Danielle Memmott

Professor Ron Christensen

English 1010

November 25, 2014

Self Defense for Women

Martial arts are used for many different reasons. Self defense, exercise, cardio, muscle toning, to help build self confidence, becoming stronger, and it is a great stress reliever. Martial arts are known to be a man’s sport. Women are just as capable as men when training in mixed martial arts. Why aren’t more women learning or training in martial arts self defense? Some women think it is easier to carry a firearm. Women may misunderstand what martial arts are used for. Fedor Emelianenk, a famous mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter, believes that women should be feminine and not fight MMA (Symes n.p.). Women may think it is confusing or have a hard narrowing down the decision of what classes to take. With the many benefits of martial arts, women should overcome fear and find out what self defense is all about.

**Self Defense-** The protection of a person from physical harm by attack. The term is usually extended to include the physical protection of others against unwanted attack.

A claim or plea that the use of force or injuring or killing another was necessary in defending one’s own person from physical attack. (dictionary.com)

The reasons women need to learn self defense is because women are more likely to suffer domestic abuse. An estimated 1.9 million women are physically assaulted annually. In 2008, 164,240 women were victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault. 75.7% were committed by men. These crimes can happen anywhere at any time and we should always be prepared. (How to Choose a Martial Arts School 1)

The reason women are attacked is simple: predators choose smaller, weaker targets to ensure their success. Women and elderly people get attacked, professional football players do not. It’s unfortunate that most women do not even study basic self-defense and strategy. Traditionally more men enroll in martial arts programs than women to the tune of about 10 to 1 (Why Every Woman Should Study Martial Arts and Self Defense 1).

I want to learn as much as possible to protect myself and protect anyone else I can if I happen to be in a violent situation. I want to be the women to scare someone off, save a child from any kind of dangerous harm, or talk someone into making better decisions. If I had the choice to work out at the gym or take dance classes, I would choose self defense for all the important safety benefits.

Viewpoint #1 Mixed Martial Arts are not Just a Competitive Sport

If you watch the martial arts sports on television, you can see that it is a very competitive sport. When most women think of martial arts and don’t know the sport well, they automatically think you have to train to fight and jump into an octagon ring and battle each other until one is no longer standing. There is an aspect of the sport that does not ethically align with many people (Alvarez 2). Some people wonder why anyone would want to get in a ring and get beaten up. It feels good to win a fight and know you have accomplished so much but you could also win money from fights or lose and feel down. This is not what it is all about. Women can train in martial arts for self defense and not have to ever step foot in a ring. Women wouldn’t have to worry about being hurt intentionally. Most martial arts centers focus on teaching respect, self defense, morals, and discipline. You will be close to people while training and become friends. You will help each other with learning new moves and feeling comfortable.

Viewpoint#2 Women and Firearms

Why do more women like to carry firearms? What is the point of martial arts if you own a gun? Guns are small, easy to carry, and aren’t as much as work as self defense training but there are some down falls to packing a gun. Training is still needed, target practice and learning to pull a gun safely takes time and who’s to say you have time to pull a gun or have it loaded in time when being attacked? The attacker will hurt you and you have no way to defend yourself if that gun isn’t ready. A gun can fall, drop out of your hands, the attacker can fight for it and you accidently get shot, it could jam, or back fire.

There was a study years ago as to how fast a police officer could unholster and discharge their firearm if they were being rushed by someone with a knife. The conclusion of study is that the guy with the knife was within 23 feet or so and he would be on the officer with the knife before the officer could draw his weapon.

While a gun certainly has stopping power on its side, it is not as simple as people describe. A gun could jam and my arm wont. Fire arms are limited by the number of rounds they have, If I completely discharge all bullets, I need another system to go to. Firearms are by definition, lethal force tools however, not all self defense situations require lethal force, and unarmed skills give you several non lethal options.

A weapon has to be drawn while martial arts training can deploy a strike without winding up, or even if hands are full. If you’re immobile before you draw your weapon, escape skills and grapping skills can allow you to position yourself to use your weapon and training skills (Stanley 2).

