

Be your own **Bodyguard**

Personal Safety Tips for the Home, the Street, and the Workplace.

a service of



peaceful paths
personal safety training

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Welcome!

Before delving into this treasure chest of safety tips, it's necessary to understand a bit of rudimentary predator psychology. Whether you're dealing with prowlers, con-artists, or serial rapists, rarely do the heart-breakers and life-takers of the world pick their victims at random. This would be much too dangerous, with a high risk of getting hurt or being caught. Instead, predators tend to pick their victims very carefully, and they usually conduct their attacks in three stages:

1. Identify a likely target. During this stage, the predator hunts for vulnerable prey. "Good victims" are usually unaware of their surroundings, or appear to have weak defenses. This guide will help you avoid giving the impression that you might make easy prey.
2. Test the target. To lower the risk of being hurt or caught, predators usually check the cooperativeness of potential victims. This can be done covertly by observing the habits of potential victims and searching for opportunities to strike, or it could take on a covert form, such as verbal or psychological "tests". This guide will help you avoid offering excessive opportunity in your daily habits.
3. Assault the target. Once the predator is reasonably confident that he will be successful, he commits the assault. Unfortunately, it's beyond the scope of this guide to offer techniques for responding to violence—our verbal and physical training courses address these complex issues. However, by following the tips and tricks in this guide, you will substantially lower your chances of ever reaching this stage of the assault. Of course, you can never completely eliminate the chances of violent conflict, and that is why physical and verbal training is a vital part of any personal protection strategy.

When you understand what predators look for in their prey, it's much easier to avoid attracting them. With that in mind, onward to our safety tips...

Share your wisdom!

Share your favorite safety tips with the rest of the world! Email you tips to:

peacepath1@aol.com

They may be included in the next version of this booklet.

If you have comments or questions about this booklet, please contact us today.

If there are specific sections that you would like to see added to this booklet—for example, safety tips for children—please don't hesitate to tell us.



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We hope you find Be Your Own Bodyguard useful! Feel free to copy and distribute this book to your friends. We ask you to bear in mind that the maintenance of this booklet and the accompanying website represent a sizeable investment of Peaceful Paths' time and resources. If this guide makes you safer, more street smart, or if it helps you recognize and avoid predators, please help us to continue spreading this information by sending \$3.50 to:

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Protecting yourself at home

No home is completely burglar--proof, but by making your house a difficult target to assault, you can greatly lower your chances of being victimized. Strengthening your home, whether you live in a house, an apartment, or a condominium is a matter of looking for weaknesses the same way burglars do.

General tips

Case the joint! Start the process of fortifying your home by looking at your house or apartment from a burglar's point of view. "Case the joint" as a burglar would and look for weak spots in your defenses. Ask yourself, "how would I break into this place?" The tips in this booklet will help you strengthen weaknesses. Remember that burglars love to work in concealment, and keep these questions in mind as you go conduct your search:

- Are your windows and doors hidden from the view of your neighbors? Avoid giving burglars privacy to work on breaking into your home. Problem areas include windows or doors hidden by high hedges, lack of lighting, or entry ways that are hidden from view, such as garage-to-house doorways or deep window wells where a burglar can work undisturbed and unseen.
- Do you offer robbers easy access to loosely-guarded windows via trellises, downspouts, and utility poles? Some burglars specialize in 2nd-story entry or "balcony-hopping" where they move from one apartment to another by way of balconies. Don't assume that a high window is a secure window. Once a burglar has made it inside, he can exit right through the front door with your valuables.
- Do you display signs that you're not home? Burglars often learn the habits of their victims, and they know what a vacant house looks like. When you leave home, avoid the obvious piled newspapers or mail. Timed lights and radios that turn on at the same time every day are good, but alternating intervals are even better. Most personal safety catalogs offer devices to control the timing of several lights and appliances throughout the house.

A single light that never turns off is a sure sign that the occupants are not home.

Motes & alligators?

We've come a long way from the time of medieval castles fortified with physical barriers such as moats and draw-bridges. Today, we have sophisticated alarm systems on our homes. But don't be fooled into thinking that an alarm is enough. You still need to protect your home with actual physical barriers.

Our nation's White House is an excellent example of a building fortified with physical barriers that don't infringe on aesthetics—lots of lighting, open, unconcealed spaces and entrances, and physical barriers that the most skilled intruder would have trouble breaching.

The White House achieves all this while maintaining a friendly, open appearance.

-
- Do you display overwhelming temptations to would-be robbers? Do you leave boxes that contained expensive items in the trash, or place computers or entertainment centers in front of windows for the whole world to see? Do you have particularly weak basement windows, cellar doors, or garage doors? Do you leave your garage door open, offering easy access to bicycles, cars, or tools, or possibly providing an entry to the house? Do you leave sensitive personal or financial information intact in the trash? Do you leave keys in obvious places such as under door mats, in planters, or around milk boxes? These are invitations for trouble.
 - Are there unprotected openings to your house? Do you have vents, skylights, or unlocked windows or doors? Secure them. Don't forget about 2nd story entrances.

Develop healthy habits!

- Make sure that you always return home to lighted house. Personal safety catalogs offer simple electric timers, or elaborate ones. Be sure that the outside of your house is well-lit, as well.
- Never enter a house that has been tampered with or looks like it's been broken into. Surprising a burglar can cause him to panic and attack you.
- Don't open the door for strangers, and never, ever let a stranger into your home. If someone comes to your door asking for help, offer to call someone for them. This can be done without even opening the door. If you must open the door for a stranger or delivery person, you can create the illusion that you're not alone by shouting to an imaginary friend before opening the door, or by running the shower while you answer the door.
- When you leave your house, even for a minute, lock the door behind you.
- Be aware that your telephone offers insight into your personal life and daily habits. If you live alone, use "we" rather than "I" on your answering machine. If you are a single woman, consider having a male friend record your greeting, or insulate yourself with automated answering service or in-line messaging.

Safeguard your personal safety around the house . Consider

Case yourself

As you "case" your house, examine also your own habits. Are there times during your daily routine when you are particularly vulnerable, such as arriving to work early or leaving late, or having to traverse a secluded parking garage alone each evening?

Take measures to fortify your daily routine just as you would fortify your home. See our section on street safety.

placing a deadbolt on your bedroom door, and never sleep with the doors or windows open. If you find yourself in an abusive relationship, go to a trusted friend's house or to a shelter. Don't offer warning or your whereabouts to your abuser or his associates.

If you're being stalked, keep a log of each event, including as much detail as you can: dates, times, events, & exact words. Tell police of every incident, even if they can't arrest, and obtain a restraining order.

Build deterrents. What follows is a list of deterrents, including information on alarms, dogs, and methods for safeguarding your property and becoming your own bodyguard!

Houses

Lighting: One of the most important deterrents for houses is light. Houses usually offer many more points of entry than do apartments or condominiums. Doors and windows should be in plain view and well-lit from the outside. Open, unconcealed spaces are an excellent deterrent—it's hard for a burglar to work when he is in plain view of the neighborhood. Be sure that your lights are not all at the same level and easily accessed from the ground. Lights with motion sensors are becoming cheap and easy to install—consider using them at strategic places outside your house such as walkways, side yards, or other areas that are not commonly used at night. Be sure to light your alleyway and back yard to discourage predators from lurking unseen and studying your home and habits.

