



# ***Self Defense***



Self defense is one of the main reasons that people train in the martial arts. However, there are very real differences between practicing kata applications, sparring, and learning practical, functional self-defense. Self-defense needs to be proven effective in high stress scenarios, especially against larger, stronger opponents. Each of Satori's five self-defense sets focus on the application of a different principle or technique. In the end, you should have the skills to defend yourself in a wide variety of real-world situations.

## **Level I: Tiger Claw Set**

## **One Green Stripe**

The tiger claw set is an easily learned combination of four strikes that each has a high probability of success in a variety of situations. These techniques are then linked in such a way that they not only flow naturally into one another, but each builds on the success (or failure) of the previous technique, allowing you to systematically attack your opponent's key bodily systems: visual, circulatory, respiratory and nervous.

## **Level II: Stamping Kick Set**

## **Two Green Stripes**

The stamping kick set uses low kicks to target your attacker's knees and disable his loco motor system. From there you continue through a commanding ten-move technique flow that combines boxing and karate to target your opponent's respiratory, circulatory, and nervous systems in quick succession.

## **Level III: Elbow Set**

## **Green Belt**

Your elbows are some of your most powerful weapons, capable of delivering devastating blows to your attacker. In addition to striking with your elbows, you will learn different ways to lock, hyperextend, and even break your opponent's elbows if necessary. As in our previous sets, counterattacks systematically target your attacker's key body systems, reducing his ability and willingness to continue.

## **Level IV: Tambo Defense**

## **Brown Belt**

This set is instrumental in teaching you how to deal with an attacker who is armed with a short weapon. Tambo self defense teaches you how to avoid the weapon, when and how to close the gap, and finally, how to disarm and finish your attacker.

## **Level V: Knife Defense**

## **Black Belt**

Any encounter with a knife-wielding attacker is about as serious and life threatening as a self-defense situation can be. This level teaches how to increase your odds of survival.

## Introduction

When grabbed by an opponent, it usually indicates that he has momentarily gained the initiative. It is the defender's responsibility to turn the circumstances around, taking control of the situation by countering the attack and following up with a variety of techniques. The attacker's weakness lies in his strategy. For whatever reason, he is attempting to grab you rather than immediately striking or punching. This necessarily occupies one or both hands. He most likely expects you, his intended victim, to try to break his hold and escape, and will expect tactics to that end. Your strength lies in your unpredictability, which you may take advantage of by suddenly and decisively executing an effective counter-attack, often disregarding or placing secondary emphasis on the hand that is grabbing you while concentrating on a more efficient attack aimed at another, more vital area on your attacker's anatomy.

When practicing self-defense, strive to achieve an awareness of yourself and your surroundings. This awareness is essential, and should carry over into all areas of your life. As you are grabbed by the opponent(s), you should react quickly and without thought. Make your counters quick, and decisive, taking the initiative and never relinquishing it. Techniques should be executed strongly, but pulled just short of striking your partner in practice. Self-defense should always conclude with a finishing technique, be it a powerful blow before escaping or a controlling lock to neutralize your attacker. Flow smoothly and continuously until either you have a good opportunity to escape, or the attacker has been subdued and no longer poses any threat to you. Make sure your counters are appropriate to your size in relation to your opponent. Keep in mind that the *kiai* can play a major role in self-defense, serving to startle your opponent and put him on the defensive, as well as mustering your strength and bolstering your confidence.

When practicing, remember to respect your partner, taking care to pull every attack short of striking its target. Salute your partner before and after the exercise to express gratitude for their trust, time, and energy.

Note: While attackers may be of either gender, the pronouns "he" and "his" have been used for the sake of simplicity.

**"Don't hit at all  
if it is honorably possible to avoid hitting;  
but *never* hit softly."**

- Theodore Roosevelt

## Level I: Tiger Claw Set

The first set of self-defense is derived from Tiger Style Kung Fu. The principle behind the tiger claw set is simple: strike the opponent's most vulnerable target, his eyes, at the earliest opportunity. An eye strike does not depend on size or strength to have the potential to momentarily incapacitate any attacker.



