

SAFETY

The pattern of an attack followed by most human attackers is:

1. Select an easy victim. Someone who seems oblivious, fearful or aggressive
2. Create a position of advantage to gain privacy and control
3. Dominate the victim through intimidation, physical assault, or robbery
4. Escape so they can get away without getting caught.

The sooner we interrupt this pattern, the safer we will be.

Understand Reality --- and FACE IT

Many folks understand reality, but don't really face it full on. Completely see and accept reality and you'll be miles closer to being safe and being in charge of your life.

Be Aware Of Your Surroundings:

If you must walk in isolated or lightly populated areas, walk briskly and confidently. Be aware of the people and areas around you. If someone passes or approaches you, look them over carefully and do not look away. Pay particular attention to their hands and anything they are carrying. Do not give the appearance of being vulnerable or you risk making your self a victim.

An aware confident attitude will prevent most attackers from selecting you as their victim. Make sure your body language and attitude lets people know that you know they are there without acting afraid or challenging them. Move as if you are sure about where you are going. Sit or stand as upright as you can. Instead of staring at someone aggressively or looking away passively, glance briefly towards the person and then continue on your way. Even if you can't see, you can still turn your face towards people so they understand that you are aware of their presence.

Take charge of the space around you so that a potential attacker does not have the opportunity to get close to you. If you are in an isolated place, move away from people who seem like they might be a threat to you. The "I'm OK, You're Ok" approach works most of the time. Just leave cheerfully and get to a safe place. If someone is being rude, or calling you to come over, you could act as if there is no problem - smile, wave and say something neutral like, "Hi" or "No thanks" or "Sorry, No". Make sure your stance and attitude lets people know you know they are there. It works best to glance with a "soft eye" towards the person rather than making prolonged eye contact. Our message is "I see you." not "I'm challenging or inviting or afraid of you."

If someone starts confronting you and you can't just leave, take charge by setting a boundary. Put your hands up in front of you like you are making a wall and get yourself into balance. Tell the person politely and assertively what you want, "Stop right there.... Turn around and leave.... I'm leaving now." Be sure you use a calm firm loud voice and strong neutral body language - without fists waving at someone's face and without shrinking away.

Trust Your Intuition

If your intuition is warning you, there IS something wrong. Trust it, and act to increase your safety.

Stay Aware

We might almost say "Stay awake." We're all often daydreaming, I think. Stay aware, wherever you are, whatever you are doing.

Know where safety is and how to get help

Always have a plan for where you would go if you have a problem. Be willing to make a scene and order bystanders to call the police or come to your aid. Be willing to embarrass, inconvenience, or offend other people in order to protect your well-being. Know how to set clear boundaries with people you know. Most of the people who bother us are people we know.

Know how to set clear boundaries with people you know. Most of the people who bother us are people we know. Know how to tell people you care about what is and is not okay with you even if it hurts their feeling

or makes them upset. Your safety and self-esteem are worth causing anyone inconvenience, embarrassment, or offence. Problems should not be secrets, so talk issues over with people you trust.

Identify and take the power out of your triggers. Triggers are thoughts or words or feelings or other behavior that cause us to explode with feelings. When we are exploding with feelings, we cannot think clearly. Common triggers are bad words and foul language, insults, scary words and threats, or confusing words and feeling sorry for someone. Make sure what you do is a decision based on what is really happening, rather than an automatic reaction or a habit.

Leave if you can. Yell for help. Fight if you have to. If you cannot get away right away, keep looking for a new chance to get away. Instead of freezing, pretend to give up so that the attacker will relax and then leave or start resisting the instant you have an opening to do so.

How to Look and Sound Like You Mean It:

People are more likely to believe you and do what you want them to if you sound and look like you believe in what you are saying. If you want someone who is scaring or bothering you to stop some behavior, **be definite.**

Pay attention to your tone of voice and choice of words. Are you raising the tone at the end of each sentence to make it a question? **Making statements into questions leaves you sounding uncertain and anxious. Are your words vague or positive and clear?** If you want to communicate something really important to you, it can be worth taking the time to write the words down and practice out loud in front of a mirror. Get feedback from other people to make sure that you sound both confident and respectful.