You might also consider installing a panic switch (independent of your alarm system, or integrated with it) that will flood your house with light, both inside and out. Lighting your house may frighten off intruders before they enter, and it can draw attention to your house.

Be sure that the numbers on your house are large and well-lit. This will help emergency personnel respond to your house more quickly.

Automatic garage doors: These can be particularly tempting to burglars because they are easily jimmied and often provide easy access to the rest of the house. Garage doors should sound an alarm if opened without the remote. If you leave town, be sure to unplug your automatic opener. You can also drill a hole through one or both of the door tracks and insert padlocks when you're gone. This prevents the door from being jimmied, and also deters a thief from stealing your car

No privacy

Lighting is one of the most important defenses for any home. It takes time to break into a home, and intruders love to work in the privacy offered by shadows. Deny them that privacy by lighting weak spots on the exterior of your home.

from the inside.

Garage-to-home doors (the passageways that connects a garage and house) are favorites among burglars because they are generally completely concealed, and usually flimsy. Be sure that this passageway is strong—see our section on doors & windows to help you fortify this weakness.

Apartments, condominiums, and dormitories

Whereas houses tend to offer criminals more points of entry than apartments and condominiums, the latter present their own set of safety concerns because of the increased traffic of strangers in and around your building. Managers, landlords, and maintenance people may have keys to your unit, security among other tenants may be lax, and the layout of your building may offer predators concealed access to your doors and windows, or even concealed access to you in elevators and laundry rooms. But in spite of these challenges, you can still be your own bodyguard by becoming aware of the opportunities that predators search for.

Keys: Your first concern when moving into a new unit should be the key to your front door. Many people have lived here before you, and you may be surprised to learn how many people could still have keys to your unit. The solution to this problem is simple and cheap: install a new lock whenever you move into a new unit. When you give the new key to management, place it in a sealed, notarized envelope. Establish a clear understanding that the key may only be used in case of emergency, and routine maintenance should be scheduled for when you are home. This should discourage management from taking advantage of your key—if not, you might be living in the wrong complex.

Elevators: Elevators can be dangerous areas in any building. Muggers, rapists, and other criminals often use this environment to trap their prey by pressing the emergency stop button, or by carrying them to a floor where their criminal cohorts are waiting. Here are a few tips to keep in mind any time you ride an elevator: When waiting for an elevator, stand away from the entrance so that you are not pulled or pushed in when the door opens. If you are on an elevator with a stranger, position yourself next to the control panel so that you can exit the elevator if you need to, and so that a predator doesn't have easy access to the emergency stop button. If ever you are uncomfortable entering an elevator with a stranger, simply wait for the next car. If a stranger

Security Surveys

Thinking of hiring a 3rd party to help you conduct a security survey of your home? Usually, there's no need to hire an expensive consultant. Your local police department is probably willing to visit your house and offer a security survey. Just ask them.

enters your car and you are uncomfortable, don't hesitate to get off before the door closes. A couple of moments spent waiting for the next car is a small price to pay for peace of mind.

Stairwells: These areas can be as dangerous as elevators, if not more so. By law, stairwells are constructed to be fireproof. The heavy, latching doors tend to insulate sound, and this could put you in a precarious position if confronted by a predator. The same rules that apply to elevators apply to stairwells: If you're uncomfortable, leave. If you are under attack, yelling "fire" in apartment buildings, hotels, or businesses will attract attention—much more so than on the street.

Laundry Rooms: Unfortunately, laundry rooms are often ideal environments for predators. Many times they are located in the corner of unpopulated basements, and they can be deserted and dangerous during non-peak hours. Additionally, some laundry rooms have windows that are left unlatched for the sake of ventilation, creating easy access for strangers. As much as possible, use the laundry room when you know that others will be around, and be sure the landlord hasn't propped the window open for ventilation so much that a stranger could work his way in.

Secured entry ways: In many complexes, secured entry ways that require strangers to be "buzzed" in by a tenant actually offer little security against someone who truly wants to get in. Criminals can pretend they have legitimate business and slip in with someone who has a key, they can dupe tenants with any number of claims that they are there to do repair work or even that they are authority figures, or they can simply push several buttons with the sure knowledge that *someone* will buzz them in unchallenged.

The best defense is for all tenants to take a secured entryway seriously. Never let strangers in, no matter how harmless they may seem. If they truly had legitimate business in your complex, they would be buzzing the people they came to see, not bothering you. And never leave front or back doors propped open as a "favor" to a friend (a habit common to dormitories). This renders your first line of defense completely useless and puts your neighbors in danger. When you see a prop that isn't currently being used by movers or for another legitimate reason, remove it.

Apartment and dormitory safety tips:

Seclusion

Apartment living unfortunately often places people in secluded and potentially dangerous situations. Parking lots, elevators, stairwells, and laundry rooms can be dangerous places when you're alone. Make sure to take this into account when planning your daily routine.

When searching for a new apartment, be aware that small apartment complexes, while more intimate and neighborly, tend to have lax security. Large complexes, all things being equal, tend to have a lower crime rate.

Most apartments and condos have sliding glass doors, which can be extremely easy to breach. Please refer to our section on securing these doors.

Make sure your front door has a peep-hole. It should view 180° to prevent someone from hiding, and it should not be removable from the outside.

If you are under physical attack inside a building, yelling “fire” is much more effective than it is on the street.

You can leave something valuable on the table (like a watch or bill) so that if its gone when you return you know not to enter. You don’t want to surprise a burglar in progress.

Most burglaries occur during the day. Have your complex increase security during this time, as it is usually lax.

Be sure you have at least one solid-core deadbolt on your front door. See our section on locks for tips on selecting a deadbolt. A door chain is also a good idea, but the only chain worth its salt is one that bolts into the door frame and loops over the doorknob, and is made of heavy steel. Most other types of chains are easily broken or snapped from its mounting.

On campus, avoid areas such as “Greek row” where alcohol consumption is rampant. Why? Alcohol is involved in as many as 90% of campus crime. Most campuses have an escort service so that people don’t have to walk alone at night. If your campus doesn’t have an escort service, be the first to organize one. You may be saving a life.

Doors, locks, windows

Doors are the most common point of entry in almost any crime. All locks can eventually be jimmied or broken. The question is, how long will it take? Old-fashioned key-in-knob locks are the easiest to jimmy. They can often be broken with a strong twist of a screwdriver. Even a good, strong deadbolt can be broken with a swift kick—not because they are weak, but because the strike plate is usually poorly mounted into the door frame with small, shallow screws.

Key-in-knob locks: If this is the only kind of lock you have in your front door, you're asking for trouble. Reinforce this lock with at least one deadbolt.

Deadbolt: These locks should be solid core, which means that the part that slides into the door frame is steel or has a steel core. It should extend at least one inch into the door frame. The strike plate (the flat piece that you mount on the door frame) is just as important as the lock, but is often overlooked. Don't mount this piece with the small, one-inch screws that come with the lock. Instead, purchase larger screws that are at least three inches long with a coarse thread. These longer screws should mount all the way into the frame of the door, not just the trim, to prevent the lock from being defeated with a kick. To further strengthen this weak link, you can purchase a heavier strike plate than the one that came with the lock.

