

These self-defense strategies work equally well for men and women. Although most courses teach skills to quickly and efficiently destroy an attacker, these strategies include more methods for preventing a confrontation to be more practical and drastically increase your chances of surviving.

1. **Trust Your Instincts:** If the situation feels bad, don't second guess yourself. Your instinct is a built-in danger detection system. Rely on it.
2. **Don't be an Accessible Target:** If you have the opportunity to escape a situation before it turns bad, take it.
3. **Be Confident.** Be aware of your body language and project confidence. Predators target those who appear weak, vulnerable, frightened, confused and/or distracted. Hold your head up and keep your hands out of your pockets.
4. **Set Strong Verbal Boundaries.** Good verbal skills are a strong self-defense tool. If you're engaged in a conversation with a predator, you're being probed for weaknesses. Be calm and speak confidently and assertively with the power of your voice.
5. **Have a Non-Confrontational Stance.** Stand relaxed with your hips and shoulders forward, your arms bent, and your hands up and open. This posture may signal that you're willing to comply, but you'll be ready to strike if it becomes necessary, and the predator probably won't be ready for it. In a self-defense situation, one of your secret weapons is the element of surprise. If you assume a fighting posture on the other hand, this tells the attacker you're ready to fight and will probably result in them being even more aggressive.
6. **Keep a Safe Distance.** Once an aggressor enters your personal space/comfort zone, your discomfort becomes obvious because you know you need that space to put up a fight. Try to maintain a one and a half arms length of space. If the aggressor starts closing in, use verbal boundaries. If he doesn't back off, it's time to get physical.
7. **Use the Element of Surprise.** Most predators assume you cannot defend yourself, so take advantage of the element of surprise. If you're engaged in a conversation, you have the opportunity to use verbal skills and a non-confrontational stance to entice the aggressor into dropping his guard. If you're grabbed from behind, you must respond immediately. In either case, putting up a fight can surprise him and increase your chance of landing the first blow.



8. **Keep Your Techniques Simple.** A loss of fine motor skills results from an adrenaline release, so simple movements like unlacing your fingers or pulling your hands out of your pockets can become much more challenging. And the odds of your executing a beautiful joint lock or high kick rapidly diminish. Learn techniques that are basic and stick with them in a self-defense scenario. Here's some recommendations:

- **Heel-palm strike.** Hitting with an open hand reduces the chance that you'll injure your hand and enables you to more easily attack from a non-confrontational stance. Hold your hands up and open while you set verbal boundaries. Then, if your attacker steps into your comfort zone — **BAM!** — land it right in his face.
- **Eye strike.** The eye strike can be used in a standing or prone position. Often, simply driving your fingers toward your assailant's eyes will cause him to recoil. Even if you don't make contact, it creates space to set up a more devastating blow.
- **Knee strike.** This technique is recommended over any type of standing kick because it is easy to use and can be delivered while you stay centered and close to the ground. That's crucial when you're adrenalized. A knee to the groin can end a fight immediately.

9. **Don't Panic if You're Knocked Down.** Although a male assailant counts on knocking a woman to the ground, they're typically not skilled fighters. They're bullies. Now is a good time for that heel-palm strike or eye strike. And a good, solid kick either too. The side thrust kick also gives you an advantage because your legs are longer than his arms. That means he'll have to expose his body to your kick if he wants to reach you. Knee strikes also function effectively on the ground. While you struggle with your attacker, he probably won't protect his groin. Once you see an opening, get close enough to strike upward into his crotch.

10. **Follow Through.** The fight is only over when no longer exists. You must be completely committed to the battle. If you fight back and then pause, you give up the initial advantage you gained from using the element of surprise. Once your opponent knows you can fight, it becomes more difficult for you to prevail. To survive, you must continue your barrage until it's safe to stop striking and escape. **Finish the job.**

