

For legal and practical reasons it is preferable to escape, deter or avoid an attack when possible, therefore, we address the following concepts in our Awareness class: **Awareness, Defensive Mindset, Personal Protection Plans, Avoiding Confrontations, Recognizing Body Language and Signs of Aggression, Target Avoidance, and Responding To Attacks.** (Virginia Safety and Justice Associates <http://www.vajusticeandsafety.com/awareness.htm>)

January is National Personal Self-Defense Awareness Month.

What would you do if you suddenly came face-to-face with a criminal? In these times, it is very likely that you'll be a target. Crime can happen to anyone, anyplace and at anytime. Will you know what to do in an encounter with a criminal? Are you prepared with the tools, knowledge, and skills to protect yourself and your loved ones when the need arises?

This month is dedicated to educate citizens, especially women and teens about realistic self-defense options that could very well save their lives. The aim is emphasize that being totally prepared by raising your awareness, reducing your risk of being a victim. This however is only 90 percent of the equation. The other 10 percent of your safety is purely physical. The total package is aimed to make you more alert and more aware that to the fact that the key to their own safety lies within you.

Despite the recent reports that crime has dropped the following statistics have remain almost constant.

- Every 2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted.
- Every 6 minutes, someone in the U.S. is raped.
- Every 34 minutes, someone in the U.S. is Murdered.

(Statistics from FBI Uniform Crime Reports www.fbi.gov)

When the time comes, instead of being paralyzed with fear, you can be empowered with the right knowledge, and the correct tools to STOP a potentially life altering event if you buy the right protection and, arm yourself with the knowledge of how to

protect yourself and guard your property. Don't let some offensive criminal behavior negatively impact your life.

The best way of protecting yourself is through personal self-defense education and training. Self-defense is not always about FIGHTING back. Mr. Miyagi said in one of the Karate Kid movies " *Best way to avoid punch, no be there.*" Your best way to avoid being a crime victim is to apply quick thinking and de-escalating methods to the situation in order to get away. Criminals feed off of vulnerability so stay alert to avoid becoming a statistic. *Did you know that approximately 95% of crime can be easily prevented?* Survivors of rape and domestic violence will probably agree that avoidance is much easier than recovery.

Where to begin

- Learn to do smart things that will keep you safe.
- Make it a point to enroll in a local self defense class. Your local police can probably tell you of free classes. While you are at it, take some friends with you.
- If you can't avoid a situation, having the right [personal protection product](#), and knowing how to use it can allow you to escape.

[PepperEyes.com](#) is dedicated to providing you with the best and most affordable personal protection products on the market to meet the security needs of you, your family members or your business, by assisting anyone who is unwilling to become a victim of crime. If you want to take personal responsibility for yourself, your home or your business, buy our high quality discount personal protection products and arm yourself with the knowledge of the best way to stay secure in an ever-increasing violent world. In today's society being equipped mentally and physically is no longer an option.

Peppereyes.com <http://peppereyes.wordpress.com/2011/01/05/january-is-national-personal-self-defense-awareness-month/>

Do you feel lucky?

Over the Holidays a friend of my house was robbed. In the decades that his family had lived there, nothing like this had happened to them. I also have known other people who became crime victims. In doing research about crime you quickly see patterns of behavior that one make a person more or less attractive for a criminal attack. One thing that you learn in discussing crime is that psychologically, most people are not even willing to accept that it may become a crime victim. They prefer to not even think about it and they don't take proactive steps to protect their own safety and the safety of their residence and family.

Ask ten of your friends what type of personal protection they have when the time comes. Ask them if they even thought about what they would do if approached by a criminal? I know lots of gun owners, but they don't carry them when they go shopping or walking or jogging. Some homeowners take some precautions but, don't do many of the things I've recommended. They are gambling with their safety!

