Strategies for Effective Self Defense and Precautions against Rapists, Intruders, Gang Members and Purse Snatchers

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Overview

Introduction

This Booklet has been designed to give you information and ideas on how to lower or minimize your risk of being raped, robbed or beaten. This is not an answer all book but can provide help in answering some of the most frequently asked questions on how to reduce the risk of placing yourself in vulnerable positions or places.
Facts about Rape

Introduction

Rape is something that a lot of women, young and old, have thought about at least a few times. Maybe:

➤ A friend was raped and told you about it
➤ You read something in the news
➤ Or had a scare or rape yourself

We all take care to be safe by:

➤ Not going out alone at night to “dangerous areas”
➤ Locking our doors

Even though we take care to be safe, sexual assault is something that a lot of people feel helpless about. Most of us have put safety precautions on the back burner at some time when wanting to go somewhere or do something that was risky. Most of us have heard at least one-person say, “If someone tries to rape you, give in and let him so he doesn’t hurt you.” “If you try to fight back you will just make him mad.”

One-sided view

Rape and preventing rape is a lot more complicated than one would think. It is true that in some cases it is pretty hard, even impossible, to resist successfully. If we take a one-sided view of things then we could be missing some opportunities for stopping the rape.

What are the chances that I might get Raped?

Experts estimate that 1 in 4 women will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18. Some of those women may be young girls or children. They may be molested, victims of incest or raped by either acquaintances or strangers. These same experts say that one out of every 10 boy’s will fall victim to sexual assault by the age of 18. (D. Finkelhor, 1982; Diana Russell, 1981; King County Rape Relief, 1979.) With these estimates it makes a lot of sense for us to be afraid of rape. This fear can either help us or paralyze us. Ideally we want enough fear to make us cautious but not so much that we can not live our life freely or react to defend ourselves.
Fear of Rape

Knowing Fear
One way to control fear is to look where it comes from. This table will give a break down of some types of fear and descriptions of how or why they may affect you. Knowing where your fear comes from is the key to overcoming it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Fear</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Facts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sensationalization” of rape through the media</td>
<td>✓ Detective shows on TV. ✓ Newspapers.</td>
<td>* Most rapes result in little or no physical injury to the victim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: These types of media usually show the most brutal and violent cases. This makes it easy to get the idea that rapes are filled with violence and murder.</td>
<td>* Only 2% involve injuries as serious as a broken arm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Emotional damage done to the victim is very serious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Emotional damage may takes years to heal and may never go away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear that males are stronger than females.</td>
<td>✓ This is part of cultural upbringing.</td>
<td>* Men on the average may be bigger and stronger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ We are told as kids that men or boy’s are stronger than women or girls.</td>
<td>* Women still have the right to fight back to protect themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ This gives the mindset that it will do no good to fight back.</td>
<td>* When defending against an attacker you must only discourage them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note: This makes females think that they will lose when trying to fight back against someone who is raping them.</td>
<td>* You must only defend until you get the chance to get away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Many women successfully defend themselves against an attacker.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of a women defending against an attacker
A ten-year-old girl had successfully defended herself against an attacker that had broke into her home. She ran to the kitchen and used everything there to defend herself that she could find. She held off the attacker for a half an hour until her uncle came home. The uncle called the police and held the man at the house. When the police took custody of the man he had to be hospitalized from the injuries he had received from the little girl.
# Resisting Rape

