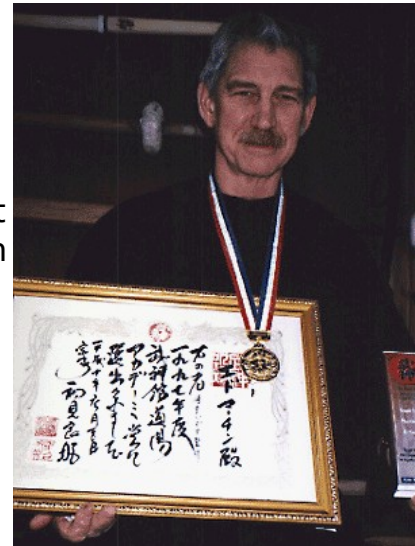


Ed Martin

Misconceptions About Self Defense

There are many misconceptions commonly held about what is necessary for self defense. One misconception is that size and strength determine a persons ability to defend themselves. In this series of articles I hope to address these misconceptions and offer alternatives of which anyone can take advantage. Please understand that what I write about in this series is not sport but serious self defense. It is intended to prevent an attacker from causing harm.



The very first principle in self defense simply is don't stay where the attack can hit you. Without the knowledge of how to get out of the way, this can be difficult to accomplish. Getting out of the way requires getting **off the line of attack**. It is very difficult to avoid an attack by backing away when your attacker is coming forward because your attacker can move forward faster and easier than you can move backward. One of the most effective ways of getting off the line of attack is to shift the weight to one leg while twisting the hips. The movement must be done with the spine straight and the shoulders remaining in line with the hips.

The following exercise helps train the body to move correctly. Put a line on a full length mirror, align your center with the line, and with the feet shoulder width apart, shift your weight from one leg to the other while twisting your hips. Watch the line on the mirror, you will see how the center of your body actually moves three to four inches to the side of the line.

Most sports require a lot of time training because an athlete must rely on his/her muscle memory when the action starts . Once correct muscle memory is learned, the correct response will be automatic and without thought. In an altercation there is no time for thought, everything happens too fast. Conversely when the body moves without thought, the appearance is blinding speed.

In addition distance is critical to the speed with which an action occurs. Simply if your opponents fist or foot must move three feet while you only need to move three inches, your opponent would need to be impossibly fast in order to succeed. Speed and distance are inseparably connected.

Let's add one more action to this hip movement exercise, let your hands come up about eye level with your elbows close to your sides. When you turn, let your elbow contact the attacker's arm or leg, whichever is extended. Don't reach for it, just let the power of your body movement do the work. If you have ever had an elbow hit your leg, you know how much that hurts! Done correctly it will probably mean that your opponent won't throw another attack. Take note of your positioning in relation to your attacker. Many of your attacker's vulnerable points will be exposed.