

# Situational Awareness

## Color Codes of Awareness

### Condition **White**: Unaware

- You don't think anything bad will happen and may believe that violent crime happens to "other people."
- Modern technologies such as smartphones create a perfect environment to lull individuals into Condition White.
- It's the condition of most victims, and it's the condition that criminals look for.
- Never allow yourself to be in Condition White when armed!



### Condition **Yellow**: Aware



- This is the condition you should be in any time you're in public.
- You are aware of what's happening in the immediate vicinity, and you proceed with caution.
- You are not paranoid or overreactive, but you keep an eye out for potential threats and their sources.
- Your posture, eyes and demeanor say, "I am alert," and you walk faster than the crowd.
- If you are armed, you must be in Condition Yellow.

# Situational Awareness

## Color Codes of Awareness

### Condition **Orange**: Heightened Awareness

- You realize that something may be wrong.
- There may be a danger to yourself or others.
- You make a plan on how to react.
- You may begin to take preemptive action, such as issuing verbal commands.
- You decide on a mental “trigger” that will move you to take action.
- You mentally prepare yourself for a confrontation or a rapid escape.



### Condition **Red**: Action

- Your mental trigger has been tripped and you execute your plan.
- Trust your instincts; it's better to run away from a situation that turned out not to be a threat than it is to get stuck in a mental block of “this can't be what I think it is” and guessing wrong.
- Instinct and adrenaline will cause involuntary reactions and must be calculated into your training program.
- You should expect your hands to tremble and your fine motor skills to degrade.
- If engaging the threat, operate within the rules governing the use of force, including the obligation to retreat if possible and the obligation to use something less than deadly force if it will suffice.
- A use of force is not the required outcome. If you've closely observed the immediate area and have identified an escape route, retreat may be the most logical and prudent course of action.

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## Color Codes of Awareness

### Condition **Red**: Action



#### **Escape**

The individual has identified a threat early enough to make a rapid escape or to head toward cover.



#### **Draw Firearm and Issue Commands**

The individual forcefully issues commands with her firearm at a low-ready position (and her finger outside the trigger guard).



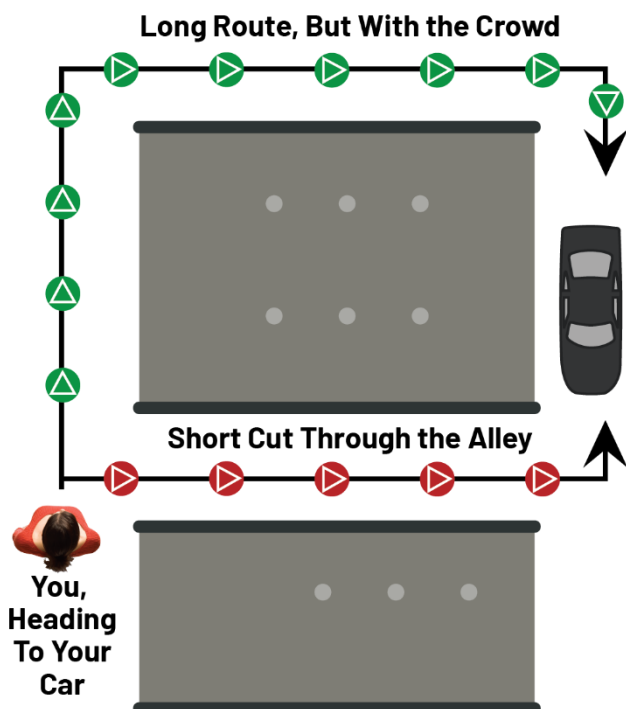
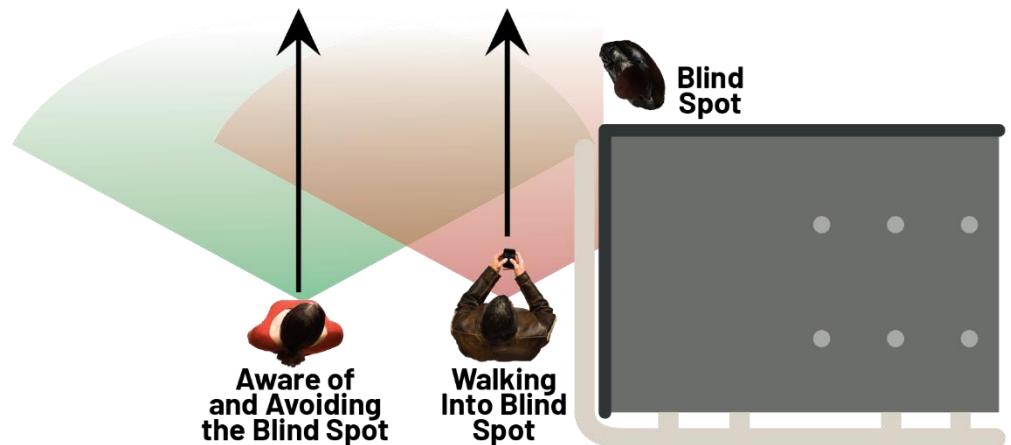
#### **Engage the Threat**

