



*the*  
**GIRLS** *fight* **BACK**

*sassy*  
**self-defense**  
**GUIDE**

## Hey friend, it's time for some real talk. Ready?

### YOU. ARE. AWESOME.

You are an incredibly strong, resilient, powerful and spirited soul who is fully capable of physically fighting back some really sketchy shiznit. Hard to believe? Understandable. As women, we've been raised to assume that our safety is someone else's responsibility. We walk through the world praying that our daddy, our boyfriend or our knight in shining armor will rescue us if something bad happens. We are trained to believe that someone else will save us. That's how the fairy tale always ends, just like in all the movies, right?

We have a wild idea. What if we stopped relying on the Knight in Shining Armor, and just saved ourselves instead? That's why Girls Fight Back was founded in 2001— because violence is happening now. We don't choose to be a victim, but we can choose how we respond to creepy situations. (and darlings it is NOT your fault if a crime happens to you!) It's time to reclaim our power, our confidence, and our right to live the badass existence for which we were intended!

Now before we throw down here, first let's make an attitude adjustment. Many women don't believe they CAN physically fight back against a man successfully. *(Note: We know that not all attackers are men, but according to sources including the NVAWS and the National Crime Victim Survey, 90% + of all acts of violence committed against men/women/kids are committed by men. That's why we'll use "he/him" pronouns in this guide.)* It probably has a lot to do with growing up as a woman in America. Gender norms can be hurtful and when those norms try to make us believe that womxn aren't capable of defending themselves then it's time to flip the script!

My dangerous damsel, please know that you are fierce. Men are not the only ones capable of defending themselves. Regardless of what society, your ex, or that guy on Facebook said, you have everything you need right now in your powerful body to defend yourself against ANYONE of any gender, body type, age, background, etc. The men you see in TV and movies that can survive 5 story falls, punch through glass without a flinch and come out of fist fights with no injuries (and no blood!) don't exist! So don't let that fiction discourage you from recognizing your strength!

This Sassy Self-Defense Guide is intended to help you conquer anxiety, increase confidence, teach you some tricky techniques, and inspire you to grab life by the horns using simple moves! You'll learn how to find a good self-defense class and get answers to the most common FAQs about women's safety.

**Check out the VIDEO page at [girlsfightback.com](http://girlsfightback.com) for visuals too!**

## Ok, let's get this party started...

### Q1: What is self-defense?

Anything you do to avoid danger and/or keep yourself safe counts as self-defense! It really is that simple! Self-defense and fighting back aren't just about physical moves. It is also about boundary setting, using your intuition and having a strong verbal response to sketchy situations. A good verbal response shows that you are not vulnerable and could help you avoid an escalation to a physical confrontation. **We believe that the best fight is the one never fought!** Self-defense isn't about what you SHOULD do, it's about what you CAN do! There are no style points, no rules, and no such thing as a fair fight when it comes to defending your life and getting to safety. Self-defense is about having options and choices for how to manage the situations we encounter on a daily basis. Then you pick what works best for you!

### Q2: How can I find a great, local women's self-defense class?

First, look for a class with a woman-friendly vibe. Instructors should never speak to you in a condescending way or use sexist language. I don't care how many black belts they have. Learning self-defense is about confronting our worst fears, so this experience is best had in an environment where you feel safe and respected.

We recommend taking a class that offers scenario-based training with an instructor in a padded suit. And remember, while the martial arts are beautiful and teach amazing skills like discipline, coordination and physical fitness, it isn't the same as a full-contact adrenaline-based self-defense class. Taking a class that includes both physical & verbal scenarios that address what violence out in the world (including assaultive language) realistically looks like means you'll have adrenaline rushing through your body. Doing the moves and learning how to think while in this amplified state trains your body to respond through muscle memory (or state dependent learning if you want to get technical!) and reduces the freeze response when you are facing a potentially dangerous situation.

Before taking any sort of self-defense, make sure you are prepared - both physically and emotionally. Survivors of violence may have a difficult time with some scenarios, and can be triggered to have flashbacks. Discuss self-defense with a counselor or therapist before signing up. Learning to fight has helped many survivors heal, but you have to be ready for it.

