

STUN AND RUN COURSE

Facts About Sexual Assault





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Some people have the wrong idea about sexual assault. They think the assailant was overcome with sexual desire, the victim was dressed too seductively or "asked for it", or that all victims wanted sexual contact.

These ideas assume that sexual assault is motivated by passion. It isn't. Sexual assault is a violent crime, a hostile attack, an attempt to hurt and humiliate. Sex is only the weapon.

Sexual assault is a crime, and it occurs with increasing frequency, but remains the most under-reported crime in the US criminal justice system. In the USA, there is a rape every six minutes. A woman is beaten every 18 seconds; three to four million are battered every year. Three out of four women will be the victims of at least one violent crime during their lifetime. These statistics are repeated, in countries worldwide, year after year.

In over one-half of reported rapes, the rapist is an acquaintance, neighbor, friend or relative. Acquaintance rape is less likely to be reported to the authorities than rape by a stranger. Acquaintance rape frequently occurs under circumstances where the victim, the attacker or both have been drinking or are intoxicated. The victim of an acquaintance rape may not recognize it as a crime or consider the incident as a rape.

The Victim - You are a victim of a crime if you have had unwanted sexual contact. Sexual assault is no less serious just because you know your assailant. Previous sexual contact with your assailant does not justify or excuse the crime. If you think sexual assault is motivated by passion or happens because the victim asked for or wanted it, look at the facts. Sexual assault can happen to anyone - you, your children, co-workers or friends, or other members of your family.

The Situation - Perhaps you think sexual assault happens only in certain high-risk situations such as hitchhiking, walking alone at night, or going out socially alone. It's true that sexual assault can occur in such situations, but it also takes place in ordinary, seemingly safe places. In fact, about one-third of all rapes occur in or near the victim's residence. About one-half of rapes are by first or casual dates or romantic acquaintances.

The Rapist - Imagine a typical rapist. Whom do you picture? A sex-crazed man? A psychopath? More often than not, those stereotypes are wrong. Most rapists don't look peculiar or behave strangely. Mainly, they want to hurt, humiliate and degrade another human being. Rapists are not sexually deprived men; most have available sexual outlets. In addition, many are married and lead normal lives prior to conviction and often come from the same socioeconomic background as their victims. Rapists may be repeaters and may continue to rape until they are caught.

The Crime - "I thought I could trust him; I thought he was my friend. I started feeling uncomfortable, but I ignored my feelings. I thought he would never do anything to hurt me. Suddenly, he was a stranger. He was doing something I never thought he would be capable of - my friend was raping me." Donna - 20-year old acquaintance rape survivor.

INCREASING YOUR SAFETY FACTORS

Anyone can be a victim.

Sexual assault awareness is based on environmental alertness. Remember, alcohol dulls your reflexes. When uncomfortable, trust your instincts!

Be Alert When with Acquaintances

- Find out about a new date. Ask others who know or have dated the person. Date with friends before accepting a single date. Make definite plans in advance. Don't leave a group setting with a person you don't know well.
- Set sexual limits and communicate those limits. Tell your partner clearly what you intend. Establish that any sexual activity will be a mutual decision. Speak up if you're getting confusing messages from your partner. Be forceful and firm; don't worry about being polite. Don't fall for lines such as "You would if you loved me." Consider or practice approaches such as "Stop this! I'm not enjoying it." Pay your own way or share costs to avoid arguments such as "You owe me - I spent all this money on you." Beware of partners who disregard your requests.
- Be assertive. State what you really want and are feeling. Remember, alcohol and other drugs compromise your ability to make decisions. When you say "no", make your message clear. When you say "yes", be sure you know what you're agreeing to. Don't be embarrassed to yell, make a scene or run away. Don't worry about offending your partner; remember, you are being humiliated.
- If you are uncomfortable with a date, you can choose to end it. Take your own vehicle or meet at the destination. Carry money for a phone call or fare home. Avoid parties where men greatly outnumber women. Don't accept rides from newly made acquaintances.
- Be careful when inviting someone to your residence or accepting an invitation to theirs. Avoid secluded places where you are put in a vulnerable position. Acquaintance rapes often occur in a residence.
- Take care of yourself - don't assume other people will take care of you or protect you from harm.
- Trust your INSTINCTS - believe your inner feelings when you get uncomfortable about a person or situation. Respond as soon as you feel uncomfortable!

