

SELF DEFENCE CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

UNIT 2

Combat Academy Instructor Training Programme

Self Defence CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

UNIT 2

Learning Outcomes

The aims of this unit are to enable you to:

- Have a broad based knowledge of the subject of self defence.
- To understand current academic models and processes.
- To understand the physical processes and stages that occur in a violent attack.
- To define and understand the difference between self defence and personal safety.

Self Defence

What is it?

*There is a big difference between self defence and personal safety. Self defence is predicated on the fact that you are in a very bad place to begin with. Things have already gone wrong or escalated and violence has already occurred or is an imminent threat. As such, self defence is making sure the situation doesn't get **any** worse, or surviving the encounter - it is damage control, pure and simple.*

TUTOR TALK



Consider a range of different concepts and strategies towards personal safety and self defence. There is no one size fits all approach as different situations may require different approaches. Consider how the different models link to each other overlap or even contradict each other at times.

However, **no** damage control is **EVER** as good as preventing the problem in the first place. That's personal safety... (Coker 2008).

Concepts and Strategies

Five Stages of Violent Crime (CRGI & Marc MacYoung, 2009)

The *Five Stages of Violent Crime* is an internationally recognized system to identify if - and determine when and if - you are being set up for a crime or violence.

While we strongly advocate awareness and avoidance as a primary means for personal safety sometimes that isn't enough. The Five Stages of Violent Crime has been tested in court as an easily explainable standard by which individuals determined if they were legally justified to use self defence tactics. Remember, when it comes to violence there are usually legal repercussions. Therefore, we strongly advocate you know when you are justified to use force.

Time for the phases to develop

Crime and violence are processes that take *time* to develop. The attack is **not** the first step, the preliminary triangle must be built. There are five distinct stages that are easily identified:

- 1) Intent
- 2) Interview
- 3) Positioning
- 4) Attack
- 5) Reaction

During the first three stages, you can prevent an attack without the use of violence. These are where the criminal (or violent person) decides *whether or not* he can get away with it. He may want to (Intent), but if he doesn't have the opportunity (Positioning) he cannot succeed. The Interview is his way to double check if you are safe for him to attack. *If these conditions are not met, he will not attack!*

What we are about to say is **not** hyperbole. *Selecting a safe victim is a matter of life or death for the criminal.* If he picks the wrong target, he's the one who is going to die. Therefore, he's going to make sure he can successfully use violence against you (Interview and Positioning) before he commits himself to act. Once he is sure of his

ability to succeed - and has put you in a position where he can quickly overwhelm you - *they will attack*.

Below is a shorthand version of the five stages. Each is linked to a more in-depth look at the subject:

Intent

By intent, we don't mean that you are a psychic. You cannot read someone's mind. Although the word 'intent' has often been replaced in court with Jeopardy (acting in a way that is consistent with known pre-attack behaviours) we still use the term 'intent' for a simple reason. With this system, intent is *not* what is going on inside of the person's head.

It's the *visible* and discernable physiological manifestations that, a person *ready to commit violence*, *will* display. This isn't you being psychic. This is his body displaying these signs, no matter how hard he tries to hide it.

This is where the person crosses a normal mental boundary. From this point, the person is mentally and physically prepared to commit violence in order to get what he wants – whatever that may be. Being able to recognize when intent is present is one of the key components of your personal safety. Yet, this isn't always easy as you might think. The criminal has often learned how to mask it behind words and feigned innocence. But once you know how to spot the physiological signs, it is easily recognizable. Learn more about intent.

Interview

With *all* violence, the assailant's safety is a critical factor in deciding whether or not to attack. While in interpersonal violence, the deciding factor may be anger, strong emotion or pride. However, with criminal violence it is more of a conscious decision. This leads us to the interview, where the criminal decides upon your suitability as a victim. There are several kinds of interviews common to criminal attacks.

Positioning

This is the criminal putting himself in a place where he can successfully attack you. A

criminal (or even a violent person) doesn't want to fight you; he wants to overwhelm you. To do this, he has to put himself in a position where he can do it quickly and effectively. An attempt to develop positioning is the final proof of ill intent. Someone trying to position himself to attack removes all doubt that the situation is innocent. Like the Interview, there are several kinds of Positioning.

Attack

The attack is the when the criminal/violent person commits himself to using force - or the threat of force - to get what he wants. Like the other stages there are important distinctions to be made about the kind of attack you will face.

Reaction

Reaction is how the criminal feels about what he has done. However, this is made more complicated by the fact that your reaction is an important contributing factor.

AOI (Short-hand version)

What follows is a parallel system to the Five Stages of Violent Crime. AOI stands for



Ability, Opportunity and Intent. Although not as complete as the Five Stages, it will give you a quick-rule-of-thumb set of standards to determine whether or not you are in danger. While the Five Stages is more complete, for people who are not particularly interested in self defence, AOI is a nice set of fast and easy guidelines.