How can you become one of the successful resistors of rape? Here is a table that breaks it down into three simple steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1** | ✓ Turn your fear into anger.  
✓ Practice thinking about what you could do if anyone tries to rape you.  
✓ If you feel scared about rape, stop and think about what you know and what you could do.  
✓ Remember that no one deserves to be raped and that the one that tries to rape you is the one who is responsible. |
| **2** | ✓ Think about how you can avoid ever being vulnerable to rape.  
✓ Keep your home secure by making sure that it would be hard to break in.  
✓ Be aware of what is around you; Whether you are walking down the street, sunning yourself on the beach or jogging in the park.  
✓ Be assertive about telling people when you do not like them touching you in any way.  
✓ Be cautious about giving personal information to people you do not know or to people who do not need to know it. |
| **3** | ✓ Look at what you can do if it came down to you having to fight back.  
✓ Learn how to defend yourself.  
✓ Take a self-defense class.  
✓ Call your local rape crisis center for recommendations.  
✓ Think about how you could escape.  
✓ Use your voice; yelling at an attacker is a good self-defense technique.  
✓ If you have to fight back, go for the weakest point and be sure to use your fists, feet, whatever you are carrying or whatever is around that may help you. |

**Note:** It is not possible to live your life so that there is no danger of sexual assault, but if you refer to the last 5 sections of this booklet you will get some ideas on how to minimize your risk.

**Note:** If you take self-defense courses be sure that you find a good instructor.
Resisting Rape, Continued

Vital Points Diagram

Here is a diagram of the vital points that would be targets for self-defense.

Number Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Vital Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Right or left chin area- Nerves- area of pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chin/ Lower lip- Nerve area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Groin area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Upper lip- Nerve area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Throat/ Esophagus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Knees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on next page
Resisting Rape, Continued

Research on Fighting Back vs. Not Fighting Back

In the past we have hardly ever hear about the women who successfully defended themselves. Currently the newspapers have started to report these stories and scientist who study rape are looking at the strategies that were used. This table will show the some of the results from some of these studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Researchers Found:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of women that were raped vs. women that prevented rape.</td>
<td>* The victims that got raped reacted with a lot of fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* The women that prevented rape reacted with anger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison of injuries between women whom fought back vs. women whom did not fight back.</td>
<td>* Serious injuries were the same for both groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* The ones that fought back had a few more minor injuries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* The majority of women that fought back did not get raped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research on successful strategies for resisting rape.</td>
<td>That using a combination of at least 2 of the 3 things listed was most effective:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Escaping or getting away from the person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Physical Resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Yelling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What if you are successful?

If you are successful you may feel:

- Wonderfully strong
- Terribly scared
- Remorse for hurting someone

Even though you were successful in fighting off the attack you should still follow up by talking to someone. There could be some feelings that you need to talk about.

What if you are unsuccessful?

Well that could happen. But you did the best that you could, so no one can expect more of you. A lot of things can get in the way of successful self-defense:

- Too much fear
- An attacker that is too powerful
- Or maybe you could not figure out what to do until later

Continued on next page
Resisting Rape, Continued

Seeking Help

These feelings that you feel or the way you react to the situation are things that could happen to anyone. Make sure to seek help. You should follow up by:

- Contacting your local rape crisis center for help recovering
- Talk to family
- Talk to a friend
- Talk to you doctor

There are many more options. The main thing is to start the road to recovery and not to be embarrassed or shamed by what has happened.

Reporting

Be sure you report it to the authorities. If you are having doubts about reporting it contact you local rape crisis center. They will be able to help you with reporting it. Remember that rape is against the law.
Home Security

Introduction

At least one-third of reported rapes happen in the victim’s home. The offender in these cases may be strangers, acquaintances, friends, dates, family members or work clients. Good home security is not complete protection but it’s a good start. A woman could be victimized in her own home by someone who was invited there or maybe lives there.

Getting the Family Involved

Home security should be a family/group concern. Family/group members should take into account the way the family/group lives. It should be more than just a set of rules to be followed and it should be realistic for the whole group.

Note: This applies to any group of people living together.

