

6 Ways to Overcome Sexual Assault

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Before We Begin

Believe it or not, the information in this booklet can keep you from becoming a victim of a violent or sexual assault. I realize that's a pretty tall order for a little 12-page book, but it's absolutely true if... we begin by redefining our paradigms regarding victims.

Most people define a victim as someone who has been sexually assaulted. Therefore, you are not a victim if you either avoid being assaulted or defeat your attacker during an assault. If that is true, then by our "standard" definition, anyone who is assaulted, but continues to fight back, either through legal recourse or professional counseling is still a "victim."

For the purposes of this booklet, and our Kicks USA Women's Self Defense Workshops, I would ask you to consider the following definition of a victim:

**A person becomes a victim when they willfully choose
to no longer utilize or employ their options and/or
opportunities to overcome a present or past assault
either mentally, physically, or emotionally.**

I would like you to notice the fundamental differences between our two definitions. The first, "standard" definition is only described in terms of a physical act, an assault. Yet victimization, and overcoming an assault, is an issue of mental, physical, and emotional activity and wellbeing.

This booklet is about helping you to become aware of the options and opportunities that exist before, during, and after a sexual assault or encounter. If you choose to embrace these six "Fields of Combat" and, when necessary, activate them in your life, you will never become a "victim" of a violent or sexual assault.

The Facts

Before we define the Six Fields of Combat, we need to take a sobering look at why preventing violent and sexual assaults are of such importance.

In a report by the American Medical Association regarding the “Facts About Sexual Assault”, this is what was said:

- Sexual assault continues to represent the most rapidly growing violent crime in America, claiming a victim every 45 seconds.
- Over 700,000 women are sexually assaulted each year.
- Fewer than 50% of rapes are reported.
- Approximately 80% of sexual assaults against women are committed by friends, acquaintances, intimates, and family members. The remaining 20% are perpetrated by assailants unknown to the victim.
- Lonnie Brostow, M.D., and former AMA president said, “sexual assault is a “silent-violent epidemic” growing at an alarming rate and traumatizing the women and children of our nation.”

(To read the whole report, visit our website at www.kicksusa.com.)

Hopefully these facts make you feel uncomfortable. I say that because, if they do, then you will have a reason to seriously consider preparing yourself against violent and sexual assaults.

6 Fields of Combat

They are called “Fields of Combat” because to effectively utilize them you must actively engage yourself against your attacker either mentally, physically, or emotionally.

The Six Fields of Combat are:

1. Preventive Combat (*Primarily Mental*)
2. Psychological Combat (*Primarily Mental*)
3. Physical Combat (*Primarily Physical*)
4. Passive Combat (*Primarily Emotional*)
5. Public Combat (*Primarily Emotional*)
6. Personal Combat (*Primarily Emotional*)

#1: Preventive Combat

Many people see *Preventive Combat* as a list of situations and circumstances to either engage in or avoid. Such a list might include:

- Avoid dark, deserted areas when alone.
- Ask a clerk, security guard, or store manager to walk you to your car.
- When going to your car have your keys ready.
- Know the location of the local police station.
- Look into your car before you get in
- If you feel you are being followed when driving, don't go home. Drive to the nearest fire or police station.
- Walk with confidence. If a stranger approaches you, walk tall and be assertive.
- At home, lock your doors and windows when alone.
- Consider a monitoring system for your home alarm system that contacts the local police.
- Leave lights on outside of your home.
- Don't advertise that you live alone; i.e. phone book, name on outside mailbox, telephone answering machine.

As important as all of these are, we usually tend to let them travel “in one ear and out the other.” We know that they are good rules to live by, but we generally don't follow them as well as we could or should. The challenge with presenting a list of “Do's and Don'ts” is that the process of simply reading them creates no real impact. We have no way of seeing how our good or bad habits affect our daily lives and our vulnerability.

A more effective way to engage in *Preventive Combat* is to objectively ask yourself these two questions:

1. How closely does my current lifestyle fit the Victim Profile?

2. If I needed to defend myself today, prepared am I?

In an effort to effectively answer these two questions, we have come up with evaluations that determine your Assault Quotient and Prevention Quotient.

Your Assault Quotient answers the question, “how closely does my current lifestyle fit the Victim Profile?” by helping you determine the specific “Dangerous Habits and Conditions” in your life. By doing so we can determine if you are an “Easy Target,” a “Hard Target,” or somewhere in between.

Your Prevention Quotient answers the question, “If I needed to defend myself today, how prepared am I?” This is accomplished by helping you determine how your personality and current activities and skills would assist you during an assault. This evaluation gives you a general idea of how prepared you really are to physically fight off an attacker.

Preventive Combat is not only about “Do’s and Don’ts,” it’s about objectively studying your current lifestyle, finding out how vulnerable you really are, and deciding whether you want to make changes that can help you prevent a violent or sexual assault from occurring in your life.