Researchers who spoke to crime victims say that people react in one of two ways. Many "good" people were so doubtful that anything like this could ever happen to them that they could get past their sense of having been "wronged" to take the steps that prevent the same thing from happening again. Other victims however admitted that they created the opportunity for the time, by being distracted by something else. The people in these groups are the ones who will learn from their mistakes and make corrective changes to prevent from being a victim again. Our goal is to prevent you from having to learn from a mistake and do what you have to do now, so you want have to do what you should have done later.

So what types of people are criminals choosing as targets? What are the odds that you could be targeted? Why do they choose this person and not that one? Why was your neighbor's house robbed and not yours? The crime victims more often than not, offer themselves up as targets by the way they behave, by being distracted, disorganized, unfocused and unprepared. As a seasoned criminal said "We don't pick our victims, they pick themselves"

I was told *never give a crook a chance* because they would take it. Criminals are looking to hit the Jackpot, They look for opportunities to score big, and there are looking for big returns with minimal amount of risk and efforts.

Unfortunately as a group, women are the more frequent crime victims. Women alone may certainly be attractive targets for robbery or other attacks simply because they are smaller and according to popular myth weaker than men offer the path of least resistance.

Below are the statistical numbers based on crime data provided by various studies that indicate your odds of being a victim of sexual crime.

STATISTICAL DATA

In 2007, there were 248,300 victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault. (These figures do not include victims 12 years old or younger.) Here's the math. According to the U.S. Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey — the country's largest and most reliable crime study — there were 248,300 sexual assaults in 2007 (the most recent data available). There are 525,600 minutes in a non-leap year. That makes 31,536,000 seconds/year. So, 31,536,000 divided by 248,300 comes out to 1 sexual assault every 127 seconds, or **about 1 every 2 minutes**. This figure has remained consistent for over a decade.

1 out of every 6 American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime (14.8% completed rape; 2.8% attempted rape).

17.7 million American women have been victims of attempted or completed rape.

9 of every 10 rape victims were female in 2003.

1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually assaulted by age 18 (Finkelhor, David, et al. "Sexual Abuse in a National Survey of Adult Men and Women: Prevalence, Characteristics, and Risk Factors." 1990.)

About half of all rape victims are in the **lowest third of income** distribution; half are in the upper two-thirds. (Violence against Women, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Dept. of Justice, 1994.)

While about 80% of all victims are white, minorities are somewhat more likely to be attacked.

Lifetime rate of rape /attempted rape for women by race:

- All women: 17.6%
- White women: 17.7%
- Black women: 18.8%
- Asian Pacific Islander women: 6.8%
- American Indian/Alaskan women: 34.1%
- Mixed race women: 24.4%

Men

- One in six men will experience a sexual assault in his lifetime.

Children

- More than half of all rapes of women occur before age 18; 22% occur before age 12. (Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women, Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, November, 2000)
- Females ages 12 to 24 are at the greatest risk for experiencing a rape or sexual assault (DOJ 2001).
 - 15% of sexual assault and rape victims are under age 12.
 - 29% are age 12-17
 - 44% are under age 18.3
 - 80% are under age 30.3
 - 12-34 are the highest risk years.
 - Girls ages 16-19 are 4 times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault.
 - 7% of girls in grades 5-8 and 12% of girls in grades 9-12 said they had been sexually abused.⁴
 - 3% of boys grades 5-8 and 5% of boys in grades 9-12 said they had been sexually abused.

In 1995, local child protection service agencies identified 126,000 children who were victims of either substantiated or indicated sexual abuse.

- Of these, 75% were girls.
- Nearly 30% of child victims were between the age of 4 and 7.

93% of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker.

- 34.2% of attackers were family members.
- 58.7% were acquaintances.
- Only 7% of the perpetrators were strangers to the victim.

If you think your safe because the probability of your being a victim is low, don't use this as an excuse to walk through life with a false sense of security. You should still be vigilant about your security. Remember that adage "never give a crok a chance". My friend lives in a nice subdivision, and never had this issue before. None the less he did become a crime victim.

Current statistical reports indicate that over the past decade and a half, the crime rates in most major cities have declined, considering that two-thirds of national crime rate occurs in the ten largest cities in the U.S.