Be Alert Where You Live

- Be sure the doors of your residence are locked when you are there as well as when away.
- Use peepholes to identify people before opening the door.
- Require identification from service providers.

- Don't let anyone you don't know well inside your residence to use the phone; make the call for them.
- Never indicate to anyone that you are alone.
- Close curtains and shades at night.
- List your initials instead of your first name on your mailbox and in the telephone directory.
- Refrain from doing laundry in a deserted or poorly lighted facility.
- Avoid being in isolated areas such as laundries or parking garages by yourself, especially at night.
- Always have your key ready for quick entry into your residence.
- Have a telephone readily available near your bed for quick use at night.
- Hang up immediately on unwanted calls.
- If you find a door or window open or signs of forced entry upon arriving at your residence, don't enter. Go to the nearest phone and call the police.

Be Alert When Walking

- Avoid walking alone.
- Stay in well-lighted areas, away from alleys, bushes, and entryways.
- Walk confidently, directly, and at a steady pace.
- Walk on the side of the street facing traffic.
- If a driver stops to ask directions, avoid getting near the vehicle.
- Don't hitchhike and only accept rides from people you know well.
- If a car appears to be following you, turn and walk in the opposite direction.
- Carry a whistle and use it if you feel you are in danger.
- If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Yell, call for help, shout "fire", or break a window.

Above all, be aware of your surroundings and the people around you, even those you know.

Be Alert In Vehicles

- Have your key ready when you approach your vehicle.
- Check inside your vehicle before entering.
- Always keep your vehicle locked with windows up, even while driving.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- Avoid isolated roads and short-cuts.
- Never pick up hitchhikers or people you don't know well.
- Keep your vehicle in good repair. Make certain you have enough fuel.
- Remain inside your vehicle if you develop mechanical trouble. Keep the doors locked and the windows up until help arrives. To signal distress, put up the hood or display a sign. If someone stops to offer help, don't leave the vehicle; ask that they call the police or a service provider.
- If you are followed, drive to the nearest open business for help, or go to a police or fire station.
- When dropping someone off, wait until passengers have safely entered their residence or destination.
- If involved in a minor collision at night or in an isolated location, do not exit to inspect damage or contact the other driver. Signal the other driver with your lights, and proceed to the nearest lighted and occupied business or police station.
- Report suspicious or criminal activity to the police immediately

Know Your Defenses

Anyone can be a victim of sexual assault. You should think about the kinds of defense you would be willing to use. In some cases, resistance can frighten off or discourage the attacker, but it can also lead a rapist to become more violent or increase efforts to subdue the victim.

Now is the time to consider your options; there is little time to think during an attack. Could you really hurt an acquaintance who tried to hurt you? Are you willing to yell? Are you able to run? Remember, rape is a crime of violence, not passion. You've got to assume that a rapist is willing to use violence. If you are attacked, your main concern must always be your safety.

Because all people and all situations are different, there is no ONE way for you to protect yourself. People have different capabilities, and you must decide for yourself the best defense method for you.

There are several ways to react to a sexual assault...