My favorite national self-defense program is **IMPACT Personal Safety** (**IMPACTPERSONALSAFETY.COM**, see final page of this guide for a list of local classes.) This program

has professional, diverse instructors who take every precaution to ensure classes are safe and sensitive for people of all backgrounds. All classes are team taught by a woman lead instructor and a padded instructor. There are many more excellent programs out there too, including FAST Defense (also included below), and ESD Global, so do your research, ask friends for recommendations, and see what feels right.

### **Q3: Should a woman *always* fight back if attacked?**

Although I believe all women should know *how* to fight, it's really up to the individual whether or not to bust out your moves. Trust your gut on that one but knowing HOW to fight at least gives you the choice – which is empowering.

Sometimes immediately fighting back is not physically possible. For example, if you woke up in the middle of the night to a man pinning you to your bed, it's better to take a few moments to wake up and assess the situation instead of just thrashing while pinned. This can waste valuable energy that you will need later. In a full contact self-defense class, you'll learn about finding your moment to fight back and how to unleash mega-force when the right time comes. Fighting back is a personal choice and whatever you decide to do to survive your situation IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO!

So how can you tell if fighting is the right way to react? By learning to trust your intuition and having the skills to properly defend yourself, you will be amazed at how simple the choice may become. In fact, many women report going into *auto pilot mode* when attacked after taking a self-defense class. Learning techniques will create muscle memory, triggering your brain to remember them and respond, even under stress.

Regardless how you react in the situation, remember violence **IS NEVER YOUR FAULT**. No matter what you do or don't do, **no one deserves to be victimized in any way**. But if you or a friend are sexually assaulted, stalked or abused – please don't be afraid to get help.

**National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE**

**National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE**

**Crime Victims Hotline (stalking): 1-866-689-HELP**

**National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC): 1-877-739-3895**

## Q4: Can a small woman defend herself against a large man?

*“I’m only five feet tall and 100 pounds. Could I possibly fight back and win against a guy bigger, taller or stronger than me?”* We’ve heard this a gazillion times, especially from the vertically challenged gals. The answer is YES, you can. I’ve seen them do hundreds of times in class! Here’s the thing: **Women do not fight men with strength. We fight with strategy.** That strategy is a very simple formula that anyone can use even in a stressful situation. Ask yourself these questions:

Where is an attacker vulnerable? + Where am I strong? + FORCE = **Strategy**

You don’t need a black belt in karate or to memorize any complicated moves. You don’t even have to be coordinated!

## Q5: Where are the best places to strike an attacker?

The secret to winning a fight is using your strengths against your attacker’s weaknesses. Knowing that you are worth fighting for is one of the biggest strengths you have! If we look at the whole man, it can be a bit intimidating to try and take him down. However, when we break him down into teensy-weensy pieces and tackle those vulnerable targets singularly, it’s less overwhelming.

**The goal here is NOT to cause PAIN, but to cause DISABILITY.** We were once told by a student at a GFB show, “I loved the techniques you discussed, but if some guy attacks me, I’m just gonna pinch him in the armpit.” Ummm, okay. Free country, I suppose. But really picture that situation. If the gal being attacked pinches a perp, she might get punched in the face (or worse) because a pinch won’t likely disable an attacker from doing further damage.

### Where is an attacker vulnerable?

- Ears
- Ear
- Knee
- Temple
- Throat
- Ankle/Instep
- Eye
- Back of the Neck
- Foot/Shin
- Nose
- Groin (regardless of gender)
- Spine

There are other spots you can shoot for but those listed will give you a bigger bang for your buck. You always want to shoot for the spot that will create the most damage in the least amount of time. Remember, you're not here for a drawn-out sparring match. Your ultimate goal is to escape as safely and quickly as possible.

## Where are you strong?

- **Voice!**
- **Teeth**
- **Booty**
- **Hands**
- **Elbows**
- **Fingers**
- **Legs**
- **Knees**
- **Feet**

As you can see, you have lots of choices. Your voice is your first weapon, so make some noise! Your hands can be used to poke eyes or palm heel to the face. Your teeth can be used to bite. (Oh hell yeah, we believe in fighting dirty! There are no fair fights in self-defense.) Your elbows can strike someone's spine or face when they have you in a rear hold. Your feet can kick, either while standing up or on the ground. And don't forget our booty (aka junk in the trunk) is a powerful part of our bodies!

