

## **BRUIN SELF DEFENSE – AWARENESS 101**

This document is the first in a series preparing you to avoid and/or how to deal with dangerous situations. The best “self-defense” technique is to avoid dangerous situations altogether. So this first ‘tip sheet’ talks about basic awareness.

Awareness of your surroundings, your environment and your physical and mental capabilities are essential in avoiding dangerous situations. Your awareness of your surroundings is severely prohibited when:

- You are on the phone (whether talking, checking in, texting or playing a game)
- You are listening to music
- You are mentally focusing on something other than the present moment (work stress, exams, schoolwork, relationships etc...)

*‘Very basic meditation techniques can help you keep your awareness focused at the times you most need it.’ - The UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center offers free meditation classes – [www.marc.ucla.edu](http://www.marc.ucla.edu)*

### **WHAT TO BE AWARE OF:**

**At home or any place where you spend a lot of time and feel most comfortable/safe (e.g. campus buildings):**

- Every possible exit from the building (including windows and ventilation shafts etc.) - *A quick tip from our Ninjutsu instructor is to take a photo (use your phone) of the emergency exit plan posted at most entrances/exits.*
- The most likely place an intruder will attempt entry (front door, window facing alleyway etc.)
- Location of items that could be used as a defensive weapon (pens, bags, bat/racquets, kitchen knives, glass bottles/vases etc.)
- Hiding places
- Location and accessibility of communication devices to use to call for help (computer, phones etc.)

**Walking on campus/outside:**

- Closest building which is likely to be populated (union, library etc.)
- Exits (even when outside, gauging which way to run in an emergency is imperative)
- Location of emergency phone stations
- Who is walking behind you
- Who has walked past you
- What you can use as a defensive weapon, and is it at hand (books, bags, coats, pens, keys etc.)
- Potential attack locations (dimly lit pathways, stairwells, large amounts of foliage/bushes/trees etc.)



Many people do not think regularly about these things, but getting into the habit of taking a short time to mentally note them and understand them could save your life.

*Training your brain to notice minor details that may seem unimportant is a good habit to get into. Know how many stairs go up to your apt or dorm, make a mental note of the color of each professors shirt in your classes or getting into the habit of knowing the make, model and color of the cars you park next to every day are great ways to train yourself to be more aware. These are all exercises that help in making the registering this information a habit which could save your life one day.*

Being aware of your surroundings is the first step in avoiding dangerous situations and/or escaping safely.

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## **BRUIN SELF DEFENSE – AWARENESS 102**

The first tip sheet (Awareness 101) discussed some basic awareness tips for being inside buildings or outside/on campus. Awareness 102 focuses more on awareness of other people and their behavior, but also awareness of your own behavior.

Many predatory attackers look for victims that will not cause trouble, will be easily subdued, and will not fight back. Basic descriptors of such 'victims' are described below:

- Hunched shoulders
- Head down
- No eye contact
- Shy demeanor
- Inactive
- Avoids any conflict
- Quiet
- Lacking confidence
- Unaware
- Slow movements

*'Be aware of how others see you and how to you can avoid "acting" like a victim. If you "act" like someone not to mess with, few people will!'*

One fun exercise is to use your awareness skills to try to understand the mind of an attacker/predator. Regardless of their intent, try to walk in their shoes:

1. Look around in a bus or crowded park/market/bar etc. Look at the crowd like a predator would. If you wanted to steal money, soon and at the least risk to yourself, who would you attack? How? Where?
2. Who appears weak, unaware, or sick? Who has bad posture? Who is alone? Who is too drunk to respond to an attack? Who can you get close to?
3. Look at why they appear sick/alone/easy prey etc. Then look at your own behavior in different situations to look less like a victim.
4. Use the same idea and identify people you would *not* attack, and analyze what characteristics they have that make you not want to attack them.

Every one of us has the ability to process information faster than any computer ever built. Our brains provide us with information thousands of times a day which we use subconsciously to continue our lives. Whether it is that gut feeling that the car next to you is going to cut you off or that your girlfriend/boyfriend is going to ask you something important. We all have intuition, some people listen to it and change their behavior because of it better than others. The Technology of Intuition is a chapter in a book that we highly recommend you read – The Gift of Fear by Gavin De Becker. It describes many stories and talks about the science behind what intuition is. UCLA currently has a copy of this book in the Biomed Library (Call number HM281; .D278g 1997)

*One of the most important statements from this series is to Trust Your Intuition, do not let your inner voice dumb it down or ignore it because it seems easier or more polite to do so. Learn to listen to it and learn how to behave differently because of it.*

*"As humans we let judgment get in the way of intuition – with judgment comes the ability to disregard your intuition unless you can explain it logically, the eagerness to judge and convict your feelings rather than honor them is dangerous." – Gift of Fear (De Becker, Gavin)*

*"Can you imagine an animal in the wild suddenly overcome with fear, spending anytime thinking "Its probably nothing"!? Yet as humans we chide ourselves for thinking that the unusual behavior of someone might be sinister." Gift of Fear (De Becker, Gavin)*

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## **BRUIN SELF DEFENSE – LEVELS OF AWARENESS**

**White** The complete lack of awareness. A person is unaware of their surroundings. A person is engaged in other activities. A person is relaxed and oblivious to what is going on.

