

Self Defense for Runners:

Tips and Tools



How to Prevent an Attack

The best defense is a smart offense. There are precautions you can take to protect yourself during a run. Safety tips for runners, walkers, and cyclists. tips focus on increasing your visibility and awareness.

- Carry a phone, but keep it stowed away and out of sight.
- Carry a whistle and an ID (identification).
- Don't leave your house unlocked.
- Carry a key. Have your door key ready before you reach your home.
- Don't wear jewelry, carry cash, or run with other valuables in sight.
- Exercise caution if anyone in a car asks you for directions. If you answer, keep a full arm's length from the car
- Face oncoming traffic when running or walking so that you can see approaching vehicles. Cyclists need to go with the flow of traffic.
- If you think you are being followed, change direction and head for open stores, theaters, or a lighted house.

Helpful Tips

- Don't engage with verbal harassment. Use discretion in acknowledging strangers.
- Look directly at others and be observant, but keep your distance and keep moving.
- Jog on a familiar route but vary your daily routes and the time of your run.
- Plan your route ahead.
- Know where safe spaces are located along the course, including businesses and stores that are open.
- Run in pairs, in a group, or with a dog when trying out new routes that you are unfamiliar with.
- Run in open spaces, away from bushes, parked cars, or alcoves where someone could hide.
- Run with confidence. Keep your head up and your eyes alert.
- Tell a friend or family member where you are going and when you will return. Have them track you using a smartphone app if possible.
- Trust your intuition. If you are unsure about an area or a person or feel unsafe, leave immediately.
- Wear reflective material so motorists can easily see you.

Self Defense Gear

There are several different products that cast light or emit a loud sound in the event of an attack.

Personal Security Jogger Alarms are worn on your arm and emits a 110-decibel alarm if necessary. Pepper spray is probably the most common tool that runners carry to protect themselves in the event of an attack, although some runners also carry mace. **Pepper spray** is considered more effective when dealing with attackers who are mentally disturbed or under the influence of drugs. The canisters are usually small enough to hold in your hand and many come with a hand strap. Most have a 10 to 12-foot range and contain multiple blasts. You can even purchase practice pepper spray to test it out so you feel more prepared for an attack.



There are also other self-defense tools for runners on the market. TigerLady - a revolutionary discreet self-defense tool modeled after a cat's retractable claws. Some runners purchase and carry **stun guns**, and there are also devices that you can attach to your shoe.



Self-defense tools such as pepper spray, mace, stun guns, and other gear that may inflict harm are not legal in all states. Check your state laws before purchasing or carrying one of these safety devices.