

Fighting Back: Myths and Facts

by Susan Bartelstone, Crime Prevention Specialist

**YOUR LIFE IS
WORTH FIGHTING
FOR!**

**NO ONE HAS THE
RIGHT TO RAPE OR
ASSAULT OR
ABUSE YOU! EVER!**

Consider carrying Pepper Spray!



Many myths and misconceptions about Self Defense exist and they make people (especially women) fearful and hesitant to even think about fighting as an option. Three common myths are listed below:

Myth 1: Fighting back will just make an attacker madder. It's safer to submit than fight.

Fact: Submitting to any crime, with or without resistance, is always a valid choice. Do only what you think will ensure your survival! The "don't fight" caveat, however, is based on the assumption that you would lose the fight. That assumption might be an erroneous one—especially if you have some training.

Fighting back is not a magical solution to an attack, but it just might save your life and/or prevent that rape or sexual assault. It's easier to consider fighting as an option if you know what you're doing. The best advice is to become mentally and physically prepared beforehand, then you can make an informed decision if the need arises. Taking a Self Defense course is the best way to become informed.

You don't have to be an expert to be successful.

Myth 2: A person needs to be a martial arts expert in order to defeat an attacker; a brief Self Defense course is not enough. Besides, I'm too old, too small, too weak, too out of shape, too (add your own adjective here) to be effective in a fight...or to even take a Self Defense course!

Fact: For centuries, people with no specific training at all have successfully fought off attackers. The odds of success can only increase if you have some idea what to do. The Self Defense approach to fighting is different from the martial arts approach in several ways:

- It's intended to be short-term (usually 4-6 weeks).
- It's specifically designed for shorter, older, weaker people.
- It focuses on fighting **one battle—one time...and how to put all you have into that battle.**



✓ **Take a yearly Self Defense Course**

The word "he" when describing an attacker is used solely for expediency. Attackers can be women as well as men; teens or tweens as well as adults.

Sometimes nothing can be done to prevent an undesirable outcome in a crime situation. Submitting to an attacker, with or without resistance, is always a valid choice. Whatever you do to survive is the correct response.

Contact Us:

Crime Prevention101
www.crimeprevention101.com
solutions@crimeprevention101.com

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Self Defense techniques **don't** require great strength, athletic ability, a fully-functioning body or years of training to master. **A good course should also include skills for avoiding problems, defusing confrontations and self-empowerment.**

Naturally, no one can expect to attain a high level of skill after only a few weeks, but it's an amazing fact that a small amount of knowledge accompanied by determination, guts and the will to survive can be even more important than years of training. Some of the lessons you'll learn will remain with you your whole life. Just to be sure, take a Self Defense class **once a year** to keep your skills fresh and up-to-date.

Training Makes the Difference.

Myth 3: No matter what, I just think I'd be too scared to fight.

Fact: Taking a Self Defense course is the quickest way to break through the false conditioning and mental barriers (I'm too old, too small, too weak, too scared, whatever) that bind and limit us.

Through training, you learn how to become a warrior (mentally) and find your **Fighting Heart**—that inner place of strength, determination and power that each of us possesses; where the impossible becomes possible, fears are overcome, and battle scars (for those that have them) start to heal.

When Considering the Option to Fight:

- ✓ Don't assume that if you cooperate with a rapist you won't be hurt or killed anyway—even if he tells you this.
- ✓ Always consider a rape attack or an assault a life-threatening situation.
- ✓ The physical trauma resulting from rape can be devastating (including the possibility of contracting AIDS or other STDs).
- ✓ The emotional trauma resulting from rape can be equally severe as any physical trauma and can last for years.

Estimates are that 3 out of 4 people who receive proper training—consisting of awareness preparation, empowerment and defensive tactics—will successfully deter crime. Put the odds of success in your favor!