

ALEXANDRIA KARATE DOJO

# The Self-Defense Starter Guide

5 Things Every Adult Should Know  
Before Violence Finds Them

A free resource from Sensei Roberto Curtis  
Beikoku Shidokan Karate Association

# Why This Guide Exists

*A practical primer for adults exploring self-defense*

Last year, more than 1.2 million Americans experienced a violent incident — most of them ordinary people who never expected it. You don't have to become a fighter to protect yourself. You just have to start.

This short guide will give you 5 principles you can use today, a 7-day awareness challenge, and a simple plan for what to do next — whether you ever step foot in our dojo or not.

— Sensei Roberto Curtis, Rokudan (6th Degree Black Belt)

# The 5 Principles of Real-World Self-Defense

*Forget the movies. These are the fundamentals professionals actually rely on.*

## 1. Awareness Beats Technique

The fight you avoid is the fight you win. Most violent encounters give off warning signs 30–90 seconds before they happen. Eyes up. Phone down. Scan exits when you enter a room. Trust the discomfort in your gut — it is older and smarter than your manners.

## 2. Distance Is Your First Weapon

Anything inside arm's reach can hurt you in under a second. Practice creating space: step back, angle off, put obstacles (cars, tables, trash cans) between you and a threat. Distance buys you time. Time buys you choices.

## 3. Voice Before Hands

A loud, firm "BACK UP!" does three things: it freezes the attacker, alerts witnesses, and breaks your own freeze response. Practice it out loud, today, in your car. If your voice is weak when nothing is wrong, it will fail you when everything is.

## 4. Target the Body's Switches

You don't need strength to disable someone — you need to know where to strike. Eyes, throat, groin, knees. These targets work regardless of size, gender, or training. A 120-lb woman can stop a 220-lb attacker by attacking what the body cannot armor.

## 5. Train Before You Need It

Under real stress, you do not rise to the occasion — you fall to the level of your training. Skills built in calm are the only skills you keep in chaos. Two hours a week of honest practice is more protection than any device you can buy.

# Your 7-Day Awareness Challenge

*No gear. No gym. Just attention.*

## **Day 1 — Eyes Up**

Walk from your car to every destination today without looking at your phone. Notice 3 people's hands and 2 exits in every room.

## **Day 2 — Map Your Exits**

In every building you enter, identify two ways out within 10 seconds of entering.

## **Day 3 — Voice Drill**

Say "BACK UP!" out loud, sharply, 10 times in your car. Feel how unnatural it is. That's why you're practicing.

## **Day 4 — The Interview**

Notice anyone who tries to engage you in unexpected conversation in a parking lot, ATM, or elevator. This is the most common pre-attack behavior.

## **Day 5 — Distance Game**

All day, maintain a full arm's length from every stranger. Notice how often people violate it — and how you usually let them.

## **Day 6 — Hands Free**

Carry nothing in your dominant hand when walking to your car at night. Keys go in the other hand.

## **Day 7 — Reflect**

Journal one paragraph: What did you notice this week that you used to miss? That awareness is the foundation of every skill we teach.

# 3 Self-Defense Myths That Get People Hurt

## **Myth #1: “I’ll just use pepper spray.”**

Pepper spray fails in wind, in close quarters, and when you can’t reach it in time. It’s a tool — not a plan. Skill is the plan.

## **Myth #2: “I’m too old / out of shape / not athletic.”**

Traditional karate was developed for everyday people, not athletes. Our students range from their 20s to their 70s. The body adapts faster than you think when training is taught correctly.

## **Myth #3: “I’ll figure it out if it happens.”**

Neuroscience is clear: untrained people freeze. Trained people respond. The difference is built in the dojo, not in the moment.

# Ready For The Next Step?

*Come train with us — your first class is free.*

You've just done more for your safety than 95% of adults will this year. The next step is showing up to a class. No commitment. No contracts. Just one honest hour to see if this is for you.

At Alexandria Karate Dojo you'll learn authentic Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate — the real-world self-defense system passed down through Grandmaster Iha and the Beikoku Shidokan Karate Association. We teach adults and teens only, in a welcoming, no-ego environment.

## CLAIM YOUR FREE INTRO CLASS

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Book online: [www.alexandriakarate.info](http://www.alexandriakarate.info)

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