

below: You can carry a good pocket knife like this Summa folder by CRKT almost all the time and anywhere.

Edged Weapon Attacks and the Myth of Self Defense:



Senior Citizens Be Prepared!



The Sayoc Tactical Group teaches students to put the attacking bad guy on the defensive.

[BY BRUCE N. EIMER, Ph.D.]

When was the last time you sat on a train, a bus, or in a restaurant, club, or movie theater, and worried that you might be attacked by a knife wielding madman?

If you were to admit that you did that yesterday, some people, especially those who suffer from hoplophobia, and who don't want to think about such things, might want to give you a mental health diagnosis. However, the most recent episode in February of 2011 of a crazed knife-wielding murderer, wilding through the streets and subways of Manhattan, drives home the fact that such a thing could happen to you. In fact, the husband of a member of the gym I belong to was attacked by that guy on a Manhattan subway car!

Senior citizens are frequently considered easy prey by violent criminal predators. The good news is that if you are reading this article, you are disproving the validity of that belief. I have discussed in previous articles the fact that we seniors have the advantage of surprise on our side. It can be a good thing to be underestimated. Fortunately, you do not have to be a former Special Forces operator to learn some simple counter attack techniques to turn the tables on a knife wielding attacker. You, my friends, can learn how to do it too. However, it does take some training.



The Sayoc Tactical Group regularly offers seminars on Counter Edged Weapon Tactics to prepare good people to survive edged weapon attacks by bad people.

Throughout human history, oppressed groups of people in a myriad of cultures were forced to find accessible tools to use as weapons. Hence stick, edged weapon as well as empty hand fighting techniques evolved into well developed martial art forms such as those of Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia. These martial arts cultures developed techniques for aggressively deploying edged weapons in a fight and for defending against edged weapon attacks. As a student of edged weapon combatives with the Sayoc Tactical Group (STG) (www.SayocTactical.com), I have been fortunate to study some of these techniques with like minded partners.

Edged weapon realities

At contact distances, relying solely on your hands or any other body parts in the face of an edged weapon attack should be a last resort. Before that, we

should have exhausted verbal dissuasion and any other attempt to abort or escape the situation. Unfortunately, in “gun-free zones” and jurisdictions that do not permit carrying firearms, the law abiding citizen is really on his or her own in a close quarter blade confrontation. In such a situation, getting an impact or edged weapon into play would be our next goal. However, if this cannot be done, then we are in an empty hand versus blade confrontation.

Avoid jumping too quickly into an “empty hand versus blade” training mentality because there seldom is a good outcome to an empty hand versus blade confrontation; rather, it is a *least bad* outcome—you are most likely going to get cut and the question is how to minimize the damage. In the real world, it is false confidence to assume that you will be able to reliably deploy empty hand defenses and knife disarms and remain intact physically.

Knife attacks happen very fast—faster than the eyes can track. Therefore, always keep avoidance in mind. Learn to recognize precursors to attacks and to violent behavior. Anyone who teaches empty hand tactics in this context without mentioning this is irresponsible.

The person who has the blade has an advantage. Imagine for a moment that you are fighting your clone. You are empty handed and your clone has an edged weapon. You will lose because the “you” with the blade will be a more dangerous fighter than the “you” without the blade. What this means is that if you want to come out the winner in a close-quarter fight with a blade wielding attacker, you have to be better than that person with the blade.

The “De-escalation mindset”

Situational awareness is essential to staying safe and surviving in the world. In order to survive an attack and win the



above: How can you “defend” against an ambush attack like this without a weapon assisted aggressive counter-attack?

right: Since a folder is easier to carry than a fixed blade, an assisted opening folder such as this CRKT Ignitor may provide a good solution to the problem of getting your folder open fast.



fight, you must be ready. The Readiness Formula is *Awareness + Willingness + Preparedness = Readiness*.

Awareness. Always be aware of your 360 degree world so that you can pick up early on any precursors to an attack.

Willingness. You must be willing to do whatever it takes to win. This means you must be willing to fight for your life, and to use deadly force if you are faced with deadly force. This requires a decision on your part. If you carry a deadly weapon, you had better be willing to use it if you need to. In previous articles, I and other contributors have discussed the judicious use of less than lethal force and lethal force. For

the best discussion on this topic, read Massad Ayoob's *In the Gravest Extreme*, or better yet, take one of his seminars (www.MassadAyoobGroup.com).

Preparedness. It is not enough to be willing. You must also have the necessary training, both mental and physical, so that you are *prepared* to use deadly force if you must in order to survive. The good news is that you do not have to become a black belt to learn some simple counter edged weapon tactics.

The mental piece. Whether there are precursors to an attack or not, and whether you pick up on them or not, you need to train yourself to prepare

mentally. Your personal security requires that you are prepared and mentally willing to use your weapons every time there is a change of state. I am talking here about the “de-escalation mindset.” This means that every time there is a change in the situation and the door opens and someone comes into your space, you need to go through your mental drawstroke, so to speak. Most of the time there is no problem. But, if there is a problem, if you train yourself to do this, you will be prepared to do whatever you must do. The de-escalation mindset is a cycle we should go through all the time. The more you do it, the easier it will be, as it turns into

a habit that becomes hard wired into your brain.

The reactionary gap. The point is that we, the good guys and gals, are always riding a time curve. Remember the principle that *action is faster than reaction*. When there is a change of state, you must change with it. This is plain common sense survival. I know it does not sound “right” to people who do not want to face reality, because it is reality! If you were on that subway car, would you have been ready to go?

The myth of self defense

In a fight, everything is a balance between offensive and defensive mindsets. If one person is purely defending, then the other guy according to the laws of the balance can go 100 percent on the offensive. Eventually, he will find his way through your defenses and wear you down. However, if you can force him to react defensively, that will slow down his offensive attack. As a student of edged weapon combatives with the Sayoc Tactical Group, this idea has been imprinted into my brain. We do not like to use the word “defensive” because when you do so, you accept the mentality of that “if I can begin to defend myself successfully, I am winning.” This mentality will get you killed!

If you are taken by surprise, the fight begins with the bad guy being the “feeder” (that is, feeding you his blade or his blows or his bullets) and you being the “receiver.” If you are to prevail, you must change that immediately by making yourself the “feeder” and the bad guy the “receiver.” The term, *Counter Edged Weapon*, gives us an accurate description of the desired mentality. With every movement, you must counter the bad guy’s attacks. As you counterattack him, now he will have to *defend* himself, and if he doesn’t have a counter offensive strategy, he will lose. Your end goal in an inescapable close quarter engagement is to end his attack. This may translate into making your attacker go into a fetal position as you overwhelm him.

In summary, in order to prevail and survive the ordeal that you did not start, you need to be attacking and wearing your attacker down every time you



Lessons from the tiger. The tiger does not block. He strikes aggressively with his claws. Learn to pair a block or a parry with a strike.

counter his movements. To this end, STG conducts counter edged weapon seminars that teach participants how to parry, tap, and strike simultaneously.

Summary

You need not be taken by surprise. Follow the concepts presented here and train yourself to be prepared for anything. At the very least, carry a good fighting-folder pocket knife with you everywhere so that you have a better fighting chance if you are unfortunately attacked by someone wielding a blade. Check out some of the videos at www.SayocTactical.com and learn what you would be dealing with if you were attacked by a man with a knife. Consider signing up for a seminar on counter edged weapon tactics. Don’t let strangers get too close to you; that is, breach your personal space. Always leave yourself an escape route. ★

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