#2: Psychological Combat

Psychological Combat is the first of three Fields of Combat that exist during an actual assault encounter. The purpose behind *Psychological Combat* is two-fold:

1. Reduce the level of violence and aggression by remaining calm and thoughtful.
2. Disrupt your attacker's plan by behaving unexpectedly. Whether or not you can remain calm during a highly stressful or violent situation is partly a function of your natural disposition, and partly a function of practice. When a stressful event occurs, we all involuntarily react, but not everyone chooses to respond. A "reaction" is an immediate, unconscious mental retort to a given stimulus. A "response" is a conscious decision about how you choose to physically act after your initial reaction. A conscious response might be to physically act in alignment with your reaction, or to purposely act in a completely different way.

Imagine two people standing at the edge of "The Devil's Diving Board," the breathtaking cliff at the top of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park. If they are both afraid of heights, and are forced to stand at that lofty peak, they will both "react" in the same way. Their immediate, involuntary reaction would be gripping fear and mental anxiety. The person who only reacts will involuntarily, physically respond by "freezing up," unable and/or unwilling to move. The person who chooses to consciously respond will still feel the same fear, but they will maintain self control. They will take a deep breath, tell themselves to remain calm, and very cautiously, observe the scene.

Courage, the foundation of choosing a response, is resistance to fear, not the absence of it. It is the motivation behind the first function of *Psychological Combat*, the ability to reduce the level of violence and aggression by remaining calm and thoughtful.

The second part of *Psychological Combat* is to disrupt your attackers plan. By saying or doing something unexpected, they may become confused and abandon their plan or at least

give you an opportunity to strike. The following are a few ways to effectively engage this principle:

- Ask questions. Become a person in the assailant's mind. He doesn't perceive you as an individual; he views you as an object.
- Tell them you have AIDS.
- Tell them you have vaginal cancer.
- Throw Up.

Remember, violent and sexual assaults are not about sexual activity, they are about power and control. If you plead, you will feed and encourage their primary motive for assaulting you, but if you psychologically attack by disrupting their plan it's possible to create opportunities and options for yourself.

#3: Physical Combat

The second opportunity that exists during an assault is to physically attack. This does not mean following your “reaction” by flailing, slapping, and squirming. I’m not saying that those actions won’t work... as a matter of fact, they might. What I am saying is that each Field of Combat is a product of conscious response. Someone can properly engage in *Physical Combat* by taking the time, before an assault occurs, to train their mind, body, and emotions through hands-on self defense classes and/or workshops.

A few of the benefits of enrolling in a self-defense or martial arts program are:

- Knowing **how** to properly strike, to avoid injuring yourself during your attack.
- Knowing **where** to strike, to create the greatest impact, and effect.
- Knowing **when** you should strike, to create the best opportunities for escape.
- Knowing how to **maintain self-control**, so that your fear and anger don’t work against you.
- Knowing **when to stop** a successful counter attack, and what legal repercussions exist for overstepping your boundaries regarding self-defense.

When it comes to *Physical Combat* there is no substitute for participating in a safe, professional, controlled environment where some of the conditions of an assault can be recreated, allowing you to practice specific and effective self-defense skills.

#4: Passive Combat

Passive Combat is submission. As uncomfortable as it may be, submission can be an effective option if your objective is to save your life, or the life of a loved one. Please note that I said submission, not consent. While consent is agreement to an act, submission is a willingness to follow through with an act, even though it's against your will, for a greater purpose or goal.

This Field of Combat is highly emotional, and is the first of the remaining three Fields that will cause you to fight for control, not against your attacker, but against yourself.

#5: Public Combat

Can you still avoid becoming a victim and effectively fight back after a sexual assault encounter? Yes! One option is to engage in *Public Combat*. Going to the police, preserving evidence, and remembering the details about the assault and your attacker, can not only assist in proving forced sex, but can also bring your attacker to justice.

It has been estimated that over 50% of violent and sexual assaults are never reported. That means that thousands of people allow hundreds and hundreds of rapists to attack again. If you are ever confronted with this option, assist the authorities in finding your attacker and bringing them to justice.

#6: Personal Combat

If, despite your preventive, psychological and physical efforts, you are sexually assaulted, (regardless of whether you choose not to engage in *Public Combat* or not) you can still avoid becoming your attacker's victim. This is achieved through *Personal Combat*, by fighting to regain and/or maintain your self control and dignity. Please remember... Don't blame yourself.

Get help - There are many of resources available to people who have survived and continue to fight back against a personal sexual assault.

Look in your local Yellow Pages and make a list of some resources you can turn to in the event of a violent or sexual assault. Specific Yellow Page topic include: Associations, Clinics, Crisis Intervention Service, Social Service Organizations, and Women's Organizations & Services.

Conclusion

If you have felt the same way reading this booklet as I have writing it, we can agree that this is certainly not pleasurable reading. Then again, it's not intended to be. The topic of violent and sexual assaults is sobering at best, but you do have options.

My hope is that the time you have invested here has stirred up some emotions of discomfort and concern, in an effort to move you to action. Always remember that, you can overcome your personal fears regarding violent and sexual assaults, you can live your life with confidence and peace of mind, and if someone tries to assault you, you can fight back!

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