When you buy a deadbolt, don't skimp. A few extra dollars will buy you a good barrier against the knuckleheads of the world. Medeco locks are of exceptional quality, and two deadbolts are optimal. Position them at least 18 inches apart so that the force of a blow is evenly distributed.

In houses and condo's, consider installing a security storm door that has its own double-key deadbolt. This provides an exceptional physical barrier because the storm door will open outward, therefore making it impossible to kick in. A double-key deadbolt prevents the possibility of breaking the glass and unlocking the door—just make sure that if you lock it at night you keep a key close to the door so that you don't prevent escape during an emergency.

Cane bolt locks: These locks are mounted at the top and bottom of the door, and slide into the upper and lower frame of the door. They are very effective.

If your door opens outward: If your door opens outward, the hinges are probably exposed and the hinge pins could be removed. This is a burglar's dream. To prevent this from happening, remove the center screws from each side of all hinges. Drill into the door-side of the hinge a hole about 1/4 inch deep and 1/4 inch wide where the screws used to be. On the frame side of the hinge, mount a 1/4 inch headless screw that protrudes 1/4 inch. When the door is closed, the headless screws will project into the door, "pinning it" and making it impossible to easily remove the door even if the hinge pins are removed.

If you don't want to drill the holes and hunt for headless screws, you can simply pound 20 penny nails where the screws once were, and saw the heads of the nails off so that they extend about 1/4 inch.

General safety tips for doors:

- Make sure your deadbolts are good quality, solid core.
- Lock doors even if going out for a minute.
- If you move, have a licensed locksmith change the locks or do it yourself.
- Give extra protection to concealed entrances. If a door is unavoidably concealed from the view of neighbors, install at least two deadbolts, or consider cane bolts. Security storm doors provide an excellent physical barrier.
- All external doors should be a minimum one and 1/2 inches thick, solid core. If your doors are hollow core, they can be penetrated with a bare fist. Solid-core with a metal shell are the most secure.
- Strike plates must penetrate the door jamb *and* frame. Use three or four inch screws with a coarse thread, and use L-shaped strike plates—these are stronger than the standard curved strike plates that come with most locks. Use hardened steel deadbolts.
- If you have a window within 44 inches of your doorknob, use a double-key lock to prevent someone from breaking the glass and reaching in. But be sure that you and your family keep a key close to the lock so that you are not trapped inside during an emergency.
- Replace small windows that are close to the door or in the door with lexan rather than glass. Lexan plastic is very hard to break.
- If you use two or more locks, position them at least 18 inches apart.
- If the door opens out, pin the hinges.

Sliding glass doors

These doors, as they come from the factory, are particularly easy to penetrate because they can be lifted from the tracks, or the flimsy locks can be jimmied. Fortunately, they can be fortified. Rarely will a burglar break the glass because, like cockroaches, light and sound send

Emergency escape

Remember that each measure you take to strengthen a sliding glass door increases the time it will take to escape in an emergency.

them running.

- One of the most important deterrents, as with any door or window, is to keep the sliding door in plain view, bathed in light.
- Remember that the stationary panel of the door can be moved, too. Be sure that this part of the door is securely bolted to the frame from the inside so that it cannot be pried out.
- Don't gain a false sense of security by laying a broomstick in the track of your door. This can be defeated with a common coat-hanger slipped between the doors. Instead, purchase a hinged prop that can be mounted on the sliding door rather than the frame.
- To prevent the sliding portion of the door from moving, any number of small deadbolts can be mounted at the top and bottom of the door. They usually require that you drill a hole into the non-sliding panel, taking care not to crack the glass.
- To prevent the sliding portion of the door from being lifted and removed from the track, you can mount screws into the track above the door so that they extend far enough down to prevent the door from being lifted when it is closed, but not so far that it interferes with the movement of the door. Mount these screws every eight to ten inches.
- To permanently lock a door, you can drill through the bottom of the frame and into the track, taking care not to crack the glass. Drilling three or four holes, spaced evenly along the bottom of the door, and screwing the door frame into the track will secure the door, but be aware that you have eliminated an emergency exit. While these screws can be removed, they can't be removed in less than 5 minutes or so (this option is best for the non-sliding portion of the door). As an easily-removable option for the sliding portion of the door, consider placing three or four nails that can be easily pulled out.
- If you own your unit, consider installing a second sliding door in front of the first, or persuade your landlord to do it if you are renting. This will provide heat insulation, as well as an added barrier that prowlers would just as soon not deal with.

Windows

- Of course the first line of defense with windows is to have them in plain view, and well lit. See our section on lighting.

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- Alarms are another great deterrent, especially when a window is hidden from view. See our section on alarms. Be sure to use the window stickers that come with your alarm system, but don't rely on generic stickers that you can buy in a hardware store unless you have an alarm system to back them up. Professional burglars can spot a counterfeit.
 - Generally speaking, burglars would just as soon not hassle with storm windows. Not only do they provide you with great heat insulation, but they are too time-consuming to suit the taste of most burglars.
 - With casement windows that have cranks, keep the crank removed and stored near the window. These cranks usually do not need to be secured on the shaft with the set screw in order to operate the window, just placed on the shaft.
 - Reinforce flimsy latches on sash windows by drilling holes through both sashes and inserting a nail that can be easily removed. Eye bolts work well too. Drill the hole at a slight downward angle so that the bolt doesn't fall out.
 - Remember that any of these measures can be counteracted if the burglar breaks a window. If you are concerned about any particular window, inquire at your hardware store about locks that require keys from the inside. Remember to store your key near the window in case of emergency.
 - If you install bars, be sure that you can open them from the inside.
 - Reinforce deep window wells with horizontal bars that are secured by a cable with a release mechanism so you don't eliminate an emergency exit. By placing the bars at ground level, you prevent intruders from disappearing into the window well and working on your window in seclusion. You also prevent someone from accidentally falling in.
 - Windows within 44 inches of doorknobs should be replaced with lexan, and the doors should be double-key, with the key kept nearby for emergency exits.
 - Skylights should be made of lexan so that they are difficult to break, and they should be monitored by your alarm system in case they are pried open
 - Remember that privacy is a key defense in protecting your house. Make sure that your window treatments don't allow people to see

into your house—particularly at night.

Second story windows & other entry ways

- Some intruders specialize in 2nd story entry. Vulnerabilities to watch for include trellises that act as a virtual ladder, utility poles and downspouts adjacent to windows or skylights, and windows that are unlocked or poorly reinforced under the mistaken notion that they are invulnerable.

To counteract these weaknesses, utility poles can be smeared with axle grease, downspouts can be painted with no-climb paint, and trellises can be moved or covered with thorny plants.

- Even if your 2nd story windows seem inaccessible, remember that some burglars are brazen enough to use ladders. Reinforce these windows as you would if they were on the ground level (see section on windows).
- Likewise, don't assume that a window or sliding door on a 2nd story balcony, or higher, is inaccessible to intruders. Some burglars specialize in "balcony hopping" and travel from one unit to the next, entering by way of unreinforced sliding doors or open windows.
- In the process of securing your windows, don't eliminate the possibility of using them as escape routes. Keep a rope ladder near emergency exits and only use bars that can be opened from the inside.

