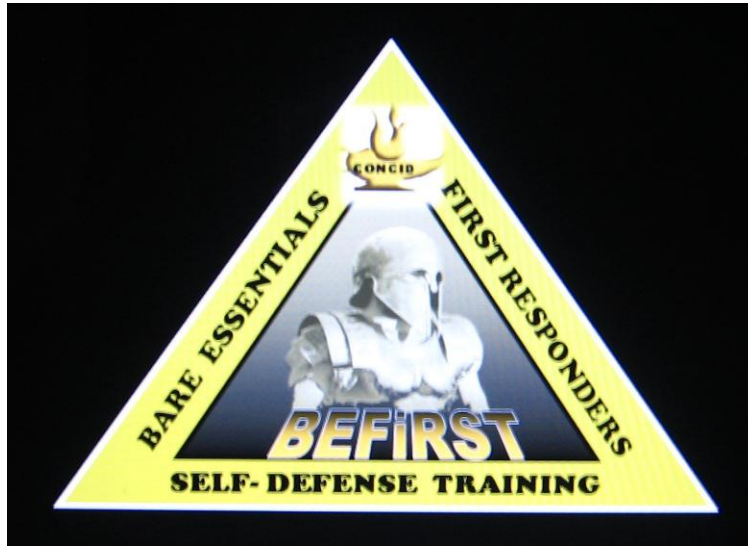
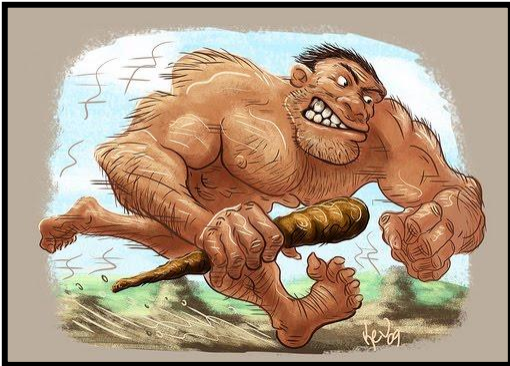


Bare Essentials First Responders Self-defense Training



By L. Rivera

Ever since the beginning of time, humans have used their fists, rocks, sticks and whatever else was available to them as a mean to fight, defend or protect their family and self. With time they began to formalize and systematize these skills into forms of combat that are known as Martial Arts—fighting methods that involved the use of natural as well as



manmade weapons. Some martial arts historians claim the foundation of the arts started with the development of language by ancient people for their protection against enemies and animals. However, it is the author's opinion that man identified the need for *self-protection* way before there was a language; it makes more sense that such skills found their origins as the answer to man's primal instinct of survival. The bottom line is that when it comes to effectively protecting oneself a stick, a rock, a punch or kick are not enough. For

this reason, an effective form of Self-defense must also include the knowledge of when, where and how to use the techniques learned, in other words, it must also include self-defense strategy.

Self-defense Strategy



First Responders from CAP Senior Practicing Self-defense

Self-defense situations involve two separate and distinct stages, the “**Pre-conflict Stage** and the **Engagement Stage.**” The **Pre-conflict Stage** refers to changes in the environment that gives the individual a series of indications or signals that something is about to happen. The second stage, **The Engagement Stage**, refers to the actual confrontation. Consequently, for any self-defense centric fighting strategy to be effective it must address both stages.

The Pre-Confrontation Stage

Detecting these signals can only happen when the individual is aware of his or her environment. The fact of the matter is that most people go through their daily lives completely oblivious of the many hazards around them. If one was to stand on a corner and look at people passing by, one would see that 90% of them—including police officers and other key personnel—are too busy listening to their music, talking on their cell phones or texting, consequently placing themselves in constant danger by not being able to detect the signals that can provide early warning of potential dangerous situations. The bottom line is that first responders cannot afford the luxury of being in that state of mind and must re-educate themselves or relearn how to be more observant in order to react appropriately to these changes.



The aforementioned changes can easily be accomplished by using a system called the Cooper’s Color Code. A code developed by retired USMC LTC John Dean Cooper—AKA, Jeff Cooper. According to Cooper, the most important means of surviving a lethal confrontation is neither weapons nor the martial skills, but awareness. Cooper introduced a system that applies to the states of readiness. It consists of four mental states, to which LTC Cooper assigned different colors that concur with the basic four mental states of awareness allowing the individual to conceptualize them—relate them to the environment.

Cooper’s Color Code

(1) **CONDITION WHITE**- The IPOD and Cell Phone syndrome—a state of mind characterized by the person being unaware, not alert, oblivious to the dangers that threaten their security. People in the white state usually walk around with their heads down not noticing awaiting dangers. Condition white is appropriate for when:

- **One is at home with the cat**
- **Gun within reach**
- **The doors locked**
- **The alarm system on**

Anything less than this requires that one elevate the level of awareness to **Condition Yellow**.

(2) **CONDITION YELLOW**- Or state of general awareness. This stage requires for the person to have his or her head up and eyes open, to be alert and aware of the surroundings. These simple adjustments will make the individual a less appealing target and also help identify things that are unusual with the potential of becoming a hazard—like running into a light pole, or being surprised by an assailant—if something fishy is identified one can elevate ones awareness level to **Condition Orange**.

(3) **CONDITION ORANGE**- The difference between Yellow and ORANGE is that in Orange one would have already identified the potential threat. Once the person feels that he or she have been identified as a target, the condition must be elevated to **Condition Red**.

(4) **CONDITION RED**- *The time to get it on ...!!!*

The Engagement Stage



Once the determination has been made that a confrontation is eminent and there is no way it can be avoided, it is time to get ready for the big time. Although there are no rules in the streets and every situation is different, there are a series of principles that can help a person overcome not only an attacker—regardless of the environment—but also the fears and anxieties associated with it. The strategy is called **B.E.A.M.**—a fighting strategy that is taught in Chinese and Okinawa Kenpo—**B.E.A.M.** stands for *Breath, Eyes, Attention and Movement*.

Women Self-defense training as part of St. Paul's United Church Mission in Mozambique

Breath, Eyes, Attention and Movement (B.E.A.M.)

Self-defense Strategy

- **Breath: If your opponent can't breathe, he or she can't fight.** Take the attacker's **Breath** away, you'll win.
- **Eyes: If your opponent can't see, he or she would not be able to anticipate the blow and protect against it.** Take his or her **Eyesight**, you'll win.

- **Attention**: Take away his or her **Attention**, you'll win.
- **Movement**: If your opponent can't move, he or she wouldn't be able to get away or come after you. Take away his or her **Movement**, you'll win.

The Seven Stars

In the traditional Chinese martial Arts, the natural weapons of a human body are called the "seven stars." These are divided into two classes—higher and lower—the higher consist of the shoulders, elbows, and hands; all of which can be used in a variety of ways. The lower stars refer to the lower extremities such as the person's waist, their knees, and their feet. And last, but not least is the head or the central star." These natural weapons will work best when employed against the vulnerable parts of the body, in other words one must Attack **Soft Targets** with **Hard Bones**."



"Bones against Flesh"

Bones against flesh is just what it sounds like, using the bones of the body to attack soft tissue, such as muscles and nerves. Two of the best examples of the application of the aforementioned are "**Kicks to then legs and to the groin**" which when properly used can cause serious damage and can temporarily incapacitate the opponent.

It is the dream of every man and woman to become better, to become physically and mentally stronger, and to have the ability to protect themselves from those who will not hesitate to harm them" (Oyama, 1965).

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