

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM ARMED ROBBERY

While purse snatching is one of today's most common crimes facing women, strongarm robbery (hold-ups, muggings) is the most prevalent act where men are generally the victims.

By observing the basic rules of "common sense," your chances of being victimized are greatly reduced. Since most strongarm robberies occur during the hours between sunset and sunrise, the best rule to follow is simply to stay inside at night. However, since this is not always possible, by observing basic precautionary measures, can greatly reduce your chances of becoming a robbery victim.

Here are some general rules to follow:

1. Travel on well-lighted streets. Avoid dark corners, alleys and entrances to buildings. Always try to walk on the side of the street nearest oncoming traffic.
2. If you must travel at night, don't carry more than you can afford to lose. One suggestion is to carry a second wallet containing a few \$ 1.00 bills and old expired credit cards, which are normally destroyed or discarded. If confronted at knife or gunpoint, give the criminal the second wallet and concentrate on a good physical description to help the police in making the arrest.
3. There's safety in numbers! If possible, walk with a companion—either male or female. An armed robber is less likely to confront two or more people.
4. When waiting for a bus or streetcar, try to select a well-lighted area. Aim for a busy stop where many people will be coming and going.
5. Don't hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.
6. Avoid taking shortcuts through deserted areas such as parks, playgrounds, vacant lots, alleys, etc.
7. Be cautious entering your car—someone may be hiding inside. Or, when leaving your car, someone may be waiting. Park in well-lighted areas.
8. Never carry weapons that can be used against you.
9. If someone asks directions, keep a polite but safe distance.
10. If you are alone and think you are being followed, head for an occupied building such as a bar, restaurant, gas station, fire station, etc. If none is available, cross the street in the middle of the block. If there is traffic, try to stop a car for help.

IF YOU ARE CONFRONTED

1. DO NOT RESIST! Cooperate! Give the criminal whatever he asks for—wallet, keys, jewelry, credit cards or anything else he demands. Your life is more valuable than replaceable possessions.
2. Don't make any sudden, unexpected moves. A nervous criminal may think you are reaching for a concealed weapon.
3. If the criminal claims he has a gun, knife, razor or other weapon in his pocket, never try to force his bluff.
4. Never try to be a hero and apprehend the criminal yourself.
5. Notify police as soon as possible.