANCE: the concept of fighting while making body contact.

ZONES OF DEFENSE: the four quadrants of a defense circle.