



**Colorado**  
**KRAV MAGA**  
**TACTICAL TRAINING DIVISION**

## **Non-Verbal Precursors to Violence: Recognizing the possible presence of ‘Flight or Flight’ chemical responses in a subject.**

This is meant to be a refresher guide for those who attended the multimedia presentation by Tactical Krav Maga’s James Hiromasa. This outline cannot be used without the context provided in the course.

### **DO NOT SHARE OR PUBLISH THIS DOCUMENT**

It’s important to remember 3 governing principles when observing behaviors and looking for indications of Fight or Flight (FoF):

1. Without first observing a “baseline” of non-stressed or lower-stress behavior in the subject, these indicators cannot be trusted as this could be a more normal state of being for the subject.
2. The behaviors or “symptoms” by and of themselves individually are not an indication of FoF. The observer should look for clusters of behaviors and more so an increasing frequency of clusters.
3. The observation of these indicators in clusters outside of an established baseline may indicate only nervousness or stress, and may not be leading to a FoF action. Indeed, the stress may be due to the subjects resignation to non-action as much as to action.

Taking pre-emptive physical action using force based on these behaviors alone may be ill advised, even when observing the 3 governing principles. However, in the presence of such behavior that falls within these principles, one should definitely be on heightened alert and at the very least “pre-load” your defensive action mentally, take immediate steps to de-escalate, or even remove yourself from the situation altogether.

## **Autonomic Bodily Function Response to FoF aka: Biological Survival Mechanisms**

- Accelerated heart rate and blood pressure
- Blood flow diverted away from the skin's surface
- Increased blood flow to muscles
- Release of energy stores
- Activated sweat glands
- Piloerection (goosebumps)
- Dilated pupils & Tearing
- Inhibited bladder and excretory functions
- Reduced digestive functions
- Increased lung capacity and respiration

### **Observable Manifestations of the Autonomic Response**

- Increased blood flow to muscles and organs, decreased blood at the surface can manifest as:
  - Pale skin
  - Subconscious "Limbering Up" to relieve muscle tension and prepare for action
  - Rubbing the neck, shoulders, face, head, hands...relieves tension and can be self calming
  - Hands tightly balled or unnaturally open
- Activated Sweat Glands and Piloerection can manifest as:
  - Visible perspiration
  - Adjusting hats or clothing for comfort
  - Adjusting or removing jewelry
  - Goosebumps
  - Fixing Hair or scratching head
  - Touching or rubbing the nose or ears (irritation from nasal or ear canal hairs in piloerection)

- **Reduced Digestive Functions can manifest as:**
  - Cotton mouth, causing lip licking, teeth licking and sucking
  - Touching the corners of the mouth often
  - Excessive throat clearing
  - “Trauma Water”, an attempt to provide relief from the above symptoms
- **Pupil Dilation and Tearing can manifest as:**
  - Rapid Blinking
  - Forceful Blinking using much of the face
  - Visible Tears or rubbing the eyes
  - Tears running internally causing an audible sniff

### **More Subconscious Psychological/Physiological Indicators**

- **Eye movement/Gaze**
- **Facial Expressions**
- **Body Movements**
- **Lowered Center of Gravity**
- **Vocal Cues**
- **Proxemics**

### **Observable Manifestations of the Autonomic Response**

- **Eye Movement and Facial Expressions might include:**
  - Exit and Target glances
  - Gaze Aversion, particularly away from authority
  - Out of context expressions
  - Numb Face
- **Body Movements may include:**
  - Over Exaggerated Movements and Weight Shifting (Fidgeting)
  - Large movements are also a subconscious form of stretching and range finding

- Weight shifting can be impatience, stretching, or the subconscious practice of striking or fleeing
- Touching or Prepping clothing (yep, that's where the weapon is)
- Repetitive movement (looping)
- **Stance and Positioning (Proxemics):**
  - Lowering the center of gravity is a 'stabilizing' stress reaction to an attack
  - Bladed stance, strong side is usually back, could be prepping to run or loading the strong side for a strike
  - Standing too close (fight) or too far (flight)
  - Unnatural reaction to a third-party approach
- **Vocal or Verbal Cues:**
  - Raspy voice due to dry throat and vocal cord muscle tension
  - Elevated amplitude and modulation
  - Repeating questions or saying "what" could be formulating lies or loss of cognitive ability
  - Too much information. The silence must be filled.
  - Repetitive speech (looping)
  - Committal Sigh

## **Identifying Possible Concealed Weapons** **The "TAPP" Principle**

- **Touching**
- **Adjusting**
- **Positioning**
- **Prepping**