



# Spartan Firearms Training Group, LLC

## Strategic Engagement: The Role of Tactics and Techniques for Self-Defense Combat—Part 2

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*In Part 1 of this article (see [Strategic Engagement Part 1](#)), you read about using strategy, tactics, and techniques for self-defense combat with a firearm. You also learned about Colonel Jeff Cooper's concept of the “combat mindset.”*

*Part 2 identifies three broad self-defense combat categories, from foundational concepts and mindsets to home and family defense. Twelve tactics are sorted by category, and each tactic has several techniques assigned to it. This arrangement supports a layered approach to armed personal protection, especially in home defense or concealed and open carry. Tactics tell you what to do; techniques tell you how to do it.*

*Part 3, published soon, continues the presentation of tactics and techniques. Part 3 has five broad categories of tactics, ranging from pre-engagement and tactical movement to post-engagement. Fourteen specific tactics and related techniques are distributed across the categories.*

*My son (and business partner) and I acquired these skills over many years of personal training with America's elite warrior veterans, including Army Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, and Tier One Special Operations Command (SOCOM) veterans. I am also a certified executive protection specialist. That training provided many tactics and techniques; some are identified below.*

*It is essential to realize that the information provided below is not an ultimate collection of tactics and techniques. Other people will have ideas about what should have been included. Nevertheless, we encourage you to start imagining scenarios where you could use these and other tactics and techniques to defend your life and the lives of your loved ones, and then start training toward proficiency. Remember, when facing a life-threatening event, you will fall to the level of your training, not rise to the level of your expectations (attributed to [ARCHILOCHUS](#)).*

## Prologue

*Legal Considerations and Firearms Safety.* Armed self-defense, although justified in some cases, can bring the heavy hand of the law down on those who do not comply with legal requirements for using deadly force. You should be familiar with the self-defense laws in your state. Maryland's requirements, which are similar to those of other states, are: ([State v. Faulkner, 483 A.2d 759 \(1984\)](#))

- Innocence--You cannot be the aggressor.
- Imminence--You must believe the threat will happen immediately.
- Reasonableness—You must be up against multiple adversaries or those who are bigger and stronger.
- Avoidance — You must retreat if it is safe to do so.
- Proportionality—You must use only the minimal force necessary.

Even if these requirements are met, you could still face legal consequences.

Several organizations can help you stay current with your state's self-defense requirements. For Maryland residents, one of those is Maryland Shall Issue ([Self Defense is a Civil Right - Maryland Shall Issue®, Inc.](#)), which tracks legislative action, including bills that passed and those that have not (membership not required, but for a \$25 membership fee you can join the fight against those who wish to constrain firearms ownership and use in Maryland).

Another organization that provides legal updates is the National Rifle Association—Institute for Legislative Action (at [NRA-ILA | Home](#)). Send them your name, state, and contact information, and they will send legislative updates directly to your inbox.

A third place to find legal updates is the website [www.handgunlaw.us](http://www.handgunlaw.us). It summarizes weapons laws for all states and the District of Columbia. It is updated regularly. The site also provides a travel planner that allows you to check the firearms laws for each state.

*Firearms Safety Considerations.* Please ensure that you are familiar with and understand the safety rules governing the use of firearms. We teach a set of five rules that should be reviewed every time before starting or restarting a training program:

- Always check to ensure the gun is unloaded. It is always loaded until you check it, which is extremely important if you are engaged in “dry practice” with an unloaded gun.

- Never point the gun at anyone or anything you do not wish to shoot.
- Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.
- Be sure of your target and its surroundings.
- Be sure of the condition of your gun.

## FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS AND MINDSET

### *1.0 Protector Mindset*

1.1 **Tactic:** Think like an executive protection specialist.

1.11 **Techniques for Effectiveness:** *Answer the following questions to prepare a risk profile for you and your family.*

- Why would someone want to attack you or your family?
- What would they want from you?
- Where would they attack you?
- When would they attack you?
- How would they attack you?

### *2.0 Avoid Becoming a Victim*

2.10 **Tactic:** Use Surveillance Routes for Driving, Walking, or Jogging.

#### **2.11 Techniques for Effectiveness**

- Develop the mindset that “I knew this could happen someday, and I know what to do about it” (Col. Jeff Cooper) by training the correct skills correctly.
- Review “Beyond the Watchful Eye...” at [Beyond-The-Watchful-Eye/](#).
- Identify several routes to and from your daily destinations.
- Assess the routes for ease of use.
- Assess the routes to avoid chokepoints and dead ends.
- Don’t go places with your firearm that you would not go to without it.