## **Q6: What are the most BADASS self-defense techniques?**

There are so many to choose from, and you'll learn how to do them properly in a good self-defense class. But here is a quick overview of my fave tricky moves...

- **Palm Strike (no fists!)**

Using the hard bone located at the heel of the hand, pull back your fingers to expose the area entirely. With a swift upward motion, use the heel of the hand to upwardly strike the attacker's nose or forehead. After someone has been effectively palm-stricken, possible outcomes include a broken nose, difficulty breathing, decreased vision due to watery eyes and a sensation of being off-balance. Plus, they will most likely not be thinking about your next target...

- **Groin Strike**

Kicking or knee striking a guy between the legs is serious business and can cause debilitating injuries. It's worth noting that this strike will hurt anyone regardless of their gender. Using the strong area of the lower thigh right above your knee, drive beneath and upwards into the attacker's groin. This causes lots 'o pain, and simultaneously knocks the wind out of a person. One of my guy friends calls this move "Man Death."

- **Eye Jab**

Injuries to the eye pack a wallop of a punch when it comes to the psychological trauma. To do an effective eye jab, I recommend using all the fingers on one hand and making a point, like a shadow puppet on a wall with an overhead projector. Using the tips of all five fingers, you can poke at the eye area. Remember, it doesn't matter how big and strong a bad guy is – our eyes are equally vulnerable to injury and we all have built-in reflexes to flinch and defend them.

## **Q7: What are some basic self-defense rules?**

First understand there **ARE NO RULES** in fighting for your life. You gotta get creative and scrappy to survive. Here are 3 basic strategies to get you started...breathe, respond, escape.

## **Breathe. Respond. Escape.**

### **>> BREATHE**

Breathing is one of the hardest things to do during a fight - but is also the most important. Sometimes a response to fear is the sucking in of breath and holding it in. Have you ever been in a near-miss car accident? Right after you realize you're not actually going to hit someone, you let out an enormous sigh of relief. Hold the breath long enough and you will surely pass out. (I don't teach unconscious ass whoopin', sorry.) Yelling NO with every strike while using self-defense techniques will keep the air flowing and remind you to breathe – as well as throwin' down some great verbal defense.

## >> RESPOND

Learning self-defense has been proven to shorten the freeze response, making it possible to move into action more quickly. Ask yourself the question “What’s Going On?” to switch your brain into problem solving mode and start figuring out what you can do. What targets are available on their body? What weapons on your body are available? You are powerful and you have options. Harness your fear and it will make you stronger and faster. Fear is your friend. Rock it.

## >> ESCAPE

Your responsibility in a self-defense scenario is to defend yourself until the bad guy is no longer a threat. No need to stick around any longer than that. If someone attacks you, the safest thing to do is execute techniques necessary to open up an opportunity to get the hell away from this person. Then get help!

**Thanks for reading, and feel free to share this sassiness with your friends!**

**Badass love from the GFB Team!**

 **girlsfightback**

 **@studentsfightback | @girlsfightback**

 **Twitter: @girlsfightback | #badassbasics**

 **gfb@girlsfightback.com**

## **IMPACT SELF-DEFENSE CLASSES**

### **California—Los Angeles**

IMPACT Personal Safety, Inc.  
PO Box 931541  
Los Angeles, CA 90093  
Phone: (310) 360-1096  
Email: [impactla@aol.com](mailto:impactla@aol.com)  
Website: [www.impactpersonalsafety.com](http://www.impactpersonalsafety.com)

### **California—San Francisco/Bay Area**

IMPACT Bay Area (formerly BMM)  
1724 Mandela Parkway #1  
Oakland, CA 94607  
Phone: (510) 208-0480  
Email: [info@impactbayarea.org](mailto:info@impactbayarea.org)  
Website: [www.impactbayarea.org](http://www.impactbayarea.org)

