



## Strategies for Safety

Walking at night, living alone—many people are afraid of being attacked in these situations. And with good reason: More than half of us will be the target of violent crime in our lifetimes. In fact, we are most vulnerable with people we know: More than 70% of attacks on women, girls, LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people are by acquaintances, friends, partners (& ex-partners), and family members.

The blame for harassment, abuse, and attack **always** rest with the aggressor. But we can take steps to prevent and interrupt these violations. Here are five tools for safety:

- 1 Know what matters.** Would you fight over your watch, your purse, your car? Chances of injury are high, and no property matters that much. But what about protecting yourself? Those who set limits against abuse, or resist sexual assault, are less likely to be injured.
- 2 Practice awareness.** Notice people, their moods, their behavior. Notice how they treat you. Keep track of your environment, where the nearest way out or safe place is. If you're distracted, or just inside your own head, you're vulnerable to surprise. Awareness is the first line of defense.
- 3 Learn to say "no."** Attackers rarely strike out of nowhere. Usually they are someone you know, and they have pushed your limits or violated your boundaries already. If you're uncomfortable, say so.
- 4 Pick your friends and partners wisely.** If someone puts you down, tries to control you, disregards your opinion, or refuses to take "no" for an answer, ditch them. These are warning signs of abuse. Take them seriously.
- 5 Use your tools.** Even if you are small, out of shape, or have disabilities, you have options against an attacker. Yell: "NO!" "Leave me alone!" "Call 911!" Stomp the attacker's feet, kick knees or shins, drive your knee into their groin, poke their eyes, smash their nose.

For practice on all these things, and lots more skills,  
***take an empowerment self-defense class!***

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