Passive Resistance

The goal of passive resistance is to think and talk your way out of the situation. With passive resistance, you can:

- Try to calm the attacker. Try to persuade him not to carry out the attack.
- Some rapists will stop when forced into adult reasoning mode and faced with the consequences of their actions. Tell him this is rape, someone will find him, he will go to prison.
- Other methods are throwing the rapist off guard by faking an epileptic fit or pretending to faint or urinating, defecating or sticking fingers down the throat to induce vomiting as few people can stand the smell.
- Claim to be sick or pregnant. Tell him you have a sexually transmitted disease. This may intimidate the attacker.
- Try to discourage him. Pretend to faint, cry hysterically, act insane or mentally incapacitated.
- If you're at your residence, tell the attacker a friend is coming over or that your spouse or roommate will be back soon.

Active Resistance

Active resistance is intended to distract or temporarily injure your attacker to create an opportunity for escape. Nobody can tell you whether or not active resistance will be the "right" thing to do. A decision to resist actively, however, is irreversible. Your goal is to escape, not to win. Here are some pros and cons regarding the most common types of active resistance:

YELLING

A yell can surprise or frighten an attacker away if he fears people will come to help. But yelling won't help in isolated or noisy areas.

WEAPONS

Some people carry weapons such as guns, knives, or spray chemicals to ward off attackers. Unless you are trained and not afraid to use these weapons, they can be very dangerous. The attacker might be able to turn them against you. Also, some weapons cannot legally be carried, so check with local law enforcement authorities.

STRUGGLING and FIGHTING BACK USING MARTIAL ARTS

Special self-defense skills such as those taught at Champion Martial Arts are very useful in discouraging or ending an attack. If you are proficient in such techniques, they can be very effective. But proficiency requires practice. A forceful struggle may discourage an attacker, but you must be aware that many will retaliate with the potential to inflict serious injuries. However, you must not be afraid to hurt an attacker. All kicks and blows must be forceful and should be aimed at vulnerable areas such as the groin, eyes, nose, ears, throat or shins.

We use the acronym G.E.N.T.S. to help you remember these vital points.

G - groin

E – ears & eyes

N – nose

T – throat

S - shins

Submitting to an Attack

If you believe you might get hurt defending yourself or if you're afraid to fight back, keep this in mind: Studies have dispelled the myth that women are unable to protect themselves and that resistance will only "make things worse," replacing this erroneous claim with newfound data: immediate and aggressive responses including fighting back *are* effective. Conversely pleading, reasoning or appealing to a rapist's humanity is not - the latter being "almost universally futile," notes Dr. Judith Herman, foremost authority on trauma and author of the best-selling book *Trauma and Recovery*.

"By not resisting rape, women may be putting themselves at greater risk," says Sarah Ullman, assistant professor from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Of course fighting carries risks, but Ullman's research on resistance strategies concluded that a woman's "level of physical injury is mainly determined by the offender's use of violence" and initial blows struck, not because she fought back.

Having choices and defense skills may also be critical in the aftermath. "The women who fought to the best of their abilities were not only more likely to be successful in thwarting the rape attempt, but less likely to suffer severe distress symptoms," wrote Herman. "By contrast, women who submitted without a struggle were more likely to be highly self critical and more depressed in the aftermath."

However, even if you don't fight back, sexual assault is still an assault and still a crime, even if you do not have a single cut or bruise. Victims who do not resist should never feel guilty; it is the assailant who committed the crime.

REMEMBER THIS:

If attacked, escape

If trapped, stay alive

If assaulted, memorize details

If You Have Been Attacked...

What Should You Do If You're A Survivor of Sexual Assault?

Giving in is a survival strategy - don't blame yourself! A rape-threatening situation is a life-threatening situation. Your only responsibility is to yourself; stay alive.

Many survivors of sexual assault don't know where to turn for help or what to do. You may be afraid or ashamed to talk to anyone, or want to act as though nothing has happened.

If you've been assaulted, get help quickly. Contact your local Sexual Assault Hotline. Staff there can inform you of your options.

