

RAPE AND FIGHTING BACK

*By Crime Prevention and Personal Safety Specialist
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MYTHS, FACTS AND OPTIONS

I recently appeared on the Today Show in a great segment concerning rape and fighting back—prompted by an incident in Los Angeles where a young woman, walking to her car in an empty parking garage, was jumped by a concealed assailant and raped. The segment featured two re-creations of the rape scenario with a security specialist playing the part of the attacker and a young woman volunteer playing the rape victim.

The first re-creation was identical to the original incident. Prior to the second re-creation, however, a martial arts instructor gave the woman volunteer a self defense lesson which included simple strikes and kicks, advice to keep moving and the instruction to try to attract attention and assistance by yelling. After her lesson, the volunteer victim was clearly able to deter the assault. I was proud to appear on this program and to offer additional information and tips on this subject.

FIGHTING BACK is not a magical solution to an attack, but if you have no other choice, it just might save your life. Before a situation occurs where you have to decide whether to fight or not, mull over the following. It might help you make your decision.

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

The Myths and Facts. Many people, women especially, have absorbed falsehoods about self defense that make them hesitant to even think about fighting back as a choice. Here are three common myths:

Myth: *Fighting back will just make an attacker madder. It's safer to submit than to try to defend yourself.*

Fact: Submitting to any crime, with or without resistance, is always a valid choice and a person should only act in a way that will enable them to survive.

As featured on the
TODAY SHOW

No one has the right to assault, abuse, or rape you —ever— under any conceivable circumstance!

To Rape or Crime Survivors:

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.

When considering whether to fight an attacker or cooperate, however, it's hard to view fighting as a viable option if you don't know how to go about it.

The myth that it's safer to submit is based on the assumption that you would lose the fight. This assumption is erroneous; there's no way to predict the outcome in advance. In fact, scientific studies have determined that you're **twice as likely to prevent a rape if you take forceful and immediate action!** The odds of success can only get better if you actually have some defensive instruction (i.e., a Self Defense or Personal Safety course).

Myth: A person needs to be a martial arts expert in order to defeat an attacker. A few weeks of a Self Defense course isn't enough.

Fact: For centuries people with no martial arts training at all have successfully fought off attackers—using only guts and the determination to survive. It's well known in my field that these factors can be even more important than years of training!

The Self Defense approach to fighting is different from the martial arts approach and training is designed to be short-term (usually 4-6 weeks). Naturally, no one can expect to attain a high level of skill after only a few weeks; but the fact is, a high level of skill isn't necessary in the most common crime scenarios. Thousands of success stories from former self defense students attest to this.

TRAINING MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

Myth: No matter what, I think I'd be too scared to fight someone. Besides, I'm (pick one) too old, too small, too weak, too out of shape to be effective in a fight (or to even take a Self Defense course).

Fact: If you've never driven a car, you might be fearful of driving until you take some lessons and actually get behind the wheel. Similarly, taking a self defense/personal safety course is the quickest way to break through the false conditioning and mental barriers (I'm too old, too weak, etc.) that make you fearful of fighting.

As opposed to martial arts, self defense courses are specifically designed for shorter, older, weaker people. Techniques focus on vulnerable areas of the body which can be hurt severely with minimal strength and don't require athletic ability or a fully-functioning body to be effective. They don't require years of practice to master either.

A good course should also include skills for avoiding problems and defusing confrontations and techniques for finding your inner courage in a desperate situation so you can overcome the common reaction of freezing in panic. It should also provide a safe space for those folks who already have battle scars, so they can further their healing process.

Take at least one Self Defense or Personal Safety course a year so you keep your knowledge and skills current.



Estimates are that 3 out of 4 people who receive proper training—consisting of awareness preparation and physical defense tactics—will successfully deter crime.

Put the odds of success in YOUR favor!

No absolutes exist in crime scenarios and no advice can address every variable. Each situation should be evaluated individually and responded to in the way you instinctively judge best.