



Immediate ACTION
(to a free swinging blade)

Managing the free swinging blade

Don't hollow out.

That's got
to stop



BLM Riots - Downtown San Diego

The free-swinging blade is a complex problem. The attacker's hand moves incredibly fast, and instead of just one stab, you're likely to face a rapid series of thrusts, like a sewing machine pounding away.



Understanding the problem

The critical moment the knife is introduced might only last 2-3 seconds, but it can determine the outcome of the fight. It is made more dangerous if the blade is entirely uncontrolled by you. Understand you might miss the first stab, and it is doubtful they are going to hit you once, more likely there be multiple stabs in quick succession.



You need an immediate response to gain control of the blade and that control must be strong enough to stop a barrage or multitude of thrusts.



What feels natural?

When a sharp blade comes at you, it's natural to flinch, pull back, and try to hollow out (I'll address hollowing in sec).



So, grabbing the attacker's hand sounds like a good idea. That stops them, right?

**Wrong, that's
not enough**



Grab the hand! But that's not all

You need to gain control of the free swinging blade and close the distance between you and them. DON'T HOLLOW OUT. Some advocate hollowing as the best way to defend yourself. But here's the problem: you might block one stab, but not the flurry that follows. When hollow, your arm can't reach as far as **THEIR** arm can **retract**. They'll retract beyond your ability to extend, disconnect from your grip and then continue to stab.



*"Hollowing out" (pulling your center back away from them) doesn't get you far enough away to be safe.



Alright so what's the solution!

The better option—**though no option is perfect**—is to get close. Press right up against them, control their weapon bearing limb using a wrist tie or a biceps tie, and push the arm back as far as it'll go. You've got to

stick to them like glue, staying in posture and keeping good head positioning. This takes away their ability to retract and attack.



Does this resolve the attack?

No.

Does it make things perfectly stable or safe?

Not really.

Your immediate action limits what they will likely do next. When they feel you latch on and force the knife hand away from you, they will have one of two responses. Either, they try to yank their arm back or they shove it forward. Sure, they might try something else, but these are the most common reactions. Knowing they have two common reactions narrows your options making it easier for you to progress through a defensive strategy.



Attach to the free swinging blade, biceps-tie or wrist-tie



Close the distance, move to the same side as the blade



Extend your arm so they can't retract their arm