Four Steps to Home Security

This table will give you four steps to follow to make your home more secure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Questions to Answer?</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Have a family/group discussion on home security and answer the following questions: | ➢ When are the times when everyone is home?  
➢ When are the times when everyone is gone?  
➢ When are people coming and going?  
➢ Are there times when the doors are unlocked for people to come and go?  
➢ Are there times when people come in at various times while everyone is asleep; weekends, vacations, days off?  
➢ Are there times when someone who is vulnerable might be home alone (like a person under 10)? | Note: Figure out when your security hardware (locks, etc.) would not be enough to keep out intruders. Think of ways to compensate.  
Example: Make sure that each family member who comes into the house calls out when arriving to let others know that they came in. |
### Home Security, Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Questions to Answer?</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2. Check the security “hardware” in your home. | - Are the locks deadbolts?  
- Do the deadbolts require a key on both sides or does one side have a lever? (You may need to get out in a hurry.)  
- Do your windows lock?  
- Are there any windows that are easily reached from the ground?  
- Are any of the windows close to the doors to make it easy to reach in to the lock?  
- Do you have hardware on the windows to limit the opening so someone could not fit through it?  
- Who is responsible for locking up at night?  
- Where are the spots in your home that are difficult or impossible to lock or secure? | Note: See if you can change anything to make your home more secure or try to figure something out to compensate for the unsecured areas. |
| 3. Check the outside of your home: | - Does it look like it would be difficult to break in?  
- Is the outside well lit?  
- Do the lights come on automatically or is someone responsible to turn them on?  
- Do the inside lights come on automatically if no one is home?  
- Does the home look occupied even when it is not?  
- Can the neighbors or people passing by see if someone is trying to break in?  
- Is your house or apartment in an isolated or remote area?  
- If you have neighbors that could help you have you talked to them about what to do?  
- Does your neighbor cooperate in preventing crime? | Note: After answering these questions try to fix some of the things you found that could be changed or improved. |

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### Home Security, Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Questions to Answer?</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Mentally prepare yourself and make a plan.</td>
<td>➢ What would you do if someone were breaking in or was inside?</td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Update your plan every six months or so to be sure that it still fits the family’s life and so that everyone will remember what to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Where is the most likely place for a break-in?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ How could you alert other members of your family?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ How would you get out if you needed to escape?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Where would you go?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ How could the family communicate if there were an intruder inside?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Could you notify your neighbor?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ How would you notify the authorities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Babysitting Emergency Preparedness and Safety Guidelines

Introduction

Babysitting is an easy way for teenagers to make a little money. It also gives them the opportunity to learn responsibility of caring for children. Being prepared for emergencies, protecting yourself and protecting the children in your care is all a part of babysitting.

Setting Up Your Babysitting Job

Getting started with your babysitting jobs may not be easy at first but hard work and planning will pay off in the end. This table will give you a list of steps to follow when setting up babysitting jobs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Interview your employer before agreeing to baby-sit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Work out transportation for each job before accepting it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Make sure that your parents know the arrangements for each of your babysitting jobs (telephone number, transportation, time expected home, who your employers are etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Have your employer go over the security of the home before leaving you alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Become familiar with the layout of the house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Make sure you have a list of emergency numbers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Babysitting Safety Guidelines

When starting your babysitting jobs it may be hard to know what to do and what not to do until you get more experience. There are a few things that you should be aware of that can prevent panic if something unexpected were to happen. Here is a list of some safety guidelines to follow while on your babysitting job:

✔ If someone knocks at the door, check through a window or peephole to see whom it is before answering the door.

✔ Answer the door yourself, rather than allowing the children to answer it.

✔ No one should be allowed in the house unless your employer has given you instructions to allow them in.

✔ If you are uncomfortable with letting someone in, then tell your employer that you would rather not have anyone come into the home while you are sitting.

Continued on next page
If you invite a friend to go with you on a babysitting job be clear to both your friend and your employer that your primary concern is the care of the kids.

Be prepared to ask your friend to leave if h/she takes the privacy of the situation as an invitation to push for sexual activity.

Know where the kids are at all times. Do not assume that they are in bed after you put them there. Check on them.

Keep emergency telephone numbers handy; police, the parents or a neighbor.

Know the address of the home to include any major cross streets, just incase you have to give directions.

If anyone telephones or comes to the door avoid telling them that you are babysitting—it tells them that you are alone. Instead tell them that Mr./Mrs____ are not taking calls or receiving guests.