The individual points her firearm at the attacker and is ready to take whatever action is required to stop the threat.

# Situational Awareness

## Blind Spots

- When approaching blind spots at the corners of buildings or when approaching trees, tall bushes, concrete pillars, or vehicles, make a wide turn.
- Turn to observe the hidden area as you approach.
- If danger is spotted, be ready to run, hide, or fight!



## Areas to Avoid

### Away From the Crowds

- Criminals count on an easy escape with no witnesses! Sticking with the crowd is one of your best methods of avoiding violent crime.
- Regardless of how convenient a shortcut might seem or however safe you might feel heading to your car late at night all alone, that's the kind of behavior that criminals count on to find an easy victim.

# Not Looking Like a Victim

- ✓ Making eye contact with any individual in our “protective bubble” sends the simple message, “I see you.”
- ✓ To avoid a potential threat, we may need to take minor evasive action:
  - “Stepping off the line”
  - Speeding up or slowing down
- ✓ We can increase our “unattractiveness” by walking with a purpose:
  - Body erect
  - Head up
  - Walking faster than the crowd

**Imagine two individuals walking down the street.**

## **First Individual:**

- Walking with purpose.
- Moving at a quick enough pace that she looks like she’s going somewhere.
- Swiveling her head to scan the area.
- Making quick eye contact with anyone in her immediate area.

## **Second Individual:**

- Shuffling along at a slow pace.
- Focused on a three-inch circle in front of him, while he sends a text message on his cellphone.

**Which person do you think a criminal will want to target?**

# Not Looking Like a Victim

Notice there was no indication of the size or other characteristics of the potential “victims.”

The truth is, an observant, 110-pound woman is a less attractive victim than a 200-pound man who is entirely absorbed in his cellphone and who is completely unaware of the attacker approaching from behind.

## **Do You Look Like an Easy Victim?**

Regardless of how tough you might look on the outside, all a criminal will look for is whether you look like an easy victim or not.

## **Why Is Conflict Avoidance So Important?**

The only guaranteed method of surviving a violent encounter is to avoid it in the first place. Having good situational awareness and not looking like a victim are key components to avoiding conflict.

# Survivor Mindset

- It's important to recognize that YOU are responsible for your own safety. We can't always depend on others, like family members or even law enforcement officers, to watch out for us.
- It's not about paranoia; it's about preparedness. It's about living your life with determination, purpose, and resilience. If you can make that decision every day, then you are ahead of the game and are making yourself into someone bad guys won't want to target.
- One of the most important things that anyone can do to ensure her safety is to establish personal boundaries and use situational awareness. This involves consciously, deliberately, and actively making decisions and purposefully moving through daily events and activities.

## Be the “WRONG” person!

Who is the wrong person? She's the woman a stalker, attacker or criminal does not want to mess with because she is too alert and aware of her surroundings and because she appears to be prepared and ready. She's a fighter, a warrior, and she is worth defending!