Building a safe room

A safe room is a room in your house where you or your children can go in the event that an intruder has entered the house. It should protect you from the intruder for an extended period of time, and you should be able to communicate with the outside world once inside. A safe room can be a bedroom, a large closet, or even a bathroom.

To build a safe room, be sure that it is virtually impenetrable from the outside. The door should be solid core, preferably with a metal exterior. If the door opens outward, pin the hinges (see section on doors). If the door opens inward, you will need to reinforce it against being kicked in by drilling the strike plates of your locks well into the frame. Cane bolt locks are an excellent addition to safe room doors.

The door should have no less than two solid core deadbolts mounted a few feet apart. They should be keyed from the outside, but not from

Safe rooms

Anyone who has kids should consider building a safe room and instructing the children on how and when to use it. Make sure that you, the parents, have a means of entry when the door is locked.

the inside—the whole idea of a safe room is that you can lock it quickly. It's a good idea to have a 180° peep hole so that you can observe your assailant if necessary, and verify the identity of those outside the room.

Make sure that the walls of your safe-room are not accessible to an assailant. Most walls within houses consist only of a wooden frame with sheets of drywall on either side. One swift kick is all it takes to break through most drywall. For this reason, it's best to place your safe room at the end of hallways, in closets, or in other situations where large areas of wall are not easily accessible. The ideal safe room is on an upper level, with a window. Your own bedroom is an ideal safe room, since you can lock the door at the first hint of trouble, or you can sleep with your door locked.

Inside your safe room you should have a cell phone to call 911. Don't rely on the house phone—it can be disconnected or taken off the hook, thereby preventing you from making a call. If you have a window in your safe room, keep a rope-ladder so that you can make a quick escape.

Dogs

Dogs, particularly large, formidable breeds, are one of the most effective deterrents against intruders. Even small dogs, while they don't offer much physical protection, can sound a life-saving, early alarm to warn of intruders and frighten them away.

Most families have no use for fully-trained attack dogs. These animals can cost upward of \$5,000 once training is complete, and they are not good with family and friends. The preferable dog is a walking burglar alarm that's good with kids.

For this reason, don't buy the pitch that you need to purchase an expensive purebred animal. A mongrel from your local pound can bark just as loud, and they tend to be more even-tempered than pedigrees.

Mongrels should be purchased full-grown, preferably from a local shelter, so that you can get an immediate glimpse into their personalities. Females tend to be better watchdogs than males even without training because of their tendency to bond with their owners.

Look in your yellow pages under "dog trainers" to find someone qualified to train your pet as a watchdog, or consult your local library if you choose to do it yourself. At a bare minimum, you should praise your

dog for barking at strangers when they approach your house. Bear in mind that full-fledged attack training, or “Schutzhund” training is very expensive and not appropriate for most families. These dogs are trained to be vicious toward anyone other than master. Most families want a dog that can travel around town with them and won’t eat their house guests.

If you travel for a living, as real-estate agents and contractors do, consider having your dog travel with you. Dogs provide excellent protection for people who consistently enter strange environments. Just be sure you keep plenty of food, water, and fresh, cool air available.

Alarms

Alarms are meant to accomplish two tasks. First, they serve as a deterrent to criminals. Second, they provide a warning to you. In order to meet these goals, an alarm system should be fairly obvious (that’s why they come with window stickers and yard signs) and they should be loud and bright when tripped. Silent alarms that are used by businesses can backfire on families by failing to chase away the assailant.

Alarms should not only alert you, but also the police and your neighbors by way of horns and lights. If an alarm only alerts the occupants of the house, the only one who will hear the alarm if no one is home is the burglar. A professional burglar can silence an alarm in less than 30 seconds, so it’s important that others immediately know that the alarm has been tripped.

At minimum, an alarm system should include the following: 24-hour monitoring by trained professionals, control pad, audible alarm, door and window sensors, window stickers, battery backup, and a panic button. Make sure that sky lights and 2nd story windows are covered by the system. Don’t forget the all-important alarm on the garage door.

Before selecting a company, check the response time with neighbors. If their response time is more than five minutes, it is too long. Additionally, they should provide immediate response to panic buttons and severed lines.

Remember that no matter how efficient an alarm is, it does not provide any physical barrier against intruders.

Neighborhood watch groups

One of the most important things you can do to protect your home

(even if you live in an apartment) is to establish a neighborhood watch group. Even if your group consists of only two or three neighbors, you greatly reduce the chances of becoming a crime victim—the more neighbors you have involved, the better. When you set up your group, keep these tips in mind:

- Exchange names and phone numbers with your neighbors. It might be helpful to store these numbers on a hand-drawn map of the neighborhood.
- Learn your neighbors routines so that you can identify suspicious behavior.
- Be suspicious. It's easy to ignore suspicious behavior, but don't give in to the temptation to not get involved. Write down the descriptions of any strange people, and record the description and license plate of suspicious vehicles around your neighbors' homes. Don't hesitate to notify the police if you notice activities that seem out of place (for instance, movers appearing when a neighbor isn't home).
- Contact your police department to set up neighborhood meetings with your local crime prevention officer. This officer has a great deal of useful information for your group.

Employer Responsibility

According to the rules of OSHA, your employer has the responsibility to provide you with a safe work environment. In addition to physical barriers, one of the most important preventive measures for an employer to provide is training.

Protecting yourself at work

What your employer should know

If you work in the field, handle patients or inmates, travel to homes in the community, or have the authority to enforce rules on the public, you are at a greater risk for workplace violence. If you fall into one of these categories, your employer should supply you with:

- A buddy system so that you minimize the amount of time you spend alone (or at least someone that you communicate with regularly).
- A work plan for keeping track of your location throughout the day.
- Cellular phones, radios, or other means of immediate contact.
- Training in self-defense and hostile conflict management.

Additional measures may include deterrents such as pepper spray, personal alarms, and portable panic buttons.

Bomb threats & emergency plans

If you work in an office, factory, or any other kind of building, your employer has a responsibility to maintain bomb threat and emergency plans to include:

- Procedures for handling bomb threats, to include training for those who answer phones or greet the public.
- Procedures for evacuating the premises and accounting for all employees.
- Procedures for calling medical assistance (which may include on-site personnel).
- Contingencies for evacuating and securing any work area.
- Training in recognizing warning signs and responding to workplace violence.

Bomb Threats: Every workplace should have a bomb-threat plan that includes plans for evacuating the premises, designating personnel familiar with the facility to assist authorities in search efforts, instruction of all employees, especially receptionists, in responding to bomb threats, training each employee to recognize suspicious packages and suspicious

Domestic violence in the workplace

Domestic violence that finds its way into the workplace is becoming a considerable problem. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 13,000 acts of violence in the workplace each year are committed directly by significant others.

tampering with the physical environment. Contact the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to obtain guidelines for handling bomb threats. Your employer may also wish to take measures to protect sensitive documents and data in the event of an explosion.