Pay attention to your body language and facial expressions. Are your shoulders slumped? Is your head down? Do you have an apologetic smile on your face? This makes you look like a victim. Are you glaring at someone and making rude gestures? This makes you look like an aggressor. Most communications with others will work best if your body is upright and your face is calm. Looking strong and confident makes you MUCH less likely to be targeted. Do not act or look like an easy target - look confident!

In a confrontation, ordering someone to "PLEASE STOP!" is apt to work much better than, "Would you please stop, okay?" At the same time, you don't want to escalate a potential confrontation by insulting someone. **Dealing with a conflict works best if your voice, tone, words, body, and expression are firm, polite, strong and clear.** Set Boundaries: We have heard so many times that a just a few words was all that was necessary to end a situation, be it harassment or potential attack. Most "fights" are won before they start, and aggressors will back down if you maintain eye contact and are not intimidated by them.

Take charge by controlling distance so that a potential attacker does not have the opportunity to create a position of advantage by getting close to you. If you are in an isolated place, move away from people who seem like they might be a threat to you. The "I'm OK, You're Ok" approach works most of the time. Just leave cheerfully and get to a safe place. If someone is being rude, or calling you to come over, you could act as if there is no problem - smile, wave and say something neutral like, "Hi" or "No thanks" or "Sorry, No". If you can't just leave, take charge by setting a boundary. Get into ready position and tell the person politely and assertively what you want, "Stop right there.... Turn around and leave." (or "I'm leaving now." depending on what is more physically appropriate and safest.) Be sure you use a calm firm voice and strong centered body language.

Fight Back

Applying all your wisdom and the ideas above makes the possibility of attack much less likely. But it still might happen. And if it does, as we have said many times, **there is only one way to fight - 100%.** And remember, at that point you are not "defending" as such (in the sense of reacting to each of his attacking moves), you are now "counter-attacking" completely taking control with a force of energy.

The basic strategy is to **use your body as a weapon and the vulnerable parts of an attacker's body as targets.** Common front attack techniques are strikes to the eyes, heel palm hits to the face, knee strikes and kicks to the groin. Most rear attacks can be stopped by your NO! stance, lower your center of gravity, foot stomps, slaps to the groin, grabbing and squeezing the testicles, and elbow strikes to the solar plexus or head.

Thigh smashes or kicks to the groin or head are far more powerful than your arms. Most attacks are stopped by just one strong move, but be prepared to keep fighting until you feel it is safe to leave and get help.

Unless you are quite highly trained, don't rely on punching. Your legs are much stronger and the chances of you breaking your fingers or wrist are quite high. Fingers tightly squeezed together and jabbed full-force into someone's eye will do more to end a fight than most people's punching.

You are more important than your property so we do NOT recommend that you fight over your stuff. Just hand it over and say, "Take it. It's yours." Our experts say that your risk of injury goes up if you fight to keep a robber from taking your possessions. However, statistically your risk of injury goes down if you fight to keep an attacker from hurting you or taking you away to a more private place.

The same strategies usually work even if the attacker has a weapon or you end up on the ground, or there are two or more attackers. Our experts say that your risk of injury goes up if you fight to keep someone from taking your possessions--so we do not recommend that you fight over your stuff--but your risk of injury goes down if you fight to keep an attacker from hurting you or from having more privacy and control which would put you in a more vulnerable position.

Children Need To Know These Rules About Safety When They Are Out On Their Own:

- Most people seem good. This means most *strangers* seem good.
- A stranger is just someone I don't know and can look like anybody.
- The rules are different when I am with an adult who is taking care of me and when I am on my own. When I are on my own, my job is to check first with the adult in charge before I let a stranger get close to me, talk to me, or give me anything.
- If I am old enough to be out on my own without an adult to ask, it is safer to be where there are other people close by to get help if I need it.
- I do not give personal information to a stranger or to someone who makes me feel uncomfortable.
- It is OK to get help from strangers if an emergency is happening to me, and there is no one close by that I know.
- My job is to check first with the adult in charge before I go anywhere with anyone (a stranger or someone I know). I will tell the adult in charge where I am going, who will be with me, and what I will be doing.
- I will have a safety plan for how to get help anywhere I go.
- I will know what my family's safety rules are for children answering the door, being on the phone, and being on the internet.
- Trust your senses and that you have the right to say no to what you sense is wrong.
- Adults rarely ask children for directions or help; and a child should never approach or get in the car of a stranger.

