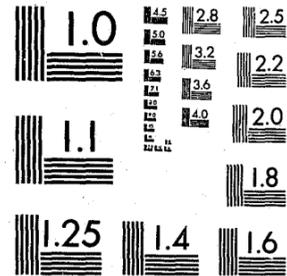


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PORTLAND POLICE BUREAU  
PATROL SUPPORT DIVISION  
CRIME PREVENTION DETAIL

✓  
EVALUATION OF THE  
WOMENSTRENGTH SELF-DEFENSE PROGRAM

January, 1982

Ronald R. Still  
Chief of Police

Francis J. Ivancie  
Mayor

Written By  
Steve Beedle

82098

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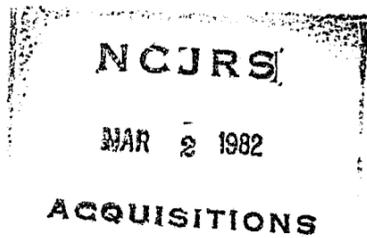
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**SUMMARY**

- 3,483 women have participated in the Womenstrength Self-Defense Workshops since these workshops were first offered in July, 1979.
- All workshops are taught by trained volunteers. Each volunteer instructor receives approximately 60 hours of training provided by the Portland Police Bureau. There are currently 35 volunteers actively participating in the Crime Prevention Detail's Sexual Assault Prevention program.
- The 125 self-defense workshops (366 weekly meetings) held during the period from July, 1979 to December, 1981, represented a total of 3,294 volunteer staff hours. This citizen donated service would be equivalent to a salary of approximately \$26,585.
- 104 women who registered for the March, 1981 Self-Defense Workshops participated in a pre- and a 6 month post-workshop attitude survey study.
- The number of women feeling "somewhat" or "very" confident in their ability to defend themselves from an attacker increased from 56% (N=58) to 96% (N=100) after attending the workshops. Statistically, this increase is probably not due to chance.
- Participants also had increased feelings of self-confidence and assertiveness after taking the self-defense course.
- 3 women were victims of crime during the 6 month pre- and post-survey period. Each woman was able to use skills and information taught in the workshops during these crime incidents. (Refer to Page 11.)
- 88% (N=92) of the participants said that their behavior had changed with respect to crime prevention as a result of the workshops. Approximately one-half of the participants also indicated that they would now take action if someone touched or spoke to them offensively.

## Evaluation of the Womenstrength Self-Defense Program

### Introduction

A number of crime prevention programs are available to the citizens of Portland. Through the Portland Police Bureau's Precinct Crime Prevention Units and the Crime Prevention Detail (as well as the neighborhood based Neighborhoods Against Crime agency), crime prevention programs are offered in the areas of commercial and residential security, personal safety, neighborhood watch, sexual assault prevention, and youth and elderly crime prevention.

To assess the effectiveness of crime prevention, the Crime Prevention Detail has evaluated a number of its programs. For example, evaluation results of two residential security programs<sup>1,2</sup> found that program participants were less likely to be victimized by a residential burglary than non-program participants. In addition, a 2 year follow-up of one of these crime prevention residential programs<sup>3</sup> indicated that the lower burglary victimization rate for participants previously found after 1 year in the program was still observed 2 years after initial participation in the program.

One crime prevention program that has not yet been assessed is the Womenstrength Self-Defense program of the Portland Police Bureau's Sexual Assault Prevention program. The purpose of the evaluation is to answer two general questions regarding this self-defense program: (1) do participants feel more confident in their ability to defend themselves from an attacker after having the class, and (2) following completion of the class, have participants had to use the information and techniques taught in the course, and parenthetically, were participants able to use this information in such victim-suspect situations.

### Program Background

During the summer of 1979, the Inner Southeast Neighborhoods Against Crime (NAC) Coordinator requested "seed money" from the Crime Prevention Detail (CPD) to contract with Defend Ourselves (a self-defense program for women) to provide a series of self-defense workshops. Under the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) grants which originally funded both CPD and NAC programs, the CPD Comprehensive Crime Prevention grant contained funding for NAC project materials, thus CPD was required to approve all expenditures ("seed money") for NAC project materials.

This NAC request to provide such self-defense information had come from women in the inner southeast area of Portland who wanted to be able to react assertively (that is, an active response versus a passive response) in the event a sexual assault situation arose.

One participant in these workshops was the Director of the CPD Rape Prevention program (now call the Sexual Assault Prevention program).

