



# Taking your life in your own hands

## STREET SMARTS

*On a dark early morning in the fall of 1997 a woman left her car running for just a minute to run back for something from her house. As she stepped back into the car a man who had been walking past rushed up, sat on her lap and drove the car away. When he told her "you're not going anywhere" she knew she had to escape. She managed to squeeze out from under him and jump from the moving vehicle.*

**Safety on the street:** Many of these tips should be used when leaving malls, grocery stores or office buildings or on campus. When your hands are full and your mind is on getting home, predators can sneak up on you before you see or hear them.

- Look confident and purposeful and be very alert to your surroundings. Keep your head up and look all around as you walk.

- Consider carrying pepper spray or an air horn or take

your dog with you if you must go out alone. Remember, any of the three may be somewhat undependable. Don't go anywhere you wouldn't go without them.

- Use the safest and most direct route to your destination when walking; day or night.
- Stay on blocks where someone can hear you yell and see you run. Choose well-lighted streets and avoid routes that pass by vacant lots, alleys or construction sites. Choose streets you know well and where you feel comfortable.
- Think about possible situations that might arise on your route and decide how you might be able to handle them.

- Become familiar with stores or businesses that stay open late — you may need to run there for help.
- If followed or suspicious of a situation — trust your instinct and go to a home or business and ask them to call the police. Don't be shy about this and don't wait until it is too late.
- Walk facing traffic, near the curb side.
- Carry only identification and what cash you need in a pocket instead of carrying a purse or wallet. If you must carry a purse or wallet keep a few dollars separate.



## IS IT SAFE TO WALK OR RUN?

**If you are alone and it's after dark or before dawn, you are at risk.**

*Think about it. If thieves and assailants break into homes, running around the dark streets of the city has got to be a little bit dangerous. If you know the risks and prepare ahead, you can reduce your chances of running into trouble.*

- Don't wear headphones.
- Go with another runner/walker.
- Don't zone out
- Bring a cell phone.
- Don't hesitate to call the police.
- Don't hesitate to go up to a home or business for help.
- Vary your routes.
- Run/walk in familiar areas.
- Stay aware of your surroundings.
- Stay away from deserted business or industrial areas.
- Stay out of parks or heavily foliated areas.

