

PERSONAL BEST

FIGHT, NOT FLIGHT

*Throw a few punches
of your own*

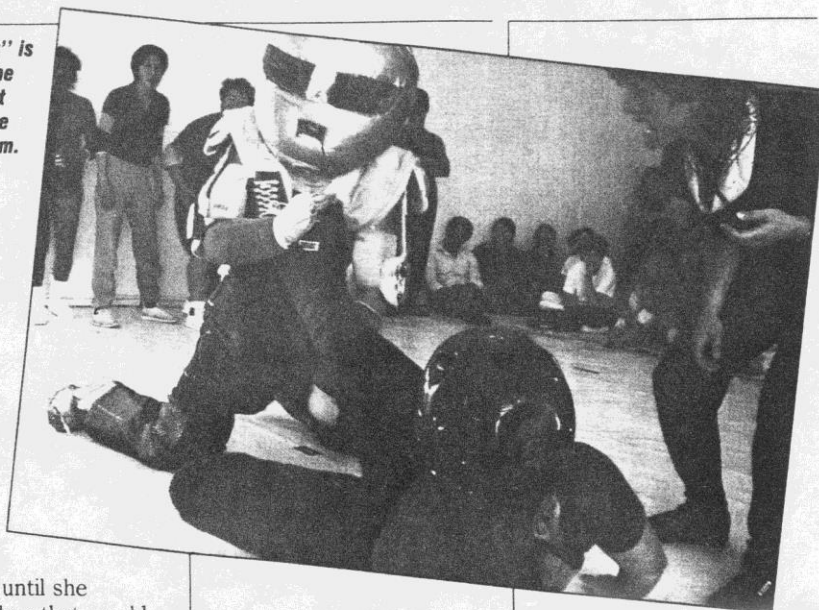
It's every woman's fear: being attacked in a city subway. But one night in Boston, a "victim" turned the tables. Instead of becoming just another crime statistic, she fought back. Her assailant was the one who wound up in the hospital with a severely bruised groin and broken bones in his instep, ribs, and nose.

Superwoman or vigilante? Neither. The "victim" doesn't remember exactly what she did to her attacker, since she responded instinctively after taking a unique self-defense course called Model Mugging.

Originator Matt Thomas developed the course after one of his fellow black-belt karate classmates was raped. When this martial arts enthusiast was confronted with a real enemy rather than a sparring partner, she became paralyzed with fear and unable to defend herself.

Model Mugging teaches women to fight by reflex. After practicing simple self-defense techniques, each class participant is attacked by a heavily padded "model mugger," who may take her to the ground and who uses degrading, terrifying language. He won't hurt the student, but he also won't

*This "mugger" is
as scary as the
real thing, but
he offers more
help than harm.*



release her until she delivers a blow that would render him unconscious if he were not wearing protective gear. After the "mugging," the attacker removes his helmet and offers suggestions for more effective defense strategies.

Sheryl Hall Doran, who teaches the course in the San Francisco area, says she first attended a class in order to debunk it. She believed most self-defense courses taught just enough to instill false confidence. She quickly changed her mind about this one.

More than 6,000 women have taken the course since 1972, and 80 of them have prevented assault with assertive language and stance. Of the 28 graduates who were attacked, two chose not to fight because their assailant carried a weapon, six disabled their attacker long enough to escape, and 20 knocked

out their assailant in less than five seconds.

Cost of the 21-hour course is \$290. For information on classes in your area, contact Model Mugging, 801 Lighthouse Avenue, Monterey, CA 93940; (408) 646-5425.

—Cynthia Cummins