Professor Wesley G. Skogan from Northwestern University spoke at UIC's SSB last year, regarding the issue of the declining crime rate in the city of Chicago.

Skogan explained that when crime rate is down in one big city, it can be up in another, or in other area like the suburbs.

"Crime is local, one third increase of property rate contributes to crime in New York, City" said Skogan.

According to Skogan, it is the community factors that have strengthened in cities like Chicago in 15 years, which leaves reason to believe that citizens taking precautions, educating, and arming themselves are contributing to help lower the crime rate.

So if you want to reduce your chances of being a crime victim, do what you have to do now, so that you want regret it later.

By Victor Swindell, owner of PepperEyes.com, a division of Swindell Enterprises. PepperEyes.com is dedicated to assist those people who are unwilling to become a victim and are taking personal responsibility to protect themselves, and their families with our pepper spray, stun guns, and other personal security products. In today's society being equipped mentally and physically is no longer an option.

<http://peppereyes.wordpress.com/2010/01/15/do-you-feel-lucky/>

You've Got Mail

January is Stalking Awareness Month

A decade ago, a stalker was someone who repeatedly followed another person around town, pranked called your home or even peeked in your bedroom window. Now with the use of modern easy to use technology, a new form of stalking has risen called Cyber -stalking. This is the second and final article in our [stalking series](#).

Anyone who has dealt with a cyber stalker knows how serious it can be and how stressful it can be. According to research most of these stalkers are the same as their non technology counterparts. These can be a crazy "ex" boy-friend, girl-friend, or spouse, a co-worker, a student from a class, a distant friend or even a stranger.

What is CYBERSTALKING

Cyber stalking is the use of the Internet or other electronic means to stalk someone. It has been defined as the use of information and communications technology, particularly the Internet, by an individual or group of individuals, to harass another individual, group of individuals, or organization. The behavior can include and of the following:

- False accusations
- Hacking and/or monitoring a victim's computer and internet activity
- Installing [snoopware](#) and monitoring a victim's cell phone

- Sending threatening or obscene mail
- Identity theft or assuming a person's identity online
- Damage to data or equipment
- The solicitation of minors for sexual purposes
- Gathering information for harassment purposes
- Sending viruses(spyware)
- Harassing victims in chat rooms including flaming (online verbal abuse).
- Harassment through unwanted texting
- Creating a website in "honor" of a victim that includes lost of recent photos, and details about the person.

The harassment must be such that a reasonable person, in possession of the same information, would regard it as sufficient to cause another reasonable person distress. You may not be sure of the "objective" of the stalker but you should still report incidents that concern you. Situations which do not meet the legal standard still could be documented and reported to other agencies.

While cyber stalking is a specific kind of stalking, the possible severity of its emotional and physical threat is similar to the terror caused by regular stalking, with the same potential consequences. As a result of their victimization, many victims have physical and emotional reactions such as: Changes in sleeping and/or eating patterns, Experiencing nightmares, Feeling stressed, anxious or helpless, fearing for one's safety and security.

With the miniaturization of electronics in the past few decades, this has enabled these devices to be extremely small and well hidden. The mass production of these devices have made them so affordable that [spy electronics](#) available to anyone, from concerned parents using a nanny cam, or a jealous ex-boyfriend, a suspecting spouse, or a stranger who wants to stalk you. The only remaining challenge is placement: If anyone wants to capture the juicy tidbits of your life, they've got to have a microphone or camera in the right place at the right time. While you never know about that hotel room your in, what about your home, or your cell phone. Like offline stalking, cyber stalking is a form of personal terrorism. Similarly, cyber stalking may precede offline stalking, sexual assault, physical violence, or even murder.

