

## *Fights vs. Gunfights*

### *Understanding the Use of Force Continuum*

More and more of our fellow citizens are becoming concerned about the chaos, crime, and violence that we are seeing in cities around the US. People are buying defensive firearms in record numbers. We all must realize that owning a firearm is just one very small part of personal defense. Not all criminal attacks justify the use of deadly force.



It is possible to apply too much force in responding to an attack. People may think that they are justified by proclaiming that they were “in fear for their life”. Through fear and uncertainty, individuals may use more force than is necessary to resolve a conflict. The real issue is whether or not the criminal justice system (the prosecutor and the judge) views a person as justified. These folks have a lot to say about where you will reside for the next 20 years after a defensive use of a firearm, hopefully not in a gated community at state expense, simply because you didn’t understand the law.

Laws in every state are slightly different. Essentially the statutes attempt to determine if a person’s response to a threat was a reasonable response. In other words, it doesn’t matter what I think, or the *expert* witness you hire; what matters is what the prosecuting attorney, the judge, or the jury thinks. This is the reason that everyone who is concerned about their personal safety should obtain the good advice from a local criminal defense attorney.

CONTINUUM OF FORCE PYRAMID



So, if we consider a reasonable response to a threat, I may not always be justified in using my firearm against a man who comes at me with his bare fists. And I should have a plan for dealing with that probability. Everyone ought to have something in their toolbox between a verbal command and a gun. Everyone must understand

the use-of-force continuum.

There are many things that we might do to deal with an assault that is not a deadly assault. We might sign up for some martial arts classes that teach us to fight, instead of just compete. We might take some stick fighting classes that teach us how to use a walking cane effectively. Or we might start carrying some of the oleoresin capsaicin “pepper gel” products as the police do to bridge the gap between mere presence and deadly force. In short, we need to find some training, and equipment, that helps us deal with a non-deadly assault in what is clearly a non-deadly manner.



A really good idea might be to invite a criminal defense attorney to speak on the use of force to your local group, club or organization. Most law enforcement agencies have officers who regularly make such talks to citizen groups. The key is to get good information from someone in authority who can speak on the laws, and the interpretation of the laws, in your specific geographic area.

Just saying, "I feel that I was justified" won't suffice in today's litigious society. It is important to get good information and then back that up by purchasing good defense equipment and training to protect yourself against a non-deadly attack.

There are numerous other options to consider, these are the basics. → Stay Safe!!

*Protect yourself and your family by signing up for a Situational Awareness, Concealed Carry or other Personal Protection class from Advantage. You'll learn more tips like these, how to protect yourself and essential protection techniques. You will learn how to use your tools to protect yourself and your loved ones. More importantly, you'll be taught how to hopefully never need to use these tools! Learn more about available classes online at [www.AdvantageFET.com](http://www.AdvantageFET.com).*