Upon completion of the Defend Ourselves workshops, CPD privately contracted with two Portland State University Physical Education instructors to provide a course for the Director of the CPD Rape Prevention program and several women who were willing to serve as volunteer instructors for a proposed CPD self-defense program. This course taught by the Portland State University instructors emphasized (a) the learning of basic self-defense skills, and (b) instruction, that is, "teacher training", necessary to teach these skills. An additional 12-16 hours of "teacher training" was also obtained from the Defend Ourselves instructors.

CPD then developed the Womenstrength Workshops, a self-defense program utilizing a combination of defense techniques and assertiveness skills from the Defend Ourselves and the Portland State University classes, as well as material from the text, In Defense of Ourselves by Linda Tschirhart-Sanford and Ann Fetter. The main criterion for selecting a particular self-defense technique was that it be relatively easy to learn by women comprising a wide range of ages (approximately 14 years to 80 years) as well as physical strengths, and yet the technique be highly effective in permitting a woman to debilitate and escape from an attacker.

The present Womenstrength Self-Defense Program consists of three 3-hour classes with each class normally being scheduled one week apart. These workshops emphasize the use of the woman's body as a "natural weapon" against the vulnerable body parts of an attacker, and simple escape and pressure hold techniques available to use when an attacker has already grasped an individual. The workshops state, however, that the "element of surprise" is the effective weapon as an attacker does not expect a skilled physical response. Of importance, workshop instructors do individualize these skills for participants in order to allow for differences in size, strength, and possible handicaps, etc. of the women attending the workshops. A description of these self-defense skills may be found in the printed material given to each workshop participant. See Appendix A for a copy of this material.

These self-defense techniques are demonstrated to the participants and the participants subsequently practice these skills throughout the 3 week session. In addition to the emphasis on the self-defense skills, other issues discussed include: (1) myths and misconceptions about rape, (2) effective residential security measures, (3) laws and the Criminal Justice System, and (4) victim support services. At the conclusion of the workshops, participants are asked to critique the materials and skills taught in the classes.

The Self-Defense workshops are taught by volunteer instructors who have each completed approximately 60 hours of intensive training provided by the Portland Police Bureau. The use of volunteer instructors in this self-defense program was a result of the successful use of volunteers in another CPD Sexual Assault Prevention program: the Rape Prevention Speakers program.<sup>4</sup> In this program, volunteer speakers talk about rape prevention to citizen groups requesting such services from the Police Bureau. Many volunteers serve in both programs, and there are currently 35 volunteers actively participating in both the self-defense and the speakers programs. Using these trained volunteers in the Sexual Assault Prevention program permits many citizens to participate in the self-defense workshops. This level of participation would not be financially possible if the responsibility of conducting the workshops rested solely with paid crime prevention staff members.

#### Evaluation Procedures

All women registered for the March, 1981 self-defense workshops were asked during the first session of the workshop to complete a brief attitude survey. The month of March was randomly selected as the month to begin this evaluation process. Appendix B contains a copy of the survey. This survey asked 7 main questions: (1) the frequency of worrying about being a violent crime victim, (2) the chances of being a rape victim, (3) how daily activities are limited because of crime; for example, "I do not go out alone at night," (4) confidence in ability to defend oneself, (5) a rating scale on assertiveness, independence, self-confidence, and physical strength, (6) victimization history, and (7) types of participation in other crime prevention programs.

The rationale for asking the first three questions was to obtain a measure of the fear level of the women participating in the workshops. A question that has been asked and is yet unanswered is "Do many women who register to take these workshops have a high level of fear regarding crime." In addition, the questions provide a base level with which to evaluate post-workshop results. Question Numbers 4 and 5 deal with content areas of the workshops, and the final two questions provide historical/background information of the participants.

Participants were also asked to include their name and mailing address on the survey in order that a follow-up survey could be sent to them in six months. In September, 1981, a follow-up attitude survey (see Appendix C) was mailed to the participants. In the cover letter to this follow-up survey, participants were given an opportunity to receive a copy of the study's results. Participants who did not return the survey within the requested time period were sent a reminder letter (and another copy of the survey) in October, 1981.

The follow-up survey was similar to the original questionnaire however there were some modifications. Two of the initial survey questions were omitted: (1) past participation in other crime prevention programs, and (2) the daily activities limited because of crime. Asking the "past participation" question again would provide little additional information, and analysis of results of the second question indicated that respondents had interpreted it in too many different ways, thus not permitting specific conclusions. For example, for the responses "won't go to certain areas of the city" or "won't go out at night alone" some women checked these categories but also added "I don't like to but I have to go to work at night", or "I work in that area of the city, but I wished I didn't." Therefore some respondents may have answered the question from this perspective, but did not indicate this factor on the questionnaire. Because conclusions cannot definitely be made from this question there would be no need for comparative purposes to ask it again on the follow-up survey.

