

Skill Set: Basic Retention Techniques

by Tiger McKee

Most violent confrontations take place at close distance. A lot of bad guys practice disarming techniques. When your weapon is taken away chances are high you will be shot with it. Basic retention techniques should be part of your fighting skills.

The best retention technique is distance. For someone to disarm you they have to be within arms' reach, so whenever possible don't let them get close. In theory this is simple, but theory and reality are normally separated by a wide gap that is filled with possibilities, both good and bad. The average person can cover twenty-one feet in a second and a half, and usually quicker. Even if you have distance and go to draw your weapon the ground between the two of you can disappear quickly. The environment may not allow you to create distance. And you always have to remember there is a high possibility of multiple threats; while one is attracting your attention another suddenly appears at your side.



When someone does get hands on your weapon immediate action is required. Action always beats reaction, so if you're reacting to a disarming attempt you're starting from behind. There is not a fraction of a second to delay.

Step one: If, when, or as someone attempts to put their hands on your weapon consider them a lethal threat and react accordingly, and if necessary use your weapon, engaging as necessary, and creating distance whenever possible.

Step two: If they do make contact, getting a grip on your weapon, step back with your strong side leg, right leg for right hand shooter, and extend your arms. Then suddenly and violently jerk your arms towards you. Most of the time, this will strip the weapon from their hands, even if they have a good grip on it. The key element to success is surprise, so the move must be quick.

Step three: Should the threat anticipate your actions and come forward as you step to the rear and pull then use their momentum, drop and roll down onto your back while at the same time getting your feet up, positioning them against the threat's pelvic area. Your leg muscles are the strongest part of your body, and you may be able to keep the threat off of you, and possibly kick them away. You could need to fire from here, so flatten out your legs so you don't end up shooting yourself and can track the attacker to your left or right sides.

Step four: As soon as possible work up to standing, engaging as needed, and create distance, move to cover, or escape the situation.

There are a lot of retention techniques out there, but for me simple is best. Simple techniques are easy to employ. Additional benefits of simple retention techniques are that they are easy to learn, retain, and to teach others if you're an instructor. And if the same technique will work with pistol and carbine, well that's even better.

Practice your technique, prepare for the worst-case scenario, and when necessary react immediately. And remember, it ain't gotta be pretty, it just has to work.

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