If you receive any suspicious calls (i.e. obscene, threats, specific questions about employers or the situation, no one talking etc) call the police, your parents or a neighbor.

If you receive a suspicious call listen outside for strange noises.

If you hear a prowler or think someone is trying to get into the house, call the police, then call your parents.
Transportation Safety

Introduction
Whenever you are in a car with someone else as the driver, you are not able to protect yourself as well as you could otherwise. Just being in a vehicle makes it hard to escape or defend yourself. This section will cover some information on safety when getting into unfamiliar vehicles. Safety when traveling on busses and subways and what to do if you are the driver. Also some precautions that should be taken when parking your car.

Hitchhiking
Hitchhiking may be a cheap way to get from one place to another, but it is one of the most risky ways to travel. People who pick you up usually expect some kind of “payment” in sexual terms. Even if you get picked up by someone that does not expect you to pay its very risky. It is a very dangerous situation to be in a car with someone you do not know.

Guidelines for Accepting a Ride
Accepting an offered ride can be very risky even if you know the driver. Here is some guidelines to follow if you find yourself carpooling, going on a date or needing a ride from a party or some other get together you may have been at:
- Do not be embarrassed to turn down rides from someone you are not sure of for any reason. (i.e.; A man alone, a group of men, someone who has been drinking.)
- Find out where the driver is going before accepting a ride. If taking you home would take him out of his way, then there is probably more there than meets the eye.
- When you get into a car that is unfamiliar to you, check to see how the door opens and how the seatbelt releases.
- Sit so you can see the driver, as well as the road.
- Be ready to jump out if the driver acts threatening.
- Watch where you are going. If the driver takes unexpected turns or goes the wrong way, be ready to jump out or defend yourself.

Safety Guidelines When Parking Your Car
Giving rides can be just as dangerous. However when you are the driver you have more control over the situation. Here are some guidelines to follow when you are the driver:
- Keep your car locked.
- Try to park in well lit areas.
- Check the surrounding area and back seat before getting in.
- Have someone you know walk you to your car.
- Park in a group and leave as a group.

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### Transportation Safety Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Giving Rides</strong></td>
<td>If you give someone a ride, make sure that they tell you where they want to go, before you tell them where you are going. This will keep the person from tricking their way into your car by claiming to be going the same way as you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Forced Entry**         | If someone forces you into a car or forces their way into your car and makes you drive them some place you should drive to a:  
- Police Station  
- Fire Station  
- Gas station  
- Drive in  
- Jump out of the car  
- Or have a minor accident                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| **What to do if Someone is following you** | If you think that someone is following you:  
- Stay in populated areas  
- Go to a Police Station  
- Go to a Fire Station  
- Go to a well lit public place  
- Call someone to come meet you  
- Be sure to avoid driving to isolated areas until you are sure that you are no longer being followed.                                                                                                                                               |
| **Public Transportation** | When using public transportation you need to use caution. As a young adult this may provide you with more independence than having your parents drive you everywhere you need to go. There can be some dangers. Here are some guidelines to follow:  
- Pay attention to what is going on around you  
- Watch for sudden movements. This may give you an early indication that someone is running up to snatch your purse.  
- Be aware of people watching you.  
- Be aware of people following you. Especially if they follow you onto the bus or subway.  
- Be careful whom you talk to. Remember that you do not have to talk to anyone you do not want to.                                                                                     |

*Continued on next page*
Be aware of what information you give to people. Remember that you should not give out personal information to people you do not know or in an area where others may hear you.

If you do want to get to know someone only give them your phone number and not you address and stick to general topics of conversation.

If you do not want to talk to someone, be firm about telling them that you don’t want to them. If they won’t stop change seats or ask someone to help you.

If someone who has been acting suspicious gets ready to get off at your stop stay on and get off at the next stop.

If someone suspicious does get off the bus with you, try to get back on, if you can’t, then get help immediately.
Personal Security

Introduction

Offenders sometimes choose their victim’s by looking for signs that they may be “easy” targets. Some of the signs they look for are someone who acts:

- Timid
- Frightened or
- Submissive

The way you walk, talk and generally relate to the people around you gives a lot of information about you. Try to make your image one of a strong, independent person who can take care of themselves.