Viewpoint#3 Women Don’t Know How to Get Involved

Most women don’t know how to go about getting into a self defense class. There are multiple classes in mixed martial arts. Jiu-jitsu, Muay tai, Karate, Aikido, Judo, Tae Kwon Do etc. It is not hard to choose if you try out a couple different self defense classes because a good trainer will sit down and explain the differences of each type of self defense and walk you through your wants and needs. Women become confused because there are so many self defense classes and don’t know what is right for them. There really isn’t a right or wrong class to take because they are all fun and all self defenses. I have listed the steps on

How To Find The Right Martial Art Class For You

The first step to finding the right martial art school is deciding what the women would hope to gain from taking martial arts. Many people make the mistake of choosing an academy too soon, before they really establish their goals. This is a shame because it usually leads to the student quitting out of disappointment and never taking the time to experience the great benefits. Write down your goals before hand and be specific even if you’re not sure which style you would like to practice. Ask yourself how important is

* Self defense
* Improving fitness
* Competition (MMA Sports)
* Character development
* Creative expression
* Instructor training and certifications

Second, every school has a mix of these important wants and needs and it is important to find a school with a balance that you’re happy with.

Third, shop around; don’t join the first school unless you’re positive that no other could meet your needs any better. Nearly all martial arts schools offer a free trial period or at least one free class. Narrow searches down that you enjoyed the most and which you benefitted from. If you are not having fun, chances are, you won’t last long at that particular academy.

Fourth, find a qualified instructor. Research his/her credentials and make sure that you feel comfortable with the person. Also, remember that the word “champion” does not always equal “great teacher”. The teacher that takes him time with you and helps you to understand the lesson will be much more helpful than the undefeated grand champion of the world who just boasts about how great he is. Even if you have to drive a little further or pay a little more for training it will be well worth it to know that you are getting great instruction.

Last, sit down with the instructor and discuss your goals with him or her. Don’t forget to ask plenty of questions. While discipline is a large part of martial arts, you must remember that the instructor is working for you and you deserve the best instruction available. ([www.wikihow.com/choose-a-martial-arts-school](http://www.wikihow.com/choose-a-martial-arts-school))

Viewpoint#4 Women Studying Martial Arts Often Experience Gender Stereotypes and Harassment

Many people have always thought that women need to feminine. Who is to say a women isn’t feminine because she likes to learn martial arts/ self defense? Women should be having babies, cooking dinner, and cleaning the house. Even in today's supposedly enlightened society, a woman starting in any martial arts training program is often subjected to many responses from friends, family, and co-workers. These responses are often based upon misinformation and prejudicial born myths. A few of these myths are covered below:

1. Martial arts training makes women become unfeminine - This myth is so hard to kill even though Shaolin nuns were practicing the martial arts over a thousand years ago. Vulnerability may work well in the movies and romance novels but on the street it can get you killed. When a woman learns martial arts, she also learns self-defense, self-confidence and self-esteem. These things do not make her less a woman, in fact, the allow her to be able to go out in life with less fear and with a warmer and more open attitude.

2. Martial arts training is 100% effective in any given situation - All too many women AND men believe this one. Regardless of what how well a technique works in a martial arts class or seminar, no single technique is going to work in any and every situation. The important thing to remember is to have back up techniques and to be able to execute them without hesitation or thought.

3. Karate or any type of martial arts training is too rough for women. They get knocked around and hurt - Most schools require padding during any type of sparring activity. This protection is also used during tournament fighting. Any type of physical training can be rough on women but in martial arts the woman will be taught how to train properly. How to move, hit, punch, kick, fall and avoid an opponent. Jogging and tennis may be considered more "feminine" but even these can pose opportunities for injury. How many joggers or tennis players learn to fall in case of a misstep?

4. Martial arts make women more aggressive - True martial arts training and discipline teaches the women and me to control themselves, their temper, and anger. It also teaches patience. Just because a woman has the right to say no and proceeds to do so doesn't make her aggressive, hard, unyielding or the term that comes up so often and rhymes with witch.

5. She will be able to defeat a man-Pound for pound in a wrestling match; a woman usually won't be able to beat the man. On the other hand, martial arts training will teach ways to work around this problem. Many styles will teach leverage or joint locking techniques that will even out the competition.