If You Are Raped

- Go to a friend's house or somewhere you can get emotional support.
- Seek medical treatment. DO NOT douche, bathe, shower, or change clothes before you go.
- Report the rape to the authorities (this does not mean you must proceed with prosecution). The more acquaintance rape is reported, the easier it may be to prevent.
- Seek counseling. Even if you don't report the rape or press charges, you should contact the Sexual Assault Hotline for information about counseling.

Emotional Concerns of Survivors

- As a survivor of a violent crime, you will probably experience strong emotional reactions.
- You may feel guilty because society has conditioned you to believe you "asked for it" or did not do enough to fight off your attacker.
- You may feel angry and take it out on those you love.
- You may feel afraid that your attacker will come back.
- You may feel ashamed of what has happened to you.
- You may feel helpless because it seems you have lost control of your life.
- You may feel unclean, even after bathing.
- These feelings may cause you to behave in ways you normally would not.
- You may not be able to sleep, or you may have terrible nightmares.
- You may find your eating habits changing.
- You may not want to be left alone.
- You may not be able to resume your normal sexual relationships.
- You may have trouble concentrating and making decisions.
- You may cry uncontrollably.

Helping the Survivor

Believe the survivor. People rarely make up stories about being a sexual assault victim.

Let the survivor know you want to listen. How you listen matters more than what you say. Don't interrupt; let stalls and silences happen. Show interest; nod, maintain eye contact, repeat back. Let the victim know you care. Express sympathy ("I'm very sorry this happened to you"), empathy ("It must have been frightening for you"), and concern. Acknowledge that the survivor is blameless. S/he may have used poor judgement, but no one deserves to be raped. Avoid blaming language.

Be patient; survivors may feel the need to talk about the assault repetitively or may not feel able to talk to you at all.

Let the survivor control the situation and who is informed about the assault. The victim needs to regain control; encourage her or him to make as many choices as soon after the event as possible. Respect confidentiality - when discussing the assault, use a private location. Even if you disagree, respect the survivor's right to choose the course of action; offer (but don't impose) choices.

Realize that you will have strong feelings about the assault; seek counseling for yourself. Avoid communicating your biases and negative emotions to the survivor.

What Happens If You Call the Police?

First, they will make sure you are safe. They'll help you get to the hospital, and will place you in touch with counseling providers.

A police officer will question you about what happened. Female officers and investigators are usually available if you'd prefer. This interview may take place before, while or after you visit the hospital. Other officers will examine the place where the attack occurred to collect evidence.

You'll speak with a trained sexual assault investigator soon after the attack. This investigator will review your earlier statement and may ask very specific questions. If your attacker was a stranger, you may be asked to look at photographs of prior offenders or to help a police artist prepare a sketch of your attacker. As the investigation progresses, the police will remain in touch and keep you abreast of developments. If a suspect is located, you will be asked to confirm the identification through means that prevent the suspect from seeing you.

What Happens At the Hospital?

At the hospital, you'll be given a medical examination to make sure you are all right and to collect medical evidence. This evidence will be needed if you decide to pursue prosecution and is only available immediately after the attack. If you wish, a rape response advocate is available to stay with you during the exam to provide support.

At your request, the doctor can also check for pregnancy and give medication to prevent sexually-transmitted diseases. It's important that you have a follow-up exam to ensure you didn't later develop such a disease. The hospital staff can also refer you to appropriate counseling resources.

What Happens If You Choose to Prosecute?

Whether or not to prosecute is up to you. Ultimately, you must appear in court in order to prosecute the offender. It takes courage to report and prosecute a sexual assault, but it is the only way to stop the assailant and may help you regain your sense of control.

Additional Advice:

FIGHT BACK AGAINST RAPE — WITH *FEAR!*

By Melissa Soalt (a.k.a. Dr. Ruthless)

Rape. It's a four-letter word that plunges women into the basement of their fears. And it's every parent's unspoken fear for their daughter.