### **Colorado - Denver**

IMPACT Personal Safety CO  
700 N. Colorado Blvd., #180  
Denver, CO 80206  
Phone: (303) 956-6643  
Email: [info@impact-colorado.org](mailto:info@impact-colorado.org)

### **Illinois - Chicago**

IMPACT Chicago  
4770 N Lincoln Ave. # 6  
Chicago, IL 60660  
Phone: (773) 561-9000  
Email: [info@impactchicago.org](mailto:info@impactchicago.org)  
Website: [www.impactchicago.org](http://www.impactchicago.org)

### **Massachusetts – Boston Area**

Boston IMPACT  
420 Pearl St.  
Malden, MA 02148  
Phone: (781) 321-3900  
Email: [info@impactboston.com](mailto:info@impactboston.com)  
Website: [www.impactboston.com](http://www.impactboston.com)

### **New Mexico – Santa Fe**

IMPACT Personal Safety  
PO Box 8350  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-8350  
Phone: (505) 992-8833  
Email: [info@impactpersonalsafety.org](mailto:info@impactpersonalsafety.org)  
Website: [www.impactpersonalsafety.org](http://www.impactpersonalsafety.org)

### **New York – New York**

Prepare Inc.  
147 W. 25th St., 8th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Phone: (800) 442-7273 or (212) 255-0505  
Email: [prepareinc@aol.com](mailto:prepareinc@aol.com)  
Website: [www.prepareinc.com](http://www.prepareinc.com)

### **North Dakota - Grand Forks**

University of North Dakota Women's Center  
P.O. Box 7122, UND  
305 Hamline St.  
Grand Forks, ND 58203  
Phone : (701) 777-4300  
Email: [undwomenscenter@und.nodak.edu](mailto:undwomenscenter@und.nodak.edu)

### **Ohio - Columbus**

IMPACT Safety  
A Program of Life Care Alliance  
1699 West Mound Street  
Columbus, OH 43223  
Phone: (614) 437-2936  
Email: [info@impactsafety.org](mailto:info@impactsafety.org)  
Website: [www.impactsafety.org](http://www.impactsafety.org)

### **Oregon - Portland**

PDX Prepare Portland  
8119 N. Syracuse St., #1  
Portland, OR 97203  
Phone: (503) 764-8344  
Email: [prepareportland@gmail.com](mailto:prepareportland@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.prepareportland.org](http://www.prepareportland.org)

**Washington D.C.**

IMPACT Self Defense  
1716 Newton St. NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
Phone: (202) 328-1203 or (866) 638-5165  
Email: [info@dcimpact.org](mailto:info@dcimpact.org)  
Website: [www.dcimpact.org](http://www.dcimpact.org)

**England - London**

IMPACT UK  
P.O. Box 38883  
London W12 9XP  
Phone: 020 8743 7827  
Email: [lcps@lcps.demon.co.uk](mailto:lcps@lcps.demon.co.uk)  
Website:  
[www.londoncentreforpersonalsafety.org](http://www.londoncentreforpersonalsafety.org)

**Israel - Jerusalem**

IMPACT Israel  
37 Pierre Koenig  
Jerusalem  
Phone: 011-972-2-678-1764/94  
Email: [elhalev@elhalev.org](mailto:elhalev@elhalev.org)  
Website: [www.elhalev.org](http://www.elhalev.org)

## FAST SELF-DEFENSE CLASSES

### Arkansas - Fayetteville

IMPACT Martial Arts of Fayetteville  
16 W. Township  
Fayetteville, AR 72703  
Phone: (479) 251-8783  
Email: randy.edwards@att.net  
Website: www.fayettevillemartialarts.com

### California – San Francisco/Bay Area

Practical Martial Arts Academy  
5768F Paradise Drive  
Corte Madera, CA 94925  
Phone: (505) 992-8833  
Email: practicalmartialarts@mac.com  
Website: www.practicalmartialarts.net

### California – San Francisco/Bay Area

DoJo USA World Training Center  
731 Kains Ave  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
Phone: (650) 589-9148  
Email: info@dojousa.net  
Website: www.dojousa.net

