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# Self-Defense

We have a very simple but effective self-defense program at our Martial Arts school. Contrary to what one might think, it has little to do with the styles of martial arts we practice. It has more to do with understanding the thinking of the violent criminal as well as what has worked in the past to escape from them. It is important to note that we do not condone fighting, which we define as a physical contest used to resolve a less than life threatening dispute. We do condone self-defense, which we define as the use of physical or even deadly force to prevent serious harm or death to ourselves or others. This article is in three parts: Mindset, Body Weapons and Improvised Weapons.

## Part I, Mindset:

### 1. ESCAPE!

Remember, we're not talking about a competition or a "fair fight" here. We're talking about avoiding death, rape or serious bodily harm from an attack by a violent criminal. Material possessions are not worth risking your life over. Attempting to apprehend a violent criminal could result in serious injury or death. And preservation of pride can quickly cost you your life. Fight if you have to, but only if you have to, and only for as long as it takes to create an opportunity to escape.

### 2. EXPECT INJURY:

Livestock are lead to their slaughter in an attempt to avoid a superficial shock from a cattle prod or temporary pain from a nose ring. Cooperating with a violent criminal to avoid injury essentially follows the same logic. Stories abound of fatal kidnapping cases where people are coerced into a vehicle at gun point. They let fear of injury lead them to their deaths. Had the victims thought ahead of time about what awaited them inside the car or at "crime scene #2," they'd have taken their chances running for it. Families are easily corralled during a home invasion with threats of violence against other family members. Consider that one escaped family member means a checkmate for the home invaders – the police are on the way. And sticking around and taking a violent criminal at his word: "Cooperate and no one will get hurt" is an exercise in naiveté and wishful thinking – you leave yourself at the mercy of the merciless. When life turns violent – and it can do so on a dime – expect injury so that you are not controlled by the threat of it.

### 3. NEVER, EVER, GIVE UP:

It's easy to say "Of course" to this one, but you really have to visualize what this could entail. With a violent criminal, you're likely to experience extreme pain, disfigurement, injury or God forbid loss of a loved one. In the book "Strong on Defense" (by Sanford Strong, Simon and Schuster 1996) there is a story of a little girl who was kidnapped. Several times during her abduction, she is beaten, sometimes to the point of unconsciousness. Although the situation seemed hopeless, she continued to fight every chance she got and eventually escaped, struggling free of her attacker in the middle of the woods and happening upon hunters who rescued her. This is an area where the right martial arts school, regardless of style, can really help. The number one tenant of Taekwondo, is "Indomitable Spirit" and students work toward making it a way of life.

Work toward escape, expect injury so that you are not controlled by the threat of it, and never, ever give up.

Master Jeff Wade is the 6th dan Chief Instructor and owner of South Miami Martial Arts. He teaches primarily Taekwondo and Aikido. You may reach him at 888-585-KICK or on the school website at [www.MiamiTKD.com](http://www.MiamiTKD.com).