

How To Evade A Car Stalker

Whenever I have heard stories from women, about being approached in a menacing way, by men in cars, one phrase always comes up; 'I didn't know *what* to do'. An ounce of mental preparation is worth a ton of luck and prowess. If you wait for a problem to arise, you probably will draw a blank, then panic, and that will not sharpen your thinking. The following suggestions apply equally to anyone who is so threatened. Children, old enough to be out without adults, and anyone who might be targeted because of size or age. Anyone, out alone, especially after dark, should learn these stratagems.

Basic principles, in any contest: 1} Recognize your opponent's goal. If you can convince him that it's out of reach, you win. 2} See your options, which, if he is the aggressor, will be limited by his goal and options. 3} Use those limits of choice, to focus on the best course. 4} Plot contingencies; how one action might open others, or close off others. 5} Diminish your opponent's advantages (and, of course, enhance your own).

Tie Goes to the Runner

It's easier to play for a draw than a win, and, for you, a draw is a win. Your opponent needs to overcome or change the circumstances. He must do something, whereas you don't really need to. You merely need to maintain the status quo by remaining out of reach.

Anything you do, to delay his total success, enhances your chance of escaping, greatly, not only by raising his level of difficulty, but by letting him see, for himself, the danger of persisting. In almost every case, if you just run a few steps, in the opposite direction the car is pointed, he must immediately realize the futility of following. Open a gap, immediately by sprinting! Don't worry about looking silly. The FBI says there are 25–50 serial killers at large, in the U.S. How dignified will you feel after one of those guys gets you to himself for twenty minutes?!

Invert His Advantage

A car is a big advantage, but equally a deficit. Unless he has stolen it, a car identifies the driver, or, at least, connects him to the owner so that it's possible to track him. Only the dumbest person would fail to feel this limitation on his time. Every moment he spends, increases his risk of being seen by someone else, who might get a better look at him or his car and license plate, than his intended victim can. The need to get away, makes it very hard for the victim to observe those details. The prey may have to turn her back to the attacker, and fear might interfere with memorization, but, even with that advantage, the attacker must realize that he must quit within a few seconds, if he is not to be seen by other people.

In Reverse

Assuming you cannot get into an occupied building, you must run opposite the direction the car is pointed. You force the stalker to turn around or back up. 1} Backing up, is much more difficult for any driver. It's very hard to pursue, in reverse, without running a very great risk of being challenged by third parties, or being seen, long enough to be identified by witnesses. In most situations, other traffic will come along to stop him from continuing backwards. 2} At any

speed but creeping, it's very hard to back up straight enough to avoid parked cars. 3} Cars have a very slow maximum speed, in reverse. If you have opened a gap, already, you should win. 4} Going parallel to the street, rather than perpendicular to it, you will pass more buildings, giving you a better chance of finding signs of life, inside one of them. > 1} Start by running immediately and fast. All those deficits of backing up, reduce his time to effectively react, and impressing upon him that his chance of success, is critically reduced each second. 2} Don't continue running, after you are out of range for an immediate capture. Conserve your breath and energy, and wait to see what his next move is. If he turns the car around, A] continue to move in the same direction until he gets near while looking for a safe building or someone to help, and B] turn around, when he reaches you! You can change direction much faster than a car, and can keep doing so, indefinitely. A stand-off is a draw, which is a victory for you. 3} Likewise, running back and forth around an obstacle, especially another car, can be carried on for a while. Eventually, he will overcome this tactic, but you can move to another car and do it again. Someone will come along within a minute or two, except very late at night. 4} Don't walk, alone at those hours, for any reason.

Shelter or Trap

After you have gotten some distance from him, run from the car at a 45° angle; i.e., opposite the direction the car is pointed, and away from the street. In most modern environments, like urban / suburban streets, buildings are too close to the street to allow a prolonged perpendicular retreat, but it might be possible to get inside a building, and even to find help from someone within. If not, buildings are just walls, blocking your retreat from the street. An empty building is just a trap without witnesses. Stay outside unless you are sure that help is available inside a building. None of this should be necessary if you get that critical distance, away, right away, so that he just gives up.