What if an adult wants you to do something you don't want to do?

First, every child should know that he or she has a right to say "No!". We have a tendency to tell children to obey adults. This makes them vulnerable to every adult. There are only certain adults they should obey. And you should tell them who they are. Teach your child to protect their personal space from unwanted intrusion.

What if an adult asks you to keep a secret from your mother or your father?

No adult should ask a child to keep a secret from their parents. If an adult, even someone they trust like a babysitter or a relative, ever tells them to keep a secret, they should tell you immediately. Molesters depend on the fact that a child will keep their secret.

What is a stranger?

Children should know that a stranger is any adult they don't know well. That doesn't mean they're bad. It just means they haven't earned your trust yet. Even someone they see every day, like a neighbor, is a stranger if they

don't know them well. (Children often think of "strangers" as slovenly or sneaky-looking, causing them to accept clean-cut, but potentially dangerous strangers.)

What if a stranger wants you to come to his car or house?

If a stranger pulls over and asks for help or wants to show you something in his car, don't go to the car. Stand back and be ready to run. You should explain that while it's OK for a child to ask a grownup for help, grownups shouldn't ask children for help. They should be asking other grownups. Abductors will use many lures to draw children to them: They ask for help, like directions for finding a pet; They seduce children with gifts, candy, money or jobs; They make threats; They pretend to be authority figures, like police and clergy; They say it's an emergency: "Your parents are hurt. I'll take you to the hospital."

What do you do if a stranger says he's come to pick you up?

For the safety of your child, you should have a secret code word that just the family members know. If you ever send someone to pick up your child, give them the code word. Your child should not go near the car unless the stranger knows the secret word.

What do you do if you think that someone is following you?

Don't be alone. Immediately run to a friend's house or the nearest store and tell them.

What if a stranger ever threatens you or tries to grab you?

Shout "HELP" and "I don't know you" and "call 911". And get away fast. Make a big scene so people will come. Carry and use a personal attack alarm. Most abductors and molesters will run away if their victim fights and attracts attention with noise.

Can you dial your full phone number? What's your full name and address?

Make sure your child knows their full name, phone number and address, including state. Make a game of teaching them to call home long distance. Or if they're too young, teach them to dial 911 for help. Tell them if they are abducted, a phone call home or to 911 can bring them home.

What if you're home alone and someone calls for your mother or father?

A child should never tell anyone they're home alone. Just tell them "My parents can't come to the phone right now. I'll take a message." And never open the door to any stranger.

What if you get separated while you are shopping or in another public place?

Whenever you go shopping, set up a meeting place. If you get separated, don't search for each other. Immediately go to the meeting place. Or ask a police officer, guard, or employee for assistance.

In General

Walk with confidence, don't be a victim waiting for an attack.

Don't be too predictable, vary your routine.

Stay in good physical condition.

If assaulted, even with a gun, and you are told to get in a car, don't. The criminal will have more control if you do and you won't come back.

Take every opportunity you can to learn more about self-defense and to practice the techniques you learn.

Walking/Jogging

-Walk in pairs. When possible don't walk alone.

-If you see or sense problems on your way, just change your route and - prepare to run or defend yourself

-Do not wear conspicuous jewelry when you are walking on the streets alone

-Do not hitchhike, use buses or taxis instead

-If you have car trouble and are walking to look for help, always walk against the traffic so that you can see what is coming

- If shadowed by a car, run back in the direction from which you came. If you continue in the same direction, you will make it easy for the shadowing to continue
- Be wary of alert passengers
- Don't use a "walkman" when walking in isolated areas at any time
- Regularly change your routines
- Mark out houses at intervals on each route you take that may be used as "safe houses" in the event of attack such as shops or houses that you know to be occupied by a friend or acquaintance. Try to incorporate these houses every time you vary your route
- Be alert at all times
- Don't presume that because your area has been "safe" thus far, that it will continue to be so.