The standard Tiger Claw combination only has four moves, tiger claw, chop, knee, and elbow, but they are designed for easy memory and maximum effectivity. The first attack, the tiger claw is a linear strike that targets the opponent's visual system. The combination of your five fingers and his two eyes give you ten chances to score with a single strike, making this a technique with a very high percentage chance of success. A solid hit will often immediately inflict a great deal of pain as well as depriving him of his major source or sensory input, making it momentarily difficult for him to continue attacking you, or defending himself, effectively. This shocking surprise attack has a good chance of discouraging all but the most determined attackers. Even if your opponent sees your attack coming and flinches away, he has exposed his neck for your second strike.

The second technique, a short, sharp chop to the side of the neck, is delivered a fraction of a second after the eye strike. It targets the opponent's circulatory system, and has a good chance of triggering an involuntary vagal response, stunning or even knocking out your opponent. The neck chop flows into an outside hook, allowing you to pull the opponent into your third attack, a knee strike to the solar plexus targeting his respiratory system, with the goal of "knocking the wind out of him." As he doubles up in response, either from the impact or merely from his flinch response to avoid being hit, he is now open for the final strike, a downward elbow to the spine just between the shoulder blades, an attack on his nervous system aimed at driving the opponent to the ground.

While there are many acceptable variations to this combination, these particular consecutive attacks are designed to finish your attacker while leaving few openings, in either time or space, in which he can begin to mount a defense.

Note that the weakest part of an opponent's grasp is the gap between the thumb and forefinger. Therefore, to escape a grab, rotate your arm so that the narrowest profile of your wrist lines up with the gap before you snap your wrist out of his grasp.

### **1. Attacker's right hand grasps your left wrist (same side)**

Immediately strike to the opponent's eyes with your free hand. The strike should drive his head backwards, exposing his neck. Without withdrawing your right hand very far, deliver an inner chop to the right side of the opponent's neck. Maintain cohesion with the opponent, hooking behind his neck with your chopping hand and pulling him into a right knee strike. Finish the doubled opponent with a powerful jumping downward elbow strike to his spine, landing in a low horse stance. Be very careful NOT to actually strike your training partners. If the opponent drops to his hands and knees, you can push him over sideways before running.

### **2. Attacker's right hand grasps your right wrist (opposite side)**

Immediately strike to the opponent's eyes with your free hand. Slide your left foot forward 45° to your left to the attacker's dead/right side, into a left diagonal stance. Simultaneously rotate your right hand under and around his wrist, going against the gap between the attacker's thumb and forefinger to escape, as if executing an inner middle block. Check his right arm with your left hand as you deliver a right tiger claw to the opponent's face. Follow up with the standard chop-knee-elbow combination described in #1 above.

### **3. Both attacker's hands grasp your right wrist (two-on-one)**

Follow directions for same side grab (#1) or opposite side grab (#2) above.

### **4. Both wrists are grasped in front (both hands grasp both wrists)**

Follow directions for same side grab described in #1 above.

### **5. Choke or lapel grab**

Tuck your chin to your chest to guard your throat. Grasp the opponent's right wrist with your left hand as you slide your right hand either outside and over or in between your opponent's arms to deliver the tiger claw strike. Follow up with the standard chop-knee-elbow combination described in #1 above.



## **6. Both wrists are grasped from behind**

Keep your hands in front of your hips and turn sharply, using your body to strip the opponent's hand from your wrist. Continue turning directly into the tiger claw strike. Follow up with the standard chop-knee-elbow combination.

If the initial release fails, use the opponent's reaction to slingshot yourself backwards, striking the opponent with your hips, back, and head. Turn and finish with the standard chop-knee-elbow combination.