Abandon Your Route

Should you continue to walk the way you were going, after the car drives off, you open yourself to another approach, in which the attacker has more advantages. If the first approach was made from a car, moving parallel to your path, on the same side of the street, and you reverse direction, it is safest to assume that he will assume that you will resume your original path, once

he's out of sight. He may continue as he was, one or two crossing streets beyond you – and go around the block! He could then approach from a crossing street. There are two important elements, here. 1} As you cross one of the perpendicular streets, he could pull up behind you, as you complete the crossing. He can hang back, timing his arrival to the moment when you have just gotten to the opposite curb. At that moment, there is no other car between you and him, as there would be along the rest of the street, because no one can park in a crosswalk. In such a situation, the problem of an accomplice in the passenger's seat, is the most grave threat I can imagine when stalked by a car. The driver can't run at you from behind, instantly, because his own car is in his way. 2} After dark, it's impossible to identify a car more than several yards away. All you can see is headlights, so that, even when his car is in plain view, you can't distinguish it from any other. He sees you distinctly from a distance, with his headlights. He might also turn his lights off, but street lights will still show you up.

If approached this way, you can't just go straight ahead. He can follow just by turning the corner, and his presence, there, tells you he is determined. Even if a light or traffic slows him down, he'll be next to you, any moment. You're back square one. The only thing to do is the most basic in any such situation; run in the opposite direction the car is pointed! When you realize he's there, you are moving away from the side of the car; perpendicular. Turn right to run past the tail lights.

Playing Offense

The person in need of a real win will be more likely to blunder, and when he does, you may be able to attack. Should he slip on the grass, for instance, kick him, especially if the face is available. You must strike while he's vulnerable – and if you should waste his moment of vulnerability, forget it and move on. The idea is to reduce risk, not multiply it. 1} It doesn't matter how much it may anger him. If he's already out of his car, close enough for you to even consider striking, you're already in the maximum amount of danger. 2} He's already working against the clock, and pain will slow him down enough to recover from the initial shock. 3} In the age of DNA, he can't afford to leave a trail of blood, unless he has not committed a crime. Only the biggest lunatic would persist to the point of a felony, knowing he had left his genetic signature on the sidewalk – or on you! (Of course, you could be up against someone who isn't playing with a full deck!) 4} It's preferable not to move close enough for contact. You might find any number of objects just lying around, which can be thrown accurately. Improve this possibility by practicing how to throw, not like a girl. With a bit of coaching, a few minutes in the yard should do it. Step toward the target on the foot, opposite your throwing hand. That means leading slightly with the opposite shoulder, which just happens, naturally if you step forward. The other problem women have in throwing, consists of not leading with the elbow. They keep the upper arm perpendicular to the forearm and parallel to the ground while rotating the shoulder, back to front. If you lead with the elbow and let it 'drag' the hand along, you will naturally rotate the shoulder, first, back to front, as you are naturally inclined, but finishing, "overhand". Many women do play ball games, so it can be learned. Elongated objects, like small branch segments, can be thrown sidearm, even backhand, with enough accuracy for this purpose. Keep it low (so he can't fend it with his arms) and parallel to the ground (for the best

shot at the knee. (Always go for the knee.)

Miscellaneous

A lone operator must choose between giving up, or getting out of the car, to pursue on foot, but if there are two, one can get out, while the driver trails. The strategy I have described is still the most sound. Always move in the opposite direction the car is pointed. You may have to run faster or longer, but the attacker will still feel quite a strict time limit. If you can get a margin of distance to do it safely, cross the street. If the driver is counting on another person to leave the car after you, crossing the street leaves that person on the wrong side of the car. By making the car, itself, an obstacle, you cost them more in time, to get to you, and more time and effort to bring you back. This is dangerous. You must be able to take traffic into account, but by doing so, you may also use the moving cars to run interference for you. Where traffic is moving, a comfortable gap for you, can close up on the person, following you, closely. At night you must be certain that there isn't a car with the lights off.