Be Assertive With Your Friends

Tell people that may be touching you that this is something that you do not want. You do not have to hug, kiss, etc., someone if you do not want to. If you are on a date make sure that sexual exploration is something you want to happen and that your wishes are respected if you say no. If someone is touching you sexually and you do not like it or if a date keeps pushing and will not listen to you, get away and/or get help. You do not have to handle it alone!

Personal Information

When you first meet someone, be cautious about what sort of information you give them. Stick to topics like:

- What school you go to.
- What church you go to.
- A general description of your neighborhood not an exact address.

If there is something about your life that makes you particularly vulnerable like your parents work nights, a part time job where you have to walk home alone late at night, etc., then be careful who you tell. If someone presses for personal information, it could be a warning signal. Do not be afraid to ask someone for help handling it.

Awareness of Movement

When you are walking out doors, look at people walking towards you. Watch for unusual action. Be ready to avoid anyone who seems dangerous. Check out movement behind you. Watch for changes in light patterns, reflections, sounds, etc. If you are with a friend, do not get so involved in your conversation that you do not notice things. If you are not sure of something, turn around and look. Watch for places where someone could hide, like behind stairs, behind buildings, between bushes, etc.

Continued on next page
Be Prepared to Act

There are a few precautions you can take so that you may be better prepared to react to a situation. Like wearing clothes that make it possible for you to escape or to defend yourself. Some clothes that could make that hard are high-heeled shoes, tight skirts, long dresses, large hats, etc. Try not to overload yourself with packages or books that could make it hard to react. If you have to, be ready to throw them down or at the assailant, if you are threatened.

Carry enough change with you to call home if you need to. Ask your parents or someone you know to come pick you up with no questions or hassles, if you are in trouble.

Get involved in learning self-defense from a reputable instructor. You can check your local community college, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A. or call the rape crisis center for more information.
Jogging

Introduction

While jogging is something that many people do. You may be compromising your safety without realizing it. Remember that it is safer to run with a partner because people who jog together are less vulnerable to an attack. These sections will cover some safety guidelines for jogging.

Jogging Routes

The following table will give you some safety tips on typical areas where people often jog:

**Note:** Most of these safety guidelines can be applied to areas where you may jog.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If You Run:</th>
<th>Then:</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In wooded areas:</td>
<td>➢ Choose a path that is not isolated.</td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> This will prevent anyone that was trying to surprise you to be visible before they were close enough to grab you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Run on well-cleared paths where bushes and other foliage that could hide an assailant are cut back from your path.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Identify the places in your route where you would be most vulnerable to assault.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Make the last part of your run, when you are most tired, through the safest area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On city streets:</td>
<td>➢ Become familiar with the people on your route so that you will notice if something is out of place.</td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> If you run in a very regular pattern, try to get to know the people well enough that they would be concerned if you varied your route.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Chose a path that is well lit when running in the late evening or early morning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Take note of places where you could seek help.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Identify places where a car may be able to force you into an isolated area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Be aware of places where a person in a car could abduct you without drawing much attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Identify places in your route where you would be most vulnerable to assault.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continued on next page*
If You Run | Then | Additional Information
---|---|---
**On a stadium or indoor track:**
➢ Know the spots on the track where someone could pull you off the track i.e.: around equipment, by a refreshment stand, a break in the bleachers, etc.
➢ Be aware of people watching who might be watching you in particular or come closer to the track while watching.
➢ Fight the boredom that comes with running around a track by maintaining your awareness.

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**Stretching**

When stretching or warming up pay attention to what is going on around you. Be sure that:

- You choose stretches that allow you to see what is going on around you.
- Change positions often so that you can see different directions.
- If your position makes you vulnerable from a certain side or area, then you should increase your awareness of noises, changes in light patterns and other clues that might alert you to danger.