



Personal Safety & Security

Practical Strategies for Everyday Protection

Situational Awareness: Your First Line of Defense

Most crimes are crimes of opportunity. Criminals look for easy targets—people who appear distracted, vulnerable, or unaware of their surroundings. Developing situational awareness doesn't mean living in fear; it means being present and prepared.

The OODA Loop

Observe: Scan your environment continuously.

- Who's around you?
- What's normal for this location?
- Are there exits and safe spaces?

Orient: Process what you're seeing

- Does anything seem out of place?
- Are you being followed or watched?
- What are your options?

Decide: Choose your response.

- Avoid, evade, or confront?
- Call for help?
- Change your route?

Act: Execute your decision confidently

- Trust your instincts
- Move with purpose
- Don't second-guess safety decisions

Personal Safety in Different Environments

In Public Spaces:

- Walk with confidence and purpose
- Keep phone and valuables secured
- Stay in well-lit, populated areas
- Trust your gut—if it feels wrong, leave
- Have keys ready before reaching your car



At Home:

- Lock doors and windows, even when home
- Install quality deadbolts and consider smart locks
- Use peepholes or video doorbells
- Don't advertise absences on social media
- Know your neighbors
- Have an emergency plan and rally point

Online:

- Limit personal information shared publicly
- Use strong, unique passwords
- Enable two-factor authentication
- Be cautious of phishing and scams
- Review privacy settings regularly
- Don't share real-time location

Travel Safety

Before You Go:

- Research destination safety
- Share itinerary with trusted contact
- Register with the embassy if traveling internationally
- Make copies of important documents

While Traveling:

- Stay alert in airports and transit hubs
- Use hotel safes for valuables
- Vary your routine
- Know local emergency numbers
- Trust hotel/local recommendations for safe areas
- Keep emergency cash in multiple locations

De-escalation Techniques

If confronted by an aggressor:

- Stay calm and breathe
- Use non-threatening body language



- Speak in a calm, even tone
- Give them space—don't corner them
- Acknowledge their feelings without agreeing
- Look for exit opportunities
- Comply with demands if it's about property
- Your life is worth more than your belongings

When to Fight Back

Physical resistance should be a last resort when:

- You're being moved to a secondary location (never go)
- Your life is in immediate danger
- You have a reasonable chance of escape

If you must fight:

- Fight with everything you have
- Target vulnerable areas: eyes, throat, groin
- Make noise—yell "FIRE" to attract attention
- Create an opportunity to escape, then **RUN**
- Don't stop until you're safe

Digital Safety

Protecting Your Information:

- Use VPN on public WiFi
- Regularly update software and apps
- Be skeptical of unsolicited contacts
- Monitor financial accounts
- Freeze credit if not actively using

Social Media Safety:

- Limit who can see your posts
- Don't share vacation plans in real-time
- Avoid posting children's schools or routines
- Be cautious when accepting friend requests
- Review tagged photos and location data



Emergency Preparedness

Have Ready:

- Emergency contacts programmed in phone
- ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact
- Basic first aid knowledge
- Flashlight and phone charger
- Emergency cash
- Important documents backed up

Know:

- Your address and nearest cross streets
- How to describe your location
- Local emergency numbers
- Nearest hospital/police station
- Your blood type and allergies

Trust Your Instincts

Your intuition is a powerful tool that has evolved and developed over time. If something feels wrong, it probably is. Don't worry about being rude or overreacting—your safety is more important than being socially uncomfortable. It's better to be embarrassed than endangered.

Safety is not about paranoia—it's about preparation. Small habits and awareness can make a significant difference in your personal security.

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