Questions to answer during a bomb threat include: exact time and date of threat, how reported, and the exact words of caller. Questions to ask the terrorist include: When is the bomb going to explode, where is the bomb right now, what kind of bomb is it, what does it look like, why did you place the bomb, and where are you calling from. Pay particular attention to the caller's voice. Were they male or female, young or old sounding? Did they have an accent? If so, from where? When did they hang up? Record as many details of the conversation as possible. Those who answer the phones for the company should have these questions printed on a sheet of paper.

Two-way radios and cell-phones should not be used once a bomb threat is received. It is possible that these types of transmissions can detonate devices.

Take all bomb threats seriously.

Workplace violence

Contrary to popular belief, most instances of workplace violence are committed by a customer or other stranger to the company, rather than by a disgruntled employee. This means that those who deal directly with the public are at greatest risk for workplace violence.

Prevention programs should include strategies for recognizing and repairing danger areas such as weaknesses in security or constant friction between organizational layers or departments, as well as training for recognizing and responding to violence. The plan should also include counseling and employee-assistance to help employees manage the aftermath of violence. Proper exit interview and discharge procedures are vital in preventing workplace violence.

Contact Peaceful Paths for guidance in this area.

Domestic violence in the workplace

More and more, domestic violence is finding its way into the workplace. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 13,000 episodes of workplace violence every year are directly linked to domestic violence. The best defense is to stay empathetic to your co-workers and

Workplace violence statistics

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health estimates that violence in the workplace annually costs employers \$13.5 Billion in medical costs, and \$6.2 Billion in lost wages and support costs. Two million people reported being attacked in the workplace in 1992 alone.

employees.

Watch for warning signs of domestic violence such as an erratic schedule, phone calls that leave the employee distressed, numerous absences, reluctance to establish friendships, and of course, bruising.

The employer should not create an obligation to protect the employee, but should take the situation seriously by establishing an employee assistance program to deal with this problem, offering legal assistance, and maintaining a list of community counseling and safe-house resources.

Employers should establish a threats and violence policy that forbids verbal and physical threats, physical violence of any kind, weapons, and clearly states the action which may be taken in response to violation of the policy. Search and seizure policies should also be written and made available to all employees.

While these policies are vital, beware of establishing “zero-tolerance” policies that allow no room for uncharacteristically poor judgement on the part of an extremely distressed employee. Such rigid policies can inflame an otherwise

Post-incident counseling is a vital step in responding to workplace violence, and this process should be established before violence occurs.

Unlike other forms of violence, workplace violence is highly preventable because there is usually a long string of warning signs. Training is the key to recognizing these signs and responding before a tragedy occurs. Contact Peaceful Paths for training in this area.

Sexual Harassment

What is sexual harassment? In general, any unwelcome sexual conduct can be harassment if you have to submit to it to get or keep a job, enter an academic program, avoid negative consequences from a superior, get ahead in your job or academics, or any other such contingency.

Sexual harassment is a complex issue, and it is beyond the scope of this guide. However, we can offer a few guidelines:

- Don't ignore it. Sexual harassment will only get worse if it goes unaddressed.
- Begin taking control with a simple verbal warning, for example, “I don't like being stared at. Please stop”, “Don't touch me again”, or

"Please address me by my name, not 'babe'."

- Keep written records of events, times, meetings, and witnesses. You might consider writing a letter via registered mail to your harasser so that you have documented proof of your request that the person stop the behavior.
- If the behavior continues, consider filing a complaint with your workplace or school. You may even need to file legal charges in extreme cases. Be sure that your organization has strict confidentiality policies in order to protect your safety.
- If ever you fear for your safety, don't hesitate to leave the scene, go to friends or coworkers, yell for help, or call the police. Always trust your intuition.

Danger spots in the workplace

Elevators: Elevators can be dangerous areas in any building. Muggers, rapists, and other criminals often use this environment to trap their prey by pressing the emergency stop button, or by carrying them to a floor where their criminal cohorts are waiting or the environment is conducive to committing a crime.

Here are a few tips to keep in mind any time you ride an elevator:

- When waiting for an elevator, stand away from the entrance so that you are not pulled or pushed in when the door opens.
- Get on with a group or a friend whenever possible.
- While waiting, don't become fixated on the elevator door. Remain aware of your surroundings.
- If you are on an elevator with a stranger, position yourself next to the control panel so that you can exit the elevator if you need to, and so that a predator doesn't have easy access to the emergency stop button.
- If ever you are uncomfortable entering an elevator with a stranger, simply wait for the next car. If a stranger enters your car and you are uncomfortable, don't hesitate to get off before the door closes. A couple of moments spent waiting for the next car is a small price to pay for peace of mind.

Stairwells: Stay out of stairwells before and after hours! By law, stairwells are fire proof and therefore very secluded, especially when you

consider that very few people use them. The heavy, latching doors tend to insulate sound, which could put you in a precarious spot if confronted by a predator. The same rules that apply to elevators apply to stairwells: If you're uncomfortable, leave. If you are under attack, yelling "fire" in an office building or business will attract attention—much more so than on the street.

Restrooms: Restrooms are particularly dangerous, and a high percentage of workplace crimes occur here. Keyed restrooms that are off-limits to the public are preferable, and any restroom in a high-traffic area is safer than a secluded restroom. Avoid restrooms after hours, before hours, or any other time when you are alone.

After-hours: It's best to avoid your workplace altogether after hours. Enjoy your weekend. But if you must work other than normal hours, use the buddy system or have a friend come with you.

Parking garages: Avoid this area after hours. If it's the weekend or night time, try to park directly in front of the building. Always use the buddy system when returning to the parking garage, and always check under, around, and in your car before getting in.

Workplace habits

- Use a third party to help settle disputes with co-workers.
- Don't keep personal items or information such as checkbooks or ID in your desk.
- Use the buddy system before and after hours, or when travelling to homes in the community.
- Get to know security guards. Few states regulate guards, and it's even possible to get a job as a security guard when you have a criminal record. Talk to your security guards and learn as much as you can. Trust your intuition.
- Get to know contractors for the same reason. Know their schedules, when they are supposed to be there, and when they are not.
- Avoid being predictable with deposits and cash handling.
- See to it that your employer has well-lit and well-guarded facilities, that visitors require an escort, restrooms are not available to the public, hiring techniques include background checks and drug testing, and that the company takes sexual harassment and threats seriously.

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- Ask your employer for training in recognizing and responding to hostile behavior.
 - Ask your employer for training in self-defense.

On the road

Sales people, real estate agents, and other on-site workers need to be aware of the dangers of entering an environment that may be unfriendly. Whenever you enter a new environment with a client, follow these simple guidelines:

- Make sure that somebody knows where you are, who you are with, and how to reach you.
- Get a dog that can travel with you when you meet clients.
- If you are meeting a client for the first time, meet in your office. If your intuition tells you something is not quite right, take someone with you when you meet them on-site.
- When entering an environment with a client, follow behind them, leave doors unlocked behind you (or open if possible), and always be mindful of escape routes. Don't let a stranger stand between you and the exit.
- If your intuition says leave, then *leave*!
- Ask your employer for training in self-defense and hostile conflict management.

Traveling sales people : Because you are constantly changing environments, you need to be extra vigilant to the people and circumstances around you.

