

# Winter Park Police Safety Tips for WOMEN

- If walking by yourself, **get off your cell phone**. Chatting can distract you; it's better to be aware of your surroundings.
- If walking by yourself, **hold your cell phone and be ready to make an emergency call**. Many phones now have a button on the screen to dial 911 immediately. Go one step further and preset one of the buttons on your phone to call the emergency number.
- **Walk with confidence and purpose** when you're out solo. Keep your head up and don't be afraid to make eye contact with those you pass. Walk at a steady pace and walk facing traffic to keep yourself visible. If you get lost, don't wander aimlessly. Keep your pace steady and head for the nearest store or restaurant to ask for directions.
- **Trust your gut**. When out alone at night, your instincts are your best friend. If you are worried someone is following you, turn around. Let the person know you're aware of their presence. Don't head straight for your car or home, but go to a nearby store or restaurant, somewhere public and safe.
- **Stay in well-lit areas** at night even if it means taking a longer route.
- **Switch up your running/walking routes** to avoid potential stalkers learning our route.
- **Run outdoors with only one earbud in to keep the other ear on your surroundings**.
- Walk past your destination, particularly if it's your home, if someone has been trailing you for a while.
- Scope out potential safe havens if someone appears to be following you – **plan ahead**.
- Walk with your **keys grasped between your fingers** in case you need to use them as a weapon.
- **Keep your keys ready**. Even if it's a quick jaunt from your front door to your car, it's a good idea to keep your keys ready at all times. Hold on to them inside your pocket. Then, bring them out holding the proper key in position as you approach your car or front door. This will eliminate fumbling around in your purse for them outside, which will distract you from your surroundings.
- Consider using a safety app, which uses gps as a locator connected to your cell phone. There are apps in which you determine who can see your location.



For more safety information or to obtain information on or register for a S.A.F.E. class, please call 407.599.3301 or 407.599.3507

- **Know what to do in the worst-case scenario.** A woman's best defense against an attack is awareness and action. If you are faced with an uncomfortable or dangerous situation and you can escape, do so immediately. Only you can determine what you can or will do when faced with an attacker. Self-defense moves and tips can be found from various web sources, or through community self-defense classes (like WPPD SAFE class).
- **Change the locks** when house keys are misplaced.
- If you return to your car and it has a flat tire, back away. Return to wherever you came from (restaurant, store, etc.) and call for help. Once assistance arrives, approach your car. If someone comes up to you (even if they are a woman) and wants to offer help, politely say, "No thank you."
- When leaving the mall/store late at night, ask a security guard to walk you to your car.
- **Avoid struggling with lots of bags.** Struggling with many bags as you make your way into your home can be a fact of life, but you should avoid it whenever possible. Multiple bags can prevent your ability to react quickly should a dangerous situation arise.
- When asking for directions and someone offers to show you the way by having you follow them, do not go. Just ask for them to point you in the right direction.
- **If someone tries to grab you, twist your arm up and down and yell, "Stop!"** Do anything you can to draw attention to yourself.
- **Don't check-in on social media apps when you arrive somewhere.** Instead, check in as you leave. This way no one will be able to digitally stalk you and know your every move or when you're not home. Along the same lines, avoid tweeting or Facebooking from vacation, especially if your account is public, as it's a way of letting the world know that your home is unoccupied.
- Avoid entering stairwells or elevators occupied by only one other person who is a stranger.
- Text a friend before going out for a run or on a date with a stranger and plan to text your friend again you are once home safely.
- Avoid social situations if a man whose prior advance made you uncomfortable might be there or make sure to go with a friend.
- Drive in a circle if you sense you are being followed, if it continues, call local police or drive to a local police station.
- Avoid hiding spots and park next to an illuminated light post when it's dark outside. Parked cars, dark alleys and unlit corners of parking garages are all places that you should avoid when you're alone. Keep yourself in visible places on the sidewalk or street as much as possible.
- **CALL 9-1-1 if you hear or see something which looks suspicious or if you feel uncomfortable or something isn't right.** We are here to help and will respond.

Thank you,

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Lieutenant John Montgomery  
Winter Park Police Department  
Community Services Division