Cyberstalking Laws

There are forty-six states that have laws that explicitly include electronic forms of communication within stalking or harassment laws. The states that currently do not are the District of Columbia, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Jersey, and New Mexico,

How to Prevent Cyberstalking

The best protection against becoming the prey of stalking is not to reveal anything personal that you might have in common with the potential stalker. Stalkers may display selfishness, malice, sadism, and be very cunning and arrogant. Then again, many can also come across as well-educated, "smooth talking," and charming. However, most of these individuals are antisocial, or in other words, they're "control freaks" who enjoy manipulating others. Experts have suggested some simple ways to safeguard your personal information from predators:

- Do not share personal information in public spaces anywhere online. This includes the name of your school, teams you may play for, the color of your hair, your age.
- Check websites that provide information about people to see what information is available about you such as 411.com or WhoWhere.com. You could also try searching major search engines such as Google or Dogpile. I remember years ago looking up an elderly person from my old neighborhood, who never used a computer a day in her life. Not only did I find her, but got a map to her house.
- Do not use your real name or nickname as your screen name or user ID. Pick a name that is gender- and age-neutral. I suggest fictional characters such as PoohBear or Gorgon, any mythical character, your father's middle name and his age.
- Use a "nonsense" password that has no relation to you as a person; use a combination of numbers, symbols, and letters and make sure it is at least 6 characters long. Also, try to change your password frequently (I suggest when the clocks change or on your birthday) and avoid using the same password for multiple accounts. I like using Bible verses since there are 31,103 of them and in addition I substitute certain numbers or characters for letters. Some people substitute zero for the letter O or the number three for the letter E and using characters like "#" or ~ in the password.
- Do not post personal information as part of any user profiles (i.e. Facebook, Myspace, Twitter).

- Be VERY cautious about meeting online acquaintances in person. If you choose to meet, do so in a public place and take along a friend or some type of personal protection product.
- Make sure that your Internet Service Provider (ISP) and Internet Relay Chat (IRC) network have an acceptable user policy that prohibits cyberstalking.
- If a situation online becomes hostile you should log off or go some place else elsewhere.
- Treat your passwords like your Debit or Credit card, do not give your passwords to email or social networking sites with friends or acquaintances.
- Activate password protection on cell phones and never let anyone 'borrow your cell phone' See Cell Phone Stalking
- If a situation places you in fear, contact a local law enforcement agency.

What to do if you are the victim of a cyberstalker.

If you identify yourself as a victim of cyberstalking, you may want to follow these steps:

- If you are receiving persistent unwanted contact, make clear to that person that you would like him or her not to contact you EVER again.
- Save or log all communications with the harasser and any documentation of contacts with Internet system administrators and law enforcement officials for evidence. Do not edit or alter them in any way
- Consider blocking or filtering messages from the harasser. Although formats differ, a common chat room command to block someone would be to type: /ignore. However, in some circumstances (such as threats of violence), it may be more appropriate to save the information and contact law enforcement authorities.
- Visit SpamCop, a free service that will analyze abusive emails and determine their point of origin. They then generate a report that is sent to the appropriate system administrator.
- File a complaint with the harasser's ISP or the administrator of the online community.

If harassment continues after you have asked the person to stop, contact the local police enforcement (with all the details) and visit CyberSnitch to report internet abuse and have a report send to the appropriate law enforcement agency. In addition, contact the

harasser's Internet Service Provider (ISP). Often, an ISP can try to stop the conduct by direct contact with the stalker or by closing their account. If you receive abusive e-mails, identify the domain (after the "@" sign) and contact that ISP. Most ISP's have an e-mail address such as abuse@ or postmaster@ that can be used for complaints. If the ISP has a website, visit the site for information on how to file a complaint

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About 10 percent of women and more than 2 percent of men will report being stalked by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, or date at some time during in their life. (The National Center for Victims of Crime, Stalking Resource Center — October 2005)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To obtain more information on how to report an Internet crime such as stalking, harassment, or exploitation, visit any of the following sites

- U.S. Department of Justice website [Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section](#).
- [Cache and History Cleaning and Erasing Cookies](#)
- [Internet Safety](#)
- www.antistalking.com
- www.stalkingassistance.com
- www.haltabuse.org
- www.cyberangels.org

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<http://peppereyes.wordpress.com/2010/01/13/youve-got-mail/>

How to Prevent an Assault (or reduce your chances)

Here are some facts every parent of a college age person should know.