- Get to know the people on your regular route: hotel workers, store clerks, gas station attendants, and anyone else you can get to know. Build a network of people who know and like you.
- Keep in regular contact with the home office. Make sure someone always knows where you are and when you will check in next.
- Arrive at your destination before dark.
- Keep an emergency kit in your car including flashlight, extra batteries, blanket, water, food, matches, medical supplies, cell phone, road flares, and tools.

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- When staying at a hotel, control your environment as you would at home. Park close to the entrance, don't have the counter person shout out your name and room number, don't park in a numbered space that corresponds to your room, and be careful who you give your car to. Not all valet parking attendants are the genuine article.
 - Stay at hotels that use programmable keys rather than mechanical ones. Once a key is re-programmed, there is lesser chance that strangers can get into your room.
 - Use the hotel's safe safe-deposit box rather than keeping expensive items in your room. Hotels will rarely cover losses of more than \$100—keep a clause in your homeowner's or renter's insurance to cover expensive items that you take with you on the road.
 - The safest hotel rooms against fire hazards are the lower floors. Higher floors insulate you more against robbers. Rooms near the elevator tend to be safest because traffic is higher there; rooms near back stairways offer the least protection against robbers and other predators.
 - Keep your hotel and car keys where you can get to them quickly.
 - When asking for room service or maid service, ask the front desk the name of the person who will be coming to your room, and never let strangers in. If you feel uncomfortable about a hotel employee, verify his identity with the front desk before letting him in.
 - Beware of the "clean this room" sign that tells criminals you're not there. Instead of posting this sign, call the front desk and ask for maid service.
 - Don't assume that high-priced hotels are safe. More important than the cost of the hotel is the neighborhood. A high crime rate doesn't bode well, no matter how posh the hotel is.
 - When you're out on the town, wear sneakers that you can run in, and never wear convention or other ID badges. These badges advertise that you're from out of town and unfamiliar with the terrain.
 - In airports, hotel lobbies, bus stations, restaurants, or other public

Awareness

Awareness is your most important weapon on the street. Peaceful Paths personal safety training offers ways to greatly increase your awareness.

venues, don't let phone calls, trips to the rest room, televisions, commotions, or conversations deter your attention from your luggage. Whenever possible, maintain physical contact with your luggage, even if it is merely resting under your legs while you read.

- If you're out on the town in a strange city, consider carrying two wallets. One should contain the money you'll be spending that evening—money that you can part with should you be held up. The other should carry the bulk of your cash, travelers checks, credit cards, and other important documents. Don't reveal this wallet in public.

Why does martial arts training work?

Martial arts classes will greatly lower your chances of becoming the victim of a crime—not because you will learn to “kick but” but because you will develop confidence and discipline in your daily life. This will help you avoid conflict altogether.

Protecting yourself on the street

General tips

- Don't walk, jog, or bike with headphones.
- Don't walk around in public in self-absorbed, angry, or otherwise self-absorbed state of mind. This behavior severely impairs your awareness.
- Never flash big rolls of money or expensive jewelry on the street.
- Check the area before using an ATM and don't hesitate to use the "cancel" button if you're uncomfortable. Don't use any ATM that isn't well-lit and in plain view to the public.
- Lock your car when driving. Carjackers and "red-light robbers" prefer cars that are unlocked. See section on car safety.
- Keep your keys and ID separate.
- Check the surroundings before entering a store or gas station at night. If you see suspicious people, or the situation doesn't feel right, move on.
- If you're uncomfortable in any situation, get to a populated area as quickly as possible—never question your intuition.
- Carry yourself with confidence and intent. Strong body language is a powerful deterrent.
- Avoid secluded restrooms such as those in the mall at the end of long hallways, or unlocked gas station restrooms that are located "round back." Restrooms in department stores, restaurants, or supermarkets are preferable.
- Always wear comfortable shoes when out on the town.

Training for handling predators

- Obtain training in hostile conflict management and crisis communication. Peaceful Paths specializes in this type of training, and it is far beyond the scope of this website.

However, as a general guideline, don't resist muggers, burglars, or other predators that are only after a bit of material gain. Keep in mind, however, that roughly one in five robbers seeks more than just material gain—they want to hurt you as well. If you sense that some-

Road Rage

Does "Road Rage" really exist? Despite the huge media coverage of this phenomenon, there is no increase in traffic deaths to confirm its existence. In fact, the number of traffic fatalities typically goes down each year, probably due to better safety measures.

Nevertheless, cars do insulate people from each other, making it very easy to become angry beyond the level that would occur in a face-to-face interaction. For this reason alone, it's best not to confront someone in another car—let bygones be bygones before someone does something truly regrettable.

thing larger than property is at stake, it may be time to fight. This is a difficult call to make, and we cannot stress enough the value of training.

- According to almost every federal and local crime statistic, assaults and murders are most often committed by friends, lovers, family members and other acquaintances for the sake of love, money, or petty arguments. If you find yourself in or near a heated argument, *LEAVE*.

Physical preparedness

- Keep yourself in good physical condition. Predators tend to avoid people who look like they can take care of themselves. In addition, sound physical condition will place you in a much better position should you ever need to run or fight.
- Enroll in women's self-defense classes often. Take different classes from different instructors. Classes taught exclusively by women are valuable, but it's also good to take classes that incorporate male attackers—it's important to learn that you can disable a full-grown man. Peaceful Paths offers specialized training courses for women that includes not only physical technique, but verbal skills as well.
- Consider enrolling in a martial arts school. You will gain all-important confidence that will drive most predators away *before* they attack. "Hard styles" such as Karate and Tae Kwon Do usually offer sparring and a heavy sport-orientation combined with martial philosophy. "Soft styles" such as Aikido and Tai Chi offer brilliant fighting technique and a peaceful philosophy, but take many years to master. Judo, Jujitsu, and grappling schools offer realistic, street-oriented technique. Before you choose a school, observe a few classes at different "dojo" or training halls. Avoid schools that insist on lengthy contracts; instead, find small schools with friendly, passionate instructors. If you live in the Denver area, we highly recommend the Red Mist Society.

Car safety

- Lock your car when driving. Carjackers and "red-light robbers" prefer cars that are unlocked.
- When stopped in traffic, keep enough room between you and the car in front of you so that you can pull out and drive away if necessary. Whenever possible, use the middle or inside lane at intersections.

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- If you think someone's following you but you're not sure you're being followed, take four right or left turns. If they stay with you, drive to a police station or a busy place. Don't lead them to your home, and don't pull over to confront them. Carjackers often follow their prey in pairs, waiting for an opportunity for one to jump out and take the victim's car.
 - Always check around, under, and in your car before getting in. When returning to parking lots, use the buddy system. Pre-plan your environment when parking your car. A parking lot that's bright and safe during the day may not be so inviting after the sun goes down.
 - Keep home keys and personal information away from car. In the event that it is stolen, you don't want to leave the thief an open invitation to your house.
 - Single women should consider tinting windows to conceal identity, and keeping a man's article of clothing, such as a necktie, visible in the back seat. Dogs are great deterrents and should travel with you whenever possible.
 - When leaving a parking lot or garage, have your keys ready before you arrive at the car. Check in and around your car, get in quickly, lock the door, start the engine and drive away. Fasten your seat belt and situate your belongings *after* you've begun driving away.
 - Always check the back seat before getting in.
 - Don't bait the "smash and grab" scam by leaving items visible on the seat. In this scam, robbers wait at intersections for stopped cars that have purses, wallets, duffel bags, expensive jackets, or other tempting items lying in plain view on the front or back seat. Keep these items hidden on the floor or in the trunk.
 - If you are bumped from behind, drive to a public place before pulling over. This is a scam often used by carjackers. The carjackers bump their victim, and when the driver pulls over and gets out of his car, the carjackers go into action.
 - When exchanging information after a minor accident or "bump," offer only your license number and insurance agent.
 - Don't argue with carjackers. If you have a child in the car, announce this fact to your attacker in a calm, clear voice. Most carjackers just want the property; they don't want trouble.

