

Fighting Back Pays Off

By V. Kay Curtis, JD

If you are reading this in The R.A.D.I.C.A.L. Rag, chances are good that you have been married and now you're not. Who among us *hasn't* relied on our husband to protect us from the bad guys out there? So now that he's gone, what do we do? Here are some choices:



- 1) Deny the possibility of ever being victimized.
- 2) Acknowledge the possibility but play the odds.
- 3) Prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

Denial is not just a river in Egypt. Consider that:

- One in five women will likely be assaulted in her lifetime.
- A rape happens once every 5 minutes in the U.S.
- You will know the rapist 75% of the time.

Staggering, isn't it? Well the other side of the coin is that every criminal has two fears – being caught and being hurt. And studies show that **you double your chances of success when you fight back.** *Half of all attackers* will break off their attack if the woman simply indicates she is willing to resist! But how to deal with the other half that continues the attack – ah, there's the rub.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

No one can guarantee that any one technique will work all the time in all situations to keep you from injury or harm. But there are six basic self defense principles that will improve your safety odds.

- 1) Pay attention to people around you.
- 2) Stay with people or go to people.
- 3) Keep a barrier between you and the bad guy.
- 4) Attract attention.
- 5) Control his hips and control his hands.
- 6) Fight like a girl – use your strongest weapons against his weakest targets.

Criminals tend to exhibit predatory behavior before an attack. They move when you move. They observe your habits, your self-defense assets and your vulnerabilities. They look for opportunities to attack in areas where there is privacy and no witnesses. They try and get close to you by engaging you in conversation (interviewing).

Do not let yourself be taken somewhere else (cops call it the “secondary crime scene”). If you do, you will live your worst nightmare because there will be no one to help you. If you are in a parking lot, a mall, a party, don't go! He will be afraid of being discovered. Conversely, if you are alone in your house or in an office, go to people. Run outside, climb out your window, drive to a convenience store – but go where there are people so he will be afraid of being discovered.

Lock your doors. Don't open the door for anyone. Stay in your car; push a shopping cart in the parking lot. Keep something in between you and him. Anything that requires more time and effort for him to get through increases his chances of being discovered and for you to choose options.

More than 90% of all rapists will say something like, “don't scream or I'll kill you” or “stay quiet and you won't get hurt”. They are telling you exactly what will ruin their plan! Honk the horn, scream, kick, throw things, and break things. You cannot count on people coming to your aid, but the key is to appeal to his fear that someone *might* come to help or even to investigate the racket.

When you control his hips you are controlling the distance between the two of you and preventing penetration. When you control his hands you stop him hurting you by choking, hitting or stabbing.

Don't try to fight a man as if you were a man. You will lose! Your upper body strength is inferior to his. Instead, use your strongest weapons against his weakest targets.

The first four principles are straightforward enough. But how do I control his hips? Control his hands? Fight like a girl? There are resistance techniques that require learning and practice. Any woman can master them. You don't have to be a body builder or martial artist.

Just Do It! FIGHT LIKE A GIRL classes equip women to defend against sexual assault by a stranger, and GIRLS ON GUARD focuses on date rape and attacks by an acquaintance. Both are held at Bally Total Fitness in Olathe, Kansas. Check EQUALIZER's website for details, dates and times, and to sign up.

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