We present both models for you to select which works best for you.

There is a concept called the triangle among firefighters. Along each side is an element that a fire needs in order to burn. If you take away one of these elements, the triangle collapses and the fire goes out. Crime is the same: In order for it to occur, there must be three basic elements.

This is easily remembered as A.O.I. (Ability, Opportunity and Intent). Take away any one of these elements and the triangle collapses. In other words, the crime does not have what it needs to occur.

Ability

Does the person have the ability to attack you? Could this person successfully assault you, whether through physical prowess, a weapon or numerical superiority? Many women underestimate male upper-body strength and how vulnerable they are to being physically overwhelmed.

Opportunity

Does this person have the opportunity to attack you? Are you alone with them or even in an area beyond immediate help? Could anyone come to your assistance within twenty seconds or less? As many victims have found, you can be robbed in plain view or raped with people in the next room.

Intent

Are they in a mental place where using violence to get what he wants makes sense to them?

Of the three, intent is the most nebulous, yet it is vital for determining who is a threat. It is the literally the difference between going off with someone to talk and being raped. Skip over to Intent page and to the profile of a rapist. Acquainting yourself with the criminal mind-set is also highly recommended.

The fastest way to figure out if you are in potential danger is to look for these three elements. If you see one, look for the others. If you see two out of three stop whatever else, you are doing and pay close attention for a moment. If you see him trying to develop the third, withdraw from the situation to a safer area. This is easier than using physical violence. As you will soon see, opportunity often means staying

in an area where someone could effectively use physical violence against you. If you do not see these elements, then odds are you are safe. There is no triangle.

If you wish to adhere to a more legally sanctioned idea, you can exchange the I of Intent for a K of Known (for known dangerous behaviour = jeopardy). This turns it into the acronym A-OK. Which might be easier for someone to remember.

Conclusion

Knowing the five stages is a standardized guide by which you can assess the potential threat of a situation. These five stages are inherent within crime and violence. What is important to realize is that the first three stages might not occur in that particular order. A violent and selfish person may suddenly find himself with the perfect opportunity/ability to commit a rape, and suddenly the intent appears. There was no conscious initial decision, but the circumstances developed. Due to an intrinsic flaw in his personality, he can decide to act in a violent manner. This is why you always need to check for ability, opportunity and intent (AOI).

As stated the Pyramid of Personal Safety was developed to counter the Five Stages. As the criminal must develop these stages in order to successfully attack you, the pyramid undermines his attempts. By foiling him instead attempting to contest him, you can avoid using violence in all but the most extreme circumstances.

Two major problems exist regarding self-defence. The first is knowing when to use it. How do we know when is the right time? How can we be sure we are not overreacting or starting at shadows? We should all have reservations about using force. Much of this confusion is alleviated by having a proven and external set of standards to compare a situation against. If you don't see the triangle, it is not the time to use violence.

The other problem with self-defence is the legal ramifications. In law you risk being prosecuted for "attempted self-defence," both on a criminal and civil front. What was an obvious threat at the time can be later undermined in court by a solicitor? When the prosecution asks how you knew you were in immediate danger you had better have a better answer than "he looked at me mean."

If you end up in court to defend your defending yourself, either system will help you clarify and rationally explain why you thought your actions were warranted.

THE THREE/FIVE STAGES OF AN ATTACK

D.E.F.O.F (Coker 2008)

Introduction

The DEFOF system (Coker, 2004) was created to mechanically map the process that a physical fight or attack will go through. It is not a continuum nor does a physical encounter follow a set path. The DEFOF system effectively considers all aspects of a physical encounter. The DEFOF concept also contains a physical system that deals with all 5 stages of a violent encounter. DEFOF creates a framework with which it is possible to hang actual physical techniques that work during each stage.

There is a difference between a fight and an attack inasmuch as the word fight implies that the parties involved are ready and engaged in having a physical encounter. An attack is where one party is unaware and more passive even innocent. In an attack, there is a victim. It could be argued that an attack could evolve into a fight and this is often the case. Taking this into account, the mechanics of a fight and an attack are similar once the attack starts but the readiness/willingness of the person being attacked is the main difference. The first three stages of an attack cover the actual physical process right from the point that the threat is engaged to the probability of the fight ending up on the ground. The fourth stage covers the physiological and psychological changes that occur as the fight continues and the final fifth stage considers the eventual outcome. This is particularly important where damage has occurred to either or both parties.

The stages

1. Distance

The distance stage of a fight/attack can be defined as the process where the attacker has committed to attacking the victim and has now decided to make their way towards them across an area with the intention of doing them physical harm. The considerations are a) the victim is not aware that this is happening b) the victim is aware that this is happening. Clearly, a) is very different to b).