When Walking to Your Car:

1. Have your keys in your hand.
2. Have a small flashlight on your key chain.
3. Look in your car prior to entering it.
4. Be aware of your surroundings. Check for persons following you.

Never leave a store or mall with an unknown person. A tactic used by abductors is to get women out of the mall by telling her about an car accident involving her vehicle in the parking lot.

In Your Car:

- Park close to any building you will be entering.
- Don't park next to a van or vehicle you cannot see into.
- If you return to your car and a van has parked next to it, get in the door farthest away from the van.
- Look under your car and in your car to make sure no one is hiding there.
- Have your key ready to open the lock. Practice unlocking your car door by touch so you can remain alert to your surroundings.
- If your car has an automatic lock that unlocks all doors at once, change the system to one that only unlocks the driver's door automatically.
- Lock your door as soon as you're inside your car, start the ignition, then put on your seat belt.
- Keep car windows closed, especially when stopped (even at lights).

Motor Vehicles:

- Danger areas are stepping out of your car either at home or in isolated areas, and also walking to your car
- Always approach your vehicle with the keys ready
- Windows should be up and doors locked even when driving to avoid unwanted passengers at intersections. (Please note that this conflicts with quick entering and exit procedures in the event of an accident)
- Always check your car before entering
- Never leave your car unlocked, even for the few minutes it may take you to return a video, buy milk and so forth. Attackers have been known to lie in wait for such an opportunity.
- Never get into a car even if someone is pointing a knife or a handgun at you from inside. Just start to run away from the car screaming at the same time. It's much more likely that he will drive away to find an easier target than attacking or killing you. But if you get into the car, he has a much better opportunity to drive to a quiet place and start to abuse you and later maybe kill you.
- Never pull your car over from a quiet road even if someone drives alongside your car pointing at the tyres etc. Always continue driving to a well-lit and crowded area before exiting your car. The problem might be a bluff and the driver wants you to stop at the side of the road to "help" you without a reason.
- Always be alert in parking lots, specially when it's dark. If you are afraid, don't be too shy to ask someone to escort you to your car. Between cars and inside cars, it's easy for someone to hide and wait until an unalert person comes along.
- Always leave yourself room to get away, an escape route, at lights and when parking.
- Keep car and other keys on separate rings, or a ring that splits into 2, so that you can throw keys onto the

ground and get away when he goes for them.

-Check your mirror for someone following you. If you think you are being followed don't go home.

-Don't hesitate to drive off or use your car as a weapon, if necessary.

Public Transportation:

-Remember, there is usually safety in numbers. Wait in a coffee shop or in a well lit area for the public transport to arrive

-Don't choose the window seat as you may be "blocked in" by a potential assailant; always choose an aisle seat for quick exit

-After peak hours, always choose the train compartment carrying the most passengers or the compartment directly behind the train driver

-On buses, sit behind the driver or next to the door for quick exit.

Taxis:

-Always check the identification of the driver (usually located near the visor) and ensure that it matches the driver

-Be wary of cars with central locking

-Don't sit behind the driver as it may be easy for the driver to lock the rear passenger door - always choose the adjacent seat

-Always order taxis so that the driver can be traced

-Avoid flagging taxis from the street

Public Phone Boxes:

When you are calling from a telephone box, after dialing the numbers always turn around so that you have your back to the phone and may see what is coming. You will then be able to tell the person to whom you are speaking that you may be in trouble and you may be able to use the weight of the phone as a weapon. The door of a telephone box could be used to wedge in the limbs of the attacker.

Items:

Whether carrying a purse or just sitting on a bus or other public place with one, hold the purse tightly and close to your body. Be sure that you secure the latch or zipper. In advance of any attack, consider whether the contents of your purse are worth being injured for. They are probably not. Let the purse go and avoid possible injury. Another strategy is to take a money clip and carry it with some money so that you can throw it and let the criminal take it as you get a way with your credit cards, ID, etc.

Clothing:

Think about your clothing - where will it be worn? Will you be going out after work? Get into the habit of leaving restrictive clothing and shoes for those occasions when you are certain that you have no reason to anticipate danger, such as large crowds, being picked up after work or going out and so forth.

