

## Healthy Living - Safety

For the next several newsletters, the Healthy Living section of the newsletter is going to focus on Self Defense. This month we are introducing a basic concept of providing for your own security based on a curriculum description that I found on a web site by [All Out Defense, LLC](#). The curriculum introduces the concept of a four part strategy for personal safety. I have summarized and annotated their strategy in this month's newsletter. We are also going to introduce the concept of Levels of Awareness. We will reference Levels of Awareness in the self defense class frequently during the next several weeks.

### Four Part Strategy to Personal Safety

The four part strategy consists of Awareness, Avoidance, De-escalation, and Neutralization and Escape. Each of these strategic components of personal safety are described in detail below.

<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Description</b>	Your personal safety begins with awareness. Plan where you are going, understands dangers that might be present, plan to minimize your exposure to dangers, and finally pay attention to your surroundings.
	<b>Examples</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When going to a shopping center, park in well lit locations</li> <li>2. Walk close to the curb and avoid walking near doorways and bushes</li> <li>3. Vary a running or walking routine by using different routes and times</li> <li>4. Pay attention to people around you</li> </ol> For other examples, see <a href="#">Personal Security</a> in our April 2005 newsletter.
<b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Description</b>	As part of the awareness process, you may identify a possible situation. The response to the possible concern or situation is to avoid it.
	<b>Examples</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You have identified that a great deal of crime has occurred around a store that you frequently shop at and decide to shop elsewhere.</li> <li>2. You leave your office building and enter a parking lot where you notice an person lurking in the shadows, and you decide to return to the office.</li> <li>3. You are at a party and/or bar and notice that people are losing control of their behaviors, and you decide to leave the party.</li> </ol>
<b>De-Escalation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<p>De-escalation occurs when you are unable to avoid the situation. The purpose of de-escalation is to, through verbal and non-verbal communication, defuse a hostile situation. There are two approaches that can be followed to de-escalate a situation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be assertive and use command language to control the situation. In this instance, a person may simply say "No" with confidence and forcefulness.</li> <li>2. The second approach is to use control to talk a person out of action. This does not mean being submissive.</li> </ol> <p>Regardless which verbal approach is followed, you should have your hands and body in a ready position. On the <a href="#">No Nonsense Self Defense</a> web site, the author suggests the following three things <b>NOT</b> to do or say:</p>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do NOT challenge him/her</li> <li>2. Do NOT insult him/her</li> <li>3. Do NOT deny what is happening</li> </ol> <p>More reading is available on the <a href="#">No Nonsense Self Defense website</a>.</p>
	<b>Examples</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Say "No" clearly and assertively.</li> <li>2. If the person seems to be seeking to provoke you to give your assailant a reason to attack, you may want to respond with a cold, unemotional tone. Essentially, you do not give them the emotional response they are seeking.</li> <li>3. If a person uses the approach give me whatever or I will hurt you, you might respond with "If you do, you will not like what happens." On the surface this appears to violate rule 1, but it does not. An example of violating rule 1 is "if you do, I will kick your butt."</li> </ol>
<b>Neutralization</b>	<b>Description</b>	<p>Neutralization describes the final step in the 4 step process. If you are unable to escape the situation and unable to de-escalate the situation, then you are in a position where you must defend yourself physically. In this situation, you must seek to neutralize your assailant so that you can escape. It is critical to note that your goal is to escape at the earliest opportunity. In a fight, you may be able to stun or temporarily disable an assailant, e.g. a sucker punch, so that you have an opportunity to escape. If you fail to escape at the first opportunity, you may not have a second chance to escape before being seriously injured.</p>
	<b>Example</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A person grabs your wrist. You break the grip, kick to the groin and escape.</li> <li>2. A person grabs you from behind in an attempted choke, you perform a basic shoulder throw, and escape.</li> </ol>

### Levels of Awareness

Many different self defense classes will establish color coded levels of awareness (threat levels). The color codes and number of color codes (levels) will vary depending on the instructor, but will have the same basic order. For our purposes, we will use three levels of awareness with the following color assignments.

Color Code	Description
<b>Green</b>	Green is the most secure level. A green level of security implies that you feel as secure as possible and could go to sleep without fear. This level of awareness might be associated with being at home. Many people spend their lives at this level of awareness and put themselves in risky situations.
<b>Yellow</b>	Yellow is a standard level of awareness when you are in relatively secure environments, e.g. the grocery store, pumping gas, in your work place, etc. At this level you are aware of your surroundings and paying attention to people around you.
<b>Red</b>	You are at a red level of readiness when you feel like you are being watched or stalked, when you are entering a vacant parking lot, when you are in a less secure part of town, you have a feeling of uneasiness, a person is entering your personal space, or when you have a problem, etc. At this level of readiness, your hands will be out where you can use them to defend yourself and you might have a weapon in your hand, e.g. a set of keys, a ballpoint pen, etc.

At this level of readiness, you are into the 4th Step in the Strategy introduced at the beginning of this section.

If you are interested in further reading on this subject, I suggest that you explore the following web sites

- [No Non Sense Self Defense](#)
- [National Crime Prevention Council](#)
- [Los Angeles Police Department](#)