The follow-up survey contained one question that was not on the initial questionnaire. This question asked participants if their behavior regarding crime prevention had changed due to the Self-Defense workshop, and relatedly, how had the behavior changed. In addition, the original survey question regarding past victimization was modified on the follow-up survey to include only the approximate 6 month time period between receipt of the 2 questionnaires.

Separate from the survey portion of this evaluation, an analysis of the number of participants in the Self-Defense program since its beginning in 1979 was also conducted. This information was obtained from a logbook maintained by the Director of the Sexual Assault Prevention program.

## RESULTS

### Number of Participants

A review of records maintained by the Sexual Assault Prevention program revealed information about the number of workshops held and the number of women participating in the workshops.

These numbers were:

TABLE 1

### Number of Womenstrength Self-Defense Workshop Participants

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Workshops Held</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>
1979	14 (the first workshop was scheduled in July)	303
1980	50	1,146
1981	61	2,034
<b>TOTAL</b>	125 workshops or 366 weekly meetings (the first 9 of the 14 workshops in 1979 were held in 2 week sessions; all remaining workshops were 3 week sessions)	3,483

Each weekly workshop session is 3-hours in length and 3 non-paid instructors are assigned to each session for a total of 9 staff hours per weekly session. The 125 workshops held during the period from July, 1979 to December, 1981, therefore represented a total of 3,294 volunteer staff hours. To determine the approximate salary these volunteer staff hours represented, the base salary for a Crime Representative I position was obtained for 1979, 1980, and 1981 from the City of Portland's Bureau of Personnel as well as Police Bureau records. The duties performed by the Womenstrength's Self-Defense Workshop staff most closely agree with the job description for the City of Portland's Civil Service position of a Crime Representative I. As seen in Table 2 below,

the 3,294 volunteer staff hours are equivalent to a total value of \$26,585.82. This value was computed from the following information:

TABLE 2

Equivalent Salary for the Volunteer Staff Hours

Fiscal Year	Number of Volunteer Staff Hours	Salary	=	Value of Citizen Donated Service
1979-1980 (July, 1979-June, 1980)	972 Hours	@ \$7.74/hour	=	\$ 7,523.28
1980-1981 (July, 1980-June, 1981)	1,458 Hours	@ \$7.99/hour	=	\$11,649.42
1981-1982 (July, 1981-June, 1982)	864 Hours	@ \$8.58/hour	=	\$ 7,413.12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,294 Hours</b>		=	<b>\$26,585.82</b>

Questionnaire Results

131 completed surveys were returned by the women enrolled in the March, 1981, Womenstrength Self-Defense Workshops. Of this group, 72% (N=94) resided in the City of Portland, and 28% (N=37) lived outside the city (e.g., Beaverton, Lake Oswego, Gresham, Milwaukie). Ages ranged from 14 years to 80 years. 105 women returned the 6 month follow-up surveys resulting in a return rate of 80%. One survey was incomplete, however, and could not be included in the final analysis, therefore 104 completed surveys were analyzed. This high rate of questionnaire return is unusual as the typical return rate for a "questionnaire mail-back" format is 15-20% of the number of surveys originally sent.<sup>5</sup>

For both the initial and follow-up surveys the frequency per response category for each question was determined. For questions which required a pre- and post-participation comparison, only the responses of the 104 women who returned both surveys were analyzed. These data are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Frequency of Response Per Question for the Original and Follow-Up Surveys

QUESTION	N=104 Original Survey		N=104 Follow-Up Survey		
	#	%	#	%	
1. In general, how often do you worry about being a victim of a violent crime (assault, rape, etc)?					
Often:	15	15%	9	9%	
Sometimes:	71	68%	68	65%	
Almost Never:	18	17%	27	26%	
2. Do you feel that your chances of being a victim of rape are:					
High:	4	4%	1	1%	
Moderate:	43	41%	30	29%	
Low:	49	47%	63	60%	
Almost None:	8	8%	10	10%	
3. In what ways do you limit your daily activities because of crime: (multiple answers were permitted)					
Won't go to certain areas in City:	74	56%	*	*	
Won't go out at night alone:	56	43%	*	*	
Won't leave my home unless accompanied by someone else:	5	4%	*	*	
Seldom limit my activities because of crime:	54	41%	*	*	
Other:	11	8%	*	*	
4. How confident are you in your ability to defend yourself from an attacker:					
Very confident:	4	4%	26	25%	
Somewhat confident:	54	52%	74	71%	
Not at all confident:	46	44%	4	4%	
5. How would you rate yourself on the following characteristics? (a rating of #1 would mean very independent, very self-confident, etc.)					
Assertiveness (Very)	1:	14	13%	17	16%
	2:	29	28%	51	49%
	3:	45	43%	28	27%
	4:	12	12%	8	8%
(Not Very)	5:	4	4%	0	0%

