

Best techniques and strategies for self-defence: balancing efficiency and ethics

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INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Self-defence strategies are crucial in protecting oneself in threatening situations, where the use of force should be proportional and focused on ensuring personal safety without causing unnecessary harm. Martial arts not only teach physical skills but also emphasise the moral responsibility of individuals to use these techniques with restraint and wisdom. Avoiding physical confrontation is often the most effective approach, as the consequences of engaging in violence can be severe, both legally and psychologically. Techniques such as using surroundings for defence, targeting an attacker's weak points, and making well-thought-out decisions during a confrontation can significantly improve self-defence outcomes. This paper discusses key self-defence principles, including the importance of self-restraint, the effective use of physical techniques like punches, kicks and strikes to sensitive areas, and staying calm while under pressure. By understanding and practising these strategies, individuals can protect themselves while maintaining their integrity and minimising the impact of violence.

KEYWORDS

self-defence, martial arts, conflict avoidance, physical techniques, self-restraint



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Introduction

Self-defence is a fundamental aspect of martial arts, which goes beyond learning physical skills and extends to cultivating inner discipline

and ethical responsibility. It is crucial for individuals to understand that the ultimate purpose of martial arts is not to harm others but to empower them with the ability to protect themselves in dangerous situations. The importance of avoiding unnecessary violence cannot be overstated, as engaging in physical confrontations can lead to irreversible consequences that can alter the lives of both parties involved. Many conflicts arise from temporary emotional outbursts and physical aggression, and even in moments of self-defence, can damage relationships and lead to legal ramifications.

Martial arts practitioners are often trained to stay calm, think critically, and act with restraint. The true measure of mastery lies not in the ability to inflict harm but in the ability to choose peace over conflict. In this sense, martial arts serve as a guide to maintaining personal integrity while navigating potentially dangerous situations. Key principles, like the use of temporary disabling techniques, maintaining awareness of surroundings and focusing on escape rather than escalation, are fundamental to ensuring that self-defence actions remain both effective and ethically sound.

Moreover, understanding the psychological, legal, and emotional consequences of physical confrontations adds another layer of responsibility to the practice of self-defence. The ability to avoid or defuse confrontations, without using any violence, is therefore one of the most essential skills that martial arts instils in its practitioners.

1. Materials and methods used in research

This study aims to explore the question: "What are the quickest and most effective self-defence techniques to use, in case of an attack?" To address this research problem, both qualitative analysis and practical demonstrations were employed to explore self-defence strategies, with a particular focus on Wing Chun and boxing techniques. Wing Chun, a traditional Chinese martial art, was examined for its emphasis on close-range combat, specifically fast, successive strikes (such as the chain punch) and strategic body movements. Boxing techniques, including the jab, cross, and hook, were analysed for their effectiveness in maintaining distance and neutralising threats.

In addition to physical techniques, the study incorporated ethical guidelines related to protecting oneself. Every action taken in self-defence was examined to ensure it was temporary and proportional. The objective is

not to kill or permanently harm the attacker, but to temporarily disable them in order to enable a safe escape. The study emphasised the importance of moderation and proportionality in the use of force, highlighting that excessive violence can lead to serious consequences.

Furthermore, the study incorporated religious perspectives, examining relevant verses of the Qur'an to provide a broader ethical context for self-defence. Verses addressing anger suppression, forgiveness, and avoiding aggression were explored. Specifically, the verse: "And fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not aggress; God does not love the aggressors" (*The Qur'an*, n.d., 2:190) was referenced to underline the importance of avoiding excessive violence and seeking peaceful resolution whenever possible.

To reinforce the theoretical framework, real-life case examples were used to illustrate the consequences of physical confrontations. The case of Emmanuel Matias, for example, who was involved in a road rage incident where he (at the age of 28) struck 71-year-old Michael Frank Gentile, resulting in the victim's death. Matias was sentenced to 10 years in prison for manslaughter (Hardaway, 2025). This case exemplifies the legal and personal consequences of engaging in violent conflicts.

By combining martial arts techniques, ethical principles, religious teachings, and real-life case examples, this study provides a holistic approach to understanding self-defence.

2. Ten self-defence principles.

Strategies for avoiding and managing confrontations

2.1. Avoiding physical confrontation with people one knows

Martial arts are not solely about developing physical skills; they are also comprehensive disciplines that teach self-control, patience, and a strong sense of responsibility. The ultimate purpose of these arts is not to harm others, but to enable individuals to protect themselves in life-threatening situations and to neutralise potential dangers with minimal harm. In this context, engaging in physical conflict with someone a person knows contradicts not only the philosophy of martial arts but also fundamental human values.

Martial arts not only improve physical skills but also enhance emotional regulation and mental well-being. According to Ciaccioni (2024), these

practices boost self-esteem and stress management, offering valuable mental health benefits.

However, some martial arts, like karate and kickboxing, can increase aggression levels in certain contexts (Ciaccioni et al., 2024). While martial arts foster mental resilience and self-control, they also stress the importance of avoiding unnecessary conflict – especially with individuals one knows – to protect both physical and psychological health.

Disagreements with familiar individuals often arise from temporary emotional surges. However, if not controlled, these bursts of anger can lead to irreversible consequences. Becoming physically aggressive toward someone with whom one shares social, emotional, or familial bonds may result in irreparable damage to the relationship, deep mistrust between parties, and serious fractures within the social circle. Moreover, harming someone one knows inflicts not only physical damage on the other person but also leaves a heavy burden on one's own conscience.

For those who practice martial arts, this matter requires even greater sensitivity. The technical skills and physical advantages possessed come with moral responsibility. These abilities demand remaining calm under all circumstances, seeking peaceful resolutions rather than escalating conflicts, and acting defensively only when absolutely necessary. Resorting to force against a familiar individual places a person in a morally and legally vulnerable position, regardless of intentions.

It must be remembered that true mastery lies not in the ability to strike, but in the strength to choose not to. Winning a fight is not merely about defeating an opponent; it is about resolving the issue without fighting at all. In relationships with those close to a person, this mindset not only ensures one's own safety and peace but also preserves the trust and well-being of others.

