



Publication

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In today's fast-changing world, self-defense and combatives training are more important than ever—not only for personal safety but also for professional readiness. Yet, many programs in the industry remain focused on amassing a long list of techniques. While variety can be appealing, this approach often misses the mark when it comes to preparing for actual threats. To truly advance our field and deliver meaningful results, it's time to integrate risk management principles into how we design and teach self-defense.

Collecting techniques can provide a sense of progress, but it's easy to lose sight of what matters most: effectiveness in real-world situations. Under stress, people rarely remember a menu of complex moves. Instead, time spent on irrelevant or unlikely scenarios can leave students less prepared for genuine threats.

Other high-stakes industries—like business, security, and public safety—use risk management to guide critical decisions. This means identifying, assessing, and prioritizing risks, then focusing resources on what matters most. When applied to self-defense, risk management shifts our mindset from “learn as much as possible” to “learn what's most needed.”

A strategic approach begins with understanding which threats are most likely (frequency) and which could have the biggest impact (criticality). By analyzing these factors, we can focus our curriculum on the scenarios practitioners are most likely to face or have the biggest impact—maximizing both the value and efficiency of every training session.

No two groups face the same risks. Students, corporate teams, and security professionals each have unique needs. By adopting a risk-based framework, instructors can customize programs to address the specific challenges of each audience. This ensures that every class delivers practical skills that make a real difference.

A refined technique inventory, built around risk management, empowers practitioners to master a core set of high-impact skills. This approach doesn't limit growth or adaptability—it simply

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ensures that every technique taught serves a clear and meaningful purpose. The result: more confident practitioners and higher returns on training investment.

Integrating risk management principles leads to training that is not only more focused but also more effective. Practitioners gain confidence knowing they are prepared for the most relevant threats. Instructors can deliver targeted, high-value sessions that truly prepare individuals to navigate real-world challenges. Plus, this methodology supports continuous improvement, allowing programs to adapt as new risks emerge.

To remain relevant and impactful, self-defense training must evolve from a technique-centered approach to one grounded in risk management. By embracing this strategic shift, we can provide our communities with both the practical skills and analytical mindset necessary to stay safe and resilient in an increasingly complex world.