# She's YOU!

# Avoid, Escape, Defend



Three outcomes are possible when it comes to a violent attack:

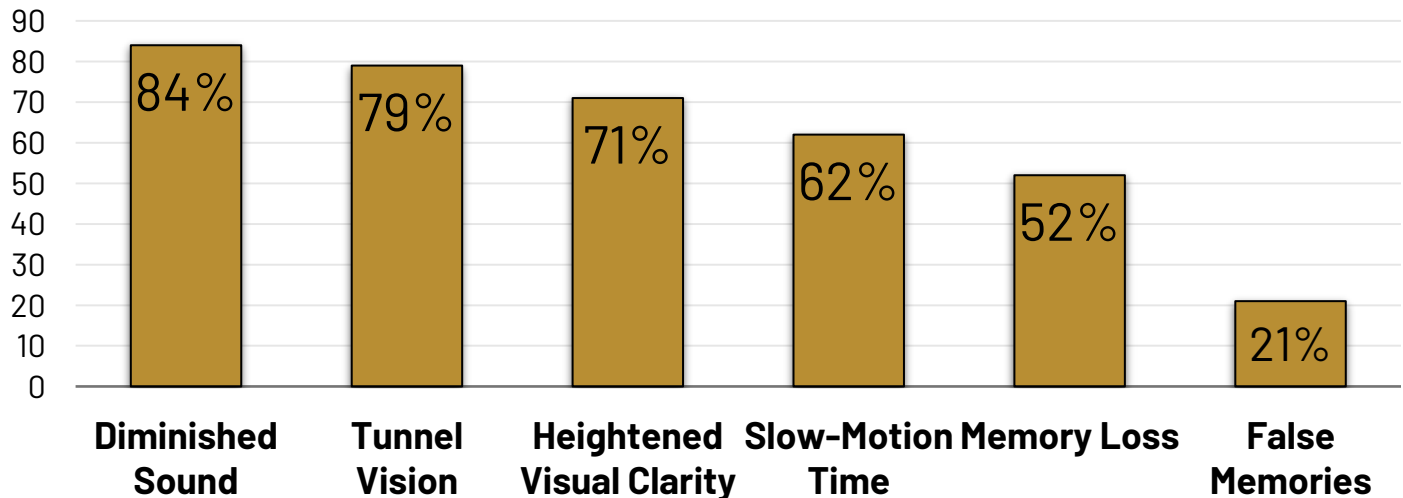
- 1) Avoid
- 2) Escape
- 3) Defend

- Each outcome has one thing in common:  
**seconds count.**



# Understanding Fight or Flight

When under extreme stress, the human body will undergo a series of automated responses as part of the “fight-or-flight” mechanisms built into its systems.



**Source: *Deadly Force Encounters*, Dr. Alexis Artwohl and Loren W. Christensen**

Based on surveys from 157 police officers involved in deadly force shootings.

- Physical and psychological effects have been attributed to adrenaline and other natural chemicals that flood your body during extreme stress.
- The “fight-or-flight” responses exist as survival mechanisms that are hardwired into your brain and nervous system.

# Effects of Adrenaline & Endorphins



## No Stress

- Muscles have an equal distribution of blood, oxygen, and glucose.
- Major muscle groups have normal strength.
- Minor muscle groups have high dexterity.

## Under Stress

- Adrenaline constricts blood vessels to force blood, oxygen, and glucose to the major muscle groups and away from the skin and extremities.
  - **Side effects:**
    - ✓ Run faster
    - ✓ Fight harder
    - ✓ **Loss of manual dexterity**
- **Endorphins will give you an elevated pain threshold.**
  - You will be able to fight longer.
  - You'll need to immediately check yourself and loved ones for injuries in the aftermath.



# Adrenaline Effects on Manual Dexterity

## Fine Motor Skills



The manual dexterity that you'll lose under the effects of adrenaline just happens to be the same dexterity required to manipulate holster-retention devices and perform finger locks, wrist locks, and other types of joint manipulation.