In this context, not only intellect and experience but also a faith-based moral consciousness must come into play. The Qur'an encourages suppressing anger, choosing forgiveness, and turning away from ignorance rather than confronting it. Avoiding physical conflict and adopting a higher ethical stance not only protects social harmony but also reinforces inner peace. The cited verses below shed light on divine principles that support this understanding (*The Qur'an*, n.d.):

- **Qur'an (7:199)** "Take to pardoning, and order what is good, and turn away from the ignorant ones".

- **Qur'an (41:34)** "Not equal are the good and the bad response. You shall resort to the one which is better. Thus, the one who used to be your enemy, may become your best friend".
- **Qur'an (42:40)** "The recompense for a crime shall be its equivalence, but whoever forgives and makes right, then his reward is upon God. He does not like the wrongdoers".
- **Quran (4:63)** "And the servants of the Almighty who walk on the earth in humility and if the ignorant speak to them, they say: 'Peace'".
- **Quran (3:134)** "The ones who spend in prosperity and hardship, and who repress anger, and who pardon the people; God loves the good doers".

2.2. Why is avoiding conflict always the best solution?

Staying away from physical confrontation is one of the most fundamental and vital principles taught by martial arts. True mastery in self-defence lies not in throwing a punch, but in having the wisdom and restraint to stop and think before doing so. No physical fight is entirely predictable or fully controllable; therefore, not getting involved in one is always the safest, most humane and most rational choice.

No fight is ever truly won – at best, it is merely survived with fewer consequences. Even when one side seems to "win", the outcomes are often costly for everyone involved. A heated argument or a momentary burst of anger can escalate in seconds and put a person either in a hospital or a police station. Physical altercations can result in severe injuries, long-term trauma, permanent disabilities or even death. More damaging than bodily harm, however, are the psychological and legal consequences. Acting out in anger, even in self-defence, may unintentionally endanger another person's life. In such situations, regardless of who initiated the conflict, the use of force can make a person legally responsible. In short, a moment of anger can cost years in prison.

There are many examples of acts of violence happening because of losing control and acting out of anger. The events experienced by these people clearly show the vital importance of avoiding physical conflict. The next subsections showcase some cases that exemplify this.

2.2.1. Emmanuel Matias case

Emmanuel Matias, a 28-year-old from Yonkers, New York, was involved in a road rage incident in Stamford, Connecticut, during which he attacked

71-year-old Michael Frank Gentile. Matias punched Gentile, causing him to fall and hit his head, resulting in a skull fracture. Gentile died due to a traumatic brain injury. Matias was sentenced to 10 years in prison for first-degree manslaughter (Hardaway, 2025).



Fig. 1. Emmanuel Matias during his sentencing with tears in his eyes

Source: (Gold, 2025).

- **Psychological consequences:** Matias likely experienced guilt, shame, and post-traumatic stress after realising the gravity of his actions. The overwhelming sense of loss and regret from unintentionally ending a life can cause long-lasting emotional turmoil, which can lead to depression or anxiety.
- **Social consequences:** Beyond the legal consequences, Matias's actions led to the dissolution of relationships with friends and family. His criminal record and involvement in violence can severely affect his future social interactions and reintegration into society.

2.2.2. Pablo Lyle case

Mexican actor Pablo Lyle was involved in a traffic dispute in Miami, in 2019. During the altercation, he punched a 63-year-old man, Juan Ricardo Hernández. Hernández fell to the ground, hit his head, and died four days later from the injury. Lyle was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced to 5 years in prison (*Mexican actor Pablo Lyle sentenced to five years in prison in road rage death*, 2023).

- **Psychological consequences:** Lyle likely faces emotional distress, feeling remorse for causing someone's death over a moment of anger. This psychological toll may include anxiety and long-term post-traumatic stress, as he has to live with the consequences of his actions.
- **Social consequences:** Lyle's actions have not only harmed the victim's family but have also affected his career and public image. His reputation as an actor has been tarnished, and his actions may lead to a loss of fan support and professional opportunities.

2.2.3. James Butler case

Professional boxer James Butler punched his opponent Richard Grant, under the guise of a handshake, after a charity boxing match in 2001, causing serious injury. He served a short prison sentence for the attack. Later, in 2004, he was convicted of the murder of sportswriter Sam Kellerman and sentenced to 29 years and 4 months in prison ("James Butler (boxer)", 2025).

- **Psychological consequences:** Butler's aggression towards his opponent was followed by a brutal act of violence and likely led to severe psychological damage. The murder of Sam Kellerman and the realisation of its impact on both the victim's family and his own life could result in deep regret, self-loathing, and a battle with mental health issues like depression or suicidal thoughts.
- **Social consequences:** Butler's criminal actions destroyed his professional career and social relationships. Being convicted of murder erased his previous professional identity as a boxer, leaving him isolated from his previous social networks.

2.2.4. Sean Kennedy case

In 2007, Stephen Andrew Moller punched 20-year-old Sean Kennedy outside of a bar in South Carolina. Kennedy fell and hit his head, later dying from the injury. Moller was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced to 5 years in prison ("Death of Sean Kennedy", 2025).

- **Psychological consequences:** Moller likely suffers from guilt and regret after unintentionally killing someone. He may struggle with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety due to the incident, compounded by the fact that the aggression was not premeditated.
- **Social consequences:** Moller's actions resulted in a damaged reputation and social alienation. He not only faces legal consequences but also social isolation, as his relationship with his community and family would likely be strained by the trauma of his crime.

2.2.5. Blake Shearer case

In 2018, David Skalla assaulted 16-year-old Blake Shearer in Pennsylvania after confronting him about playing loud music in a park. Skalla punched Shearer, who suffered traumatic brain injuries and died days later. Skalla was sentenced to 8 to 16 years in prison for involuntary manslaughter and aggravated assault ("Killing of Blake Shearer", 2025).

- **Psychological consequences:** Skalla likely faces psychological consequences such as remorse and grief. The stress of taking someone's life, even inadvertently, can cause long-term emotional issues, including depression and severe guilt.
- **Social consequences:** Skalla's actions have led to serious legal consequences and social isolation. His actions, stemming from a minor conflict, have resulted in him losing not only his freedom but also his ability to form future healthy relationships due to the stigma attached to his crime.

