

## **Self Protection Strategies For Teens**

Even if you're the toughest kid on the block, don't be fooled into believing that nothing bad could ever happen to you. Something could, and sometimes something does. It only takes a minute for someone bigger or stronger to change your life forever. Maybe even to take your life. You don't have to be frightened you have to be prepared. If you have self-protection strategies, you can do things that will help you if a bad situation arises.

Always believe what your gut tells you. If it doesn't feel like a safe place to be, it probably isn't. If it feels wrong to take that drink, or get in that car, don't do it. Some people might end up in serious situations they can't get out of because they didn't trust their gut.

Never hitchhike when you don't have a ride or bus fare. Ask an adult that you are safe with like a parent or teacher to give you a ride. If you can't find a ride, don't go. Whatever you're trying to get to, wherever you're trying to go isn't worth risking your life.

Make sure a friend or other person knows where you are and when you are expected to be someplace else if you are going to change locations. If no one knows where you should be and what time you should get there, no one will know to call the police if you don't show up. It could be nothing, like you just got tired and went home. But what if someone tries to hurt you? Don't you want someone to have our back?

Trust is a great thing and there are a lot of people out there that care for you and are safe to trust. But trust is something that takes time, getting to know someone, and letting him or her show they are trustworthy. A stranger, no matter how friendly or nice is not someone you can trust at first meeting. Always wonder to yourself, "do they want something that I don't want to give?" Strangers can be nice people, but don't get into cars with them or give them personal information about you. Remember, if you stand close enough for a stranger to hand you something, they are close enough to grab you and lock you in their vehicle within seconds. Keep your distance!!

Be careful what information you give out about yourself over the internet, and to whom you are talking. Anyone can say anything. I could tell you I was rich and that I loved you and wanted to meet you because of all the things we talked about in a chat room, and once you came to meet me, I could be a dangerous person who intends to sexually or physically assault you, or even kill you. The internet is where people hang around when they want to find a victim.

If something does happen and someone you don't want to go with grabs you or tries to force you to do anything you don't want to do, then do this:

**SCREAM AS LOUD AS YOU CAN.  
TRY TO GET THE ATTENTION OF  
ANYONE PASSING BY, YELL FOR  
HELP.  
REPORT THIS TO THE POLICE. THEY  
WILL FIND THE PERSON  
RESPONSIBLE.**

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