\* Not Asked

TABLE 3 (Continued)

QUESTION	N=104 Original Survey		N=104 Follow-Up Survey			
	#	%	#	%		
5. Continued						
Independence	(Very)					
	1:	26	25%	29	28%	
	2:	40	38%	57	55%	
	3:	34	33%	15	14%	
	4:	3	3%	3	3%	
	(Not Very)	5:	1	1%	0	0%
Self-Confidence	(Very)					
	1:	17	16%	18	17%	
	2:	29	28%	52	50%	
	3:	43	41%	26	25%	
	4:	15	15%	7	7%	
	(Not Very)	5:	1	1%	1	1%
Physical Strength	(Very)					
	1:	8	8%	7	7%	
	2:	17	16%	36	34%	
	3:	38	37%	34	33%	
	4:	27	26%	22	21%	
	(Not Very)	5:	14	13%	5	5%
6. Have you ever been a victim of a serious violent crime (assault, rape, etc)? (N=131)	Yes:	14	11%	*	*	
	No:	117	89%	*	*	
Have you been a victim of a serious violent crime (assault, rape, etc.) since taking this workshop?	Yes:	*	*	1 Molest		
				1 Attempted Burglary		
				1 Vandalism to vehicle w/possible harassment		
	No:	*	*	101	97%	
If yes, were you able to use the information/techniques taught in the self-defense workshop?	Yes:	*	*	3	100%	
	No:	*	*	0	0%	
Did you report the crime?				Attempted burglary - yes, reported		
				Vandalism/harassment - yes, reported		
				Molest - no, not reported		

\* Not Asked

TABLE 3 (Continued)

QUESTION	N=104 Original Survey		N=104 Follow-Up Survey		
	#	%	#	%	
7. Have you participated in any other crime prevention programs in the past?					
(N=131)	Yes:	34	26%	*	*
	No:	97	74%	*	*
If yes, which one(s)? (multiple answers)					
Residential Security Survey		12	9%	*	*
Rape Prevention Meeting		9	7%	*	*
General Crime Prevention Meeting		10	8%	*	*
Neighborhood Watch or attended Neighborhood Meeting		9	7%	*	*
Other		7	5%	*	*
8. Have you changed your behavior regarding crime prevention because of this workshop?					
	Yes:	*	*	92	88%
	No:	*	*	6	6%
	Did not answer:	*	*	6	6%
If yes, I now: (multiple answers)					
Lock my doors/windows		*	*	58	56%
Lock car door when I am and am not in car		*	*	49	47%
Leave lights on in my home when away		*	*	59	57%
Am cautious of people before I let them into my home		*	*	70	67%
Am now aware of what occurs around me when walking on the street		*	*	83	80%
Take action if someone touches or speaks to me offensively		*	*	52	50%
Other		*	*	17	16%
I have always done the above actions		*	*	17	16%
9. Participant resided: (N=131)					
	In Portland	94	72%	*	*
	Outside the City	37	28%	*	*

\* Not Asked

Results found that there was a trend for participants to worry less about being a victim of a violent crime after attending the workshop, as well as to have a more realistic feeling as to the probability of being a victim of rape. Prior to taking the class, 83% of the women said that they "often" or "sometimes" worried about being a victim of such a crime, while 74% felt this way 6 months later. Similarly, 45% of the participants felt that their chances of being a rape victim were "high" to "moderate" as compared to 30% feeling this same way after having had the workshop. This effect as surveyed in the first 2 questions was more evident in the 26-35 age group as compared to the other age groups.

For perspective, the 1980 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) crime statistical report<sup>6</sup> listed the rate per 1,000 Portland population for reported incidents of rape as 1.0 per 1,000 population. The probability of being a victim of a robbery or an aggravated assault was 6.2 per 1,000 population, and 6.3 per 1,000 population, respectively. While not necessarily these statistics, crime statistics are periodically presented in the Self-Defense Workshops.

As previously mentioned the purpose of the question dealing with "ways daily activities were limited because of crime" was to assess unusual levels of fear. For example, if a large percentage of the women had indicated that they would not leave their homes unless accompanied by someone else, unusual levels of fear could be assumed to exist. As noted in the Procedures Section, this question was not however asked on the follow-up survey because the response categories generated many interpretations by participants and no definite conclusions could be made. At any rate, only 4% (N=5) of the responses were listed in the category "won't leave my home unless accompanied by someone else." By contrast, 41% of the women said that they seldom limit their activities because of crime. In general, these responses were distributed among all age groups.

