

Safety Tips for Women

Alone Outside:

- * At night, try to stay on well-lighted streets; avoid doorways, shrubbery, dark shadows near buildings, and other potential hiding places. Do not take shortcuts.
- * Stay away from deserted places, parking lots or ramps during the daytime and nighttime.
- * Stay away from ATM's if they are not in a safe location.
- * Be cautious around elevators; if you are at all suspicious of another passenger, wait for the next one. Stand near the control panel while you ride. If you are threatened or attacked, hit the alarm and as many floor buttons as you can.
- * While walking or jogging, be aware of your surroundings. Look alert and confident. Make quick eye contact with people around you. Dress so you can walk or run easily to avoid attack.
- * If you are being followed by a car, change direction. If followed by a person, turn and look at him. This gives you time to think and lets the person know that you are alert. In either case, walk to the nearest public place.
- * Have a plan and know what you are going to do if attacked.
- * If possible, walk with a friend, use an escort service provided by many businesses. If you take the bus and there are few people on board, sit near the driver. Don't fall asleep.
- * In a cab or a friend's vehicle, ask the driver to wait until you signal you are safely inside your house.
- * When you take out your wallet, don't reveal your money or credit cards.
- * A woman should carry her handbag next to her body, with the flap or clasp toward her. A man should carry his wallet in an inside or front pocket.
- * Don't leave or set your purse on the back of the door or on the floor in restrooms, theaters, restaurants, or other public areas. Don't leave your purse open or unattended in a shopping cart. Carry your keys in your coat pocket.
- * Don't ever be a hitchhiker. Don't ever pick up a hitchhiker.
- * If a car approaches you and you feel threatened, scream and run in the opposite direction.

Alone In Your Car:

- * Lock your car when you are away from it. Never leave the keys in the ignition even if you'll only be gone for a minute.
- * While walking to your car, have your key ready in your hand as you approach. Before getting into your car, glance into the back seat and floor for someone hiding there. Get into your vehicle and lock the doors before settling yourself and your packages.
- * Look for a well-lighted parking place and lock your car - even if you're just running into the store for a minute. Never leave your purse in your car and always place your briefcase out of sight or in the trunk.
- * If you must leave your key with a parking attendant or service garage, leave only your car key, never the keys to your house. These can be duplicated while you're gone.

- * Keep your doors locked and windows rolled up most of the way, especially while in heavy traffic. Keep your purse out of sight.
- * If someone tries to break into your car, honk your horn repeatedly and try to drive away if you can.
- * If you are being followed, don't drive directly home. Drive to the nearest 24-hour police or fire station, hospital emergency entrance, all-night restaurant, gas station or other place where there are people. Do not get out of the car until you are safe.
- * You should not travel, especially at night, when you know you have car trouble or are low on gas. Always keep gas tank above ¼ tank full.
- * If your vehicle does fail, turn on your emergency flashers, raise the hood and hang a handkerchief from your window to attract attention or use a "call police" sign in the windshield. If someone stops, stay in your vehicle, roll down the window just enough to talk to them and ask them to call for assistance.
- * Don't leave anything listing your name and home address in view, inside of your car.

Alone at Home:

- * Anyone living alone should use only their first initial and last name in the phone book and on the mailbox. Don't be tempted to list information about your children or your employment in any directory.
- * When changing addresses, change your locks, too. Install a deadbolt lock and a high security strike plate as well as a peephole.
- * Don't leave extra keys hidden outside. They're too easily found.
- * If you suspect your home has been broken into, immediately call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's home. Don't go inside and risk confronting the burglar or destroying evidence.
- * Never allow a stranger access to your home to use the phone - even if they claim it's an emergency. Speak to them through your locked door and offer to make the call for them.
- * Always check the I. D. of any trades people, sales representatives, police officers or other professionals who wish to come inside your home.
- * Report unusual, suspicious or obscene phone calls to the police and the phone company.
- * Instruct children and babysitters not to give out any information about who is home, who is out or for how long.
- * Always lock your doors, draw your shades at night and leave a few interior and exterior lights on. Timers are also a good idea. Doors should be kept locked even when you leave the house for a short time such as going outside to do yard work, etc.
- * While you sleep, basement windows or those on the first floor, with balconies or ground floor access, should be secured shut.
- * Invite a friend or neighbor to visit or visit on the telephone when a repair person is in your home.
- * Be sure that door hinges are not removable from the outside.
- * When you are away from home, stop newspaper and mail delivery.

When in Trouble:

* Being selective about new acquaintances can help to prevent you from being the victim of a forcible sexual encounter sometimes referred to as a "date rape".

* If a robber demands your valuables, give them up! Your money or jewelry is not worth risking injury or your life.

* If you are confronted by an attacker, especially one with a weapon, stay calm. Evaluate the situation and look for a chance to escape. Think about your options.

* If you are going to fight back, don't hesitate to mark your assailant with bites, scratches or kicks. The marks can be helpful in locating and convicting the offender. Their skin or hair can yield DNA evidence.

* While you are waiting for an avenue of escape, look at your attacker - one feature at a time, and make a mental note of hair, eyes, eyebrows, nose, moustache, mouth, voice, breath, age, scars, tattoos, etc.

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* Be vocal, if you can - shouting or screaming may catch him off guard and is likely to scare him off if there's a chance someone is nearby to hear you.

* Don't depend on talking your way out, but appearing to cooperate with your attacker may give you the time you need to devise a means of escape.

* As soon as you can, call the police and write down everything you can remember about your assailant.

* If you are a victim of a physical or sexual assault, don't change your clothing, bathe or apply any medication. Although this would be your natural reaction, don't do it. You could be destroying physical evidence that will be important in the apprehension and prosecution of your attacker.

Face to Face Confrontations:

When faced with danger, trust yourself and your instincts. Your single most effective weapon is your own judgment. Rely on it to choose what you think is the best response at the time:

* Don't panic. The most important element to remember is that you are attempting to divert the person long enough to get away. Always look for a way to escape. Try to calm the attacker. Try to persuade him/discourage him not to carry out the attack.

* If you feel threatened, run or scream to attract attention. A yell can surprise or frighten an attacker away if he fears people will come to help.

* Physically resist . Fight off the attacker yourself. Nobody can tell you whether or not active resistance will be the "right" thing to do. A decision to resist actively, however, is irreversible. You must not be afraid to hurt an attacker. All kicks and blows must be forceful and should be aimed at vulnerable areas such as the groin, eyes, throat, instep of the foot. Educate yourself. Call Caparco Martial Arts to inquire about women's self-defense classes.

* Some people carry weapons such as guns, knives, or spray chemicals to ward off attackers. Unless you are trained and not afraid to use these weapons, they can be very dangerous. The attacker might be able to turn them against you. Some weapons cannot be legally carried.

Remember: If attacked, escape. If trapped, stay alive. If assaulted, memorize details.