

Hapkido Brisbane



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Give Yourself a Fighting Chance

Self Defence

You've seen it in movies: A girl walks through an isolated car park. Suddenly, an evil-looking guy jumps out from behind a car. Girl jabs bad guy in the eyes with her keys — or maybe she kicks him in a certain sensitive place. Either way, while he's squirming, she leaps into her car and speeds to safety.

That's the movies. Here's the real-life action replay: When the girl goes to jab or kick the guy, he knows what's coming and grabs her arm (or leg), pulling her off balance. Enraged by her attempt to fight back, he flips her onto the ground. Now she's in a bad place to defend herself — and she can't run away.

Many people think of self-defence as a kick to the groin or jab in the eyes of an attacker. But self-defence actually means doing everything possible to **avoid** fighting someone who threatens or attacks you. Self-defence is all about using your brains — not your fists.

Use Your Head

People who are threatened and fight back "in self-defence" actually risk making a situation worse. The attacker, who is already edgy and pumped up on adrenaline — and who knows what else — may become even more angry and violent. The best way to handle any attack or threat of attack is to try to get away. This way, you're least likely to be injured.

One way to avoid a potential attack before it happens is to trust your instincts. Your intuition, combined with your common sense, can help get you out of trouble. For example, if you're running alone on the park track and you suddenly feel like you're being watched, that could be your intuition telling you something. Your common sense would then tell you that it's a good idea to get back to where there are more people around.

De-Escalating a Bad Situation

Attackers aren't always strangers who jump out of dark alleys. Sadly, people can be attacked by people they know. That's where another important self-defence skill comes into play. This skill is something self-defence experts and negotiators call **de-escalation**.

De-escalating a situation means speaking or acting in a way that can prevent things from getting worse. The classic example of de-escalation is giving a robber your money rather than trying to fight or run. But de-escalation can work in other ways, too. For example, if someone harasses you when there's no one else around, you can de-escalate things by agreeing with him or her. You don't have to actually *believe* the taunts, of course, you're just using words to get you out of a tight spot. Then you can redirect the bully's focus ("Oops, I just heard the bell "), and calmly walk away from the situation.

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Something as simple as not losing your temper can de-escalate a situation. Learn how to manage your own anger effectively so that you can talk or walk away without using your fists or weapons.

Although de-escalation won't always work, it can only help matters if you remain calm and don't give the would-be attacker any extra ammunition. Whether it's a stranger or someone you thought you could trust, saying and doing things that don't threaten your attacker can give you some control.

Reduce Your Risks

Another part of self-defence is doing things that can help you stay safe. Here are some tips:

- ❖ Understand your surroundings. Walk or hang out in areas that are open, well lit, and well travelled. Become familiar with the buildings, parks, and other places you walk. Pay particular attention to places where someone could hide — such as stairways and bushes.
- ❖ Avoid shortcuts that take you through isolated areas.
- ❖ If you're going out at night, travel in a group.
- ❖ Make sure your friends and parents know your daily schedule (classes, sports practice, club meetings, etc.). If you go on a date or with friends for an after-game snack, let someone know where you're going and when you expect to return.
- ❖ Check out hangouts. Do they look safe? Are you comfortable being there? Ask yourself if the people around you seem to share your views on fun activities — if you think they're being reckless, move on.
- ❖ Be sure your body language shows a sense of confidence. Look like you know where you're going and act alert.
- ❖ When riding on public transportation, sit near the driver and stay awake. Attackers are looking for vulnerable targets.
- ❖ Carry a mobile phone if possible. Make sure it's programmed with your parents' phone number.
- ❖ Be willing to report crimes in your neighbourhood and school to the police.