

## Personal Safety for Adolescents

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No one wants to think about the possibility of our teen or ourselves being assaulted or hurt as a result of a horri-

ble crime. The best thing we can do to protect against crimes is prevention. "Self-protection means that one is aware of the potential of a threatening situation and knowing how to react if you are threatened." (Olson Center for Women's Health, Vol.15 2)

There are a number of things one can do to ensure personal safety.

- **Safety at Home**
  - a. Never leave doors and windows unlocked—if you are in the back yard, you may not hear an intruder come in the front door that is unlocked.
  - b. Tell a trusted friend or neighbor if you will be away from your home for an extended time.
  - c. Cancel your paper and mail delivery or have someone pick it up while you are gone.
- **Safe Practices**
  - a. One way to avoid becoming a victim is to avoid acting like a victim.
  - b. Try to look like you are sure of yourself.
  - c. Walk with a purpose as if you are going somewhere.
  - d. If you are going to your car or in a parking lot, have your keys in your hand. Do not keep them in your purse or pocket requiring you to dig to get them when you get to the car.

- **Personal Safety**

- a. Never walk alone after dark or in poorly lit areas.
- b. Carry a rescue whistle that you can blow. Your voice may not carry but a whistle can be heard a long way away.
- c. Wear clothes and shoes that allow you to run if necessary.
- d. Learn self-defense because most adolescents are biologically small and often less physically strong than adult men. Self-defense, like Karate, rely more on agility than physical strength.
- e. Use your intuition. If you think it is a bad idea, it is.
- f. Be aware of your surroundings. If you listen to music, do not have it so loud that you cannot hear anything else.
- g. Trust your sixth sense because it always has your best interest in mind.

If in spite of all this, you are attacked, blow your whistle, scream "**FIRE**". The reasoning behind screaming fire is if you are in a big crowd and are attacked, if you yell for help, individuals tend to think that someone else will answer the call for help (this is called diffusion of responsibility.) If you yell fire, people all of the sudden get very worried about their own personal safety and pay more attention. Once attention is drawn to yourself, the attacker will probably back off or you will be helped. (<http://everything2.com/title/If+you%2527re+being+attacked%252C+yell+fire>)