One result that appears clear is that the women did feel more confident after having the workshop in their ability to defend themselves from an attacker. Prior to the workshop 4% of the women said that they were "very confident" in their defense abilities, however this value increased to 25% as reflected in the 6 month follow-up results. Conversely, only 4% of the women in the follow-up survey indicated that they were not at all confident in their abilities. This value had been 44% prior to attending the workshop. Of interest, participants in all age groups felt more confident in their defense abilities, and statistical analysis of these pre- and post-participation "confidence" responses indicated that the differences were probably not due to chance.<sup>7</sup>

Participants were also asked to rate themselves (from 1 to 5) on four characteristics: assertiveness, independence, self-confidence, and physical strength. A value of 1 represented very assertive, very independent, etc., while a ranking of 5 was indicative

of not very assertive, independent, etc. Results revealed that after attending the workshop, participants rated themselves as more assertive, that is, having a rating of 1 or 2 (Pre = 41% versus Post = 65%), and more self-confident (Pre = 44% versus Post = 67%). While the rating changes on the assertiveness scale appeared distributed among all age groups, the self-confidence rating changes were most evident in the younger (ages 14-25) and older (46 years and older) age groups. There was also evidence that the participants felt more independent as well as having better physical strength after attending the workshops.

#### Victimization

Fourteen (11%) of the original 131 women participants said that they had been a victim of a serious, violent (e.g., assault, rape) crime prior to taking the workshop. With respect to both percentage figures and actual numbers, the age group having the most victimizations was the 26-35 year old group. Three women said that they had been a crime victim since taking the self-defense course.

One of these 3 women (age: 24) was the victim of a molest. As she was standing on the sidewalk, a boy on a bicycle grabbed her offensively as he rode by. She stated that she was initially caught "off-guard" when the incident occurred, but she then took action and chased the suspect as he rode away on his bicycle. This incident was not reported to the Police.

A second participant (age: 31) was the victim of an attempted residential burglary. While in her bathroom, this woman heard someone ringing her doorbell 7 or 8 times. When she left the bathroom and looked toward the front door, she saw a man attempting to pry the door open with a tennis racket handle. Using yells and other skills taught in the workshop, she ran toward the front door. The suspect then ran from the scene. This crime was reported to the Police, and the woman used the time period before yelling at the suspect to obtain a detailed description of the suspect. She told the Police that she could identify this suspect if she saw him again.

The third participant (age: 53) was victimized one hour before the third session of the workshop. While driving in her car, another driver indicated to her to pull her car over to the side of the street, which she did. This unknown driver (a 20-30 year old male) approached her and stated that while in a store's parking lot her car door hit his car and damaged it. Prior to this stranger approaching her car, she locked the car doors and rolled up the car windows. He then requested her to leave her car and view the damage. She refused stating that she did not hit his car. As she drove away the suspect kicked and damaged her car. This incident was reported to the Police.

This woman said that she had previously been a victim of a pursesnatch. The other 2 women mentioned above stated that they had not been previously victimized by a violent crime. All 3 of these women noted that their behavior had changed with respect to crime prevention because of this workshop.

Taken as a group, 88% (N=92) of the participants said that their behavior had changed with respect to crime prevention, 6% (N=6) said that there was no change, and another 6% did not indicate an answer to this question. The most frequent (N=83) behavior change selected was "I am now more aware of what occurs around me when walking on the street." The women were also likely to indicate that they were cautious of people before letting them into their homes (N=70; Note: this question permitted multiple responses). Approximately one-half of the women indicated that they would now take action if someone touched or spoke to them offensively. A majority of the women also noted that they now lock their doors and windows, car doors, as well as leave lights on in their homes when they were away. Sixteen percent (N=17) of the women said that they had taken all of the above safety measures prior to taking the self-defense workshop, and this was also the most frequent reason given by the 6 women who said that their behavior regarding crime prevention had not changed because of the self-defense workshop.

Of interest, data from the original survey found that 26% of the women had participated in some other type of crime prevention program. The most frequent program mentioned was the Residential Security Survey program (N=12), followed by attending a general crime prevention meeting (N=10), a rape prevention meeting (N=9), and a neighborhood meeting (N=9). Four participants indicated that they had taken another agency's or university's self-defense class.