2.2.6. Walter Triplett Jr. case

In 2009, during an argument at a bar in Ohio, Walter Triplett Jr. punched Michael Corrado, who died from the blow. Triplett was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to 20 years in prison (Blackwood, 2025).

- **Psychological consequences:** The emotional burden of taking a life is often accompanied by long-lasting regret and psychological pain. Triplett is likely to experience guilt and depression, especially after realising the irreversible nature of his actions.
- **Social consequences:** Triplett's social life was shattered, as his involvement in violence severely affected his relationships with his family and friends. Additionally, his criminal record makes it difficult for him to reintegrate into society.

As shown in these cases, individuals who unintentionally killed someone in a moment of anger ended up ruining not only the lives of others but also their own – despite the act being accidental. After serving their sentences, many of these individuals struggle to find employment, as their criminal records often make reintegration into society difficult. Moreover, some develop psychological issues due to their experiences, and in some cases, they may even feel the urge to return to prison as a way to escape the overwhelming pressures of life outside. Therefore, it is crucial to remember that engaging in a fight, even briefly, carries the serious risk of spending years behind bars. For this reason, one should always avoid physical confrontations whenever possible.

It is also crucial to remember that one rarely knows enough about the encountered person. They may have combat training, be carrying a concealed weapon, be under the influence of drugs or suffer from mental instability. These variables can instantly neutralise any advantage one might think they have. Underestimating an opponent in such scenarios is not only foolish but potentially fatal. Overconfidence based on physical skill can lead to making poor, irreversible decisions – especially when losing control.

Moreover, any fight that occurs in public may severely damage a person's reputation. Witnesses might misinterpret the events, and news or social media can spread the incident far beyond control. Even if one is in the right, the public perception may see someone as the aggressor, simply based on how the event is portrayed.

Martial arts are not only about acquiring physical strength – they are about learning when not to use it. A genuine understanding of self-defence is knowing that violence is the absolute last resort. This mindset encourages viewing conflict not as a battle to be won, but as a crisis to be managed. Crisis management is a far more refined skill than fighting – choosing to walk away from a confrontation is not a sign of weakness, but of strength, wisdom, and foresight.

For this reason, especially in public settings, crowded environments, or emotionally charged situations, first and foremost, the goal should be to avoid escalation at all costs. Speaking calmly, walking away, changing the environment, or even remaining silent can often be the most effective defence. It is wise to remember: if one never enters a fight, one never loses it. And sometimes, the greatest victory is the one earned without lifting a single fist.

In addition to the physical consequences, the psychological effects of engaging in physical confrontations can be far-reaching. According to Kibris and Goodwin (2024), individuals exposed to high-intensity, armed

conflict environments are more likely to experience long-term depression and trauma, as seen in their study of Turkish conscript veterans. This aligns with the notion that avoiding conflict is not only the safest choice physically, but also psychologically. The mental scars of combat or even violent confrontations can persist, affecting a person's emotional and social well-being for years after the event.

2.2.7. Legal responsibility of martial arts practitioners

One critical aspect of self-defence, often overlooked, is the legal responsibility of martial arts practitioners compared to the general population. While self-defence is universally recognised as a legal right, the degree of proportionality and moderation expected in its use may vary for practitioners of martial arts due to their advanced training and skills.

Martial arts practitioners are often held to a higher standard of responsibility than average individuals are when it comes to using force in self-defence. This is primarily because martial artists have a unique ability to neutralise threats with minimal harm, thanks to their advanced techniques and combat training. As such, legal systems may argue that martial artists should have greater restraint and more consideration before resorting to physical force.

In some jurisdictions, courts have taken the level of training into account when determining whether the use of force was appropriate. For instance, if a martial artist uses excessive force in a self-defence situation, it may be considered unreasonable or disproportionate, even if the force used would be justified for someone with less training.

2.2.8. Do legal systems differ?

The legal systems in different countries may differ in how they assess the responsibility of martial artists in self-defence cases. Some legal systems, such as those in certain U.S. states or European countries, might impose higher scrutiny on martial artists for their use of force, due to their combat training. Conversely, in some other systems, martial arts training may be viewed as mitigating circumstances, as the ability to defend oneself efficiently is considered a positive skill.

In places where the Castle doctrine or the stand-your-ground law are in effect, there may be a more lenient view on the use of force in self-defence. However, even in these contexts, martial artists are not exempt from ensuring the proportionality of their response. They cannot use force that is unreasonable for the perceived threat.

In certain professional fields (e.g. security, law enforcement), martial arts practitioners might be required to adhere to even stricter guidelines, with legal consequences for using excessive force. This is due to the expectation that their training should enable them to handle situations without the need for aggressive physical confrontation.

In conclusion, while martial arts practitioners generally have the same legal rights to defend themselves as anyone else, they also have a greater legal responsibility to use their skills responsibly. Legal systems may assess the proportionality and reasonableness of force more critically when martial arts are involved, holding practitioners to a higher standard than the average person.

2.3. If a fight is inevitable, one should stay calm and use the objects around as defence tools

During a physical confrontation, emotions and thoughts quickly come into play. In such situations, the first and most important thing is to remain calm. Most people can lose control due to anger, fear or stress, but panic and hasty decisions can exacerbate the danger. The human brain responds quickly and automatically in dangerous situations, but the response is not always the most logical solution. Often, one needs to buy some time to avoid causing further harm and to protect oneself safely. Taking a deep breath not only provides physical relaxation but also clears the mind. This generates a chance to evaluate the situation calmly and develop an effective strategy.

In moments of panic, the body moves faster and more uncontrollably, thoughts scatter, and reflexive actions trigger. With the rush of adrenaline, the body tends to move more quickly, but this speed sometimes invites the urge to act without thinking, which may not lead to the best decisions. The result may be an unwanted outcome. Therefore, acting with composure, rather than a sudden outburst of anger, will be much more successful. Remaining calm for a few seconds helps to make the best decisions for what might happen later.

