



Free Video Teaches Women Easy Self-Defense Moves

Teenagers Produced the Video to Empower Women of All Ages

Nearly 60,000 children are abducted by strangers each year. The majority of those are girls, who are also more frequently targeted for sexual attacks.

Now, Dallas Jessup and Catherine Wehage are taking a shot at stamping out violence against girls by teaching them the tools they need to fight back.

The 15-year-olds have produced a free video, "Just Yell Fire," starring some of television's biggest names, including Josh Holloway and Evangeline Lilly from "Lost."

"My cousin is a set designer from 'Lost,' and he hooked it up. We really wanted a celebrity endorsement because even though we'd like to deny it, girls are very highly influenced by celebrities," Wehage said. "My cousin talked to these two, and they did cameos for it right away."

The girls played a big part in the making of the video as well. Jessup has a black belt in tae kwon do and is certified in Filipino street fighting.

"Filipino street fighting is no rules street fighting. It includes slaps, pulls and ear pulls," Jessup said. "This sounds animalistic and

vulgar, but it is just self-defense, it is economical and useful. An attacker is trying to do something violent to you, so you have to respond in the same way."

No Experience Necessary

Wehage explained that viewers didn't need years of training to master the easy techniques taught in the video.

"The viewer can learn these in just a matter of minutes. And anyone can learn it, from a small 11-year-old to an adult woman. They are just 10 easy-to-learn moves. This is why we made this video. Not everyone has the three years it takes to get to black belt," she said. "And our video is free because a lot of girls don't have the resources to buy the advanced-training courses. This is a free way to learn how to protect yourself on the street."

The title of the video came from the advice of the girls' Filipino street fighting instructor. When he was a kid, his dad told him to yell fire if anything ever went wrong, because it was bound to get a response.

"Nowadays when people hear 'Help,' it's so often yelled and no one cares. Or if someone says the word rape or abducted, other people are afraid," Wehage said. "When

you yell 'Fire,' it draws the attention of onlookers."

Easy Moves to Master

Jessup's favorite moves are the hair comb and the ear pull. The hair comb is a move you can use if an attacker tries to choke you. When he's facing you, pull one hand up to your head like you're combing your hair to break his hold, no matter how strong he is.

The ear pull might sound brutal but it's also an effective way of disabling an attacker.

"It only takes five to seven pounds of pressure to pull off a human ear," Jessup said. "You wrap your hand around the ear and pull toward your chest. Whichever hand you just pull toward you and you can pull it off. The key here is efficiency — these are just one hand, so if your other hand is already in his grasp then you can get away."

Wehage's defense moves of choice are the scoop kick and the eye jab.

"The scoop kick is one move when you are far away from the attacker and use the longest weapon on your body: your leg. Move your leg up between his legs, eventually put your feet behind his testicles and

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pull them toward yourself," she said. "I'm told this is very painful, though I wouldn't know."

The eye jab is like a boxing punch, but you keep three fingers extended and slap backhand at their eye at an angle. You can get all three of your fingers into his eye and impair his vision. He'll be momentarily blinded.

The two girls could probably hold their own in a fight with anyone, but they said that the purpose of the moves was not to get in an all-out fight with an attacker.

"These moves are 10 easy, simple techniques to maximize the pain in order to get someone away. We want to put the predators out of business," she said. "We are not telling a 100-pound girl to get involved in a fight with a 200-pound man — you are not going to win — but if you can get yourself two or three seconds to run away, it can save your life." ■