

SELF-PROTECTION TIPS FOR WOMEN

By Sandra Orchard, author of *Emergency Reunion* (July 2015)

These are *self-protection* tips, *not* defense tips, because typically an encounter will last at least two minutes. High step in place for a couple of minutes to see how winded you get. If you can't last two minutes, you need to be able to disengage quickly. Read on:

1) The key to avoiding an encounter is hyper-vigilance.

Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Swivel your head and look. If anyone closes in within an arm's length, turn to face them on a diagonal, with your strongest arm and foot back, your weight evenly distributed, your palm raised and firmly say "Stop" as loudly as deemed necessary for the situation. Don't worry what they'll think. You can apologize later.

2) Think the best, but plan for the worst.

Facing the person and demanding he stop also attracts attention from others, which will further discourage the perpetrator and hopefully prompt others to help.

3) Always park beneath a light standard, preferably one with a video camera.

4) Long before you get close to your car, scan under it and around it.

5) Only unlock the door you need and not until you've done an interior visual check.

6) When loading purchases and children into the car, open your driver's door first, shove your purse under the seat and relock.

Next, lock kids in the car. Then put your purchases in the trunk.

7) When you leave the house, note where things are.

When you return, pay attention. If anything is out of place, take appropriate precautions.

8) If an attacker grabs you by the throat, do not let him get you to the ground.

The ground is your enemy. Your hands are free. Slam them down on his elbows to break the hold. Or if he's too tall, grab his shirt, dig in your fingers, pull him close, and knee his groin as often as needed until he releases you. Then run. (Practice to build muscle memory.)

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