

WALKING ALONE SAFETY TIPS



There is safety in numbers.

- Role-play what you would do if you are confronted by someone intending to harm you.
- Have a 'worst-case scenario' plan. The best defense against an attack is awareness and action. If you are faced with an uncomfortable or dangerous situation and you can escape, do so immediately. Only you can determine what you can or will do when faced with an attacker.
- Stick to well-populated, busy areas. Avoid hidden trails, short cuts through secluded areas or lanes that are not well travelled. Stay where there is traffic and other people on foot.
- Walk in the light and stay in well-lit areas. Do not walk in dark parking lots, dark alleys, dark lanes, dark trails, or any other dark areas. A well-lit path in a well-populated area is your safest route to any destination, even if it takes longer
- Do not shut yourself off from the world. Headphones isolate you from your surroundings and make it very easy for an attacker to surprise you.
- Take a cell phone. Carry a cell phone to have handy for 911 and other minor emergencies. Do not make and take calls while walking – you will appear distracted. Calling someone before you leave and talking with them to give them the play-by-play until you are safe is OK. This ensures someone knows where you are if something happens.
- Let others know. Always leave notice of where you are going and when you are expected to return. If you live alone, leave a note.
- Keep your head up and look confident. Posture can make all the difference in how a potential attacker perceives you. If you are looking down, seem distracted or appear afraid you are more likely target.
- Have keys ready in your hands and inside your pocket. When you reach your door, have your keys ready in the proper position. This will avoid a scrambling situation. When this happens, you are distracted.
- Avoid struggling with many bags. Struggling with five different bags at night may seem necessary, but you should avoid it whenever possible. Multiple bags can prevent a quick reaction should a dangerous situation arise.
- If you think you are being followed, head into an open store, restaurant or lighted home. Follow your gut feelings. If someone gives you a bad feeling, tell him/her clearly to leave you alone - walk away.
- If someone asks you for the time, keep your eyes up as you check your watch.
- Give directions from a distance. Do not approach a car that stops to ask you directions.
- Yell if you are under attack. Keep yelling. Yell as loud as you can. Scream. Be noisy. This may spook off the attacker.

Your best weapon is your brain. Use common sense, imagination, and good judgment.