You can't always see it but it's there, crimping women's sense of freedom. "When I walk home in the evening, I am gripped by a hyper vigilance that creates great tension in my body and runs a fast-paced tape of warnings and nightmare scenarios through my mind," wrote one student. Her anxieties are echoed by countless others: two-thirds of American women "do not feel safe." Some call it paranoia, but the fear of sexual assault isn't unfounded.

The most underreported crime in America, it is estimated that 12.1 million American women have been the victim of "forcible rape" and that 1 out of 8 will be assaulted in her lifetime. An age-old crime, rape often encompasses sexual or psychological torture; a woman's terror and pain becomes little more than fodder for a predator's amusement.

When in the presence of this evil intent, you know it, immediately - it's nightmarish sensation is primal, hard-wired. An icy chill, then panic ricochets through your body, catapulting you into a Darwinian jungle of predator and prey. It shatters the veneer of civilization and connects you to the terror of becoming a sacrificial lamb.

The aftermath of rape can be devastating, profoundly altering a woman's sense of self at the core. Far more than a heinous crime against one's body, survivors often describe it as a "shattering" experience.

No woman is immune, yet few are prepared.

Years ago, women were taught to rely on the Good Guys to protect them from the Bad Guys - a dangerously flawed strategy as women are typically alone when assaulted. (Plus that Good Guy / Bad Guy line can get blurry fast if Jeekyll plays switcheroo with Hyde.) Being rescued is a comforting thought, but only as reliable as divine intervention.

Putting The Controversy To Rest

Studies have finally dispelled the myth that women are unable to protect themselves and that resistance will only "make things worse," replacing this erroneous claim with newfound data: immediate and aggressive responses including fighting back *are* effective. Conversely pleading, reasoning or appealing to a rapist's humanity is not - the latter being "almost universally futile," notes Dr. Judith Herman, foremost authority on trauma and author of the best selling book *Trauma and Recovery*.

"By not resisting rape, women may be putting themselves at greater risk," says Sarah Ullman, assistant professor from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Of course fighting carries risks, but Ullman's research on resistance strategies concluded that a woman's "level of physical injury is mainly determined by the offender's use of violence" and initial blows struck, not because she fought back.

Having choices and defense skills may also be critical in the aftermath. "The women who fought to the best of their abilities were not only more likely to be successful in thwarting the rape attempt, but less likely to suffer severe distress symptoms," wrote Herman. "By contrast, women who submitted without a struggle were more likely to be highly self critical and depressed in the aftermath."

More good reasons why women need to learn how to counterattack. But before we get to essential strategies, we need to appreciate the dual nature of fear.

A Package Deal

Fear is a double agent, both ally and enemy, informant and saboteur. You cannot control fear, but how you react to it. It can save or imperil, empower or enslave you.

A primeval emotion, fear is hard-wired into our survival instinct. It alerts us to danger and is the voice of intuition. It elicits that *uh-oh* feeling that tells you to get moving and triggers the adrenaline dump prepping the body for action. Honoring this emotion has saved many lives. "The moment he got in my car, I was flooded with fear," one woman later remarked. ('He' is a sicko who orchestrated a parking lot mugging then 'rescued' her so that, indebted, she would drive him to his vehicle.) After tricking him into stepping out of her car, she swiftly drove off and discovered the rape kit - knives, rope, duct tape — in his attaché case.

But women are equally vulnerable to becoming victims of fear, immobilized by its grip.

The Myth Of Fearlessness

Fearlessness has been touted as the Holy Grail of the warrior arts. It's a seductive notion, but nothing could be more dangerous nor further from the truth. "Saying that you don't feel fear is like saying that you don't feel hunger, thirst, love or hate. Everyone feels emotion, fear being one of the most powerful," writes the legendary former bouncer Geoff Thompson in his book *Fear: The Friend of Exceptional People*.

The goal of any fighting art should never be to eliminate fear (reduce it, yes) but rather to replace helplessness with skills, and to re-train the body and mind to respond and react instantaneously. Without fear there is no courage nor urgency of action. It isn't fear per se, but hesitation that is the enemy.

