

How to Choose a Self-Defense Class

There are many options for self-defense classes in most communities. The best way to find a good class is to learn what is available, and then make a decision. Start by:

- Looking at local health clubs to see if they offer a class
- Checking your local (or online) Yellow Pages under “self-defense”
- Asking your fellow REALTORS[®], friends and family if they have taken a self-defense class that they would recommend

Once you know what there is to choose from, find out more about each option. What does the class cover? What qualifications does the teacher have? Will the content be applicable to a REALTOR[®] and the unique dangers you may face?

What a Good Class Will Include

Look for a class with a broad focus, which will include information on how to recognize dangerous individuals and situations, how to avoid them and how to react in an attack.

Keep in mind that a good self-defense class should include these philosophical points:

1. No one asks for, causes, invites, or deserves to be assaulted. Women and men sometimes exercise poor judgment about safety behavior, but that does not make them responsible for the attack. Attackers are responsible for their attacks and their use of violence to overpower, control and abuse another human being.
2. Whatever a person's decision in a given self-defense situation, whatever action she or he does or does not take, that person is not at fault. Someone's decision to survive the best way she can must be respected. Self-defense classes should not be used as a judgment against a victim/survivor.
3. Good self-defense programs do not tell an individual what he or she should or should not do. A program should offer options, techniques, and a way of analyzing situations. A program may point out what usually works best in most situations, but each situation is unique and the final decision rests with the person actually confronted by the situation.
4. Empowerment is the goal of a good self-defense program. The individual's right to make decisions about her participation must be respected. Pressure should not be brought to bear in any way to get someone to participate in an activity if she's hesitant or unwilling.

Source: National Coalition Against Sexual Assault Self-Defense AD-HOC Committee