If the person being faced possesses a physical threat (e.g. a weapon), and there is no possibility of retreat, strategic evaluation of the nearby objects can serve as an effective tool. Objects in the environment can provide both physical defence and create advantages one can use to neutralise the opponent (for detailed training, Escrima lessons are recommended). Taking a moment to carefully assess the surroundings may prove beneficial. The

objects around could be ordinary items: a stone, a pen, a key, a pointed ring, a hardcover book, or a bottle (Figures 2 and 3). These types of items are excellent tools which can be used as defensive objects.



Fig. 2. Self-defence technique demonstration by Peter Weckauf in *The Most Important Dirty Tricks for Self-Defence*

Source: (Weckauf, 2018).



Fig. 3. Self-defence technique demonstration by Peter Weckauf in *The Most Important Dirty Tricks for Self-Defence*

Source: (Weckauf, 2018).

For example, a stone or a hardcover book could serve as an effective shield to ward off an opponent's attack. Similarly, a pointed ring could help defend oneself with a quick strike, aimed at the opponent's vulnerable areas. Using such a defensive strategy, especially to neutralise threats and create a diversion, can turn the conflict in favour of the person protecting themselves. The most important thing here is that these objects should only be used in self-defence. These are meant not to harm the opponent but to neutralise them and to help escape the situation safely.

When defending, it is also crucial to pick the target mindfully. Planning ahead where to strike, how to neutralise the opponent, and which movements offer the safest escape options opens a pathway for thinking critically during a confrontation. While defending, the goal is not to harm or kill the aggressor but to prevent them from causing harm. The primary goal should be to escape the situation as quickly as possible.

Another key point is that the strikes should be aimed at sensitive areas of the body, such as the face, eyes, and genital region. These are the most strategic spots to neutralise an attacker. However, the movements need to be fast and effective, as the opponent may try to quickly defend themselves or counterattack. Directing the objects one uses towards these spots provides an advantage over the aggressor.

Lastly, it is worth remembering that every move made in defence is only effective temporarily. The most important thing is to quickly escape and leave the situation while still controlling it. Succeeding in a fight is not just about defeating the opponent; it is about gaining the chance to survive and protecting oneself from danger.

2.4. If an individual improves their reflexes, they can defend themselves with just their hands

If approached aggressively, one of the first actions a person can take is to raise their hands in a defensive position. Palms should face the attacker, with the left arm extended outward, and the right arm partially raised (Figure 4). Both hands should be positioned around chin level, ensuring that they stay up and act as a barrier to keep the attacker at a distance.

Wing Chun guard is very similar to this. This defensive posture is known as Man Sao (the questioning hand) and Wu Sao (the protecting hand) (Figure 5). This position not only creates a solid defence but also serves as a preparatory action for further techniques, which leads to the subsequent phase of defence.

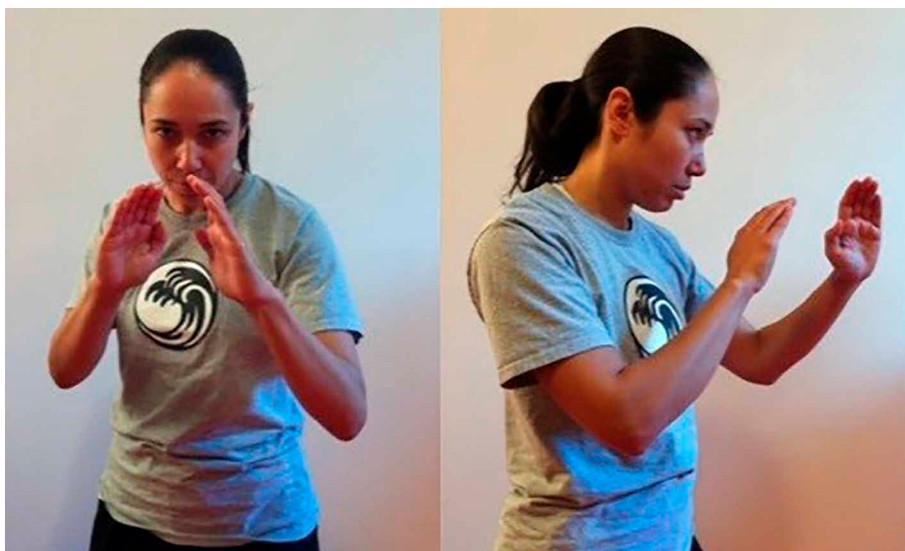


Fig. 4. The most general and practical self-defence position. To maintain distance between an individual and the attacker, hands are held open and facing the opponent at chin level

Source: (O'Connell, 2013).



Fig. 5. Wing Chun guard – Man Sao and Wu Sao

Source: (Wu Sau, n.d.).

This guard position is crucial because, in most “street” confrontations, 99% of punches are thrown as right-handed hooks. Therefore, it is essential to raise the left arm, keeping it open and high in front of one’s body to protect against these types of attacks, especially from the left side. The right hand should remain raised and ready to act as an additional defensive barrier.

2.4.1. Pak Sao (the slapping hand) – 1st defensive technique

Pak Sao is a powerful and highly effective defence technique, used to deflect straight punches aimed at the chin, chest or especially the diaphragm (a strike to it obstructs breathing) (Figure 6). When a punch is thrown directly in front of the person protecting themselves, Pak Sao (the slapping hand) allows them to redirect it away from the face or chest, clearing the space and making an opening for counteraction.



Fig. 6. Pak Sao – a technique used to defend against punches coming at the chest or face
Source: (*Wing Chun Techniques*, n.d.).

2.4.2. Jat Sao or Bil Sao (the chopping hand) – 2nd defensive technique

Jat Sao is another essential technique which can be used to defend against hook punches (Figure 7). When a punch comes from the side, Jat or Bil Sao allows intercepting and blocking it, making it one of the best tools for deflecting aggressive strikes in combat.



Fig. 7. Jai or Bil Sao – a technique which can be used to defend against hook punches
Source: (Kung Fu Mamba, 2020).

2.4.3. Gam Sao (the pressing hand) – 3rd defensive technique

Gam Sao is used to press down and control attacks coming from the stomach area or against an incoming knee strike. The aim of Gam Sao is to press down onto an attack coming from below by moving the palms downwards, stopping it and gaining momentary control over the situation (Figure 8).