*'This stage would be the same as having earphones in and using an electronic device in any surrounding. But could also be when you are in an in-depth conversation with an individual or a group.'*

**Yellow** Mind is relaxed but alert. There is no specific threat. However, you may not be approached without noticing it. You are not seeking trouble but are prepared. This is a comfortable state and where you should be at all times.

*'Being able to be at this level at all times can be tough; mentally question yourself at random times to see how aware you are of your surroundings. Making this into a habit will take time and effort.'*

*'Think of yellow as if you are driving a car. You are constantly scanning your mirrors and the road for something that may cause trouble but you are relaxed. This state is comfortable but not oblivious and you can stay in it indefinitely.'*

**Red** There is a specific threat or an action has attracted your attention. It may be harmless or it may be an assault. However, you must have a solution to the situation.

*'Think of when a dog's bark surprises you and how that makes you feel: jumpy, nervous etc. That moment is what the Red Level feels like; you must control your adrenalin by breathing deeply. Analyze what the threat is and what your next step is going to be.'*

*Examples of situations where you could reach the Red Level:*

- Anyone approaches you at night in a parking lot/lonely environment when you are on your own.
  - Two people are shouting in a restaurant or at a party
- Someone addresses you with aggressive language (includes body language)
  - Anytime your gut gives you the feeling that something is not right

**Black**: This is physical engagement. The decision to use force has been made. This position is "pro-active" and your mental, emotional and physical self is fully engaged in action.

*'All your focus is on surviving; this is where you should become the subject and not stay the object. Work towards taking charge of the situation. Move from being the victim to becoming the aggressor.'*

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## **BRUIN SELF DEFENSE – PREVENTING CARJACKING**

Despite the headlines across the country, statistically your chances of being carjacked are very slim, however preventative measures can reduce this risk even more. This tip sheet introduces some basic strategies for reducing your chances of being carjacked.

### **When parking or returning to your car:**

- Always keep your doors locked and windows rolled up, even for a short absence.
- Quickly check the back seat and floor before unlocking your car and getting in.
- Keep valuables out of sight, even if locking your car.
- Park in safe, well-lit areas near your destination.

### **While driving, especially at night, be sure to:**

- Keep your doors locked and windows rolled up. If it is hot and you do not have air conditioning, keep your windows rolled up enough so that someone cannot reach inside your car.
- When coming to a stop, leave enough room to maneuver around other cars in case you need to get away.
- Do not stop to assist a stranger whose car is broken down. You can best help them by calling the police to assist them.
- Avoid bad neighborhoods. It is worth going out of your way a few minutes.
- Keep your valuables out of sight, even when driving.
- Do not pick up hitchhikers.

### **Avoiding the “Bump and Rob”:**

- Carjackers will often use a tactic where a car, usually with at least two people in it, rear-ends or “bumps” you. When you get out of your car to check the damage and exchange information, the passenger quickly gets in and drives off.
- If you are bumped by another car:
  - Look around you before getting out
  - Check the other car with your mirrors
  - Make sure there are other cars around
  - If you do exit, take your keys with you
- If the situation makes you uneasy, jot down the car’s tag number and description then signal them to follow you and drive to the nearest police station or well-lit and busy area.

### **If you are carjacked:**

- If threatened with a gun or weapon, give up your car. It is not worth your life.
- Try to remember the carjacker’s appearance.
- Get away from the area as quickly as possible.
- Report the crime to the police immediately.

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## **BRUIN SELF DEFENSE – PARKING LOT SAFETY**

Walking to your car late at night (or even in the middle of the day) can be potentially dangerous, as most underground lots are isolated and have poorly lit spaces in which attackers can hide. This tip sheet introduces some basic strategies for making it safely to your vehicle.

### **Before heading into the parking lot, ask yourself the following questions:**

- Where are my keys? (they should be easily accessible, but not necessarily in hands as this increases the chances of you losing them if you are attacked)
- Who knows where I am going? – Is a roommate/partner expecting me? Let them know as you leave.
- Do I have any weapons handy? What could I potentially use as an improvised weapon? (Keys, books, backpack)
- Is my body free from restrictions? – Can I easily drop my belongings and run? Is there anything around my neck?
- At this point your awareness level should be rising to high yellow/red.

