

WMATM Section H1 Empty Hand Self Defense, General Information

Tae Kwon Do Self Defense, General Principles Revised: 22 January 2017

General Principles of Self Defense:

1. "The best self defense is to not get into a dangerous situation", says Master Weseman. Avoid situations that make you feel unsafe. "The best block is not being there," says Master Creamer.
2. Don't look like a victim. Walk confidently with head up and look people in the eye.
3. If an attacker wants your wallet or other possession, give it to them. Keep your distance from the attacker. Only use self-defense if your personal safety is threatened.
4. "No self defense is going to work on every body." Have more than one technique for each situation. If one technique does not work then immediately try another, different technique and then another until one does work. After you use one technique, your attacker will now be prepared for it; therefore, repeating the same technique will be LESS effective.
5. There is no "right" or "wrong" self defenses; there are only those that work or do not work *for you*. You will be taught some general self defenses but not all may work for you. You may discover other self-defenses that work better for you. When you find a good self-defense, write it down in your class notebook. "Do what you are comfortable with." Choose a few techniques for each situation and practice the techniques until they are easy to do.
6. Simple is better.
7. "The key to self defense is to react quickly." Practice each technique so you can react without having to think.
8. Attackers do not want to call attention to themselves. Yell loudly when attacked to call attention. Children should shout "Fire!" or "This is not my mom (dad)!" Too many people yell "Help" as a joke, so it is often ignored.
9. "The more aggressive the attack the easier it is to get away." An aggressive attacker will be off balance; step to the side and let them fall.
10. Strikes & Blocks:
 - a. Master Weseman reminds us that an ox jaw (palm-heel) strike is safer and easier than a punch.
 - b. For best affect strikes should aim for the *atemi*, vulnerable points we have reviewed in class.
 - c. Blocks are strikes, too, and should be done firmly to "pressure point" areas to further disable the attacker.
 - d. Alternate arm punches (or kicks) are faster than repeated punches with the same arm.
 - e. Master Creamer: "Touches" increase speed. Following a block by "touching" the opponent's arm will hold the arm out of the way and allow you to counter punch faster with your other hand.
11. "80% of attacks may end up on the ground," says Mr. Zimmerman. Practice how to get up and get away to be fully prepared.
12. Your response should be proportional to the threat. You are taught to break the grasp, escape and then strike to disable an attacker. However, you should only strike the attacker IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE PHYSICALLY IN DANGER. To strike someone who is not a threat will make YOU the attacker.

Learning and Practicing Self Defenses:

1. Self-defenses can cause injury. NEVER play or 'goof off' while practicing self-defenses. Safety first! Be a good partner by staying focused and under control.
2. Listen carefully and watch the instructor's hands, body, and foot movements to fully understand the technique. Note how different parts of the body move together to make the technique successful.
3. Practice self-defenses regularly. If the technique does not seem to work well for you then ask an upper belt for help. ADD those help notes to your class notebook.
4. Practice a self-defense as if the situation is real.

- a. Victim: Begin in a relaxed position with your feet shoulder width apart. The 'victim' should use good technique and full power AFTER the attacker has started to move.
 - b. Attacker: The 'attacker' should use full strength and act realistically. Remember as the 'attacker', you do not know if or how the victim will respond; do not try to either 'counter' the defense or weakly go along with it.
5. Ways to practice:
- a. Individual: Practice the moves at home just as you would a form.
 - b. Partner: Practice with a good partner as we do in class.
 - c. Group Practice: In class we can break up in to 3 to 5 person groups. One person in the group becomes the "victim" (the person being attacked). The other group members (the 'attackers') line up one behind the other facing the victim. The first attacker attacks the victim and the victim responds. The first person then goes to the end of the attacker's line. The 2nd attacker then attacks the victim and so on until all the attackers have participated. One of the attackers then becomes a victim and the process is repeated. This allows each victim to practice the technique several times with different people to better learn.
 - d. "Gauntlet" Practice: The whole class lines up in two rows facing each other about ten feet apart. Each person should be double arms length from the next person in the line. This is the "gauntlet". One student (the "victim") stands at the end of the gauntlet with their back to the gauntlet. The instructor walks down the gauntlet and points to people in line that are to attack the victim. When the instructor indicates, the victim turns around and starts to walk slowly down the gauntlet. Each attack individually can do a grab, punch, or kick that the victim must defend against. The victim then joins the far end of the line and a new victim steps to the start of the gauntlet. This allows each student to get used to reacting and get over the fear of being attacked.

References:

Self Defense Resources:

1. Reference 3: one step sparring and a few self defenses