

SAFETY AWARENESS FOR WOMEN (SAW)

With the recent upsurge of violent crimes against women, we have been asked to share some thoughts on combating these despicable happenings.

Allow us to first give a brief perspective of who we are, and how we are seen as qualified to comment on this. **KOMA SEAPAC** is branded as a leading promoter of authentic Korean Martial Arts (KMA), specifically TaeKwonDo or TKD (ChungDoKwan, the world's oldest school) and especially HapKiDo or HKD (SongMooKwan, also respectively the world's oldest school). **HKD** is especially relevant, as it is a **true martial art, developed originally for the battlefield** (and not for civilians), **and used extensively by several countries military forces, including Malaysia's.**

Again, the actual Instructor or head of such a body should be a specialist in his or her field, and have extensive skills, knowledge, experience and the ability to impart these to others. Our head is Julian S. Lim, an internationally recognized Master in both HKD (8th Dan) and TKD (7th Dan), as well as a **Master Specialist in Military Close Quarter Combat** or CQC. He has taught various **US Army elite units** (Special Forces, Special Operations Forces and Airborne) as well as served as the **head** of our own highly acclaimed **Tindakan Tenpur Senjata (HKD) and Combat Bladed Weapons (HKD CQB) military Programs**. He retired from reserve duty with the acting rank of Lieutenant Colonel (Army) in 1999, and is a member of both the US (Army) 75th Ranger Regiment Association and the US (Army) Airborne Pathfinder Association.

Prior to starting on the obvious, let us take a brief moment to review the not so obvious.

Firstly, **the focus of this article is on defending against violent physical crimes against women** in general.

Secondly, due to our military background, some of the terms and acronyms that we use are associated with that environment. Also, some of the points may not be politically correct; however, our primary mission here is not to please everyone, but to try and save pain and lives. Do try to understand this.

Survival depends on 2 basic ideals; minimizing the threat and maximizing our (effective) options.

For a crime to be committed there must be **3 active factors** present:

- 1) The perpetrator must have **Intent**;
- 2) He must have the **Capability**, either general or specific;
- 3) There must be **Opportunity**.

We cannot affect, let alone control, the former 2; we can only strive to minimize the latter, i.e. Opportunity.

Crime prevention begins before the event, and not during it. What we mean is that one should take steps to lessen the odds of being put in a compromising situation before trying to maximize one's chances of extracting one's self after getting into said situation.

Examples are, before driving off, do you have planned route? Do we regularly check the operational status of our transport (being stuck on a deserted road at night because we ran out of petrol or because our tires ran flat is not forward thinking).

Before leaving on a long trip, have we informed our friends of our route, our destination ETA, charged our hand phone, checked the car, etc?

Do we scan our immediate vicinity before pulling off?

Do we routinely check our mirrors to see if we are being followed?

If going to a meeting or in a social event with strangers, are we dressed too much to the nines?

The moral above was **think ahead, and be prepared.**

The **strategic phases** of defensive preparation can be summarized as **SERE**. In military circles, it stands for Survival, Evasion, Rescue and Escape. We have altered it to suit our purposes to better explain things. Within each strategic phase (there are 4) are numerous tactical executions that can be undertaken, depending on the nature of the threat and the tools available to us.

Surveillance:

In this phase, we need to be **continuously aware of our environment**; who is a potential or probable threat, weapons identified and their proximity, escape routes, etc. This must be done at both the conscious and sub-conscious levels. For many of us, this is the **most crucial phase. A danger avoided is a danger overcome.**

An example is when we are trying to alight back into our vehicle at a public car park: can we see our vehicle clearly?

Have we parked our car in a dark spot in the first place?

Is there anyone suspicious near by, either loitering around or sitting in another car, or worse, a van?

Is the area deserted?

Are we walking directly to our car, thus potentially revealing our intended final destination to all?

Are there any surveillance cameras around, and are we in plain view of them?

Has our car alarm been triggered?

Is our alarm working in the first place, and does it have a panic or alert button that is close at hand? Are we being followed?

Have we asked for a security officer to escort us to our vehicle if none of our family or friends are not around?

Are we still fumbling with our bags trying to wonder where our keys are or happily chatting away on our hand phones, totally oblivious to our surroundings?

Where are the exit points?

If at a party, have you left your drink unattended for too long? Could someone have tampered with it?