Fig. 8. Gam Sao – a technique used to defend against punches or knee strikes coming at the level of the abdomen
Source: (Wing Chun Techniques, n.d.).

2.4.4. Gan Sao (the splitting hand) – 4th defensive technique

Finally, Gan Sao is a technique used to alter the direction of punches aimed at the stomach (Figure 9). When the attack comes from below, Gan Sao allows splitting the incoming punch, redirecting it away from the body and protecting vital areas.

These four techniques – Pak Sao, Jat or Bil Sao, Gam Sao, and Gan Sao – are highly effective in self-defence situations. After practice, these can greatly enhance the ability to defend against a variety of punches and strikes, making them invaluable skills for anyone engaged in martial arts training, particularly for practitioners of Wing Chun.

These techniques can also become a reflex to eliminate the opponent's attacks by just aiming to push the attacker's wrists or fist away without memorising any technical names.

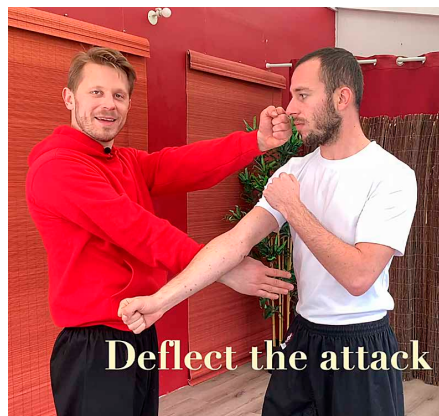


Fig. 9. Gan Sao – a technique used to alter the direction of punches aimed at the stomach

Source: (Couppey, 2022).

2.5. If there is no defence tool available, target strategic points

In a confrontation where there are no defence tools available, the most effective strategy is to focus on the opponent's strategic, vulnerable points. The genital area is one of the most sensitive parts of the human body, and a swift kick can render an opponent helpless almost instantly (Figure 10). A well-executed kick to the genital area can cause intense pain, disrupt balance and create an opportunity to escape.

This technique is especially useful in situations where the opponent is aggressively charging. The genital area is a vulnerable target that requires minimal force to cause a significant effect. The pain from a well-measured kick can stun the aggressor and earn some time, necessary to retreat.

Attacking the eyes can also immediately neutralise the opponent (Figure 11). Eyes are one of the most sensitive and vulnerable parts of the body. A quick strike, with the palm of the hand, can cause the opponent's vision to temporarily blur, rendering them unable to defend themselves properly. This attack disrupts their ability to fight back and creates an opportunity



Fig. 10. Self-defence technique demonstration by Peter Weckauf in *The Most Important Dirty Tricks for Self-Defence*
Source: (Weckauf, 2018).



Fig. 11. Self-defence technique demonstration by Peter Weckauf in *The Most Important Dirty Tricks for Self-Defence*
Source: (Weckauf, 2018).

to escape the situation. It should be stressed that the goal is not to blind the opponent but to temporarily impair their vision.

If your opponent is within reach, grabbing their finger and pulling it backwards in order to break it is also an effective technique (Figures 12a

and 12b). Grabbing and pulling the finger back can cause the bones to break and significantly disable the attacker. Alternatively, the same technique can be used to bring them to the ground. Grabbing their arms or wrists can disturb their balance and force them to the ground, restricting their movement and creating an opportunity to escape.



Fig. 12a. Self-defence technique demonstration by Peter Weckauf in *The Most Important Dirty Tricks for Self-Defence*

Source: (Weckauf, 2018).

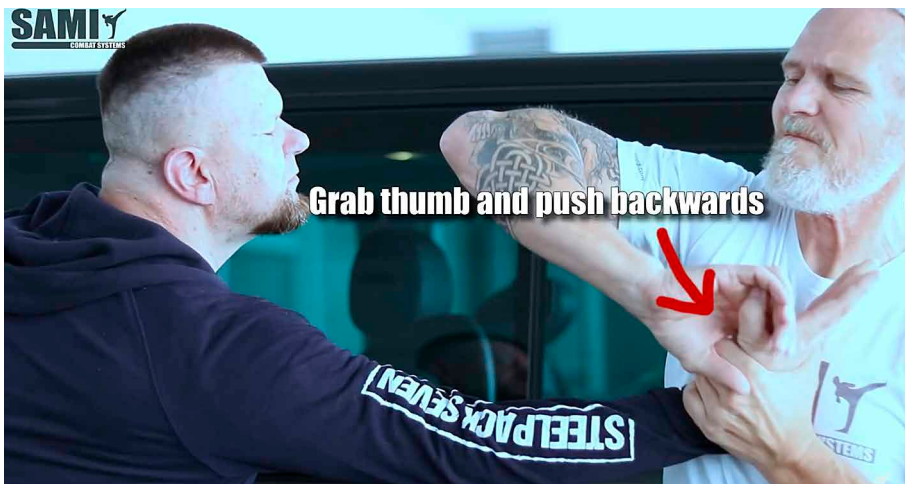


Fig. 12b. Self-defence technique demonstration by Peter Weckauf in *The Most Important Dirty Tricks for Self-Defence*

Source: (Weckauf, 2018).

If the opponent is very close and other techniques are not effective, a headbutt can be a powerful defence move (Figure 13). This technique targets the opponent's face or head with a strong blow, potentially stunning them and causing injury. A headbutt is most effective when the opponent is in a vulnerable position. This quick and powerful move can create the chance to escape while leaving the opponent disoriented.



Fig. 13. Self-defence technique demonstration by Peter Weckauf in *The Most Important Dirty Tricks for Self-Defence*

Source: (Weckauf, 2018).

In conclusion, defending at close range requires focusing on the opponent's weak points and quickly neutralising them. Each of these techniques will help render the aggressor defenceless and immediately create an opportunity for a safe escape. It is worth remembering that the goal is not to defeat the opponent but to protect oneself and take control of the situation safely.

2.6. If punching techniques are required, basic boxing moves can be used

In a physical confrontation, sometimes using hand skills to protect oneself may be required. In such cases, punching techniques can be an effective defence tool. However, it should always be remembered that the purpose of throwing punches is not to fight, but to neutralise the opponent

and escape safely. Therefore, the techniques used should be aimed at rendering the opponent defenceless without causing excessive harm.