A final segment of the follow-up survey asked for any "additional comments" from the participants. One-third of the participants wrote comments on the survey and these comments had 4 main themes:

- a. Doing a good job/please continue program (N=8)
- b. Made me feel more confident (N=8)
- c. Need a refresher course to sharpen self-defense skills (N=8)
- d. I have urged others to take the course (N=5)

Two other comments not addressing the above themes were:

- a. Classes need to be longer in order to practice the skills more (N=1)
- b. Classes should be taught in the high schools (N=1)

### Summary

3,483 women have participated in the Womenstrength Self-Defense Workshops during the 2½ years the Portland Police Bureau's program has been in existence. Trained volunteers serve as instructors in the workshops. A 6 month follow-up attitude survey of 104 women participating in the program found a statistically significant increase in these participants' expressed confidence in their defense abilities. These women also indicated increased feelings of self-confidence and assertiveness. In addition, 88% of the 104 participants said that their behavior regarding crime prevention had changed because of the workshop.

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7. Sign Test Results:  $N = 64, x^2 = 50.8, df = 1, P < .01$ .

## APPENDIX A

## List of Self-Defense Skills



CITY OF  
**PORTLAND, OREGON**  
BUREAU OF POLICE

Francis J. Ivancie, Mayor  
Ronald R. Still, Chief of Police  
222 S.W. Pine  
Portland, Oregon 97204

## **WOMENSTRENGTH**

A workshop teaching self defense skills and methods of escape to women, presented by staff members of the sexual Assault Prevention Program trained through the Portland Police Bureau.

The following is a thumbnail sketch of the physical defense skills that will be presented in the workshop. It is important that you recognize that the immediacy and confidence in your response are crucial -- and those are factors that can only develop as you establish the commitment to practice the skills you learn until they are "second nature" to you. The element of surprise is your greatest weapon -- your attacker does not expect a skilled physical response. And you do have the ability to develop that skill. As we have made the commitment to share with you instruction in physical self defense, we ask you to make a commitment to yourself. Learn the skills, practice them with purpose, and return to your daily life knowing that those skills can make a difference. It is our hope that you will swiftly discover, as we have, that strength and confidence do indeed, overcome fear.

### I. Vulnerable Body Parts - Natural Weapons

One primary principle upon which Womenstrength is based is that our strongest natural weapons (feet, fists, voice) should, in an effective defense, be directed at the attackers most vulnerable body parts. Those body parts are the eyes, nose, throat, groin and knee. These are identified as those parts of the body that (1) are most easily injured, and (2) are those body areas over which muscles cannot be developed, and so are more vulnerable to attack. The "weapons" and techniques used are outlined below.

<u>Target</u>	<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Tactic</u>
Eyes	Fingers	Attacking the eyes is an obvious but uncomfortable option for some women. The most effective way to attack the eyes is to gouge all four fingers directly into the eye area, or steady the head with palm and fingers and use the thumbs to attack.
Nose	Hands	A sharp blow to the nose of your attacker, from above (with one or two fists) or below (with the base of your palm) can be very disorienting and cause severe pain.
Throat	Hands	The throat is the most vulnerable area of the body and the most easily and painfully injured. The blow is delivered by a fist, the side of your hand, or both hands clasped together. It is most effective when aimed at the front area of the throat (where no musculature can be developed), but can also be aimed at the side of the neck.

I. Vulnerable Body Parts - Natural Weapons (Continued)

<u>Target</u>	<u>Weapon</u>	<u>Tactic</u>
Groin	Hands, Forearm, Elbow, Thigh	<p>The groin area is vulnerable to attack, but is not an emphasized target in the workshops because the element of surprise is lacking. If an attacker suspects physical resistance, he is likely to expect the potential victim will attempt a blow to the groin. For this reason, it is often not effective.</p> <p>However, if attacked effectively, it can be among the most debilitating of techniques. With the hand, attempt to grab, pull, or strike the groin area. The forearm and elbow can be used if the victim is being held from the rear. If in a face to face position, lift your leg sharply into the groin area making full contact with your thigh muscle. Note that this attack is with the upper thigh and comes from below, rather than a knee to the front groin area.</p>
Knee	Feet	<p>The knee joint is extremely delicate and can be dislocated with as little as 40 pounds of pressure. The kick is a modified martial arts technique, often called a "snap kick" or "mule kick." It is directed to the front or side of the attacker's knee area (slightly above or below the joint will cause the same injury) and can be accomplished either forward, to the side, or to the rear if the potential victim is being held from the rear.</p>

Note: In addition to these "basics," your instructors may include variations that are particularly appropriate for your size, strength, possible handicap, etc.

The one element that is critical in all defense is the use of your voice as a weapon -- an alarm -- a way to increase your strength and speed, convincing your attacker that you do not intend to become his victim.