In short, **is there a probable threat, and what are our options?**

Evasion:

On identifying a probable threat, we must try to **avoid it by all means**. This could be by simply walking away from your car for a while due to a suspicious character loitering nearby, even if they are in another car; apologizing to an offended party; requesting for assistance from a security or law official; reversing course and walking towards a more public area and going back later; if the threat is deemed

serious and immediate, waving down other cars for possible assistance, etc.

It cannot be more highly stressed that it is **better to break contact than to stay**. If one feels that one would "freeze" because one would slip into a panic, try to overcome this identified or potential problem by proven methods, e.g. visualize the situation; take self defense classes for better self confidence; attend related workshops and practice evasion scenarios either alone or better, with friends.

NEVER stay if you override your instincts because you may be pressed for time, or the threat doesn't look that bad, or "no one would really target ME", or because you think that it could be an opportunity to try out that cool move you did once in kick boxing class.

Other examples of evading threats: - do we lock our car doors when we drive?

Do we get into our car and fumble around with non-essential things instead of immediately locking the doors and scanning the area?

Do we avoid higher risk areas at night?

Do we alter our daily travel routes wherever possible?

Do we, after withdrawing money from the bank, proceed immediately to a safe location or do we happily go off for a cup of tea, leaving the cash in the car, under the seat?

One very critical example of avoiding a potential threat for children: parents, give them an **IFF** (Identification, Friend or Foe) **code**. This is to allow them some security should there ever be a need for someone else other than you or the designated person to pick them up or to take them somewhere and you cannot contact them before hand to explain. Please make the code as simple as possible. Also, you need to change the code **EACH** time it is compromised or used.

The moral here is simple: **better to run away and come back another day**.

Reaction:

If avoidance is impractical or impossible, we need to **react quickly and efficiently**.

Reaction could be **passive**, e.g. Have you checked the ingress points of your home lately? Do you hold fire escape drills in your house for all the family members? Are there fire extinguishers or smoke detectors in the critical areas?

If you have lost your keys or are moving into a new house, have you changed the locks?

Are you using ordinary locks or high security 5 bolts and up locks? Again, are you using one master key for the multiple locks or several?

Normal reactions are **active** in nature. If you can, try to react in a way that allows you to create an opportunity to escape; if a perpetrator asks you for your wallet, take it out, show it to the person, and then throw it away from you, preferably behind or to the side of him. This could give you an opening to run when he turns to retrieve it.

One can also consider a first strike option if it is felt justified (must we wait for the attack we know is coming, thus risking injury to ourselves and loved ones?). It must be understood that **this is more of a last resort**. A majority of robbery cases end without major harm if we give up our valuables.

To be able to physically overcome an attacker with a good probability of success, one needs to have good **self defense** or better, **CQC skills**, including weapons training.

When enabling yourselves with tactical defensive skills, please remember some **golden rules**:

Most women are physically **weaker** than men;

The longer the fight, the **higher** the aggressor's chances are of defeating you tactically (if they are a male);

A perpetrator has no compassion for you, therefore **do not** have any for him;

The longer and harder you train in class, the **better** your chances;

If you carry a weapon or substitute weapon (keys, spray), **know** how to use it.

Again, please be aware of how effective and pertinent your training is; if your class focuses on sport aspects, **THIS IS NOT A SPARRING EVENT**. If your class focuses on kick/punch and fitness, run fast, as **BAGS DO NOT HIT BACK**.

Find a genuine self defense or better, a CQC class to maximize your chances. **Train as you wish to fight; fight as you have trained. Military CQC focuses on avoidance, and then, if committed, quick, effective, threat elimination.** Not sport. Not looking good.

Also, make sure that the techniques used are suitable for females against males.

Do you only practice with **other females**, or do you include practice against male training partners? If you do not, for whatever reasons, pray that your mugger, rapist or potential harm bringer is a woman.

Again, a reverse punch and jump spinning kick to the upper section looks good when done by the very competent black belt, but **can it seriously work for you against a male aggressor with a high degree of success?**

The moral here is **to know your limitations, and take steps to overcome them.**

Escape:

When the threat has been neutralized, we need to evacuate ourselves out of Dodge soonest (get away now!).

There is absolutely **NO** need to stay around once you have him down. Even if the intended victim was a male, **we always advocate a rapid withdrawal policy.**

We have tried to cover some normal day scenarios in our examples. They have deliberately been kept limited to assist in giving quick and consistent platforms to refer to. Other areas that we need to be careful about are our own homes, our offices, our children's' schools, any public area, etc.

We hope that this article has been useful, and should you wish to start an effective CQC or self defense training program, please contact us to discuss our suitability for your needs (www.jlim.net or 6012-300-3636).

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