Never go toward a car, no matter how nice, or even female, the passengers seem. (Women sometimes act as 'point man' in a kidnapping or robbery.) Consider your natural advantage. A car can only get so close to a sidewalk; 8 ft. or so [?]. You already have that much of a head start, and much more, if he gets out to chase. The driver either has to get around his car or cross the street before he can begin to chase on a direct line toward you. You should gain another 20 yards or so, before he can start to gain on you. Even if he exits from the passenger seat, the moment required to get out of the car, adds to your advantage, if you haven't squandered it by standing still!

If the car is left empty, you might get the chance to attack it. Don't simply run as far from it as you can. If he gets out to chase you, keep changing direction to stay within striking distance of the car. Use obstacles, throw things, and look for a moment when the car is closer to you than it is to him. As you run, you should have been picking things up, as discussed under the heading, "Playing Offence". If he or they leave the car, look for something like a club, as well as throwing objects; a 'bat' instead of a 'ball'. If you get an opening to approach the car, smash the windshield. Of course, that can be accomplished with a thrown object, as well, small or large. The first threat of damage is likely to discourage him (them) decisively. Concentrate on the driver's side. It's hard to chase what you can't see, and a car in that condition will definitely get noticed by police, right away. A broken windshield or back window definitely will get you stopped, and the attacker should realize it and move on, under the added pressure of the certainty that he will soon have to explain what has happened to his windshield. He doesn't want to get stopped during a kidnapping, with "Exhibit A" kicking and screaming right in his car!

If you have a big advantage, you might be tempted to get into the driver's seat and take off. The very slowest speed defeats them, but, you must instantly figure out exactly how the locks and transmission on that car work. if you can't move right away, you could just lock yourself in and lean on the horn. Where would you have to be that you would not draw the attention you need, fast enough? Unless you have gotten an unlikely time advantage while being chased, you won't have time to abandon the carjacking and get out, again. If you do have such an advantage in time, you have probably already won. Just keep moving in whatever manner has been working.

Rural

All of these tactics are reliable in a typical urban / suburban environment. In a more remote setting, you can't assume the culprit will be hampered by other cars or a time limitation. Perhaps no one will happen by for many minutes. He may not feel the threat of being seen. Get as far away from the road as possible, on the perpendicular, but don't get so far that you can't beckon help from the next passing cars. Use rough terrain, to render the car useless. If he pursues, turn parallel to the road while it's still within sprinting and waving distance, always the opposite way the car is pointed. If he persists, remember, you're leading him ever farther from his car which is his safety or ruin. His car can be linked to him, and an abandoned car is more certain to draw attention where the population is sparse. If the owner lives in the area, there is a good chance that everyone who passes will already know who it belongs to. If that's the case, it will definitely nail him more certainly than in an anonymous, urban sea of cars. It may occur to him that, if he does catch you, it will not be easy to get you back to his car.

Primer

Whether a car is involved or not, many simple principles can add up to a great advantage.

1) Size up your attacker for disadvantages in age, physical condition, etc. and evaluate your advantages and deficits, against his, or theirs. If nothing else, that mental exercise may allay the tendency to panic, and the fruit of that mental search, should arm you with reasons not to panic.

2) Don't Panic! He is in danger, too. If you do anything right, it will probably convince him to give up, immediately, but, at least, if you persist in countering his moves, sensibly, he will see the sense in giving up, pretty fast.

3) Don't worry about looking foolish by over-reacting. Don't try to evaluate the intent of a possible attacker, too closely, before acting. At the first hint of a problem vibe, get up on your toes and move it, in the opposite direction the car is pointed. If his intention is innocent, he will respect your reaction. If not, you have increased your natural advantages, before he can begin to consider his own chances, which become many times worse, by the second.

