

The Art of SELF DEFENSE



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- 1** Your attacker grabs you from behind.
- 2** Place either leg in between the attacker's leg.
- 3** Simultaneously, force your elbows outwards. Use one to injure your attacker, aiming for his chest. Use the other to break your attacker's grasp.
- 4** Using the arm closest to your attacker, make a fist and swing it towards their groin.
- 5** Quickly, send your fist into an uppercut on the attacker.

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OST EVERY martial art is rooted in the idea of defending oneself, and a historical perspective of martial arts shows that this true. For example, the Samurai created jujitsu for use in and out of battle. This trend continues to this day; self-defense is still the basis of many modern martial art styles. Modern military training utilizes different forms of unarmed combat to train a soldier in the event that he or she loses his or her weapon. Militaries, such as the Israeli Defense Force, require that soldiers learn Krav Maga, a physically intensive hand-to-hand fighting style, as part of basic training.

At a glance, it may seem that modern weapons make martial arts just a bunch of ancient techniques, useless outside of very spe-

cific circumstances such as the military. The truth is that martial arts can help anyone overcome a variety of dangerous situations. Dr. Clyde Hull, associate professor at the Saunders College of Business and third Dan black belt in Chun Tong Moo Do (a style of Tae Kwon Do), said, "You don't have a lot of time to think when you're being threatened. That's how training can help. You won't need to think, because you already know what to do."

This reminded me of a situation last summer. I was walking with a friend in downtown Houston, Texas when a man brandished a knife and demanded our money. Having recently received my fourth belt in Brazilian Jujitsu, I reacted quickly and, luckily, I knew exactly what we had to do. We handed our wallets over without a fight, and the mugger left.

This might seem counterintuitive. What's the point of learning martial arts if you aren't going to use it? Don't misunderstand me. At the time, my mind was racing with different techniques, punches, kicks and throws. Had he tried to hurt my friend or myself, I wouldn't have hesitated to use my training. But, if I attempted to take him down, I could have ended up in the hospital, or worse.

Cameron Fiederer, a fourth year Computer Science major and %Nichan% (second degree) black belt in karate, said, "Karate is not about showing off. We only teach self-defense as a last resort. The goal is not to hurt people." If you're going to learn martial arts the most fundamental rule you can learn about self-defense is: %If you can avoid a fight, do so%. Hull emphasizes this point, "The first thing to consider when confronted by someone who is being aggressive is to consider giving them what

they want. There is no need to put your life on the line for your wallet or some money." Defending yourself is important, but you have to understand that not only is there a danger for your physical well-being, but you can also run into trouble with the law. Prison time will be inevitable if you end up severely injuring or killing your attacker.

Unfortunately, the world doesn't always work the way you want it to, and that means even after you comply with an aggressor, they could still want to hurt you. This is where martial arts can help put the odds on your side, but it won't make you invulnerable. Whatever the case may be, it is better to be prepared, and fortunately RIT provides many classes and clubs to help you learn the skills.