II. Simple Escapes1. Wrist Grasps

- a. Release with a swift "explosive" movement, rotating your hand towards the weakest part of your attacker's hand -- his thumb. This release technique is the same no matter what the hold, one hand on one hand, double handed grasp, palm up or down. The focus is to direct your explosive movement towards the weakest part of his hold, his thumb.
- b. If the attacker is holding your wrist or forearm with both hands, reach in between his forearms, grasp your own hand, and pull back and up sharply against his thumbs to release the hold.
- c. If the releaser is unsuccessful, or if for any reason it is not your best option, concentrate on the concept of "multiples" and consider other options open to you -- his eyes, throat, knees, etc.

II. Simple Escapes (Continued)2. Rear Body Grasps

- a. If the attacker has your arms pinned, the only targets available are the groin and knee. The groin attack is accomplished by moving your body (at the hips) to the side and bringing the forearm or fist up into the groin area.
- b. Using your attacker's arm around you for balance, by grabbing them with your hands, glance down to establish aim and deliver a rear kick to the knee.
- c. If the rear body grasp is such that your hands and arms are available, you can either balance by grabbing his forearms and deliver a rear kick to the knee, or attack his facial area with your fingers, fists, elbows, etc. The preferable, and more reliable of the two attacks, is the rear kick to the knee.

3. Front Body Grasps

- a. If your arms are free, use them. Fists and fingers aimed to any vulnerable face area will be incapacitating, as will be a blow to the throat.
- b. If your arms are pinned, the preferred blow is with the thigh to the groin area. Again, keep in mind this is not a knee blow, but a thigh lift making the most complete and sharp contact with the testicle area possible. If an attack to the groin is attempted tentatively, and not with power and confidence, it can be ineffective and be dangerous to the potential victim. Deliver the blow swiftly and strongly to do sufficient damage to the testicle area.

4. Front Choke Hold

- a. Throw your arms straight up, outside your attacker's hold, and turn swiftly, breaking the hold at the weak part of his grasp, the wrist joints.
- b. Lean forward slightly, clasp your hands in a double fist (without fingers intertwined), form a slight wedge shape with your fists and forearms, and "explode" upwards through his hold making contact between the attacker's forearm and elbow joint. The movement continues upwards and outwards, allowing continuing movement with hands and forearms to attack the facial or neck areas if possible. ("Multiples")

5. Rear Choke Hold

- a. The release is the same as the first release explained above. Throw your arms straight up, outside your attacker's arms, and turn swiftly. The hold will break at the wrist joint, and allow you time to either attack further if need be, or run.

Note: In any of the above mentioned holds (body grasps, front and rear choke holds), if for any reason the escape is unsuccessful, or the circumstances will not allow great body movement, "annoying" techniques may be utilized. The best of these is to grasp the little fingers of the attacker and bend them back to break them. This may be an option when others are not -- if you were in a rear choke in a car and your attacker were in the back seat, for example. In routine attack situations, the above escapes are far more dependable.

### III. Pressure Hold

#### 1. One or Two-Arm Rear Choke Hold

- a. The method of release from this hold is three-fold. First, grab onto the elbow of your attacker and pull down hard. At the same time, tuck your chin sharply into the elbow to give you room to breath. Finally, glance down and to the rear for aim, and deliver a sharp rear kick to the knee. The most important thing is to get your chin down into his elbow so you can get air -- then deliver the incapacitating kick.

#### 2. Hammerlock

- a. The technique for dealing with a hammerlock is not an escape -- it is a release of pressure causing pain. As your attacker applies upward pressure on your hand and forearm (behind your back) apply counterpressure with your opposite hand, pressing down on your own rear hand. Again, you can at the time glance to aim and deliver a rear kick to the knee.

#### 3. Hair Grasp

- a. Again, the purpose of the technique is to resist the pain/pressure. Apply opposite pressure -- that is, if he is pulling you by the hair, place your hand between his hand and your scalp and simply pull back. If the hand is close to the scalp, place both hands upon his grasp, and hold his hands tightly down on your head.
- b. Once the painful pressure released, balance, aim, and deliver a kick to the knee area of your attacker.

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Though in reading, these techniques may seem complicated, you will have recognized after learning them in class, that they are, in fact, "simple" escapes. Escapes that depend on (1) surprise, (2) use of the voice, (3) quick thinking, (4) recognition of his vulnerable areas and your strong ones (!), (5) practice, and most important, (6) an honest, well thought out, sincere belief in your ability to fight back. Confidence in your strength and skills. And that confidence comes with time and commitment.

A few particularly important points to remember...