When it comes to rape, there's no mincing the truth: being slammed down and pinned by a larger, pumped up creature intent on raping or ravaging you will, at least initially, evoke abject animal-like terror and can quickly suck the life force right out of one's body. No amount of warrior-within affirmations is going to change that or banish fear. Fear does not respond to, nor is it abated by, trickery — it is a deeper more purposeful emotion, ordained by Mother Nature. As was poignantly rendered by Ambrose Redmoon, "Only an enemy can initiate a warrior."

Beyond Hope and Fear

To effectively fend off a rapist, and not be immobilized by fear one must prioritize. The decision to not be raped, to escape and survive, must supercede all other concerns including the fear of injury — the biggest obstacle to fighting back. "If what you fear more than anything else is injury," says survival expert Sanford Strong, "you will not have the determination to escape an attack. You will believe all the criminal's promises and never notice fleeting opportunities."

Rape is essentially an act of terrorism. A rapist can hold a woman hostage with her very own fears, and will effectively use a woman's terror to gain compliance and render her powerless - "bought and paid for," attests Strong. The debilitating effects of fear resound in writer Sally Kempton's words: "It is hard to fight an enemy who has outposts in your head."

Piercing the Heart of Terror

It can happen in a heartbeat, but the prime directive to fight back takes place, not just in the mind or body's adrenal system, but on a deeper more spiritual level, set into motion by this bottom line decision: what is *non*-negotiable. It is this innermost decision that issues a woman's resolve, evoking the requisite will and wrath that compels her into battle, her spirit leading her body.

This flicker of reckoning can antidote potentially lethal passivity and spawn an indomitable fighting spirit, paradoxically liberated from both hope and fear. Crossing this threshold leaves many to later remark: *I didn't know I had it in me; something inside rose up and said NO; that's when I went for it.*

Instead of succumbing to fear, we need to use it as a weapon. Sensations of fear and adrenaline must become the trigger that catapults women into action. You must learn to turn the rapist's own weapons of intimidation — the vehemence of his words and actions - back onto him in a merciless counterattack that I call "return to sender." A strategy that embodies the true spirit of reversal.

To combat rape and increase your fighting chances, arm yourself with these essential strategies:

1) Recognize when you are being "tested" or "interviewed" and break away immediately. Predators often test a woman's boundaries to gain proximity and size up her defenses. (this can occur in a few seconds or over months; preceded by a simple request for directions or persistent unwanted courting.) Violating boundaries is what criminals have majored in. A predator maybe thinking: "If I can get this close, I can move in closer. If I can get her money / make her comply with one demand, I can help myself to more." Do not enable this progression of "Yeses." Take control and nip problems in the bud. Learn to draw a line, to say NO and mean it. Don't be duped by ploys - listen to your gut. Yell. Make a scene. Throw the dog a bone and escape. Never trade in your backbone for a wishbone.

2) If you are pinned or rendered immobile and cannot immediately resist, take the first opening you get. You may not get a second chance. Rape can abruptly escalate to a more violent, life-threatening attack such as severe beating, stabbing or murder. In the quandary of risk it now or risk it later, sooner is almost always the better option.

The instant he fumbles with his / your clothing, changes positions or shifts his weight, puts down a weapon, places his hands on your torso, or prepares to strike or use a weapon - ATTACK! Distractions such as "there's money / drugs on the dresser" sometimes work, but don't count on it; be prepared to seize existing slivers of opportunity.

Some rapists initially establish dominance or force women into harrowing positions. Instead of ineffectually struggling against brute strength, relaxing the body can help create explosive opportunity. "His knee was dug into my back. I thought my back would break," described one woman, her terror mounting. Instinctively she "went limp" - this makes it easier to spring - which enabled her to flip over, counterattack and flee.

