



How to Disarm Someone With a Knife

Three Parts: [Defending Yourself](#) [Attacking](#) [Getting Out of the Situation](#)

Hopefully, you will never have to face someone with a knife. Barehanded fighting against a knife is very dangerous (the risk of injury is about 80%), so you should always try to flee from an attacker if possible.^[1] If you must face a knife-wielding attacker, however, knowing how to defend yourself and take the knife away can save your life.

Part
1

Defending Yourself

- 1 Create distance between yourself and the attacker, if possible.**^[2] If it turns out that you must face a knife-wielding attacker one-on-one, start by backing away. Try to put as much distance as possible between yourself and the attacker. Experts recommend seven yards as a distance that will keep you safe from a knife attack.^[3]
- 2 Use an object as a shield.**^[4] If you want to disarm an opponent or attacker, you will have to do so at the right moment. While you are waiting, you can protect yourself by using an object as a shield. Try to find a hard, rigid object such as a board or trash can lid, but any object (even a coat, blanket, etc.) can help. Hold the object in front of you to protect yourself against sudden attacks.
 - A shield will help keep your vulnerable areas protected. Remember that your most vulnerable areas are at your core (chest, abdomen), so keep those protected above all.^[5]
- 3 Keep your body perpendicular to the attacker.**^[6] Try not to stand directly in front of the attacker; this makes you more vulnerable to attacks. Instead, remain to the side of the attacker if at all possible. That way, you will have a chance to see if the attacker turns to lunge toward you, and have slightly more time to react.
- 4 Block and redirect attacks.**^[7] If the attacker lunges at you before you are able to get the knife, step to the side out of his/her way. The attacker may then turn around to face you again. Be prepared and move to the side of the attacker, so that you can avoid direct stabs in your direction.
- 5 Deflect the attacker's arm if he or she strikes.**^[8] If the attacker lunges at you and you are not able to get out of the way, grab the attacker's arm as he/she moves toward you. Use both of your hands to grab on, if possible. Yank the attacker's arm and use the attacker's momentum to throw him/her to the ground, making sure to keep the knife pointed away from you.
- 6 Stop an underhand knife attack.**^[9] If the attacker lunges at you using an upward motion, use the blade of your hand to chop into the attacker's hand. Do this forcefully, and it will push the attacker's arm backward. Use your hands to push and hold the attacker's arm back so that the knife stays away from you. Slam the attacker's arm into a hard surface or apply pressure until the knife falls from his/her hand.
- 7 Throw the attacker from the ground.**^[10] If the attacker lunges toward you with the knife, back away and pretend to fall down so that you are still facing the attacker. Prop yourself up on your forearms, keep your left foot raised, and wait for the attacker to approach. When the attacker is within reach of your feet, put your left foot against his/her heel. Slam your right leg against the back of the attacker's knee as hard as you can, pushing the attacker away. If you do this correctly, your attacker will fall face first, with the knife aimed away from you.

Part
2

Attacking

- 1 Focus on controlling the weapon.**^[11] Do not try to attack the attacker. Remember that your primary goal is to

keep yourself safe. If you are not able to get away from the attacker, then this means eliminating the source of danger: the knife.

2 Get hold of the attacker's limb with both hands.^{[12][13]} When you are ready to remove the knife from the attacker's hand, grab his/her arm as quickly as you can. Use both of your hands if possible. Try to stabilize the attacker's arm (hold it in place). This will be difficult since the attacker will probably try to get out of your grip, so you must hold on as firmly as you can.

3 Injure the attacker's hand.^[14] Slam the attacker's hand against a hard surface as quickly as you can. You can even try to break the attacker's wrist or hand if necessary.^[15] If you cannot slam the attacker's hand against anything, focus on applying as much pressure as you can to his/her arm until it is injured. If this goes well, the attacker's on the knife will loosen, and the weapon will fall away.

4 Keep the knife away. Once the attacker is disarmed, make sure that the knife is far out of his/her reach. Kick, push, or fling the knife as far as you can so that the attacker cannot reach it.

- Once the attacker is disarmed, try to flee to safety.

5 Use a weapon if necessary and possible.^{[16][17]} If the attacker still attempts to harm you after you disarm him/her, and you cannot get away, try to use a non-deadly weapon (not the knife) to defend yourself. You could:

- Throw sand, rocks, or other small objects at the attacker. Hot coffee or ice water can even do the trick.
- Hit the attacker with whatever object is at hand: a stick, chair, book, etc. You can even use a coat like a whip to strike the attacker.

6 Incapacitate the attacker.^[18] If you do not have any object at hand to help you, try and injure or immobilize the attacker using your own body. For instance:

- Headbutt the attacker in his/her abdomen.
- Strike the attacker in the face, especially the eye, nose, or temple.
- Kick the attacker in the knees or groin.

Part 3 Getting Out of the Situation

1 Run, hide, fight.^{[19][20][21]} When faced with an attacker, remember RHF: run, hide, fight. Your first tactic should be to run away, if you can get away without harming yourself. If you cannot escape the area, try to hide in a secure location, such as a room that can be locked, or behind a cover of some kind. You should fight back against the attacker only as a last resort.

2 Stay as calm as possible. If you are faced with an attacker wielding a knife, you must work very hard to stay calm. This will be very difficult, because it is an extremely stressful situation. Not panicking, however, can save your life. It will help if you have the steps of a basic plan in mind:^[22]

- Stay calm
- Quietly signal for help, if possible
- Maintain eye contact
- Stall for time
- Keep talking to the attacker
- Follow any instructions the attacker gives
- Do not risk harm to yourself or others if at all possible
- Do not try to grab the knife itself

3 Move away. If becomes necessary to fight back and try to disarm the attacker (such as in the event that the attacker is attempting to stab you), then do so. However, if it is at all possible at any point during the confrontation, move away from the attacker.^[23]

- You can begin by trying to back away from the attacker. When you are several yards away, you can attempt to flee.
- If the attacker becomes distracted or moves away from you, use the opportunity to run away as fast as you can until you are in a safe location.
- Do not run in a straight line; instead, move in a zig-zag or more erratic motion. This will confuse the attacker, helping you to escape.^[24]

4 **Call 911 as soon as possible.**^{[25][26]} As soon as it is safe to do so (the attacker leaves, or you are able to get away), call 911 or another emergency number for assistance. Provide as detailed a description of the attacker as you can, and explain what is happening/what happened.

Tips

- Take a self-defense class. There are many training courses and seminars that can provide you with practical tips for handling a knife-wielding attacker and other dangers..^{[27][28][29]} Check with your local police department, college, or community center about what self-defense learning opportunities there are in your area.

Sources and Citations

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