4) Look around for weapons, as you run. Any delay works for you, and hurting your opponent, slows him. Even hurt, an opponent may overpower you. Strike if you must and can, but with the primary intention of putting more distance between you and your pursuer. That means disabling him. Strike the knee or foot, eye or head.

5) Use the most challenging terrain. A] An attacker might not care whether he can bring you to his car, but you are buying time and forcing an intolerable risk on him. How long can he feel safe, leaving his car back on the road, even on the shoulder? B] Depending on your confidence in your own health and conditioning, it may seem wiser to go uphill. Speed doesn't mean climbing speed. A man who can outrun a healthy woman for a short time, might find it impossible to go uphill as fast, for as long. Estimate your relative weights. Gravity might be your ally. C] In familiar terrain where more than one surface type occurs, use them. You know what's coming. Your opponent does not. He must adjust, without warning. If you know you are

going to change some factor, adjusting to it should slow him up, more than it does, you. An unexpected change in surface composition or gradation, or crossing an obstacle, however unimpressive it may seem, can throw a person off, more than you might expect.

6) Don't get caught from behind. If contact is unavoidable, make sure you're facing him beforehand. To hold you, he must be within your reach, too. He might be able to hold you still with his hands, but that makes every other part of him, vulnerable. It also makes anything else impossible for him, unless you give him time to work it out. You must attack. If he holds you at arms' length with elbows locked, I think that should be a good position to kick the knee, football placekick style, with the toe; ankle stretched and locked into position. If you can, go for the groin, punting style. (Don't try the knee to the groin. To be effective, you must drive the targeted organs, against the bone behind them, but your knee isn't protected as your foot is, by shoes. You're bringing your knee into hard contact with bone, with nothing but a couple of layers of cloth in between. Even when that move has the effect you want, your target will mostly have been pushed aside because it's so soft and nebulous.)

7) He has made his intention clear by pursuing you. You have nothing to lose. Some rapists will kill you for resisting, but they might see running away as resisting. Some won't kill you, anyway, but some will do so whether you resist or not! Unless you feel you can strike a reliable bargain with such a person, and can take the sexual assault, you must strike, the instant he comes close enough. It's harder to fend a blow than to attack. That really means, it's easier to hit a person, hard enough for your purpose, than to avoid being hit. If caught, initiate the action. always try to hobble or blind. Your mantra should be: 'Knees 'n' Feet — Eyes 'n' Head!'.

8) The eyes are the ideal target. A] They are so susceptible to pain, B] They are so important to any endeavor. You can't attack what you can't see! If you can, get both eyes, Three Stooges style! (Nyuk-Nyuk-Nyuk!) C] Because an attacker must look at what he is attacking, the eyes always are targets of opportunity; constantly in view. D] The mere pain from a poke in the eye, gives you an enormous advantage because it doesn't wear off fast enough for the attacker to resume. He must recover before he can even think about anything else.

9) Foot Stomping: Keep your footwear in mind. With pointed heels, stomping may just break them, without hurting him, enough. Stepping down and getting all your weight on his foot for a long second, might be worth a try, but be ready to kick off your shoes if they're damaged. If you're light and wearing soft soles, like sneakers, your first gambit should be something more decisive. The kneecap is always the best bet, whatever you strike with. It doesn't just discourage your opponent with pain. It hobbles him. No amount of anger will compensate. So many people wear shorts, anymore, the knee is often visible. (Don't risk your own knees on a shot to the kumquats! The purpose of such an attack as we contemplate, here, is rape. That makes everyone think that the genitals are the appropriate target. It seems like pointed justice, but it's not a sound tactic. You mean to disable and discourage him while minimizing the risk to yourself.)

10) Screaming might draw desirable attention, but it can be exhausting. As in every other respect, consider where you are and weigh your chances of success against the cost of your energy.