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- If an armed carjacker orders you to start driving, here is one very high-risk defense: wait for an opportunity in a public place and crash your car into a stationary object (avoid hitting other cars—you don't want to hurt innocent bystanders). This is very high-risk behavior, but it is most likely better than going to an environment of your attacker's choice.
 - Beware of signals from other drivers that something is wrong with your car. If you suspect a problem, drive to a service station, but don't pull over on the spot unless you must.
 - If you see a woman hitchhiker or a person stranded on the side of the road, be aware that it could be a trap. An alternative to pulling over is to call police and give the person's location.
 - Keep a cell-phone in your car. If you are stranded by the side of the road, raise your hood, lock the doors and stay in your car until help arrives. If your car is in danger of being hit by traffic, then find a safe vantage point while you wait for help.
 - Always keep your car in good running condition with at least half a tank of gas.
 - Rather than driving through bad neighborhoods, take the long way. It may cost you a few minutes, but it will help you avoid being stranded in a dangerous or deserted area.
 - Keep an emergency kit in your car including flashlight, extra batteries, blanket, water, food, matches, medical supplies, cell phone, road flares, and tools.

Vacationing

- Keep your money in two locations on your person: a wallet or purse that contains your spending money, and a second wallet or money belt that contains travelers checks, credit cards, and other important documents. Never show this wallet in public. Money belts can be purchased wherever luggage is sold.
- Travel light, and be modest in your choice of luggage. Nice luggage can attract thieves. By travelling light, you lessen the chances of being bogged-down and vulnerable.
- If you rent a car, make sure it doesn't have rental signs or plates on it. These signs advertise to predators that the occupants probably have

Drunken Rage

Alcohol is a factor in more than half of all physical assaults, and more than half of all rapes and sexual assaults.

Alcohol can greatly reduce a person's inhibitions against violence. Be particularly careful of those who tend to become aggressive when angry, are controlling by nature, or have difficulty communicating. In a sober person, these are not necessarily warning signs, but when drunk, these traits can spell danger.

Always trust your intuition. If you feel hostility beginning to build around alcohol, it's time to leave.

If you are the victim of alcohol-related violence, the best thing you can do for yourself and your attacker is to press charges. Don't ignore the problem.

cash and are disoriented. Request an unmarked car.

- Keep your purse and important carry-on luggage with you at all times. Don't nap in airports or public places unless your luggage is being watched, is in a locker, or you have a personal alarm on it. Don't allow conversations, rest-room stops, commotions, or other distractions to lose contact with your luggage or purse.
- Don't hesitate to ask taxi or shuttle drivers to wait a moment until you make it safely to your car or front door.

About alcohol

Alcohol in any environment increases your chances of injury. Alcohol is often a factor in violent acts including family violence, sexual assault, rape, assault and aggravated assault, murder, and suicide.

Alcohol does not in and of itself cause violence, but it can be used as an excuse to become violent, it lowers inhibitions, it impairs judgement, and can cause paranoia.

Over half of all physical assaults involve alcohol. Avoid areas where alcohol and violence seem common, stay sober, and stay alert to signs of trouble. If you're with friends, be sure that you have your own way to get home. You won't want to be around these people if they become hostile, and you certainly won't want to ride with them if they are drunk. When alcohol is involved, always travel in groups, or with someone you know very well.

Some of the warning signs for alcoholism include:

- Frequently needs a drink.
- Obsesses over alcohol or drinks alone.
- Frequent difficulty remembering what took place when drunk.
- Lies to conceal drinking.
- Argues with friends and family members about drinking.
- Feels that alcohol enhances performance, or needs alcohol for certain activities.
- Ignores work, school, or family obligations for alcohol.

If you or someone you know displays one or more of these signs, it's time to seek counseling. Consult your local yellow pages under "alcoholism" or call the Department of Health & Human Services Referral Routing Service at 1-800-662-HELP.

A word about deterrents

Guns

Gun ownership reduces the fear of crime, but not its occurrence. More often than not, guns are used on the wrong person or by the wrong person—guns kill many more family members than burglars. The bottom line is, if you have a gun in your house you are much more likely to incur a tragic event than you are to avoid one. If you have a gun, assume that a child *will* find it, even if you don't have children.

Don't keep or carry a gun (or any other weapon for that matter) unless you are willing to use deadly force. If you hesitate, it can be taken and used against you.

If you wish to carry a concealed gun, be aware of the laws in your area. In some places, it's completely illegal to carry concealed weapons, and in other places you need a permit. Be aware also that shooting someone on the street is much harder to justify than in your house. Even in your own home, despite the common misperception of so-called "make my day laws," most states frown on homeowners shooting intruders. It must be proved that the homeowner's life was at stake, and that the shooting was committed in self-defense. This is a burden of proof that lies entirely on the homeowner, and failure to provide this difficult evidence can result in devastating lawsuits.

If you decide to buy a gun, make sure you take it to the shooting range regularly. Try several models before you decide to buy one. Revolvers tend to be simpler and more reliable than semi-automatics, which can jam.

Sprays

Pepper spray, made from the extracts of actual peppers, has come to replace Mace, a chemical spray, as the standard self-defense spray. Chemical Mace is still available, but part of the popularity of pepper spray is the fact that it is more effective. Mace is ineffective on approximately 1 out of 10 people. Pepper spray has a higher success rate.

Be aware, though, that even pepper spray has a failure rate, particularly with those who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Even with the unimpaired, test subjects have been able to complete assaults even after being hit with pepper spray.

Although pepper spray is a popular and relatively effective deterrent, it is not perfect. Pepper spray is not designed to save your life, it is merely capable of buying you a few seconds, at best, so that you can escape. This in itself may be enough to save your life, but any deterrent must be accompanied by training.

If you carry pepper spray, carry it at the ready when you are in a questionable environment—it won't do you any good if it's at the bottom of your purse when you need it. Make sure that your pepper spray is fully-charged. If you have any concern about its functionality, purchase a new canister.

When purchasing spray, make sure that it has at least 10 continuous seconds of spray, and that it is at least 10% OC (oleoresin capsicum—the hot stuff).

Practice with your pepper spray. Spray it a few times to find out if it sprays in a stream or a fog. Try it in a breeze to find out how it responds, but never spray it into the wind, even during an attack. Devise a few worst-case scenarios with a friend (but don't spray them!) and find out just how long it takes to reach your spray, fire it, and escape. Don't be surprised if you need to hit an attacker more than once with pepper spray.

