

THE MARTIALIST YEAR ONE FINAL ISSUE

Ironically, Rob has gone to great lengths to agree with me, though he did not realize it. His story is indeed representative of the fact that reality is objective, not subjective. One's "subjective view of reality" has no bearing on another, larger human being's ability to overpower you. No difference in your perception of the event will change the outcome. Yes, size does matter, at least in certain scenarios – and no amount of *wishing* will change this.

To believe that reality is subjective is to believe that there is no objective, external standard against which we can judge what is and is not true, what is and is not effective. This is false by Rob's own anecdotal evidence, for no matter how differently he and I perceive the same event, *the outcome remains the same*.

Reality decides, as it always does. ♠

Self Defense While Sick

By Phil Elmore

I was sicker than I've ever been in my adult life. My head pounded to a feverish drumbeat every time stood or moved around, my throat was raw, my sinuses were clogged... My chest hurt so badly that I could not draw a deep breath. Every time I coughed, the pain was so intense that I thought my head would split open. After each bout of coughing, I felt light-headed and dizzy. At night I could sleep only when propped upright, waking every hour or so to more coughing spasms.

Not a pretty picture, is it?



Photo by Phil Elmore

Imagine my dismay when, in the midst of one of the worst illnesses I have ever experienced, I found myself fumbling with my keys in the dimly lighted parking lot of my mailbox service. It is in an area adjacent to a plaza that has been plagued by crime of late, including a carjacking at gunpoint within days of the onset of my sickness.

"What the hell would I do if I had to defend myself like this?" I wondered.

Illness is something we all face periodically, especially during "cold and flu season." This year the flu was particularly bad, with media reports of the epidemic spurring runs on and shortages of influenza vaccinations. No matter how healthy or strong you may be, you could be felled by a virus before you know what hit you.

What is a martialist to do in this situation? The need for self-defense cannot simply be pushed aside because we're not in the mood and not feeling up to using force. If anything, your risk of being accosted or assaulted increases if you are visibly ill and thus obviously operating at reduced capacity. How does one cope in this scenario?

First, do not try to "gut it out." You're sick. Recognize this fact and understand that

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you're not capable of the physical and mental actions you normally take for granted. See your doctor if you deem it prudent. Get extra rest if you can. Drink plenty of fluids.

Next, plan to your level of incapacitation. If you're taking cold medicine that could conceivably alter your awareness or reflexes, consider leaving your handgun locked in the safe. Even though your ability to use physical force is lower and your need for the firearm is greater than ever, you cannot afford to engage in a self-defense shooting if you believe (or a lawyer could credibly assert) that your judgment is impaired by the drugs you're taking.

Arm yourself accordingly to the level of capacity you possess. This might mean your only "equalizer" is a pocket stick, but let's be honest – we're praying you can avoid trouble entirely.



Photo by Phil Elmore

Third, reduce your level of activity as much as possible. If you're like me, you tend to do too much when you're sick, on the theory that you have work to do and it won't get done if you don't do it. Well, that may be true – but being sick means you need to *rest*. The benefit of staying home and resting as much as possible is that you stay out of situations that present personal security concerns. Yes, you

could still experience a home invasion – but thankfully the odds of that are much lower than of being accosted while out and about.

Fourth, if you must go out while ill, do so keenly aware of your diminished abilities. Move as quickly as you can and try not to cough or moan where people can see you. If it's winter, bundle up and conceal your face. Arm yourself as appropriate, but practice avoidance above all. Go out of your way to steer clear of potential threats. Cross the street to avoid crowds, drive "the long way" to skirt bad neighborhoods, etcetera. Normally I would not advise living so meekly as to treat all other human beings as active threats, but you must be overcautious while incapacitated by sickness.

Fifth, when backed into a corner, fight as viciously as you can. You're in pain, you can't breathe, and you aren't as physically adept as you might be normally. You *must* be vicious when forced to defend yourself physically. Obviously you are not justified in using force unless you reasonably fear for your life and wellbeing – but if you do, "hit with hate." Push through the pain by being as mean as you can possibly be.

I am grateful that the entire time I was sick I had little with which to deal other than my illness. I was not called on to answer any emergencies while in the fevered throes of sickness at its worst. Most of you will fare as well when you become sick, but there are no guarantees. Somewhere, there is a societal predator who knows a coughing, shuffling citizen whose head is bent in ill health makes a much easier target than someone who is feeling well.

Stay safe – and get well soon. ♠