6. Martial arts training pose a threat to a relationship - A loving spouse or significant other will understand and support the woman in her training, perhaps even take an interest and participate. For those who are in abusive relationships, martial arts training can aid in building enough self-confidence and self-esteem to move on from the abuse. For those who stay in the relationship, it can at least help by giving options on self-defense. It may also cause the abuser to pause and think before striking out.

7. It is the man's place to protect and defend the woman - Puleeze! How many times have we all seen movies where the hero is getting his rear kicked and the woman is over in the corner crying and having hysterics while the audience is yelling for her to pick up the gun? There is nothing wrong with a man being protective but the ultimate responsibility for her own safety is hers. If a man's attention is wasted on trying to look out for her, the chances are high he won't be able to respond to an attack in time. If this happens, what do you think the chances are for either of them? (*Problems women have with MMA)*

Conclusion

Why aren’t more women taking martial arts? Why does anyone feel scared to try something new or something that can save a life or help a situation? Because there are so many people in the world with different personalities. Some women don’t want to feel out of their comfort zone, some just like to stay home or have never had an offer to try martial arts classes so they has no idea it exist or maybe never pictured their self to try something like that. There are many reasons why more women do not try this sport but I recommend it to everyone.

I agree women should try to learn self defense in firearms and martial arts because they can both be used in a situation for safety and it is fun to try new activities that will benefit us. I don’t feel women should ever be stereotyped to be unfeminine because she likes to learn how to fight. I think it’s sexy when a woman is strong and can take care of herself and others. Some cultures believe that women should stay home and take care of the house and kids while the men are working to provide to pay bills but the women should have a few hours a week away from the kids to have her own time to train in self defense and get pampered.

Trying to find a self defense class is easy. It may be a little time consuming at first. I would get online, search for martial arts or karate centers nearby, visit a few and see what is suitable for my needs. The hardest part of figuring out what self defense classes are best is walking into a gym and feeling intimidated by all the men watching you train for your first time. A good martial arts center will always make you feel welcome, safe, and respected. You become friends with all the people you train with. People don’t harass each other or talk down on women.

A woman’s safety is very important. Women have to be strong in many ways. If we are alone and need to fight for ourselves, we should have the strength training and knowledge to do so. Some women are single parents living in run down areas because they can’t afford to live in a safer area. Women would not want anything happening to our kids. Women can be strong if they want but they have to have that mentality (Asha Bhosle 2)

Women can be feminine in so many ways. She can have amazing beautiful facial features with a great body, gorgeous hair, and still be a fighter and protector. There is nothing wrong with learning self defense and loving the sport while still being pretty. Women can be a house wife taking care of the children and still learning self defense on her time. There are great benefits to taking self defense classes like learning safety, social skills, confidence, and keeping a fit, toned body. What women wouldn’t want to benefit from these classes? There is no reason for women not to take self defense classes. I know these martial arts classes can be very intimidating for women but you overcome that after a few classes. The most important reason is to protect yourself in scary life situations. There is violence everywhere in the world. Learning self defense in the best choice a women can make for herself.

**References**

Alvarez, Alex . “MMA: Ethical or Unethical?” *10alvarez.* n .p., 16 Dec. 2013. Web. Nov. 2014

<http://www.context.org/iclib/ic04/nerbovig>

Self-defense by David Nerbovig. Originally published autumn 1983

Copyright by context institute.

[www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

<http://www.doceparesinternational.com/five-benefits-of-learning-self-defense/>

Doce Pares international

Five benefits of martial arts

Essortment.*Problems women have with MMA. N.P. 1*

<Http://jiketssumartialprodections.com/sdc_article_three.html>

Self Defense Company, Bermuda

2007 Jiketsu Martial productions Foundation

Why every woman should study martial arts and self defense

<http://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/women-should-learn-martial-arts-asha-bhosle/article6210129.ece>

Asha Bhosle published women should learn marital arts

Published in The Hindu Magazine

<http://www.wikihow.com/Choose-a-Martial-Arts-School>

how to choose a martial arts school