Choose a wardrobe which maximizes freedom of movement. The best self defense techniques will not help you if you cannot run away because of tight skirts or shoes with straps and high heels. In these situations, it will be necessary to disable your attacker to ensure you are not followed unless you have some means of a quick exit such as a motor vehicle. This places additional, unnecessary pressure on you to be successful. Further, if you focus too much attention on disabling your opponent, you may not be sufficiently aware of an additional threat to yourself

Babysitting

Safety While Babysitting What to Watch For and What to Do

Caring for children is one of the biggest responsibilities you'll ever have. As a babysitter you must protect yourself as well as the children.

GETTING THE JOB DONE:

- Know your employer. Babysit only for people you or your parents know, or for whom you have a personal reference. Answering newspaper ads may not be safe.
- Be sure to find out from your employers what time they expect to be back. Be sure they know how much you charge and when you must be home.
- Leave the name, address and telephone number of where you'll be babysitting with your parents, and tell them what time your employers expect to be home.

ON THE JOB:

- Before your employers leave*, fill out the information requested below. Do this for every job you take. Keep the information and a pencil near the telephone (Use a notebook for this info and add to it each time you babysit. This way you won't have to do this every time you go to that one house.)
- Make your employers do a safety check with you throughout their home. Find out if their home has emergency exits, burglar alarms, flashlights, smoke alarms and a fire extinguisher.
- Know how to work the door and window locks in the home, and use them. Leave at least one outside light on.
- If the telephone rings while you're babysitting, don't tell the caller that you're alone. Say you're visiting and the residents can't come to the phone, but you'll give them a message. If the caller persists or gets rude, just hang up.
- Don't open the door to strangers, and don't tell anyone who comes to the door that you're there alone. Again, say you're visiting and will deliver a message.
- During the day you might have the children out in the yard. If you're in back, make sure the front is locked and visa versa.
- If you take the children out to the park or anywhere else, make sure you have the house key with you when you leave. Double check to be certain all doors and windows are locked before leaving. Let your parents know where you are going and get clearance from your employer first before taking the children anywhere.
- Have the children go to the bathroom before you leave to avoid having to use public restrooms.
- When you are out with the children, don't talk to strangers. If you suspect you're being followed at any time, go to a nearby home, store or gas station and call the police.
- When you get back to the children's home, if anything seems unusual - a broken window, an open door, a strange car parked outside - don't go in. Go to a neighbor's and call the police. For that matter, if, at any time while you're babysitting, you're uneasy or suspicious about anything, don't hesitate to call for help.

IN AN EMERGENCY:

- If you suspect a fire, get the children and yourself out. Go to a neighbor's and call 911. If you've been able to take the safety checklist with you, call the parents/employer and let them know where you and the children are.
- In any kind of emergency, stay calm. The most important thing to remember is that young children won't panic if you don't. You're the leader.
- Prepare ahead of time by taking a class in CPR, basic first aid and emergency preparedness.

WHEN THE JOB IS OVER:

- When your employers return home, report on what happened, especially if you considered anything to be unusual.
- Call home to let someone know you're on your way.
- Be sure you have an escort home, this should be one of the conditions under which you accept any babysitting job.
- If, for some reason, your employers won't drive or walk you home - or seem intoxicated - ask someone at your home to come and get you.

BABYSITTING SAFETY CHECKLIST: (put all of this on one page in your babysitting notebook for quick and easy reference)

Always obtain the following information:

Address and phone of where you are (house)
Where parents will be and a way to contact them
Emergency neighbor contact: name, phone number, location
Child's doctor -name and phone number
Closest hospital-name and phone number
Allergies, Medications for each child
Special instructions or routines to follow
Emergency phone numbers (like Poison Control Center)

Resources

http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/features/020904_fs_child_safety.html

<http://www.armchair.com/defense/bw/bwmain.html>

<http://www.colonie.org/police/tips.html>

<http://www.judoinfo.com/defensetips.htm>

<http://www.kidpower.org/Articles/articles.html>

<http://www.missingkids.com/>

<http://www.safetyforwomen.com/tips.htm>

http://vtvt.essortment.com/unarmedselfdef_rlkr.htm