In the case of a), where the victim is aware, they will have time to position themselves and use the (fence) which maintains a safe distance. The victim can then

start to gain control of the encounter. In the case of b) where the attacker is unseen, the level of reaction and resulting control can vary as the attack may actually start at stage 2.

The other consideration is the distance in which an attack can be effective. This distance is completely different depending on the type of attack (see below).

2. Engagement

Engagement is the first point of physical contact or intent and ability of physical contact. This could be a punch which is thrown or grabbing, scratching, biting, objects thrown, substances, weapons (bladed or blunt). At this stage, measures have to be taken to minimise damage. This could be as follows:

- Changing the distance
- Stances and positioning
- Use of the fence
- Use of the guard
- Pre-emptive Defence
- Psychological defence
- Verbal Defence
- Clinching

3. Ground / Floor

Many violent encounters will end up on the floor. The ability to control this process and manipulate it to your advantage is possible with the right strategies and techniques. It must also be noted that you may choose to go to the ground or you may be taken to the ground against your will. Being in control on the ground and regaining control or getting back up require different strategies.

4. Ongoing

As a fight continues, the psychology and physiology of both the attacker and victim can change. Most attackers pick a victim that they think is an easy target. If they plan an attack and actually get a fight, this can start to erode or even destroy their intent and they start to think of escape rather than continuation. Spotting this process is essential as you may decide to break away and start employing verbal skills. This

could be in the form of “you don’t want to do this”, or “leave now, the police are on their way”. Using commands like this will exploit what is a growing feeling within the attacker and give them the opportunity to back out and abort of the attack.

5. Finish

The attack will come to an end with the following possible outcomes:

- Injury to the attacker
- Incapacitation of the attacker
- Death of the attacker
- Natural end
- Attacker backs out
- Injury to the victim
- Death of the victim
- Incapacitation of the victim
- Encounter stopped by third party intervention

Which of the above are acceptable finishes?

The above question may seem obvious, however, it is essential that you begin an encounter with an overall aim and strategy. Only when you decide on which outcome/s are acceptable can you control them and influence them by using everything in your power to get the desired result and prohibit the undesired result.

Putting a self defence system together that considers all aspects – REALITY BASED SYSTEMS

The reality of defending yourself means that you will be in extreme danger and under extreme physical, mental and emotional pressure. The fact that there is a minimum of at least one third party with an intent, strategies, abilities and potentially weapons that will be largely unknown means that any system needs to be completely dynamic. Your psychology and physiology will change during the encounter and so will your attackers and this needs to be considered.

To recap, the following issues need to be considered:

Ability - your ability and the attacker's ability. Threat assessment, do they have weapons, size and strength.

Location - where are you, is it isolated, and is help likely to come. Will changing your location solve the issue?

Intent - do you know or are there signs of the intent, i.e. is it a robbery? How are you being attacked, with what and why?

The attack itself and exactly what is occurring at that moment. For example, are you being punched, has the attacker taken you to the floor etc. Which defence do you select?

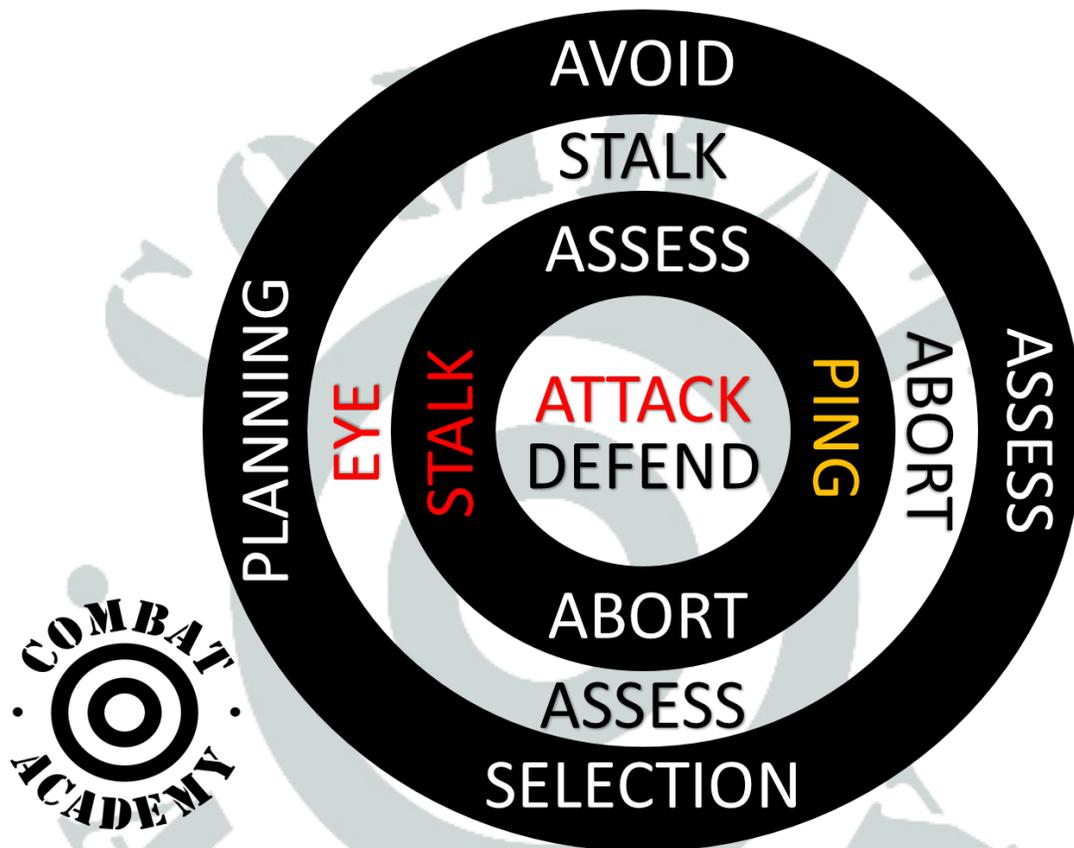
Psychology - your emotional state, their emotional state