If the opponent should pull your hands behind you so you cannot attempt the initial breakout, deliver multiple back kicks targeting the opponent's knees, thighs, groin, or midsection. While the opponent is distracted by your low attacks, try the escapes again.

## **7. Wide punch (haymaker)**

Block an incoming wide right punch with a left inner chop as you deliver a right tiger claw strike to the opponent's eyes. Grasp the opponent's right wrist with your left hand and follow up with the standard chop-knee-elbow combination.

## **8. Straight punch (jab)**

Parry the opponent's right straight punch to the inside with your left hand as you simultaneously deliver a right tiger claw strike to the opponent's eyes. Check the opponent's right arm with your left hand as you follow up with the standard chop-knee-elbow combination.

## **9. Side Headlock**

The headlock is a common hold you may encounter in a self-defense situation. Your attacker can apply a side headlock, with both of your bodies facing the same direction, or a front headlock with your body facing his. In the side headlock, your opponent has your head locked against the right side of his body with his right arm. Reach over the attacker's right shoulder with your left hand and attack his eyes, pulling his head back and loosening the hold enough for you to escape.

## **10. Front headlock**

Your opponent has your head locked against the right side of his body with his right arm. Drive forward and lift your head as you attack his groin with a right tiger mouth strike loosening the hold enough for you to escape. Follow up with the standard chop-knee-elbow combination.

## **Additional Techniques**

Of course, an opponent may grab and attack you in a wide variety of other ways. Therefore, it is important to practice against a wide variety of grabbing and even striking attacks. Using the principles described above, attempt to escape from holds such as bear hug, and rear choke. You may not always be successful, but you will learn the versatility and limitations of the technique.

## Level II: Stamping Kick Set

You will learn to use the stamping kick to quickly disable your attacker so that you might escape. The stamping kick is very effective when aimed at your opponent's knee, so great care must be taken not to injure your partner in practice.

In an actual attack, you must instinctively control your fear and anger, decide on a strategy (in this case it is to deliver the stamping kick), and act. If you are aware and alert, the element of surprise can be on your side instead of your attackers!



The machine gun principle dictates that once you have reclaimed the initiative, you should continue with a logical combination of effective techniques until the opponent is no longer a threat.

The standard stamping kick combination has ten moves that are then linked in such a way that they not only flow naturally into one another, but each builds on the success (or failure) of the previous technique, allowing you to systematically attack your opponent's key bodily systems: respiratory, circulatory, and nervous.

The standard stamping kick combination begins with:

- 1) Moving to the dead side as you secure your opponent's wrist and deliver a stamping kick to his knee, attacking the loco-motor system, continue with
  - 2) A side kick targeting the floating ribs, attacking his respiratory system,
  - 3) Land with a lead hand horizontal backfist, blocking his vision,
  - 4) Continue through with a cross to the jaw, attacking the nervous system.
  - 5, 6) The opponent's hands are now probably up attempting to guard his head, so deliver two uppercuts to his solar plexus, attacking his respiratory system.
  - 7) As soon as his hands drop, deliver an upward elbow strike to the head.
  - 8, 9, 10) Flow into the standard finish you already know from the tiger claw set: inner chop to the neck, knee strike to the body, and finishing with a downward elbow strike to the spine just between the shoulder blades.
- Bonus Move) Push the attacker sideways to unbalance him and run away.

Again, while there are many acceptable variations to this combination, these

particular consecutive attacks are designed to finish your attacker while leaving few openings in which he can begin to mount a defense.

### **1. Attacker's right hand grasps your left wrist (same side)**

Slide your left foot 45° to your left (to the attacker's dead side) as you grasp the top of his right hand with your right hand for control. Keep your back to the opponent's live side as you raise your right leg into kicking stance and pull his weight over his right leg, bringing his left heel just off the ground. Pull your hands to your left hip as you execute a right stamping kick to his right knee. Finish with the standard stamping kick combination described above.