One of the most basic moves in boxing is the jab, a fast and effective strike aimed at the opponent (Figure 14). The jab is typically used to distract, maintain distance, and expand the defence zone without causing damage. A slow and careful jab can break the aggressor's defence, disrupt their balance, and allow time to escape. The jab also acts as a barrier to prevent counter-attacks.

In addition, the cross – a straight punch – is one of the most important punches in a boxer's arsenal. The cross usually comes after the jab and delivers a much stronger blow. When using this technique, the body is fully open and a strong and effective strike is delivered to the aggressor. The greatest advantage of the cross is that it disrupts the opponent's balance and creates an opportunity to defend oneself and assess the surroundings for an escape route.

Another crucial punch technique is the hook, which is a circular motion aimed at the head or body (Figure 15). The hook is especially useful in close-range combat to disrupt the opponent's balance and deliver a direct blow. This technique is ideal for gaining an advantage while exploiting the gaps in the opponent's defence, because it is delivered from an unexpected angle. An effective hook

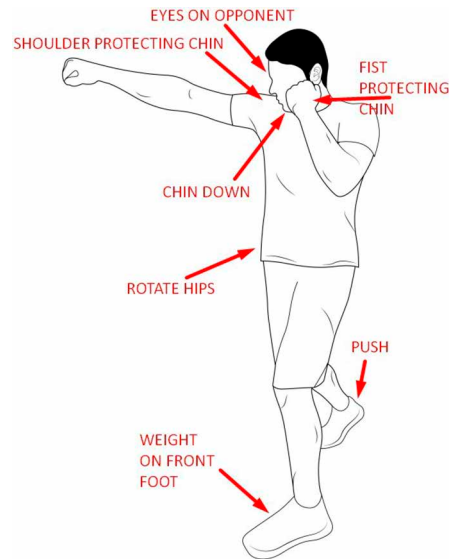


Fig. 14. Boxing punch technique illustration, showing key body movements during a punch

Source: (*Boxing punches – How to throw and get power?*, 2022).

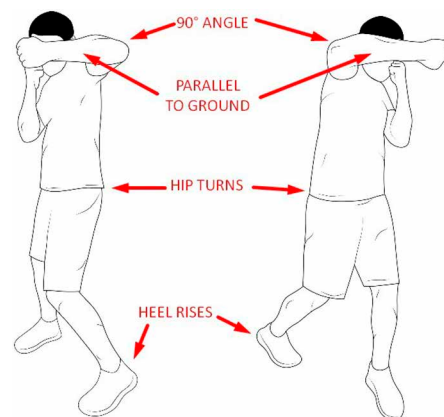


Fig. 15. Illustration showing the correct form and body movements for a hook punch

Source: (*Boxing punches – How to throw and get power?*, 2022).

shakes the opponent's head, stuns them, and weakens their defence. This gives a chance to escape, as the opponent might find it difficult to react quickly.

When using boxing techniques, one of the most important points is to focus on the defence, not the offence. The punches thrown should be delivered with neutralising the opponent in mind, not defeating them. The goal is to disable the aggressor and then quickly escape the situation. Fighting should always be the last resort, and the main objective should always be regaining control and fleeing safely, after rendering the opponent defenceless.

Succeeding in a confrontation is not just about defeating the opponent; it is about managing the situation calmly, applying the most suitable escape strategy, and causing as little harm as possible. Punching techniques can be an effective part of defence, but these should always be used to ensure safe escape.

2.7. If harder interventions are required, the strongest parts of the body can be used: elbows and knees

In a physical confrontation, when the opponent is close, defending oneself becomes more challenging. In such situations, harder interventions may be required. Soft and short strikes may not always be sufficient, so using stronger parts of the body, such as elbows and knees, can be an extremely effective strategy for self-defence in close range. These strikes can limit the opponent's movements, protect, and create an opportunity for a quick escape.

Elbow strikes are excellent techniques for inflicting significant damage at a close range. This is because elbows are stronger compared to the other parts of the arms and typically can create weak spots in the aggressor's defence. Elbow strikes can be aimed directly at the opponent's head, face, or body (Figure 16). These strikes are particularly effective at close distances, as the limited range of motion makes it harder for the opponent to escape. Furthermore, an elbow strike to the head area can disorient and break their defence, making them vulnerable. This gives an opportunity to escape and gain control of the situation.

Another effective technique is using the knee to strike. Knees are one of the strongest parts of the body, and when used correctly, they can limit the opponent's movements. Knee strikes are usually aimed at the aggressor's chest or abdominal area. These strikes can make it difficult for them