2.20 **Tactic:** Learn and apply principles of informed situational awareness (see [Left of Bang](#))

### 2.21 Techniques for Effectiveness:

- Scan your environment regularly (keep a sharp eye out).
- Identify exits, cover, and potential threats.
- Recognize pre-attack indicators, such as furtive movements, scanning, and nervous behavior.
- Practice quick mental decision-making under stress; dry runs in daily life help train this skill.
- Create an imaginary 31-foot diameter security “bubble” around yourself as you move through your environment.
- Pay attention to anyone who enters your security bubble. Assess whether they are a threat using Cooper’s Color Code framework ([Cooper Color Code](#)).
- Learn and use Boyd’s OODA Loop (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) ([OODA Loop Explained](#)).
- Learn and observe for telltale predatory behaviors

## PREPARATION AND TRAINING

### 3.0 Firearms Handling and Marksmanship

3.10 **Tactic:** Learn and master firearms handling and marksmanship skills

### 3.11 Techniques for Effectiveness:

- Draw using a 5-step sequence (see [Draw or "The Presentation": Gunsite Academy](#)).
- Use a two-handed, two-thumb forward grip. Grip stronger with the support hand—grip stronger than you think is necessary.
- Align the front and rear sights. Place the aligned sights on the target. Stare at the front sight (when using iron sights).
- Zero and use a “red dot” optic if not using iron sights. Visually place the dot on the target. Focus on the target. Do not use the iron sights.
- Keep both eyes open for iron sights and red dot optics.
- Take slack out of the trigger. Pause at the trigger “wall” then press the trigger (to make precise hits).
- Maintain sight picture after each shot until you are convinced there is no longer a threat.
- Practice emergency and tactical reloading.

#### 4.0 Dry-Fire and Force-on-Force Training

4.10 **Tactic:** Engage in dry-fire practice and force-on-force simulations to improve decision-making and accuracy under stress.

##### 4.11 Techniques for Effectiveness:

- Use tools like SIRT pistols or laser cartridges to practice at home.
- Join a force-on-force class (e.g., using Simunitions or airsoft) to develop real-time judgment skills.
- Review your performance after each scenario to identify areas for improvement.

#### 5.0 Draw from Concealment

5.10 **Tactic:** Draw your firearm quickly and smoothly from concealed carry under stress.

##### 5.11 Techniques for Effectiveness:

- Practice drawing from concealment with an unloaded gun.
- Practice clearing cover garments with your support hand before drawing.
- Rehearse various draw strokes from your carry position.
- Time your draw-to-first-shot with a shot timer to improve speed.

#### 6.0 Draw and Move

6.10 **Tactic:** Draw your firearm while moving laterally to make yourself a more challenging target. Get off the “X,” where 'X' represents your current location.

##### 6.20 Techniques for Effectiveness:

- Train to draw while sidestepping or moving offline (left/right) from your initial position.
- Combine movement with verbal commands like “STOP!” or “GET BACK!” to deter or delay the attacker.
- Practice at the range and using dry-fire drills to build muscle memory.

## 7.0 Verbal Commands and De-escalation

7.10 **Tactic:** Use loud, clear commands to deter attackers while mentally preparing yourself to act.

### 7.11 Techniques for Effectiveness:

- Use firm, authoritative tone: “Drop the weapon!” or “Back away!”
- Combine with aggressive posture and movement to cover or to create distance.
- Practice scenario-based training with role players to build confidence under stress.
- Train in a simulator (Maryland residents, see the Virtra simulator at the [GUNTRY CLUB](#))

## HOME AND FAMILY DEFENSE PLANNING

## 8.0 Home Defense

8.10 **Tactic:** Defend home and family

### 8.11 Techniques for Effectiveness

- Assess vulnerable areas in the home (windows, doors, basement access, etc.)
- Create a floor plan map.
- Create a safe room if possible. Stock it with food, water, and communication devices.
- Designate a rally point.
- Train family by doing dry runs, simulating a break-in.
- Secure a strong point; do not engage unless the intruder attempts to break through the strong point

## 9.0 Room Clearing Basics (Home Defense Focus)

*Warning: Don't do this unless trained or if you have no other choice to protect loved ones. Clearing rooms with training might result in death or serious injury. Clearing rooms without training will get you killed or seriously injured.*

9.10 If you must respond to an intruder, tactfully navigate your home while armed ([www.ufpro.com](http://www.ufpro.com)).

