

Mounted Self Defense

Compiled from the “Mounted Self Defense” class by Mark, Suncoast Equine at Emerald Oaks Ranch, Webster FL. <http://www.suncoastequine.com/>

<http://www.horsenation.com/2015/03/31/mounted-self-defense-know-how-to-protect-yourself-on-horseback/>

<http://www.showhorsepromotions.com/selfdefense.htm>

Florida “Stand Your Ground” law: Allows a person to use “reasonable” and “necessary” force to prevent death or serious bodily harm.

- Always let somebody know where you are riding (area and particular trail, if known) and when you plan to return. Do not ride alone. Carry a trail map, whistle and cell phone ON YOUR PERSON. Know alternative routes to return to your trailer.
- Teach your horse to yield both fore- and hindquarters upon command. Practice often.
- Become the best rider you can be. Maintain balance over the horse’s center, instead of riding as though you are sitting in an armchair. Unbalanced people can fall or be pulled off their horses more easily.
- The best defense is awareness of people around you, and distance from them. Trust your instincts; any person who strikes you “wrong” on the trail should be avoided, even if it means turning around and running away. Keep at least 21 feet between you and the person worrying you. DON’T worry about being rude; if somebody worries you, maintain distance and say your horse bites or kicks.
- Be sure your tack fits well and cannot be pulled off the horse quickly. Reins that clip to the bridle, halter/bridle combinations, and bridles without throat latches can be very quickly detached or pulled off the horse. Some girths can be released very quickly by an attacker.
- Law enforcement does NOT encourage riders carrying guns, tasers or pepper spray unless you are very sure that 1) your horse will tolerate the use from the saddle, and 2) you feel completely competent to use the weapon if attacked. Can you release the weapon in time? Will you be accurate in shooting without hitting you, your horse or any innocent persons? Can you judge the wind so that pepper spray doesn’t blow back on you? Or will you be able to handle the weapon AND the horse without dropping the weapon?
- If threatened, use direct rather than neck reining and increase contact. This will give you better control, and leave less “dangling” rein that the attacker could grab.
- Have a whistle where you can use it quickly, and make sure your horse is used to it blowing while you are mounted. Whistles are universal emergency signals.

- If you are attacked, YELL LOUD! Not only will the noise help you focus, but it will also let anybody in the area know that you are being attacked. This can help when you report the incident to police. Examples:
 - You're scaring me! Move away!
 - You're threatening me! Get away!
 - Help!
 - My horse will kick! My horse will bite! Stay away!
 - Get out of my way! You have no right to touch/approach me!
- Keep your horse's head pointed toward the threatening person if he is still at even a slight distance. As you yell, cue your horse to dance back and forth to act agitated. Horses are big animals and can intimidate the person with rapid movements, head shakes, speed, etc. Make the horse look "mad!"
- If somebody grabs you, do not back away from them. This would give them more leverage. Instead, move into them.
 - If he grabs your leg, arm or belt and pulls down, throw your horse's hindquarters as violently as you can into him and continue moving until you knock him down or spin him off. Then RUN.
 - If he grabs your leg and pushes up, do not stiffen your leg. That would give him leverage to throw you off the other side of the horse. Instead, bend at the knee and kick loose of the stirrup if possible. Then kick out at him as violently as possible.
 - If he grabs at the reins or bridle, move your horse forward into him and pull your horse's head around to hopefully hit the attacker in the head. Continue to move as quickly and violently as possible until you throw him off or knock him down.
- If attacked, report the incident as soon as possible to police. Say that you felt threatened, that you felt the attacker may have had a weapon, and you used the "stand your ground" law to defend yourself.