### **2. Attacker's right hand grasps your right wrist (opposite side)**

Slide your right foot forward 45° to your right as you grasp the top of the attacker's right wrist with your left hand. Raise your left leg into kicking stance as you pull the attacker's weight over his right leg, bringing his left heel just off the ground. Pull your hands to your right hip as you execute a left stamping kick to his right knee. Finish with the standard stamping kick combination described above.

### **3. Both attacker's hands grasp your right wrist (two-on-one)**

Follow directions for the opposite side grab described in #2 above.

### **4. Both wrists are grasped in front (both hands grasp both wrists)**

Follow directions for same side grab described in #1 above.

### **5. Choke or lapel grab**

Tuck your chin to your chest to guard your throat as you slide your left foot 45° to your left and grasp the opponent's wrists for control. Raise your right leg into kicking stance as you pull the attacker's weight over his right leg, bringing his left heel just off the ground. Execute a right stamping kick to his right knee. Finish with the standard stamping kick combination described above.

### **6. Both wrists are grasped from behind**

Slide your left foot to your left as you grasp his wrists for control. Raise your right leg into kicking stance and pull the attacker's weight over his left leg, bringing his right heel just off the ground, before executing a right stamping kick to his left knee. Finish with the standard stamping kick combination described above.

### **7. Straight punch (jab)**

Parry the opponent's right straight punch to the inside with your left hand as you simultaneously deliver a right stamping kick to his right knee. Use this technique to keep your attacker at bay until you score a solid shot that disrupts his base. Lunge in and finish with the standard stamping kick combination described above.

## Level III: Elbow Set

The elbow set is made up of elbow strikes and elbow breaks. Your bent elbow can be a powerful and devastating weapon for self-defense. It provides very hard striking surfaces that make excellent bludgeoning tools that can do serious damage to an opponent. You can also attack the opponent's elbow by hyperextending his straight arm. As with any joint manipulations, be extremely careful during practice!



### **1. Attacker's right hand grasps your left wrist (same side)**

Slide your left foot to the left into a left side stance as you grasp the attacker's right wrist with your right hand from underneath. Execute a left downward elbow strike to the nerve plexus on top of the attacker's forearm as you slip your wrist between the gap between his thumb and forefinger. Pull your attacker's right wrist with your right hand and slide into a left side stance as you deliver a left side elbow strike to the attacker's neck or head. Grasp behind the opponent's head with your left hand and deliver a right roundhouse elbow to his head. Immediately chop with your right hand to the neck, then hook and pull him into a right knee strike. Finish the doubled opponent with a left downward elbow strike to the spine. Push the attacker sideways to unbalance him and run away.

### **2. Attacker's right hand grasps your right wrist (opposite side)**

Circle your right hand under the opponent's arm and grasp his right wrist with your right hand as you step into a left side stance. Pull the attacker's right arm straight and use a left outer block motion to attack his right elbow. Deliver a short left roundhouse elbow strike to the right side of the opponent's face as you cross the center, then slide into a left side stance with a left side elbow strike to the attacker's ribs or face. Grasp behind the opponent's head with your left hand and deliver a right roundhouse elbow to his head. Immediately chop with your right hand to the neck, then hook and pull him into a right knee strike. Finish the doubled opponent with a left downward elbow strike to the spine. Push the attacker sideways to unbalance him and run away.

### **3. Both attacker's hands grasp your right wrist (two-on-one)**

Follow directions for same side grab (#1) or opposite side grab (#2) above.



#### **4. Both wrists are grasped in front (both hands grasp both wrists)**

Follow directions for same side grab described in #1 above.