#### 9.11 Techniques for Effectiveness:

- Stay calm. Make a quick plan before proceeding.
- Ensure that your response includes two of the following actions: surprise, violence of action, and speed. You don't need to use surprise if you have speed and violence of action; you don't need to use violence of action if you have surprise and speed; and you don't need to use speed if you have surprise and violence of action.
- "Pie the corner" to enter or exit rooms by taking slow incremental steps to minimize exposure.
- Avoid standing still in the "fatal funnel" (the open doorway into or coming out of a room or building).
- Balance your speed, not too fast or slow. As you approach an open doorway or hallway, maintain your firearm in a low-ready position while you advance. When you enter the opening, press the gun horizontally to face the area you're clearing, and be prepared to engage quickly. Once in the opening, move swiftly into the room while scanning for threats—don't linger in the open doorway.
- Practice with a light to identify targets.

### 10.0 Movement of Innocents/Family Extraction

10.10 **Tactic:** Protect or evacuate family during a violent encounter.

#### 10.11 Techniques for Effectiveness:

- Use basic executive protection specialist techniques for protecting your family.
- Create an extraction plan for immediate action. Use a safe room, if feasible.
- Create a rally point for the family to gather for protection. Once at the rally point, account for everyone.
- Practice "shooting while shielding" (positioning your body between family and threat).
- Maintain positive control of young children or cognitively vulnerable people.

## PRE-ENGAGEMENT AND TACTICAL MOVEMENT

**11.0 *Movement to Safety/Tactical Retreat*** (Note: Some states have “stand your ground” laws, some have “castle doctrine” laws, and others do not. Ensure you are familiar with the laws in your state.

**11.10 *Tactic*:** If safe, retreat to safety while maintaining readiness to engage.

### **11.11 *Techniques for Effectiveness*:**

- Always be aware of exit routes and escape paths.
- Practice shooting while moving backward and sideways (without crossing your feet).
- Practice “Z-pattern” or “L-pattern” movements at the range.
- Engage the attacker while moving offline to make yourself a more unpredictable and mobile target (get off the “X”).
- Combine movement with the use of cover or positional advantage.
- Remember: the goal is survival, not “winning” a gunfight. Retreat, if it is safe to do so.

## **12.0 *Use of Cover and Concealment***

**12.10 *Tactic*:** Seek and use cover (something that stops bullets) or concealment (something that hides you) during a confrontation.

### **12.11 *Techniques for Effectiveness*:**

- Identify cover points in daily environments, such as concrete walls, engine blocks, and pillars. (Interior walls, furniture, and vehicles are not cover).
- Practice shooting from behind cover at the range (kneeling, standing, prone, or from around obstacles).
- Don’t crowd your cover if standing; stay at least an arm’s length away to avoid ricochets or having the gun grabbed out of your hands.

**(Continued in Part 3)**



### About the Author

Francis (Frank) Duffy is a veteran of the 6th and 5th U.S. Army Special Forces Groups (the Green Berets), a graduate of the Army Ranger School, and a Green Beret combat diver.

He is a certified instructor for the NRA (rifle and handgun instructor), the Maryland State Police, and the United States Concealed Carry Association (USCCA). He is also a certified instructor in concealed carry in the District of Columbia.

He is also a member of the Board of Directors for Maryland Shall Issue, an all-volunteer, non-partisan organization dedicated to preserving and advancing gun owners' rights in Maryland.

He is the co-founder and Vice President of Spartan Firearms Training Group, LLC. He can be reached at 443-472-0216 or via email at [frank@spartanftg.com](mailto:frank@spartanftg.com).

Individuals interested in scheduling a private, one-on-one firearms training session should contact Frank.

### About the Spartan Firearms Training Group

The Spartan Firearms Training Group, LLC ([www.spartanftg.com](http://www.spartanftg.com)) is a Special Forces Veteran-Owned business formed in 2015 by Paul and Francis Duffy. At the end of March 2025, we entered into our 11th year of business, and we have trained thousands of Maryland residents in a variety of ways:

- Concealed carry training
- Handgun Qualification License (HQL) training
- Emergency Casualty Care training
- Long-distance precision shooting training
- Home Defense training
- Private, 1-on-1 firearms training
- Private group training

Our training calendar can be found at the [SFTG Calendar](#).

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**WHEN FACING A LIFE-THREATENING EVENT, YOU WILL FALL TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR TRAINING, NOT RISE TO THE LEVEL OF YOUR EXPECTATIONS. TRAIN THE WAY YOU FIGHT!**