

“I don’t need one of those things...”

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God bless you, I hope you’re right. I hope you never get into a situation where your life or the life of someone you love is threatened and you bear the shame of being unable or unwilling to do anything to stop the predator. I hope you never have to stand helplessly and watch what happens during the 10-15 minutes it takes your local police to respond to your 911 call for help. I hope I never have to confront another human being who means to harm me either.

“But I carry a handgun for personal defense. Why would I need something like a kubaton?”

Two reasons come to mind. First and foremost, not every self defense situation merits the introduction of a deadly weapon. As a law enforcement officer, I was taught the Force Continuum—that the amount of force that was reasonable in any situation was the minimum amount of force necessary to make an arrest. For the civilian, the Force Continuum is construed to mean that reasonable force is the minimum amount of force necessary to stop an aggressor’s attempts to harm you or to harm someone for whom you are responsible. Any introduction of a deadly weapon such as a handgun or a knife is an escalation of force, and escalating an existing situation may reverse your role from that of the innocent victim to that of the aggressor in the eyes of the law.

There are also a number of situations where some sort of control is required, but you do not want to harm the unruly individual. Who doesn’t remember the time cousin Vinnie got drunk at Thanksgiving and tried to pick a fight with his brother-in-law Butch? It was obvious that Vinnie needed an airing out in the back yard...obvious to everyone except Vinnie. A prod or pressure point manipulation with a kubaton makes the trip to the back yard much less of a drama, and likely saves some furniture along the way. Another situation is the young lady whose date becomes a bit too aggressive. A jab in the ribs with a kubaton reinforces the truth that NO means NO. The apparently unarmed panhandler that won’t leave you alone is more likely to be convinced if it looks like he may receive a cracked rib instead of a handout.

The second reason you need an alternative to your handgun is that every day there are more and more non-permissive environments where obvious weapons like guns and knives are frowned upon or outright forbidden either by policy or law. Airports*, government offices, schools, and (in some states) bars are all non-permissive environments by law. Your place of employment is also likely to be a gun-free zone by company policy. Businesses require liability insurance to operate. Most insurance companies believe it is cheaper (for them) if your boss hires a new computer programmer to replace you after you get mugged in the parking garage than it is to pay to defend a liability lawsuit filed by the mugger you shot. The insurance company tells your boss that they will only insure his business if he makes it a gun-free zone, so a “No Weapons” policy is enacted and the company is free of liability.

In these situations you will need a viable alternative that appears innocuous enough, but that has hidden potential. Few weapons as effective as the kubaton appear as harmless as a Stylus or a Kubaton keychain. Few can be concealed as readily as a Stinger or an Alpha Hornet. While each can be used intuitively as striking implements, a short training session with a qualified instructor opens up additional tactical uses such as pressure point and joint lock techniques. More training provides even more techniques. These tools are not magic wands that ward off evil doers and they do not make one invulnerable—they are certainly not a replacement for a good defensive handgun and OC spray has its own place as well—but they are a vital part of everyone’s defensive tool box, limited only by the level of ones training.

**By "airports" I am, of course referring to airports in general, NOT to the loading or boarding areas. No one should try to sneak any type of weapon aboard any aircraft, or into any high security controlled areas. If a TSA or other security official takes issue with something you have on your person, it is best to apologize and ask if you can mail it home to yourself.*