Ongoing issues - are you injured, are they injured

The end state - how is the attack finished? What are the considerations? Death, injury, escape are all considerations.

Clearly there is a lot going on at any one moment. The Combat Academy model created by Major (Retired) Huw Roberts, former officer in command of the Royal Military Police Close Protection unit and Reece Coker, ex Royal Navy Elite Submarine Service, professional Close Protection Operative and ex professional fighter considers all factors, possibilities and outcomes in a cycle which is ever evolving.

The Combat Academy Concentric Circle Combat Cycle Model (4C Model)



The 4C Model is a highly dynamic circular process map. In outline the model contains concentric circles with the physical attack or defence happening in the centre. This is the part that ultimately we want to avoid, though this is not always possible. This is effectively where the physical attack and defence occur. In a military sense, this would be the KILL ZONE. The 4C Model also highlights the predator process, as in “SELECT. EYE, STALK, KILL, or in this case ATTACK. What makes this model unique is that it considers the very first thing that happens before the attack takes place, i.e. the selection! The selection process recurs through many stages as does the assessment and abort stages which are constantly evolving thought processes that every attacker will go through.

The further away from the centre you are as a potential victim, the safer you are. If you look at the outer circle, at this point, you have not been seen or “EYED”. You may fit the victim profile and may look like a victim in the attacker’s mind but they have not yet seen you. During this stage, where you go and how you plan is crucial as your attacker is also going through the planning process. At this stage, personal safety is the key rather than self defence. It is where these plans collide that the danger is located. An example would be that an attacker is looking for a blonde woman wearing headphones and is planning to look during late dark hours in an isolated park area. You are blonde and will be out walking the dog at 22:00 in the park. If you carry out this plan at the same time that the attacker initiates their plan then you may progress to the “EYE” phase.

If you are “EYED” then the attacker will be assessing with a view to proceeding to the “STALK” phase.

There is still a chance that if you are NOT acting like a victim or become less isolated that they may abort. Further reading on “Victim Selection available”.

Once things proceed to the stalk phase, you have a chance to see the attacker. If you are vigilant and not impaired by wearing headphones or talking on the phone, there is a chance that you will see or “PING” the attacker. This may be enough for them to reassess and abort, depending on what you say and how you respond to any “pre-attack testing”. If not, then the attack will become physical. During the physical stage a reassessment on the part of the attacker will take place with factors like how hard you make it for them, your use of verbal commands will potentially cause a reassessment and possible abortion of the attack.

When you look at each zone of the 4C method, you can break down your actions, the attacker’s actions, your thought processes, their thought processes and of course your physical state, location and again that of your attackers. You will see from this cycle, at every stage, it is possible to cause a reassessment and abortion. The further away from the centre that you cause the reassessment the safer you are. There are four zones:

1. Outer circle – personal safety and planning. Attacker is planning and pre-selecting a victim based upon their modus operandi.
2. Inner Circle - Despite or because of choices you have made, you have now been seen and selected as a victim although you do not know this. You may have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.

3. Danger Zone – The attacker has decided to proceed and has begun stalking you! You now have a chance to see them provided that you are vigilant. If you have seen them, you may be able to force a reassessment on their part by the way you act, your repositioning, or by making it clear that you have seen them.
4. Kill Zone – The attacker now commits to and perpetrates the attack. You are now in a self defence situation. Any actions on your part may cause a reassessment and therefore an abortion.