- Recognize and remember that the myth of the "poor woman who couldn't hurt a fly" is pure bunk. We have all been taught since childhood to be ladylike -- and ladylike means we do not fight, no less fight back. We hope you have come to the realization that being prepared to defend yourself is not un-feminine, not rude, not uppity. It is sensible. And it is crucial to living happy and healthy in our day and age. It is our good fortune to be able to share that growth and knowledge with you.
- Don't be caught up in depending on anyone or anything else for your safety. Learn to depend on you. Friends, husbands, police officers, and dogs are fine as far as they go, but they're not around while you're doing dishes, or walking to the car, or diapering the baby. They can't be there 24 hours a day, so you need to know you can defend yourself physically. Hat pins as weapons have long gone out of style! (They were never all that effective to begin with!)

- Keep the concept of "multiples" in mind. The questions come up week after week, "but what if?" Your attacker will not expect you to fight, so you have the jump on him to begin with. But your position is all the better if you have not just one tactic, but a full array of defense options. One move may not work, but another will. Keep thinking... multiples.
- The importance of using your voice cannot be emphasized enough. The power of any blow will be increased dramatically coupled with an aggressive verbal response. That means yell -- don't scream and struggle -- yell and fight!
- And practice. We've said it before, we'll say it again. The more practice you get (most effective with sympathetic women friends, rather than husbands and male friends) the better your defense response will be. Do it alone, do it with friends who feel as strongly about defense as you do, do it in front of a mirror, whatever -- but do it.
- Finally, have fun. You know by now that learning physical defense skills is no real picnic - but neither is putting yourself to any important task that requires your physical, emotional and psychological energy. It takes work. You may even walk away with more fear and apprehension than you had when you arrived. But believe us. Persevere --- stick with it and you'll find your fear disappearing, and strength, good health and confidence replacing it in short order!

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It has been a pleasure to have the opportunity to introduce you to the skills of women's self defense. All we ask of you is that you support other women and the efforts of agencies and community groups working together to fight rape.

Our Sexual Assault Prevention Program offers speakers on a routine basis to any organization in Portland. Feel free to call us to arrange a meeting at your home or business.

And good luck! Call if we can help. (503) 248-4126





CITY OF  
**PORTLAND, OREGON**

BUREAU OF POLICE

**Francis J. Ivancie, Mayor**  
Ronald R. Still, Chief of Police  
222 S.W. Pine  
Portland, Oregon 97204

September, 1981

Dear Workshop Participant:

The Womenstrength Self-Defense Program has been able to provide sexual assault information to women in the Portland area. After conducting these classes since 1980, one main question which remains unanswered is whether women have had to use the information and techniques taught in the Workshop. Your feedback is important for this reason.

Six months ago you completed an attitude survey. Enclosed is a follow-up questionnaire to that survey. Your participation is very much appreciated. Please answer the questions and return them in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by September 30, 1981. All answers will remain confidential.

If you would like a copy of the results of this study, please complete and return the information at the bottom of this letter.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,  
Lt. C. Karl  
Community Affairs Unit

Teri Poppino, Director  
Sexual Assault Prevention Program

----- CUT HERE -----

Please send me the results of the Self-Defense Workshop Study.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**

**Follow-Up Attitude Survey**

**Survey Cover Letter**

**WOMENSTRENGTH SELF-DEFENSE WORKSHOP**  
Attitude Survey

Please respond honestly to the questions below. All answers will be kept confidential. Your cooperation in completing this survey is appreciated.

1. In general, how often do you worry about being a victim of a violent crime (assault, rape, etc.)?

Often  Sometimes  Almost Never

2. Do you feel your chances of being a victim of rape are:

High  Moderate  Low  Almost None

3. How confident are you now in your ability to defend yourself from an attacker?

Very Confident  Somewhat Confident  Not At All Confident

4. Since taking this Self-Defense Workshop, have you been the victim of a serious violent crime (assault, rape, etc.)?

Yes  No

If Yes, were you able to use the information/techniques taught in the Self-Defense Workshop?

Yes  No Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Did you report the crime?  Yes  No

5. Have you changed your behavior regarding crime prevention because of this Self-Defense Workshop?

Yes  No

If Yes, I now

Lock my doors/windows

Lock car door when I am and am not in the car

Leave lights on in my home when I am away

Am cautious of people before I let them into my home

Am now aware of what occurs around me when I am walking on the street

Take action if someone touches or speaks to me offensively

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

5. How would you rate yourself on the following characteristics?: (A rating of #1 would mean very independent, very self-confident, etc.)

	<u>Very</u>			<u>Not Very</u>	
Assertiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Independence	1	2	3	4	5
Self-Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Physical Strength	1	2	3	4	5

We know that all opinions about this Self-Defense Workshop cannot be reflected in such an attitude survey. If you have any other comments please write them on the back.

Thank you.

**END**