#### **5. Choke or lapel grab**

Tuck your chin and move back sharply to escape the opponent's grasp on your throat while simultaneously straightening his arms. Twist your body to your left slightly and perform a double outer block motion. Blow right through the opponent's right wrist with your left forearm to check the inside of his left wrist with the outside of your left wrist. Simultaneously execute a right outer block to the outside of the opponent's left elbow. Grasp the attacker's left wrist with your left hand as you roll over the opponent's left arm into a right roundhouse elbow strike to his face. Follow with a right back roundhouse strike to the head. Grasp behind the opponent's head with your right hand and deliver a left roundhouse elbow to his head. Immediately chop with your left hand to the neck, then hook and pull him into a left knee strike. Finish the doubled opponent with a right downward elbow strike to the spine. Push the attacker sideways to unbalance him and run away.

#### **6. Both wrists are grasped from behind**

Execute a right stamping kick to your opponent's right foot as you simultaneously snap your right elbow downward, striking to the inside of the attacker's forearm to break out of his grasp. Immediately spin counter clockwise, grabbing the attacker's left wrist with your left hand and pulling his left arm straight, landing in a horse stance. Use a right outer block motion to hyperextend or break the attacker's left elbow. Deliver a short right roundhouse elbow strike to the left side of the opponent's face, then slide into a right side stance with a right side elbow strike to the attacker's ribs or face. Grasp behind the opponent's head with your right hand and deliver a left roundhouse elbow to his head. Immediately chop with your left hand to the neck, then hook and pull him into a left knee strike. Finish the doubled opponent with a right downward elbow strike to the spine. Push the attacker sideways to unbalance him and run away.



## Level IV: Tambo Defense

When confronted by any opponent with a weapon, your first course of action should be to flee the scene. However, sometimes circumstances may force you to confront an armed adversary. In this case, it is important that you know how to defend against a weapon with your bare hands. This training starts with a tambo, but the stick can represent a variety of single-handed weapons such as a tire iron, hammer, or baseball bat.

A strike can be dissected into three main parts. In the initial phase, the swing is gaining momentum. We call this the *acceleration zone*. Then there is an area of focused concentration called the *impact zone*. After the strike has passed through the impact zone, it enters the *deceleration zone*. Needless to say, you do not want to get caught in the impact zone. The two best opportunities to intercept a strike are in the acceleration zone, and deceleration zone.

### Crossing the Gap

In this scenario, because your opponent is armed and you are not, he has the obvious advantage. Therefore, to maximize your chances of success, you'll need to gain control of the fight as early as possible. To accomplish this, hover just outside of the opponent's effective striking range, taking care to monitor his position and stay ready to back or circle away if he tries to close in on you.

The attacker's weakness lies in his strategy, which is usually to incapacitate you with a few hard hits. Read his movements and be prepared to act the moment you see him move to chamber for a strike. Better yet, draw a strike by feinting a quick motion as though you were moving to enter, but suddenly pause to see his reaction. Watch for the moment that the opponent begins to chamber for a strike. When he does, you'll need to either quickly charge directly in, or lean just out of range to avoid the strike before suddenly entering.

The opponent's reaction to your feint may be that he begins to strike, but quickly senses that you do not actually intend to enter and checks his attack. This will often be followed by a very brief moment of relaxation, which is a good time to quickly cross the gap. Again, you must move quickly on a 1-1.2 count, exploding forward while the opponent is still in the process of mentally and physically resetting. This is difficult, and therefore requires much practice, but once you have mastered it, your opponent will have a difficult time striking you, at least hard enough to stop you from closing to close quarters.

When you do enter, protect yourself using the Arrow.



## The Arrow

The arrow is a technique in which you shoot yourself quickly across the gap. Stand just out of range, baiting the opponent with your head (1). The opponent takes the bait and steps through to close the gap and strike you. At the same time, extend your arms in front of you as you duck your head and rush forward (2). Angle slightly into his weapon arm, usually to your 11 o'clock position, ahead and slightly to your left. Your left forearm strikes his arm and checks the weapon as you drive your right forearm into the side of his neck (3). Maintain pressure on the neck as you snake your rear hand around the opponent's weapon arm (4). Maintain pressure on the neck as you complete the snake and dislodge the weapon from his grasp (5). You now have the opponent's weapon (6).

