

"Fighting Back"

**BAC FU DO KUNG FU
GRADING FOR BLUE SASH
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INTRODUCTION

Some women start self defence classes for much the same reasons as men, the fun of involvement, developing friends, a healthier lifestyle, as a competitive sport, the opportunity to specialise, gain recognition, or as a precaution: re: 'a sign of the time'. For others, unfortunately they are forced to learn some form of physical protection.

Almost every day you hear about the frightening and appalling acts of violence directed against women. Most women live in fear of some kind of assault by a man, whether they are mugged or, far worse, a physical assault on their person. Women who have been violated by rape, or assaulted, feel they must learn some form of self defence as a way of dealing with their fear, and by gaining the physical skills to prevent it happening again. It is a way of reversing the humiliating source of powerlessness which is one of rape's lasting and devastating effects.

HOW WOMEN'S ATTITUDES DIFFER TO MEN.

The underlying bias of sport between male and female in Australia, places many females at a distinct disadvantage (even before she is old enough to know that she wants to be involved) because many females are not encouraged to participate in sports that were previously male dominated. Some men are still convinced that females should not be involved, let alone enjoy, certain sports, especially physical contact sports such as Kung Fu.

"Society expects less from the female athlete and values less what she does achieve."

This information is conveyed to girls and women in such a way that they are more likely than males to underestimate their athletic abilities. Males, on the other hand, tend to overestimate their ability.

(Nelson & Nelson, 1977)

Women tend to underestimate their athletic abilities because, again from a very young age, girls are reinforced differently from boys. There is a tendency to give boys a praise for their accomplishments, such as "you really hammered that guy in the ring." While females would be more likely to be told "you look great in boxing shorts."

The impact of a women perceiving herself to be lacking in ability may adversely affect her self-confidence and motivation. If she loses confidence she may be reluctant to keep pursuing goals. The male on the other hand, preserves his self-esteem by believing he has the ability, he just needs to try harder. I have also noticed that while challenged with the recent tournaments, women tend to strive for personal standards, while males are more preoccupied with defeating their opponents. e.g.; more women doing sets rather than sparring. While on the topic, I would also like to note at last year's NAS tournament, there was no category for women continuous sparring. So I put forward a sheepish request to the male co-ordinator. "Could both men and women be combined into one category?". The response was "We wouldn't want any guy to hurt you." At the time I felt that some of those guys did look considerably hefty. BUT, later when contemplating it wouldn't look good if a women hammered a guy.

Remember the old saying "Horses sweat, men perspire, but women only glow?" The man who made that observation obviously didn't know any female athletes!

Research into women in sport has increased dramatically and scientific evidence has shown that men and women are, in fact, have little difference in tapping their sporting potential. This is not to suggest that women athletes should necessarily be compared to men or that women's performances will eventually equal men's. The important issue is that the public at large, hold expectations for women athletes that are realistic.

As Cathy Reid, sports reporter for Ten News Canberra said: "Womens sports have to be marketed on their own merits. Comparing womens sport to mens is like comparing Mike Tyson to Jeff Harding. They both reign as world champions but no one would expect a head-to-head competition." (Active, Volume 2, Number 3)

IS SIZE IMPORTANT

Women are generally smaller, and not as strong as men. There are a few exceptions, but not too many. I think it is a good idea to know your disadvantages and concentrate on improving them. If your attacker is excessively large, remember to strike at his weak points. There are no exercises to strengthen his nose, or his groin. Being smaller or having a slighter frame than an attacker does not automatically put you at a disadvantage.

A single but forceful palm strike to the nose can be fatal. It doesn't take much pressure to dislocate the knee, and a well aimed side kick can have more than enough power to bring an attacker to his knees. If the attacker is towering, first use a rising technique to his groin, the tall person will kindly double over to a more reachable height for you to follow through with a strike to the temple - this causes hair line fracture; or a strike to the sternum to impair respiration. When faced with an attacker who is much taller, contrary to what most people think - it is best to get in close, otherwise his long reach will keep you at bay and instantaneously connect with a considerable amount of force. While in close under the attacker's guard, a straight finger jab to the armpit crunches the nerves and arteries against the shoulder. (Wash hands after) The elbow can be used to attack any vulnerable area. It is a very powerful weapon and it also is most effective when your attacker is close.

The following is an example of some weak points on the male body, it is a good idea to know where they are, and practice accuracy when striking.
Diagram 1

MULTIPLE ATTACKERS

Obviously, two opponents are more dangerous than one, but you can still benefit from the element of surprise. Your attackers do not expect effective readiness. Move quickly, make every kick and strike count, try using one attacker as a shield from the other. Go for a punch, elbow, then throw hip in to throw the attacker off-balance - this is particularly good for tight situations.

Simple objects around you may also be helpful:

- * use car keys to jab the attacker in the eyes
- * stomp on his foot, if wearing high heels even better
- * a broom handle could be used as a staff
- * jab with a pencil or pen
- * a rolled-up newspaper can be used to jab at pressure

points

- * throw dirt into eyes if you are on the ground

Your body is loaded with many natural weapons:

- * finger gouge or thumb press to the attacker's eyes
- * hair pulling, pinching and biting
- * popping attacker's ears with both your hands cupped
- * elbow strike to nose, chin, solar plexus etc.

twist then
other people
control

* knee to groin, hand strike to groin, grab a handful
pull
* shout - this startles your attacker and may attract
to help you
Just keep using defensive tactics until the situation is under

CONCLUSION

Female athletes still receive less than 5% of print and television media, yet they win over 30% of Australia's Olympic medals. Given that they have fewer Olympic events than men, they bring home proportionately more medals. (Triathlon Oct 1993)

I tend to be critical of the media and general public's reluctance to take women- participate those in fighting sports - seriously, these things are changing, as time moves on and people understand more and gain an education of Martial Arts, I think women will have a much easier time getting positive acceptance and exposure from the general public and the media.

Kung-Fu apart from teaching me how to look after myself has taught me how to look at things from a different perspective - things that can be related to other areas of my life. "how to handle fear", for example - to become confident, to become assertive and not overly aggressive.

Most women Martial artists, may never have to apply their physical skills, many are so alert with the constant training, that would be muggers rarely get close enough to do any damage, but should any female martial artist be taken by surprise, they would have sufficient confidence in their techniques to know that they can defend themselves.