- At least 1 in 4 college women will be the victim of a sexual assault during her academic career. *Hirsch,*
- At least 80% of all sexual assaults are committed by an acquaintance of the victim.
- 48.8% of college women who were victims of attacks that met the study's definition of rape did not consider what happened to them rape.

- More than 70% of rape victims knew their attackers, compared to about half of all violent crime victims.
- One out of eight women will be raped while in college.
- 57% of rapes occur on a date.
- 75% of male students and 55% of female students involved in date rape had been drinking or using drugs.
- The physical and psychological effects of sexual assault can be devastating, and college students who are sexually assaulted may face impediments to academic and personal success.

These are the reported figures. There is much data suggesting that most rapes go unreported. One study showed that only 5 % of victims of rape or attempted rape report it to college police.

EVERY adult female is a potential target of these assailants. Every 2 minutes, someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted, and some one is raped every 6 minutes. Most sexual assaults can be avoided

by using some common sense and being armed with knowledge of what to avoid and armed with some non-lethal [personal protection products](#).

Let's look at some things you should know to help prevent an assault:

Be aware of your surroundings

Observe all things around and be aware of your surroundings including potential hiding places, people following you, etc. If confronted by an assailant look him straight in the eye so he knows for sure that you will remember what he looks like in a police lineup. Sometime divert them by asking them what time is it.

Make Loud Noise

There are two things about a Noise. One it attracts the attention of others. Second, it deters assailants. They want an easy target not someone who is going to resist. It is also show that you are more likely to draw attention by yelling "FIRE" than by yelling "Help" You may also consider getting a Personal Alarm device.

What's in your hand?

Moses: "What's in your hand?" (Exodus 4:1-20) If you are carrying a personal protection product, have it ready. Sometimes the sound of a discharging stun gun is enough to frighten them off. You may try showing your device and yelling. Try something

like "back off" If you're carrying a fire arm, a warning shot is sometimes enough.

Empty Handed..may be not

Learn where some key points for pain are and how to inflict as much pain as you can quickly. There are lots of web sites and places that teach self defense courses for women. LEARN SOME. Eye gouges, pinch, or bite under the arm or the upper inner thigh, or the groin areas are all sensitive and subject o maximum amounts of pain. A sharp blow across the bridge of an assailant's nose will stop him dead in his tracks. You want just enough time to escape. Consider using your elbow if you can-it is the strongest point on your body.

Learn where to strike

LISTEN TO YOUR INNER VOICE

Call it intuition, a hunch, sixth sense, gut feeling, notion, an angel, God, strange feelings or your inner voice, but learn to listen and learn to respond to your "other sense" in women's self defense. If something doesn't *feel* right then go with your feelings. It is a question of whether you want to be safe or sorry. Always trust those INSTINCTS.

Be Prepared

Always carry some non-lethal self-defense weapons. A stun gun, taser, pepper spray, a telescopic baton are good examples. Each if used will afford you enough time to escape and get help.

These tips can help you prevent an assault on yourself or any woman you know. Used wisely they may save a life-maybe yours. However, nothing beats common sense.

Personal protection is about learning to decrease your risks and increase your options if assaulted. Learning to defend yourself from other people with weapons, is a result of extensive training with qualified instructors. However in most cases it's just you and them, and you can take steps to have the advantage. Your life and health are your most important possessions, so learning to avoid situations that put your safety at risk is the first goal. Your best natural weapon is your brain, and your best defense is to exercise good crime prevention strategies.

Nobody can tell you how to defend yourself in every situation. Each person must evaluate his or her own abilities, and size up the situation based on the level of danger to themselves or a loved one. defense

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<http://peppereyes.wordpress.com/2009/10/28/how-to-prevent-an-assault-or-reduce-your-chances/>

December 18, 2011, Ken, Modern Survival Blog

Situational awareness is a mindset of just being aware of what is around you and the dynamic circumstances related to you.

