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What to look for in a class on self-defense

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In light of recent attacks and assaults, it wouldn't hurt for women to look into a self-defense class. But do your research first. Some courses can be more costly than effective.

"This common sense (in assault prevention) is available if you find a course that can tell you what is going on, what has happened to women in the past, what the trends are and what do to about it," said Steve McLaughlin, professor of DanZan Ryu Jujitsu who has been teaching self-defense and assault prevention for women since 1992. "Most women want to do something, they just don't know how."

Here are some of his suggestions:

- Find out the instructor's training background.
- Check the track record of both the instructor and the course.
- The class should not be part of an exercise program.
- Make sure the class is not just a come-on to join a school.
- You should feel comfortable with the class and the instructor.
- Get recommendations from other women who have taken the course and/or instructor.

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