

How To Identify The Best Knives For Self defense

Mini-legal disclaimer notice: Before you read and follow the advice in this article, I need to mention the law. Even though I am writing these words from South Africa, this website is read by people from a number of different countries around the world.

Every country has its own laws about carrying and even owning weapons for the purpose of self defense. It's up to each of you to find out what your country allows and then follow those rules. The advice and opinions on this site are not to be regarded as legal advice.

Stop wasting time! Pinpoint the truth about picking the best knives for self defense TODAY, so you can get back to training. It's simple: You really can't go wrong with most mainstream knives of reasonable quality available today...

What's far more important to understand, is the role of each kind of knife as it applies to self defense. I'm not going to do a lengthy review of specific makes and models of knives here. In my view, there is only ONE decision you need to make when choosing a knife. Will it be:

- A fixed blade OR
- A folding knife

Now you may be thinking...

"Does this guy think I'm an idiot? It's more complicated than that!"

Nope! It may sound a bit simplistic, but once you clearly understand the pros and cons of both of these knife types, you will realise that to choose the very best knives for self defense, it HAS to be that simple.

Folding Knives: A Very Popular Choice

Folding knives or "folders" are extremely easy and convenient to carry. Most quality folders come with a pocket clip that allows you to carry them in any of your trouser pockets. Most people choose to carry in their right hand side, front pocket (perhaps because most people are right handed). Pocket carry allows you easy access to the knife when you need it, since it's right at hand level when you're standing.

The other advantage of folders is their relatively small size. Since these knives fold in half when you close them, they obviously half in length for ease of carry. There are some knife makers that have come out with enormous models of folding knives, such as the:

- [Camillus Cuda Maxx](#) (5.5 inch / 13.75cm blade)
- [Cold Steel Voyager X2](#) (6 inch / 15cm blade)
- [Cold Steel Espada](#) (7 inches / 17cm blade)

These are monstrously big knives that push the boundaries of what is really practical in a folding knife. I really don't think these weapons are the best knives for self defense.

Some people love them, though, and don't find them difficult to carry at all. In my experience (I own a Cold Steel Voyager X2); they are a bit bulky in the pocket and some models stick up out of the pocket a bit too far (so they're quite visible to anyone who might be looking). As long as you carry your folder clipped to one of your pockets, your waistband or your belt, you should be able to get to it rather quickly in a self defense situation.

Sometimes Access Can Be Difficult

In certain situations, however, it may be VERY difficult to access and open your folding knife for use against an attacker. If your attacker...

- Ambushes (surprise attacks) you and starts punching or stabbing you straight away
- Grabs you and pulls you to the ground
- Grapples with you while standing up

... you may really struggle to get your knife out and open.

What all these situations have in common is very little space for you to grab and open your folding knife. In a violent, physical attack at very close quarters, it becomes extremely tough to take one of your hands OUT of the fight to fumble for your knife. That hand may have been holding your attacker's body away, shielding you from punches or even striking the attacker.

Unfortunately, MOST people who carry folding knives for self defense have NO IDEA just how difficult this can be. Worst still, many people choose to stay in denial about this topic despite their awareness of the facts. This is the reason why I (and many others in the self defense community) have come to believe that the very best knives for self defense are...

...fixed blades.

The Best Knives For Self Defense - Fixed Blades

Fixed blade knives have one BIG advantage: they don't have to be thumbed or flicked open once you pull them out. As soon as it's out of your pocket or its sheath, the blade is right there, ready to be used to defend your life.

Another advantage of fixed blades is that you can get a good "fighting grip" or strong, whole handed grip on the knife handle BEFORE you pull the blade out of its sheath. This is very important, since it's very easy to lose your grip on the knife in the violent movement of a physical attack. Folding knives suffer from a major disadvantage here, as you have to grasp them with only two or three fingers while withdrawing them from your pocket. Once it's out, you have to carefully swivel it in your hand to the right position to access the thumb stud or thumb hole in order to open it. All of this "fine motor movement" is very vulnerable to failure.

The same two or three finger grip is used to flick open a folder by "[inertia](#)" (*Link to a Youtube video of the "inertia opening method"*). At any point in this delicate process of drawing and opening the folder, it could VERY easily be knocked out of your hand, leaving you completely unarmed.

A More Robust Design

Fixed blades are far easier and quicker to access, and draw. Here are the steps involved in the drawing folders and fixed blades:

Folder: Grab, Draw, Thumb open, Ready to use

Fixed blade: Clear cover garment, Grab, Draw, Ready to use

Looking at it like that, it might not seem obvious that the fixed blade is better. In fact, it seems like fixed blades are at a disadvantage, since you have to pull up your shirt before you can even get to the knife on your belt. However, the real difference lies in how easy each step is to perform in the middle of a violent struggle with another person.

Folding knives require that tricky step of opening the knife while grasping it with only a few fingers. It's a very delicate grip. It's very easy to fumble and drop the knife, even if you AREN'T being punched and battered by a violent criminal at the time! In a deadly force self defense situation, ALL KINDS of little things can go wrong!

That's why I believe...

...when it comes to tools for self defense, the simpler the better.

Any way you can find to simplify and speed up the process of getting to and using your weapons is worth it. It may one day mean the difference between life and death!

Drawing From Disadvantaged Body Positions

Another factor that applies when selecting the best knives for self defense is the possibility that you may have to draw your knife while in a difficult or disadvantaged bodily position. For instance, your attacker may have surprised you, knocked you to the ground and may now be sitting on your chest, punching you in the face!

He could also be larger and stronger than you and have pushed you up against a wall, making it difficult for you to draw and thumb open your knife. It could even happen that you trip and fall during the fight, landing on your right side, partially trapping your weapon under your body. Have you ever thought about or practiced drawing from any of these positions...or do you just like to practice your draw while standing still, facing the full length mirror in your bedroom? :-)

Best Choice: A Quality Fixed Blade

If you are legally allowed to carry them, fixed blades are the BEST knives for self defense. Someone once said that: "Fixed blades are the KINGS of close combat!"

They are MUCH easier to grab and draw out of their sheaths from difficult positions. Please understand, I'm not saying you'll NEVER have a difficult time drawing a fixed blade. Anything can happen in a fight for your life. It's not something you can predict. But, if you take the time to think carefully about the kinds of situations you may face, and you use that knowledge to select a knife that is easy to access and simple to use...

...then you're really going to improve your chances of surviving and winning a potentially deadly self defense situation.

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