### California – Orange County

Krav Maga of Orange County  
17751 Sky Park East, Suite E  
Irvine, CA 92614  
Phone: (949) 333-0736  
Email: mitch@kravmagaoc.com  
Website: www.kravmagaoc.com

### California – San Diego

MMA Academy  
3962 Sorrento Valley Blvd, Suite 900  
San Diego, CA 92121  
Phone: (858) 564-8800  
Email: info@mmaacademy.com  
Website: www.mmaacademy.com

### Colorado – Denver Area

Fast Defense  
7016 N. 73rd St  
Longmont, CO 80503  
Phone: (720) 256-3898  
Email: bill@fastdefense.com  
Website: fastdefense.com

### Florida – Naples

SWFL Health and Self Defense  
5926 Premier Way, Unit 128  
Naples, FL 34109  
Phone: (239) 431-6054  
Email: swflhealthandselfdefense@gmail.com  
Website: www.swflhealthandselfdefense.com

### Florida – St Petersburg

St Pete Self Defense  
Call for Locations  
St Petersburg, FL  
Phone: (727) 504-0777  
Email: kathy@stpeteselfdefense.com  
Website: www.stpeteselfdefense.com

### Florida – St Petersburg

Elite Training Center  
1144 94th Avenue North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33702  
Phone: (727) 576-2100  
Email: management@elitetraininginc.com  
Website: www.elitetraininginc.com

### Florida – Tampa Area

Tampa Bay Self Defense  
5820 Heronview Crescent Drive  
Lithia, Florida 33547  
Phone: (813) 909-5639  
Email: www.tampabaymartialarts.org  
Website: www.tampabaymartialarts.org

**Hawaii - Hilo**

Big Island Martial Arts Academy  
29 Shipman Street  
Hilo, HI 96721  
Phone: (808) 933-2503  
Email: provosts@hawaiiantel.net  
Website: www.bigislandma.perfectmind.com

**Hawaii - Honolulu**

FAST Defense Hawaii  
Call for Locations  
Honolulu, HI  
Phone: (808) 220-3111  
Email: waydeching@gmail.com  
Website: www.wingchuncombatives.com

**Hawaii - Maui**

Earth Medicine Institute  
Call for Locations  
Maui, HI  
Phone: (808) 937-4218  
Email: david@davidbruceleonard.com  
Website: www.earthmedicineinstitute.com

**Indiana – Indianapolis Area**

Gentry Martial Arts  
1909 E Morgan St  
Martinsville, IN 46151  
Phone: (765) 342-5600  
Email: reply@gentrymartialarts.com  
Website: www.gentrymartialarts.com

**Indiana – Lafayette**

USA Family Karate  
2613 Maple Point  
Lafayette, IN 47905  
Phone: (765) 269-9069  
Email: doneal58@hotmail.com  
Website: www.usafamilykarate.com

**Indiana – Warsaw**

Personal Safety Unlimited  
Call for Locations  
Warsaw, IN  
Phone: (574) 269-7209  
Email: Steve@personalsafetyunlimited.net  
Website: www.personalsafetyunlimited.net

**Maine - Randolph**

Focused Fitness Karate  
131 Kinderhook Street  
Randolph, ME 04346  
Phone: (207) 582-6365  
Email: focusfitness@aol.com  
Website: www.focusedfit.com

**Maryland - Annapolis**

Balanced Life Skills  
133 Gibraltar Ave  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Phone: (410) 263-0050  
Email: joe@balancedlifefit.com  
Website: www.balancedlifefit.com

**Massachusetts – Boston Area**

Elite Freestyle Karate  
1349 Main St  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: (781) 942-9898  
Email: efk1@aol.com  
Website: www.elitefreestylekarate.com

**Michigan - Midland**

The Academy of Martial Arts and Fitness  
700 Poseyville Rd  
Midland, MI 48640  
Phone: (989) 631-5960  
Email: theacademymartialartsfitness@gmail.com  
Website:  
www.theacademymartialartsandfitness.webs.com

**Michigan – Detroit Area**

Denny Strecker's Karate  
28732 Ryan Road  
Warren, MI 48092  
Phone: (586) 573-3881  
Email: denny@karateforchildren.com  
Website: www.KarateForChildren.com