The number one part of a Personal Protection Plan and probably the most difficult to achieve is *situational awareness* (SA)? Simply put it's your situation and your awareness of it. The best way to deal with trouble is to avoid it in the first place, which is the purpose of SA. No trouble, no problem!

Next time you go to Wally World, perform this exercise. Sit way out in the parking lot for a while and watch how insipidly and inanely people do things. They will walk down the middle of the driving lane, talking on their phone, completely oblivious to the 8 cars they are holding up, right behind them, motors running. Or they will just walk out in front of oncoming cars, pedestrians have the right of way don't they, and just walk on in complete bliss and oblivion. No one will look around and they won't look behind themselves to get some idea of what their situation is, day or night! They will mosey on and never look back. How dumb.

Here are two real-life examples of SA or the lack of it.

A young Wally World employee was walking out to her car after work, in the dark, and you can see on the parking lot video as she walks along, oblivious to all around her. In the dark a guy runs up behind her as she nears her car and abducts her in her car and as you can probably imagine she was found dead some days later. I'm not blaming this on her, it is solely the killer's fault for killing her, but she does bear responsibility for her own well being, or lack thereof.

This next one is personal. My wife calls me one morning from work and asks me to go home at lunch and see if her purse is there. I do and it isn't, the purse is gone. After hindsight and thought, we came to the conclusion that when she dropped off the baby (you park, run in, throw the baby through the window and sign the paper and leave), someone in an adjacent parking lot watched her at daycare and noted she did not have her purse with her, ran over and took it out of the running car. Wow, how much worse could that have been? Less than two minutes.

Some people are nothing but trash and you accommodate them (by being easy prey) at your own peril. Others are very opportunistic and will stab you in the back, literally. You will have to learn to be steely hard and be aware of subterfuge and cunning when dealing with everyone, even a "defenseless" mother and child. Beware, who's watching you? That's scary isn't it?

Don't just daydream and walk along...quit it! We all do it but when you make an active personal protection plan, your ways of looking at the world change and your mind changes the way it functions. You develop a cognizance of the world around you.

Some of the things you need to think about or be aware just don't occur to you because you're not a criminal by trade. I remember someone said something about having their rural house broken into and they performed some serious security upgrades to the house. The next time the crooks just chopped a hole in the roof! I remember thinking to myself, "why would they mess up the roof that way"? Oh, they're criminals and don't care about the mess they leave. To deal with the criminal world around you, you have to think like a criminal.

Also, listen to the "inner you". The INSTANT a thought goes through your mind that, "that doesn't look right", it probably isn't. You should do a 360, both mentally and physically right then, just stop, spin around and reassess your situation (I don't mean bust a dance move or behave in a manner that would cause stress to people, just stop, look at your watch, dig in your pockets like you're looking for something ALL the while looking around you and taking it in).

You should look around and watch people. I never park by the door at the big box stores. I need the exercise and it lets me overlook the parking lot and see who's watching whom. What looks odd, out of place and not right? Be observant, it is a learned habit. It should become second nature to look for oddities in people's behavior.

Not to be sexist, but women are taught to be nice and tolerant. They will climb into a locked, soundproof, isolated, metal box (elevator) with someone that gives them second thoughts, but

they don't want to be impolite or rude, even though they get bad vibes they do it anyway. Ladies AND gentlemen, quit it! In the military it's called "watching your six" (your six o'clock position, directly behind you).

Be aware of what and whom is/are around you, with out fail. If it doesn't look right, feel right or you're just not sure, then **BREAK OFF THE ENGAGEMENT** (be impolite) with the situation so you can back up, observe, consider the facts and reassess the situation.

The key to SA is to stop, look, assess and then act on that information. The better you get at this, the more likely you are to **ACT** in advance of some event, instead of **REACT** to it as it occurs. Which do you think is to your advantage?

Remember, the best way to use your Personal Protection Plan is to avoid using it with situational awareness.

<http://modernsurvivalblog.com/security/situational-awareness-and-your-personal-protection/>

PDF on personal security

<http://www.dodea.edu/offices/safety/personalSecurity.cfm>