

SELF-DEFENCE & THE LAW

If you are attacked or fear an attack, you can use reasonable force to protect yourself, others, or property.

What Is Reasonable Force?

- Enough force to stop the threat — no more.
- Revenge, punishment, or excessive force is illegal.
- The law protects honest, instinctive reactions.

BUT... Be Aware

- Carrying a weapon 'just in case' is illegal.
- The law doesn't protect you if you go too far.
- Self-defence is about protecting — not harming.

The Law on Self-Defence (CPS Guidance).

You may use reasonable force if you believe you're under threat — even if that belief is mistaken, as long as it's honestly held.

→ The law judges your actions based on what you believed at the time — not in hindsight.

The Key Test

→ "What would the reasonable person do in that moment?"

CPS Legal Guidance www.cps.gov.uk