

Ten Common Sense Safety Tips

*Your best defense against an attack
is not to be there when it happens.*

Learn these **three Quick Tips** by heart:

- **Keep away from deserted places.**
- **Stay alert to what is going on around you.**
- **When something feels the slightest bit wrong, get out of there.**

Engaging in hand-to-hand combat with an attacker should be an option of last resort, unless you are very well trained in self-defense. Don't try to be a superhero.

1. **Avoid potentially dangerous places.** The more isolated and devoid of other people a location is, the more potentially dangerous it is. Hence, stairwells are generally more perilous than elevators, underground parking garages more risky than open air parking lots. As a rule of thumb, *anywhere other people aren't is a good place for you not to be either*, even if you are familiar with the location.
2. **Stay aware of your surroundings.** Notice the details of your physical surroundings (such as where exits are located) and who else is there with you. Don't get distracted by talking on your cell phone or searching for things in your purse or pockets (have your keys in your hand before you start walking to your car or your house). Before you get into an elevator, look at the other people in the car.

Criminals use the element of *surprise* as their advantage. By staying alert to your surroundings, you take that advantage away from them.

3. **Present strong body language and walk confidently.** This can help discourage a would-be attacker. Those looking to prey upon others – whether their aim is robbery, rape, or mayhem – generally choose as victims those who appear preoccupied or tentative rather than those who exude a sense of purpose.
4. **Listen to your gut.** If a person or situation feels creepy or just “not right,” get out of there as quickly as you can. It's better to be embarrassed than to be a headline in tomorrow's crime news.

5. **Never leave the primary crime scene** and go with an attacker in his car, into an alley or into a building. You are far more likely to be killed or seriously injured if you go with the predator than if you run away (even if he promises not to hurt you). Run away, throw a rock through a store or car window, yell *Fire!* – do whatever you can to attract attention.
6. **Fight to escape.** Regardless of your age or physical condition, you can and should fight back when needed. Remember that your goal is to escape. Attackers will use their size, strength and terror tactics to subdue their victim. Don't struggle against his strength – you'll just exhaust yourself. Wait for the attacker to be distracted, or get him distracted with simple, primal moves: strike the *eyes, throat or groin* – or use the heel of both of your palms to clap him hard on both ears, which will disorient him. *Strike quickly and mean business.* As soon as possible, *RUN.*
7. **Tame your inner good Samaritan.** Do not get into a vehicle with a stranger or allow him into yours, even if he tells a sob story of needing help with a sick kid, pregnant wife or broken-down car. Also, be wary of helping strangers when you are unaccompanied. Save your helpful impulses for when you have other people with you, but when on your own keep walking even as you call out, "Nope, sorry, can't" back over your shoulder.
8. **Do not let a stranger into your home,** no matter what heartbreaking story he tells. Offer *through the closed door* to make a phone call for him. If he says he's a repair man or police man, leave him standing outside until you've ascertained that he has a legitimate reason for being there.
9. **Safety in cyberspace.** When you use social media, always keep personal information such as home address and phone number confidential. Don't announce your plans to be out of the house or out of town to the world. You can post vacation pictures after you return.
10. **Self-Defense Training.** Consider enrolling in a reputable self-defense program. If you are not ready to make a long-term commitment to martial arts training, look for a class where you get to practice in a way that's comfortable for you. Stay away from studios teaching flashy moves that are too complex for you to remember in a stressful situation. A few simple moves you can do without thinking are much more helpful. Practice what you have learned.

Learn some simple self-defense moves and review them regularly.

Use common sense and follow your instincts.