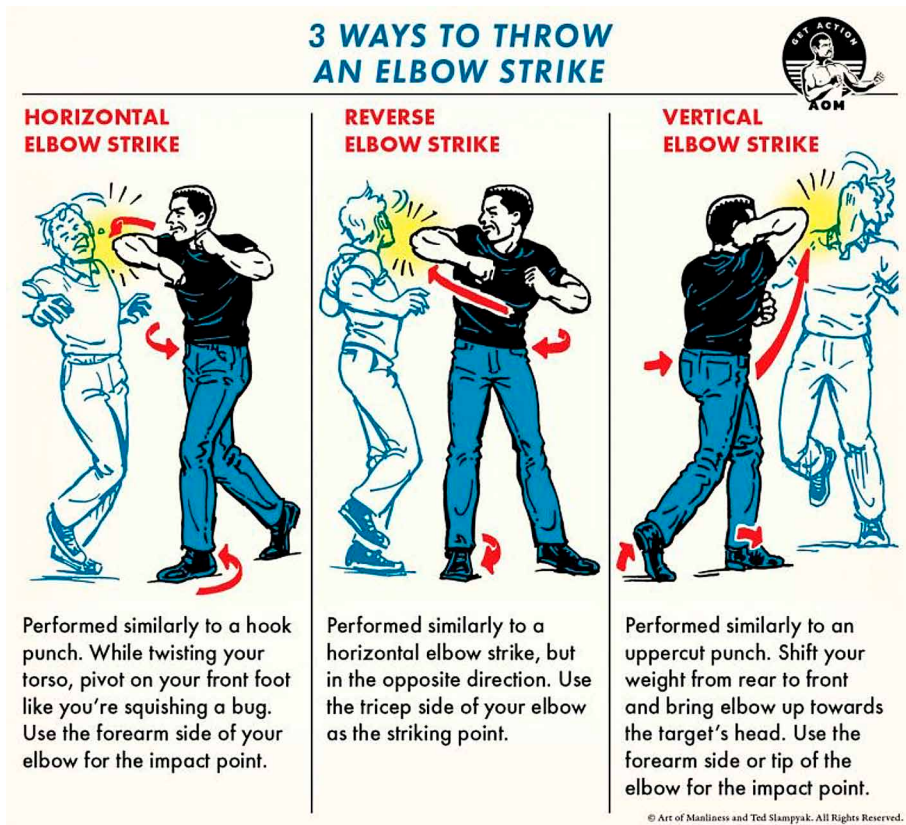


Fig. 16. Illustration showing three types of elbow strikes

Source: (McKay B., McKay K., 2024).

to breathe, cause muscle relaxation and significant pain. A knee strike to the genital area can temporarily disable the attacker or make them stumble to the ground (Figure 17). Additionally, knee strikes to the head or body have the same effect, and push the aggressor to retreat or provide an opportunity for the individual defending themselves to escape. Knee strikes to the head and body can quickly incapacitate the opponent and give a significant advantage.

Both techniques allow delivering powerful, effective and painful blows. Elbow and knee strikes are strong tools that can quickly break the opponent's defence, especially when aimed at the head or body. These strikes do not limit the attacker's physical strength, but they can cause significant pain and temporarily disable them. This provides an easier way to escape, as it becomes harder for the opponent to continue fighting.



Fig. 17. Self-defence technique demonstration by Peter Weckauf in *The Most Important Dirty Tricks for Self-Defence*

Source: (Weckauf, 2018).

When an individual is defending themselves at close range, stronger interventions may be required, and in that case, elbow and knee strikes can provide a great advantage. These techniques are excellent for breaking through the opponent's defence. However, it is crucial to use these strikes properly. As stressed before, the goal should always be to quickly incapacitate the aggressor and escape safely. Each of these techniques not only helps protect but also aids in escaping the conflict in the best possible way.

2.8. The chain punch technique to strike the opponent's chin quickly may be used as a last resort

In a physical confrontation, if the opponent is very close and is trying to attack, while not protecting their face with their hands, one of the most effective ways to defend oneself is to use the Wing Chun chain punch technique. This technique allows delivering fast, consecutive and effective strikes, breaking the opponent's defence and creating the opportunity to escape.

The chain punch technique is a method used in Wing Chun martial arts, consisting of fast and successive punches delivered one after the other (Figure 18). The main purpose of this technique is to break the opponent's defence and apply constant pressure. Essentially, when throwing a punch,

the next punch follows immediately after, creating an attack sequence. The goal is to overwhelm the opponent's defences and prevent them from having any opportunity to retaliate.



Fig. 18. Illustration of the Wing Chun chain punch technique

Source: (Sale, 2025).

Although the chain punch technique is generally thrown towards the opponent's chest, the most effective way to use this technique is to target the attacker's jaw area. The chin is one of the most vulnerable parts of the head, and a strike to it can disorient, disrupt balance and render the opponent defenceless. Speed and continuity are crucial when delivering these punches. By landing them consecutively and fast, the opponent's defence will be broken, leaving them with no time to respond. These strikes not only weaken them but can also daze them, giving an opening to escape.

If the aggressor is not protecting their face with their hands, this is an even better opportunity to attack. The chain punch technique, aimed at the chin, will effectively overwhelm the opponent. Each punch, delivered rapidly and consecutively, weakens the stance and creates a clear path for escape. This makes it much more difficult for the opponent to mount their defence or launch a counterattack.

When using the chain punch technique, the main goal is to create an escape opportunity. As punch after punch is delivered, the defence weakens, and the ability to retaliate diminishes. The sequence of punches keeps the opponent off balance, preventing them from reacting effectively. Once their defence breaks and their ability to defend themselves is compromised, an individual can take advantage of the opening and safely escape the situation.

The chain punch technique not only serves an offensive purpose; it also enhances defence. By continuously applying pressure with fast, successive punches, the aggressor has no opportunity to approach any closer. This

helps maintain control of the situation. In close combat, when one is up against an opponent trying to press the attack, this technique is particularly useful for creating spaces.

2.9. The goal should be to temporarily disable the attacker, not to kill or seriously injure them

In a physical confrontation, emotions and natural instincts play a significant role. However, it is essential to always keep in mind that the goal should not be to kill or maim the attacker. Every action taken in self-defence must be provisional and measured. The objective is to temporarily disable the aggressor and escape the situation safely.

When physically attacked, responding impulsively and aggressively can often lead to irreversible and severe consequences. Above all, any defensive actions should be proportional and targeted with thought. If the attacker poses a genuine threat to an individual's safety, the actions taken in defence should only be temporary. The goal should be not to severely hurt them, but to break the attacker's defence in order to ensure one's own safety and escape. Excessive violence can complicate the situation, leading to far more serious outcomes.

At this point, moderation becomes extremely important. If the attacker is killed or seriously injured by using excessive force, the person defending themselves may be held responsible and could face serious consequences, both legal and moral. It should be remembered that, when defending oneself, the objective is always to survive and get away from the danger. Unnecessary violence escalates the situation and can make things far more complicated.

Therefore, it is critical to always maintain control and approach self-defence with a strategic and proportional mindset. The goal of self-defence is to incapacitate the attacker and gain enough time to escape. However, avoiding unnecessary harm is always the best course of action. With a physically and psychologically healthy approach, one should always focus on safely ending the confrontation. In this context, it is important to remember the guidance in the Qur'an (2:190): "And fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not aggress; God does not love the aggressors" (*The Qur'an*, n.d.). This emphasises that while defending oneself is permissible, aggression should always be avoided, as the purpose of self-defence is not to cause harm, but to neutralise a threat temporarily and escape.