**Michigan – Detroit Area**

Dan Vigil's Academy of Taekwondo  
235 East Main Street, Suite 103  
Northville, MI 48167  
Phone: (248) 349-6900  
Email: vigil@northvillemartialarts.com  
Website: www.northvillemartialarts.com

**Minnesota – Minneapolis Area**

Northwest Martial Arts  
14696 Dory Court  
Apple Valley, MN 55124  
Phone: (651) 322-3600  
Email: karatesenior@frontiernet.net  
Website: www.northwestmartialarts.org

**Missouri – West Plains**

Top Mount Martial Arts LLC  
112 E. Trish Knight St  
West Plains, MO 65775  
Phone: (417) 256-4290  
Email: info@topmountmartialarts.com  
Website: www.topmountmartialarts.com

**Montana - Billings**

FAST Montana  
1212 Grand Ave, Suite 11  
Billings, MT 59102  
Phone: (406) 591-2864  
Email: dforleo@fastmontana.com  
Website: www.fastmontana.com

**Nebraska – Omaha Area**

American Academies of Martial Arts  
2406 Cornhusker Road  
Bellevue, NE 68123  
Phone: (402) 731-5425  
Email: frontdesk@aa-ma.com  
Website: www.martialartsinbellevue.com

**Nevada – Reno Area**

Universal TaeKwon-Do  
870 Highway 95 Alternate South  
Fernley, NV 89408  
Phone: (775) 575-6077  
Email: utffernley@gbis.com  
Website: www.martialartsnevada.com

**New Jersey – Ridgewood**

Ridgewood Shukokai Karate School  
30 Cottage Place  
Ridgewood, NJ 07450  
Phone: (201) 447-2272  
Email: karate@rsk.com  
Website: www.RSKS.com

**New Jersey – East Brunswick**

Satori Academy of Martial Arts  
1199 Amboy Avenue  
Edison, NJ 08837  
Phone: (732) 651-0123  
Email: info@satoriacademynj.com  
Website: www.satoriacademynj.com

**New York – New York City Area**

Kapatid Academy  
175 Tompkins Avenue  
Pleasantville, NY 10570  
Phone: (914) 741-5550  
Website: www.kapatidmartialarts.com

**North Carolina – Charlotte**

King Tiger Academy  
3016 B Prosperity Church Road  
Charlotte, NC 28269  
Phone: (704) 717-0903  
Email: tevinstk@yahoo.com  
Website: www.kingtigercharlotte.com

**North Carolina – Greensboro**

Allen Branch's Fitness  
1209 Shields Road  
Kernersville, NC 27284  
Phone: (336) 655-4558  
Email: trainer@myfitnessone.com  
Website: www.myfitnessone.com

**Ohio – Akron Area**

Hickey Karate Center  
4540 Stow Road  
Stow, OH 44224  
Phone: (330) 686-4540  
Email: shihan@hickeykaratecenter.com  
Website: www.hickeykaratecenter.com

**Pennsylvania – Dublin**

Maximum Impact Karate  
123 N. Main Street  
Dublin, PA 18917  
Phone: (215) 249-3532  
Email: trosanelli@maximpactkarate.com  
Website: www.maximpactkarate.com

**Texas – Houston**

Fight or Flight Self Defense  
PO Box 14523  
Houston, TX 77221  
Phone: (713) 370-1932  
Website: www.fightorflightdefense.com

**Texas – Houston**

Krav Maga Houston  
2615 Southwest Freeway, Suite 260  
Houston, TX 77098  
Phone: (713) 526-2500  
Email: ckirk@kravmagahouston.com  
Website: www.kravmagahouston.com

**Virginia – Roanoke Area**

Wado-Ki Karate  
4836 Warrior Dr  
Salem, VA 24153  
Phone: (540) 309-3416  
Email: tomrams@gmail.com  
Website: www.tomskarate.com

**Washington – Seattle Area**

Kaizen Shotokan Karate  
21515 SR 410  
Bonney Lake, WA 98391  
Phone: (253) 862-4525  
Email: kskarate1@aol.com  
Website: www.kskarate.com