

*The following pointers come from an article that is based on the principles and techniques taught in the Armed and Dangerous Knife Defense video series, available at TurtlePress.com. It is intended to give a brief overview of the central tenet of knife combat for the experienced martial artist.*

## **The keys for surviving in close quarters combat against a knife are:**

**First:** read the intent of your enemy. In combat, the enemy has only one motive, to eliminate you and obtain his objective. This often made the first assessment for me simple - there was no option to escape or placate my attackers. In civilian life, however, you must read your attackers intentions. Assess what he wants from you: your money, your car, your pride, your honor, your life - assailants have many motives for attacking their victims. If you can buy your way out of a situation, whether through material possessions or your wits, this is your best option. Do not hesitate to give the attacker if he wants if it means he will spare you injury.

**Second:** assess the intensity of his hostility. Try to determine if your attacker means to hurt you or to kill you; if he will be satisfied by getting what he wants or if he is bent on violence for the sake of violence. Many times you might find yourself faced with an assailant that has no mercy and is bent on inflicting pain no matter how you respond to his demands. If you cannot escape and your attacker is intent on hurting you, you have no choice but to fight back with all your might.

**Third:** acknowledge that you will get hurt. Once you commit to a defense against a knife-wielding attacker, you must accept that you will get hurt. Without overcoming this psychological hurdle, you cannot hope to survive. Accepting that you will get hurt, allows you let go of the notion that you must defend yourself perfectly. There is no perfect defense against a knife. Things will not go as you planned or practiced. You must be prepared to respond without prejudice or preconceptions, something you cannot do if you cling to the notion of a perfect defense

**Fourth:** do not try to intercept the knife. Focusing on the knife is the most deadly mistake you can make. The knife is simply an inanimate object. You place your focus on stopping your attacker, not the inanimate object in his hand.

**Fifth:** attack the forearm, shoulders, neck, and head. To defeat the knife, you must attack the limbs or if possible the intelligence that is controlling it. The most practical initial attack will be to the attacker's forearm (of the armed hand). The second most practical attack will be to upper arm or shoulder. Both of these targets will allow you to gain partial control of the knife wielding hand or at least to momentarily divert the attack. Your final goal should be an attack to the neck or head of the assailant to either control his body or render him unconscious.

**Sixth:** cut into the side or rear of the enemy. To attack the head or neck, you must bypass the knife. To do this you have to divert the attack with a looping, deflecting, parrying or cutting technique. Once past the knife, you should always move to the side or rear to take the attacker's balance and keep the knife as far from your body as possible. This is the stage where staying close becomes essential. Once you establish contact with the assailant's body, you have to stick to him like glue. Any space between you and your attacker works to his advantage, giving him space to maneuver the knife or take your balance.

***The cardinal rule of combat, whether against a knife or an empty-handed adversary is "Stay close to your opponent!" Especially when your opponent is armed with a knife, there is often no way out but to stay close and fight.***