2.10. Escaping is vital as the attacker may have allies or a weapon.

Ground fighting increases risks

In any physical confrontation, especially in a street fight, the primary goal should always be to escape safely as quickly as possible. The reason for constantly trying to create space between a person defending themselves and the attacker is that the attacker might have people nearby who could join the confrontation at any moment, increasing the risk. This makes fighting back more complicated and dangerous.

Additionally, the attacker might be carrying a hidden weapon, such as a knife, which can be a lethal tool. If used in a confrontation, it could cause significant injury or even death. Having a weapon concealed gives the attacker an advantage, making it crucial to keep a safe distance and avoid engaging in prolonged physical combat. The presence of such a weapon raises the stakes of the confrontation and can make an already dangerous situation far more deadly.

Ground fighting, in particular, is extremely dangerous in street confrontations. When on the ground, it is much harder to escape the situation. Fighting on the ground restricts movement, and the risk of a sudden threat, such as a knife, a kick, or even the intervention of a third party, increases significantly. These unexpected threats can quickly end the fight in the attacker's favour, making it much harder to defend oneself or get away.

In street fighting, situational awareness and the ability to escape are paramount. If an individual ends up on the ground, the ability to move and escape becomes much more limited, which could lead to more severe injury or a fatal situation. The safest strategy is always to stay on your feet, create space, and look for the quickest way to escape to safety.

Conclusion

In conclusion, self-defence is not solely about physical strength, but about using wisdom, restraint, and ethical judgment. Martial arts teach that true mastery lies in the ability to remain calm under pressure, to think critically and to avoid escalating conflicts. The core principle is to defend oneself by neutralising threats without causing permanent harm, always aiming to escape safely rather than to engage in prolonged confrontation.

Effective self-defence strategies combine physical techniques with strategic thinking. By focusing on vulnerable areas of the opponent's body, using

objects in the environment as defence tools, and remaining calm in the face of danger, individuals can increase their chances of surviving a violent encounter. Moreover, avoiding unnecessary violence is crucial, as the consequences of physical altercations can be severe, both legally and emotionally. The ultimate goal is to disable the attacker temporarily, ensuring a safe escape, without compromising one's integrity or escalating the situation.

The ethical principles emphasised in martial arts, along with the moral guidance found in religious texts, such as the Qur'an, underscore the importance of self-restraint. By understanding the responsibility that comes with physical skills, individuals can better navigate potentially dangerous situations and contribute to maintaining personal and societal harmony. Ultimately, the ability to protect oneself lies in choosing peace over conflict and seeking peaceful resolutions whenever possible.

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Najskuteczniejsze techniki i strategie samoobrony: równowaga między skutecznością a etyką

STRESZCZENIE

Odpowiednie techniki samoobrony są kluczowym narzędziem obrony własnej. Podczas sytuacji zagrażających życiu siła powinna zostać użyta w ostateczności, a jej poziom dostosowany tak, aby nie wyrządził znacznej krzywdy. Sztuki walki nie tylko uczą umiejętności fizycznych, ale także kładą nacisk na moralną odpowiedzialność jednostek za rozsądne zastosowanie. Unikanie konfrontacji jest często odpowiednim podejściem, ponieważ konsekwencje użycia przemocy mogą być poważne, zarówno pod względem prawnym, jak i psychologicznym. Techniki, takie jak wykorzystanie elementów otoczenia, atakowanie słabych punktów napastnika i podejmowanie dobrze przemyślanych decyzji podczas konfrontacji, mogą znacząco poprawić skuteczność obrony własnej. W niniejszym artykule autor omawia podstawowe zasady samoobrony, razem ze znaczeniem samokontroli, skutecznego stosowania technik sztuk walki, w tym ciosów pięścią, kopnięć i uderzeń w newralgiczne miejsca, a także zachowania spokoju. Zrozumienie i praktykowanie tych strategii pozwala chronić siebie i minimalizować skutki przemocy.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

samoobrona, sztuki walki, unikanie konfliktu, techniki fizyczne, samokontrola

Biographical note

Jalal Bashirov – Geological Engineering PhD student at Istanbul University Cerrahpaşa, specialising in geochemistry and the genesis of zinc and lead (Pb-Zn) ore deposits. With a strong foundation in both academic research and the geology field, I have contributed to a range of geological mapping projects and mineral exploration efforts. My research focuses on understanding the mineral formation processes and the geochemical patterns associated with ore deposits, with a particular emphasis on Pb-Zn mineralisation.

Beyond my academic pursuits, I am strongly engaged in martial arts, which plays a significant role in my personal development and academic life. I have trained in various martial arts disciplines, including Wing Chun, Muay Thai, Kickboxing, Judo, Wrestling, Jeet Kune Do, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) and mixed martial arts (MMA). To me, martial arts is not only about physical strength but also about developing discipline, mental clarity, and strategic thinking. I authored the book “Kendini Savunma Sanatı”, where I explore self-defence techniques based on speed and strategy, applying the principles I have learned from years of martial arts training.

I have also explored the intersection of science, religion and philosophy, an area that greatly interests me. One of my published works, “Scientific interpretation of geological statements in the Quran: plate tectonics and stabilizers”, examines how scientific principles are represented in religious texts, demonstrating how these two seemingly separate fields can inform one another. In addition, I published “Allah Din və Həyat”, a book that explores the relationships between religion, science and philosophy, offering an interdisciplinary perspective.

Alongside my academic and martial arts endeavours, I wrote “Zihnini Değiştir Hayatın Değişsin”, a digital book which focuses on the mindset transformation and personal development. This book reflects my belief in the transformative power of the mind and my commitment to helping others achieve personal growth through intellectual and practical methods. My recently published Turkish book “Kendini Savunma Sanatı” (“The Art of Self-Defense”) was written to encourage children and women to take up relevant sports and learn how to protect themselves against physical violence and bullying.

My academic journey has been complemented by my dedication to philosophical and ethical studies, allowing me to approach my research and personal challenges from a holistic perspective. As someone who believes in the value of interdisciplinary learning, I remain committed to expanding my knowledge and sharing it with others, whether in academic settings or through mentorship. My goal is to continue contributing to the fields of geology, science and philosophy, while maintaining a balance between intellectual growth and physical discipline.

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Author contributions

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.