3) If forced to wait, remain focused on the inside. Collect yourself. Think: *what part of my body is free... what targets are presenting... where is the exit... his knife?* To help counteract a racing mind and heart, lower your "center" and concentrate your breathing in your belly.

Emotions and adrenaline will quickly flood the body and can induce panic or paralysis. Adrenaline is a key factor here. Its function is to prep you for fight or flight — for action, not *inaction*. Thompson likens adrenaline to "fuel injection or turbo drive" in a sports car. Once it is dumped into the body if you do not or cannot act, it can be "gobbled up by increasing panic. Like the car," he says, "you will be pressing the accelerator but without engaging the clutch." If action is stifled this energy may be utilized negatively; the rushes of adrenaline misinterpreted as fear.

More reasons to resist immediately before this collusion has its way with you or induces "tonic immobility"- a clinical term amounting to paralysis. When one is rendered helpless or paralyzed, altered states of consciousness such as dissociation, "splitting off" or leaving one's body often take over. These are powerful *internal* survival mechanisms, designed to mitigate trauma, protect the psyche and stave off pain. But it simultaneously fosters a *disembodied* state making it difficult to mobilize energetic resistance.

4) Do not test the waters. Unlike stand up aggression, there's no wiggle room for that feint or evasive maneuver. Make your opening move count without telegraphing your intention. Initially, depending on a rapist's MO and level of violence, you might be able to lower his aggressive arousal - or at least his guard - by calmly talking to him or through physical contact (ideally placing a hand near the inside of his elbow or on his knee, giving you potential leverage and control.) This also gets him used to seeing your hands so he won't think twice when you suddenly stab his face. When it's time to unload, explode at a hundred and ten percent.

5) Attack vulnerable regions. To commit a rape, an offender's face or groin will likely be in your strike zone at some point. Viciously attack whatever he sticks out. Use dirty tactics: bite, gouge, seize-and-squeeze, slam, pound and pummel. After twisting and crushing his not-so-private parts, one older woman literally threw her rapist out of her house. A recently released felon, the police found him at home with ice packs on his groin. It took a jury seven minutes to convict him.

6) Use Your Hips and Legs To "Get Him Off!" A woman's legs are her strongest natural weapons and can be used like battering rams to vital regions. But you may have to free them first. If an attacker is lying on or straddling your hips, plant a foot and heave or buck him off, or trap his lower leg and roll (to aid such displacement, simultaneously attack the face). Other methods involve swinging your hips (think: tailbone) out sideways, or using your knees to keep him at bay until you can deliver more devastating kicks. If an offender is to the side of your body, or sitting on you upright, you might be able to hook his head or shoulders with your leg(s) and slam him down. From on "all fours" a woman can explosively drop onto her side then fire-off righteous combinations of side, thrust or ax kicks. Remember: your goal is to facilitate escape, not force him into submission.

7) Obey the nevers: Never allow yourself to be tied up or taken to a secondary crime scene - whether forced into a vehicle or dragged behind a building. The statistics get grim: at a second, more isolated location, an assailant will have far more control over you. Go ballistic — immediately! Attack like a wolverine, but don't go with.

Never give up. Another opening or stroke of luck may present itself. The body is more resilient than we think. Plenty of women have been cut or shot but live to tell the story.

BOTTOM LINE

Sexual sacrifice is a lousy choice no woman should have to confront. But in the end, Thompson is right: if you're going to fight, "KNOW FEAR"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Melissa Soalt (a.k.a. Dr. Ruthless ®) was named Black Belt Magazine's 2003 *Woman Of The Year*. A veteran instructor of practical and full-force self defense for women, her no-nonsense methods have been featured on The View, NBC Nightly News, and in over two dozen publications. A former psychotherapist specializing in working with trauma, Soalt is also a columnist for the bi-monthly magazine, "*Self Defense For Women*." To learn more about her message and methods, and her FIERCE & FEMALE videos, visit her website at www.dr-ruthless.com

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