## **Evasion**

If you have no weapon, it is not advised that you use your arm to block the weapon. Instead, you should evade whenever possible. In both of the evasion techniques presented here, the rope-a-dope and the duck, you must avoid moving on a 1-2 count in which the opponent attacks, then you enter after the opponent has finished his swing. Rather, strive to move on a much quicker 1-1.2 count, entering the instant the opponent's stick passes by and before he can rechamber to attack again. The difference is subtle, but understanding it can make the difference between success and failure.

To block and disarm a tambo strike while it is still in the acceleration zone, you will have to watch for the moment that the opponent begins to chamber his weapon for a strike, and then suddenly close the gap, entering into close range. Your rear hand should check the opponent's weapon hand, while your lead hand strikes the opponent with a tiger claw to the eyes. Slide your rear hand onto the opponent's weapon and grasp it before delivering a hard style block to the opponent's weapon arm to dislodge the weapon from his grasp. Immediately follow up with various counterattacks, including turning the opponent's weapon against him.

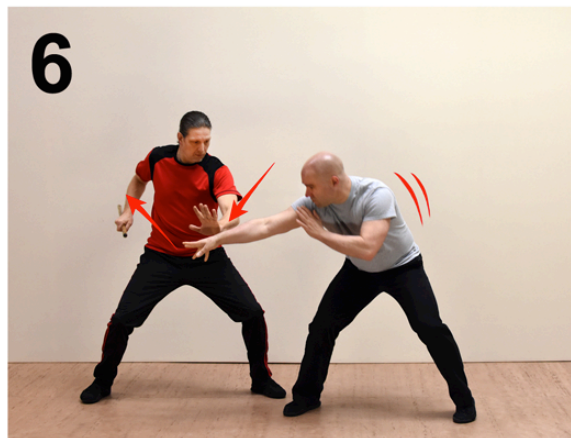
To block and disarm a tambo strike in the deceleration zone, you must first evade the strike, causing your opponent to miss his intended target. The most common method is to draw a strike, then lean your body backwards just out of range of the strike. As soon as the weapon goes by, step into close range to check the weapon hand as you simultaneously strike to his eyes with a tiger claw. Slide the rear hand and grasp the opponent's weapon to immobilize it, before delivering a hard style block to the opponent's weapon arm to dislodge the weapon from his grasp. Immediately follow up with various counterattacks, including turning the opponent's weapon against him.

Other methods of disarming the opponent include snaking or grape-vining the weapon arm, performing an empty-hand hooking disarm, or simply attacking the opponent's body with strikes or kicks. Practice a wide range of techniques so you will be versatile and able to respond effectively to every opportunity.



## Rope-a-Dope

The rope-a-dope is a boxing style made famous by Muhammad Ali in his 1974 match slated "The Rumble in the Jungle" in which he made George Foreman miss him repeatedly by leaning just out of range of his attacks. Begin by exposing your head to draw a strike (1). When the opponent swings, lean your body backwards just out of range of his strike (2). As soon as the weapon goes by, straighten back up (3). The opponent returns with a horizontal backhand strike (4). Stop the opponent's weapon arm, jamming him at the wrist and elbow (5). Grasp the opponent's stick and deliver a hard palm strike to the back of his arm to dislodge the weapon from his grasp (6).



## Level V: Knife Defense

Any encounter with a knife-wielding attacker is about as serious and life threatening as a self-defense situation gets. We practice for this in the dojo, but in the street there are some very real possibilities that you must keep in mind. If you are ever in a real confrontation involving a knife, be prepared for the possibility that you might get cut and mentally prepare yourself. If you are cut, do not stop and give in to the shock and surprise of the pain. You must keep your focus on your attacker and deal with him before tending to your wounds. If a cut does occur, apply pressure to the wound at the earliest opportunity to stop the bleeding and seek medical attention. Keep the following principles in mind when training knife self-defense:

1. Keep your vital areas out of reach of the knife.
2. Move to the dead side and attack the hand and arm that control the knife.
3. Utilize speed, control, and complete commitment in your training.
4. Keep your knees bent, weight on the balls of your feet, and your mind calm.
5. Use any resources available to put something between you and the knife (ie. jacket, chair, distance, etc.).