### **At the bottom of the stairwell/entrance to the parking lot:**

- Is anyone behind me? Make note of sounds such as doors opening and closing, footsteps, talking, etc. This is very important; people you hear could be friend or foe.
- What are my resources?
  - Alarms
  - Weapons
  - Exits
  - Training
- Where am I going?
  - Know exactly where your vehicle is. You want to reduce the time spent in an open parking lot, especially at night, so make note of where you parked before entering the lot.

### **Walking to your vehicle:**

- Walk through the lot in between parked cars (you can react quicker to attacks from in between cars)
- What sounds raise your level of awareness? Make note of:
  - Footsteps
  - Cars driving (slow engine noises etc.)
  - Car doors closing
  - Car alarms or locking sounds
- Always scan all 360 degrees around you and be wary of dark corners/areas.

### **If you are attacked:**

- Get away as quickly as possible
- Know where the closest exits are
- Know where you will most likely find help
- Make noise

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## **BRUIN SELF DEFENSE – Defensive Target Areas**

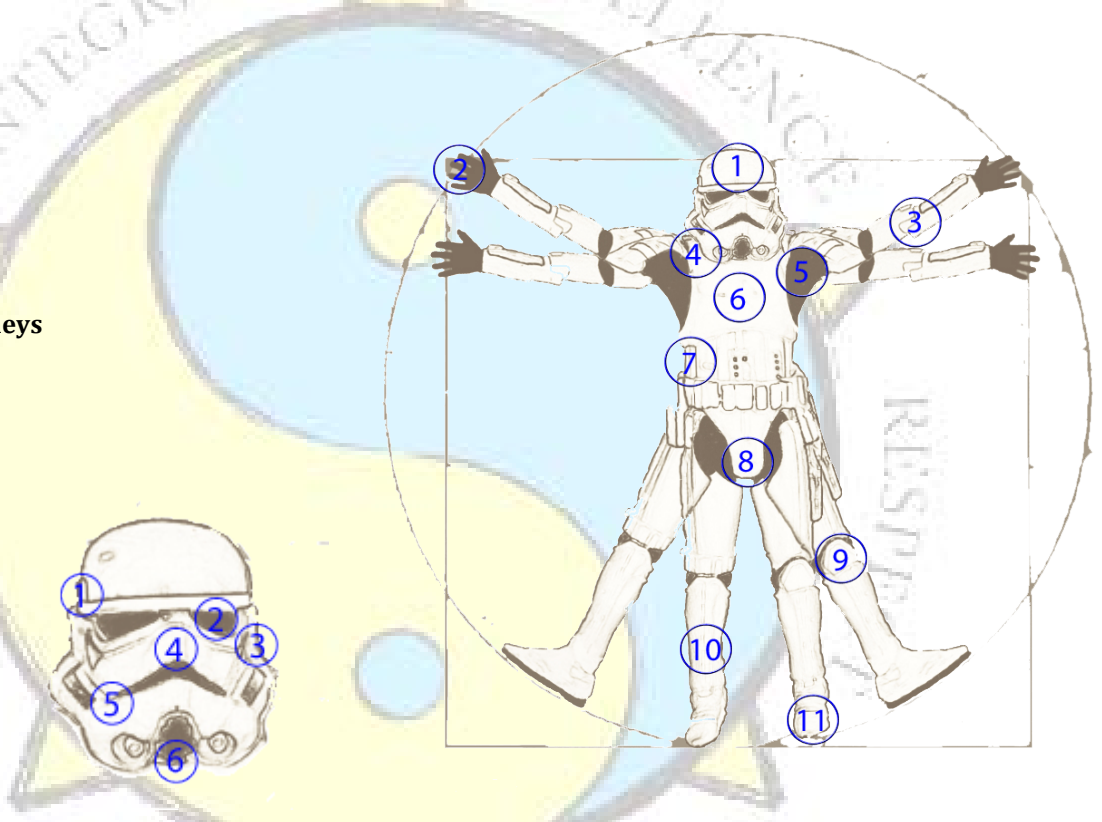
Our first tip sheets have focused on the most important aspects of self-defense: awareness and avoidance. Despite utilizing these tips, however, a situation may present itself where you need to physically defend yourself. This tip sheet introduces some basic target points on the body, should the use of force be absolutely necessary to physical defend yourself.

### **Full Body Points:**

1. Head (See Below)
2. Fingers
3. Joints
4. Collar Bone
5. Armpit
6. Solar Plexus
7. Floating Ribs/Kidneys
8. Groin
9. Knee
10. Shin
11. Top of Foot

### **Head Points:**

1. Temple
2. Eye
3. Ear
4. Nose
5. Jaw
6. Throat



### **Disclaimer:**

Some of these target points can cause pain and/or bodily harm. The UCLA Recreation Martial Art Program is not endorsing the use of unnecessary force or physical violence in any situation. The legal and moral ramifications of using physical force in a self-defense situation are outside of the scope of this tip sheet and should be investigated individually prior to use. Physical force is always a last resort for self-defense.

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