Imagine trying to tie your shoes after soaking your hands in a sink full of ice water for 5 minutes. The resulting hand tremors and lack of feeling will give you a small taste of the real thing.

For this reason, self-defense technique selection is very important. For a beginner with little to no self-defense training, you should focus on techniques that don't rely on a high degree of fine motor skills or dexterity.

# Effective Technique Selection

Prioritize **GROSS** motor skills over fine motor skills!

This chart breaks down self-defense techniques into 3 categories based on effectiveness and your experience level.

<b>Category 1</b> Effective techniques with little training	<b>Category 2</b> Effective techniques with some training	<b>Category 3</b> ( <i>fine motor skills</i> ) Effective techniques with a lot of training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Palm Strike</li><li>• Throat strike</li><li>• Hammer strike</li><li>• Elbow strike</li><li>• Knee strike</li><li>• Front kick</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Boxing strikes (Jab, Cross, Hook, Haymaker)</li><li>• Roundhouse kick</li><li>• Side kick</li><li>• Brush grab</li><li>• Turning elbow</li><li>• Chokes / Neck restraints</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finger locks</li><li>• Wrist locks</li><li>• Arm bars</li><li>• Joint manipulation techniques</li><li>• Judo throws &amp; pins</li></ul>

Any technique or weapon we rely on for self-defense must be practiced enough to become muscle memory. It is smart to use the automated responses that are already programmed in our brain.

If it's a gun, you need training on more than the basic operation of the firearm. You need to understand the laws and regulations regarding the use of deadly force.

## Non-lethal Options

Pens, keys, flashlights, pepper spray, phones, belts, high heels, or random weapon of opportunity.

# Home Defense – Safe Practices

At its most basic level, a personal and home-protection plan is designed to help keep you physically, legally, financially, and morally safe.

Your ultimate goal should be to avoid violent encounters in the first place by developing an acute awareness of your surroundings and by making intelligent decisions about your actions, behaviors, and precautions.

## According to FBI statistics, burglars enter:

- Front door 34% of the time
- Back or screen doors 22% of the time
- First floor windows 23% of the time



## Consumer Reports' test of locks and doors:

A standard deadbolt and strike plate with standard-length screws -- the door was breached after just two impacts of the battering ram at 60 joules per "kick."

The same deadbolt but with a reinforced strike plate and 3-inch screws -- the door was breached after 13 impacts at an average of 160 joules each.

## Lights:

- Is your house well-lit or poorly lit on all sides? How about the adjoining neighbors' houses? Criminals will look for not only dark homes, but also dark homes surrounded by dark homes.

## General Appearance:

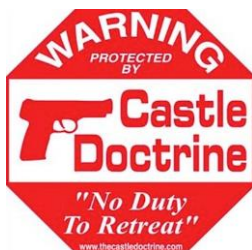
- How close are trees or shrubs to your home? Is there anything that a criminal can hide behind while trying to enter a window or door?
- Do you have burglar alarm signs (in new condition) at all entry points?

# Golden Rules of Self Defense

- ✓ You may use no greater force than a reasonable person would deem necessary to defend the threat.
- ✓ Once the threat is over, you cannot continue to use force. If the assailant retreats, you cannot continue to fight them unless they pose a threat to someone else.
- ✓ Do not be the aggressor or equal party.



**Castle Doctrine:** If you are in your own home, you do not have to retreat, even in a state that follows the retreat rule.



**“True Man” Doctrine:** If you did not initiate the encounter, you are not obligated to retreat, so long as the assailant poses a threat.

**WARNING:** *This is BOTH true and false.*

Though you are not required to retreat, if you **CAN**, you **SHOULD!** Nothing good will come from sticking around a dangerous situation. Regarding home defense, if you leave the safety and security of a locked bedroom to “hunt” down an intruder, you could get hurt and you are very likely to be in serious legal trouble.

- While most states’ laws allow a use of force to protect property, they typically do not allow you to use deadly force.
- Our recommendation is that you do **not** use force to protect property.
- We recommend that you get to, and stay in, a safe location, dial 911, and be a good witness.