Other deterrents

Stun guns are more useful as visual deterrent than as a weapon. They look formidable, but in reality you must be within arm's reach of your attacker, which is too close for your safety. Additionally, it can take up to four seconds of continuous contact to immobilize an assailant. That is entirely unrealistic during a struggle. Worse yet, because this weapon requires that you physically struggle with your attacker, there is a good chance that this weapon can be taken and used against you.

Even if you don't have a weapon at hand, virtually any item can be used to distract an attacker long enough to escape. A rolled-up magazine jabbed to the throat, a pencil jabbed to the face, or the corner of a book to the eye might possibly buy you a few seconds.

A common bit of advice is to interlace your car keys between your fingers and punch your assailant in the face. We don't recommend this because punching is a bad idea in the first place, because it takes too long to interlace keys in fingers, and because it can cause more damage to your hand than to your attacker. A smart attacker has only to

squeeze your hand to cause very distracting pain.

Personal alarms

Personal alarms have the advantage of being simple, and they cannot be turned against the victim. Purchase a type of alarm that is relatively difficult to turn off or break once it is activated. Many have attachments that allow them to be used as door or window alarms. When traveling, or even at home, it's a good idea to use these alarms on your door as you sleep.

Scenario Training

One of the most important parts of self-protection training is realistic scenario training. At Peaceful Paths, we understand the value of this fun and educational technique.

A note for the elderly

Overall, the elderly are no more prone to street crime than anyone else. However, predators do search for victims who look as if they can't defend themselves, and the elderly do need to adopt certain behaviors to insulate themselves from the heart-breakers and life-takers of the world.

- Continue regular social contact. Keep old friends and make new ones. Participate in social activities, and avoid the camp mentality.
- Never, ever give personal information, such as checking account or credit card numbers, to a stranger.
- Use the buddy system when travelling at night or in unpopulated areas. Traveling with one person can reduce the likelihood of crime tremendously. Traveling with two or more is even better. Keep this in mind in parking lots and shopping malls.
- Have your social security and retirement payments sent directly to the bank.
- Allow no one into your house. Say no to “free inspections” or estimates regarding furnaces, roofs, or other household concerns. If you need to have work done, *you* select the contractor.
- The “smash and grab” technique of breaking a car window and stealing valuables is often perpetrated against seniors. Eliminate this temptation by keeping purses and valuables hidden on the floor or in the trunk.
- Lowlifes and knuckleheads often prey on those who appear weak, confused, lost, or drunk. When in public, conduct yourself with confidence and a sense of purpose.
- Get out of the house, and have friends & family stop by frequently
- Keep control over your own assets. Be very suspicious of people who offer you deals that sound too good, or ask you to withdraw money from your checking account.
- Pay attention to the details of your personal affairs. Choose only reputable charities.
- Emotional hostility & intentional neglect from caretakers or family can lead to physical abuse. At the first sign of this, take control and change your environment.

Rape prevention tips

- Alcohol and rape are intertwined. More than half of all men who attempt rape have been drinking, and of those who had been drinking, a larger percentage were successful. For this reason, avoid areas such as "Greek Row" where drinking is rampant, or if you are going to be around alcohol in any environment, use the buddy system from the start of the evening until you are safe at home.
- Burglar proof your home. See our sections on securing your house or apartment.
- Don't jog, walk, or ride your bike with headphones on.
- Keep people apprised of your whereabouts. Make sure they know how to get ahold of you, and when to expect you back.
- Keep a cell-phone.
- Build a safe-room in your house.

Date rape drugs

What's your best defense against the "date rape drug"? Travel in a group, and use the buddy system—you keep an eye on her ALL NIGHT, and vice-versa.

Peaceful Paths Women's Self-Defense Training

Peaceful Paths offers a very unique and popular Women's Self-Defense class.

During this special eight-hour class, you will gain life-saving physical, verbal, and mental skills.

We will show you what predators look for, and how not to carry the mark of a victim. And of course, we will teach you how to physically defend yourself!



peaceful paths
personal safety training

Physical skills

- *Learn how to escape if knocked to the ground or surprised in bed.*
- *Learn how to defend against someone much larger than you.*

Verbal skills

- *Learn how to recognize and respond to a predator's initial verbal contact.*
- *Learn how to differentiate between a common catcall and a potentially dangerous incident.*

Mental skills

- *Learn to avoid the mark of a victim.*
- *Learn to improve & trust your intuition.*

Contact us today at (303) 233-8279 to schedule a session for your organization.

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- Read our sections on elevator & stairwell safety.
 - Avoid public transportation at night. If you must use it, stay close to the driver and have someone meet you at your stop.
 - Don't open the front door if you're alone.
 - Never admit strangers into your home—no matter what the pretense.
 - Be alert to your home's surroundings, such as bushes or stairwells where people can lie in wait for you to open the door.
 - Never enter your house if it's been tampered with.
 - Know a man well before you go on a date. "Date rape" is less common when you've know each other for a while.
 - *Always* listen to your intuition.
 - Training training training! Enroll in women's self-defense classes a few times each year, and take different classes from different instructors. You might be surprised how much fun it can be! Peaceful Paths offers excellent training courses for women in the workplace and on the street. You can reach us at (303) 233-8279.

Surviving hostage situations

Unfortunately, hostage situations are becoming more and more common. The good news is that hostages usually survive. Hostages are the hostage taker's most valuable asset, and he usually doesn't want to harm them. Your chances of survival are good, if you follow a few rules:

- Recognize that the first hour of the hostage situation is the most volatile. Keep a low profile, and do as the hostage taker says.
- Follow orders and don't argue. Speak only when spoken to, unless you are ill. Be mindful of your eye contact with the hostage taker. Make eye contact when you're being given orders but that's all. Too much eye contact can be taken as a challenge.
- Keep a calm facade, even if you are panicked on the inside. Speak slowly and calmly, and keep track of your facial expression and body language. If you appear calm, the hostage taker has less reason to panic.
- If your hostage taker wants to talk to you, be kind and empathetic to his cause, even if you disagree.
- In extended situations, beware of the "Stockholm syndrome" in which hostages become sympathetic and attached to their captors. This is an easy trap to fall into, and it interferes greatly with the rescue. Stay empathetic to his needs, but not sympathetic to his actions.
- Most hostage situations turn out well. Never lose hope.

About Peaceful Paths

Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, Peaceful Paths is the result of years of combined study, research, and real-life application of hostile conflict management techniques. Clients benefit from experience ranging from the classroom to the street.

Peaceful Paths has provided training to a multitude of organizations ranging from homeless shelters to businesses and professional organizations. Our subject matter ranges from Women's Self-Defense to Managing a Hostile Public.

Peaceful Paths was founded by Shawn Smith, who has spent nearly 15 years studying human aggression. He has earned degrees in Communication and Psychology from the University of Colorado, has served as Trainer and Senior Patrol Leader for the Denver Guardian Angels, and has studied the techniques and philosophies of martial arts for thirteen years. His fun and dynamic training sessions reflect this range of experience, combining effective conflict management skills with street-wise common sense.

Shawn can be reached in Denver, Colorado at (303) 233-8279, or via email, shawn@peacepath.com.



peaceful paths
personal safety training