Knife attacks are most commonly ambushes, launched at short range (within 3 feet of the victim). They are extremely violent; carried with speed and determination within a very short span of time (i.e. they don't last long). Attackers will lead with their free hand, effectively shielding the knife, and will stab the victim repetitively with quick short thrusts at different angles. Attackers frequently grab and push the victim who quite often will fall to the ground.

Studies have shown that over 70% of knife attacks are led with the free hand and this dramatically alters the dynamic of the attack along with your initial reaction. Most knife attacks are ambushes, not duels. Attackers rarely brandish the knife; they keep it concealed until the very last moment. Over 70% of knife attacks are launched within 3 feet of the victim. Knife attacks are fast and furious, often resulting in the victim falling on the ground. Knife attacks don't last long. The average time is 23 seconds but 50% of attacks last 14 seconds or less. Knife attacks are more often performed with quick, short repetitive stabs at different angles. There's usually a first, very aggressive, wave of stabs (5 to 10).



**In other words:**

You will be taken by surprise and you will be overwhelmed by fear and aggression.

You won't see the blade before the attack is launched.

You very likely won't be able to run away and avoid the attack.

You will have very little time and space to react and deploy a counter-attack.

You probably won't be able to stop the first stab(s) so, you will be cut and stabbed a number of times and might not even realize you've been stabbed.

You probably won't have time to draw your own weapon (gun, knife, pepper spray, etc); at least not before being stabbed a couple of times.

You will be likely moving backwards, your balance will be compromised, and you'll probably fall to the ground.

Your movements will be restricted, your fine motor skills will be gone, you won't be able to access the knife bearing arm easily.

Any technique that is based on smooth arm deflection and manipulation has very little chance to work.

Any technique that rests on the assumption of a single straight thrust ('full-stop one-step zombie attack') or a wide sweeping slash has very little chance to work.

Grabbing the knife wielding hand is always preferable to parrying or blocking it.

**Right Stab to the Stomach**

This is by far the most common attack with a knife. Moving into the attack is critical to stop the stabbing (by reducing space and movement) and to prevent counter-attacks (e.g. punch with free hand, head-butt, etc). You may still get stabbed or cut, but it is better to get stabbed once than multiple times, as you would if you backed away from the attack. Therefore, you have to shut your aggressor down right away.

**Smother and Lock**

This is probably the most practical way to deal with a knife attack. Cut the attack short by closing the distance with as much kinetic energy as possible. The movement is driven by your legs, which hurl you forward, into the attack. Close the distance quickly and smoothly and stay as close to your aggressor as possible. Immediately get control over the knife-wielding hand (or arm). Maintain forward pressure and take control of the knife-bearing arm as soon as possible shut down your attacker aggressively. If the attacker checks you with his lead hand, bring your right arm down and across his arm like a lower block, to clear the arm, all the while striving to control the opponent's weapon arm using a modified open-handed lower X-block. Your left arm checks the opponent's lower arm as your right checks his upper arm. Your left hand then snakes clockwise under the attacker's elbow as you control his right wrist. Grasp his upper arm with your right hand and pull the attacker towards you, taking him off balance. Follow up keeping control of both the weapon and attacker.

## **The Clam**

The clam is a useful defense against a stabbing attack, but only if the attacker does not lead with his free hand, which is statistically a less than 30% chance. The advantage of the clam is that it pits the strength of your two hands against his one. The tricky part is evading the initial thrust and controlling the knife.

## **Deadside Clam**

Your attacker has the knife in their right hand. As he thrusts at your midsection, take a quick hop with your left foot to your opponent's deadside, shift your weight to your left foot and pivot your body clockwise, "opening the door to avoid the attack. As his thrust reaches full extension, simultaneously bring your right hand up from the bottom, cupping the base of his hand, and chop down with your left hand, striking the base of his thumb with the palm corner of your open hand to loosen his grip on the knife. This movement is like a clam snapping shut, and is where the technique gets its name. If this initial move does not cause him to drop the knife, his reaction will be to pull his knife back quickly, so immediately grab your opponent tightly about the hand and wrist with both your hands to control the knife. Use his pull back to apply bent wrist. As he realizes your intent and resists your bent wrist technique, reverse the motion and, still controlling the knife with both hands, cut the side of his neck with a slash from left to right with his own knife. In the same motion, put your elbows on your hips and use your legs to drive the tip of the knife (still in his hand) up into his abdomen. Disengage and run.

## **Liveside Clam**

If you accidentally open the door to the liveside, clam your attacker's knife hand exactly as above. After grabbing, however, pull your opponent's arm up and forward as you bend his wrist down and point the tip of the knife back towards him. As he resists your pull, reverse the motion and, still controlling the knife with both hands, drive the tip of the knife (still in his hand) between his ribs (blade horizontal). Without releasing his hand or changing your grip, retract the knife, step your right foot to your left, and duck under his knife arm. Pivot counterclockwise as you step your left foot through and drive the tip of the knife (still in his hand) up into his own abdomen. Disengage and run.

## **Lower X Block**

Your body's initial response may be to jump backwards to avoid the attack. While this may not be the best choice of movement, block the attacking arm at the wrist with a lower x-block and grasp the wrist. If your left hand is on top, you can apply kote gaeshi (bent wrist), moving your left foot back and pivoting into left forward stance to take the attacker down. Disarm and finish the opponent. If your right hand is on top, move your right foot back and apply ude osae (pressing arm). Follow up keeping control of both the weapon and attacker.



## **Right Overhead Downward Strike**

**Option 1** Slide off line to the attacker's dead side to avoid the blade. Bring your right arm up and intercept/strike the attacker's wrist with your forearm, then slide down his arm to grasp his wrist. Utilize the downward momentum of the attack to guide the knife into your attacker's abdomen. You can then apply kote gaeshi, moving your left foot back and pivoting into left forward stance to take the attacker down. Follow up keeping control of both the weapon and attacker.

**Option 2** Anticipate the attack and intercept the opponent's arm before he begins his downward motion (the acceleration zone). Block the attacker's wrist with a left rising block as you bring your right hand under the opponent's arm to grasp your own left hand. Keeping the opponent's arm bent at a 90° angle, apply a juji-garami armlock. A variation is to hook the outside of their right elbow with your right hand (right hand palm up, thumb toward the attacker and resting in the crook of their elbow). In either instance, drop your left elbow straight down as you sink your hips, causing your attacker to drop straight to the ground. Be very careful not to injure your partner's shoulder in practice. Follow up keeping control of both the weapon and attacker.

## **Horizontal Slashes (right to left/left to right)**

1. Your attacker has the knife in his right hand. As he slashes at you from his right to left, hop back and "hollow out", pulling just out of range. Anticipate the return slash from left to right, and step forward with your left foot as you use a left outer block to check the attacker's right elbow. Clamp your hands down on the opponent's weapon hand, left hand on top and right hand underneath, controlling the wrist and the knife. Apply kote gaeshi, moving your left foot back and pivoting into left forward stance to take the attacker down. Follow up keeping control of both the weapon and attacker.

**Recommended Reading:** *Self-Defence Against Knife Attacks: A Full Review*

By Patrice Bonnafox ©2016

You can find it online at: <http://www.urbanfitandfearless.com/2016/09/self-defence-against-knife-attacks.html>