



TIPS FOR HEALTHY, SAFE DOG WALKING

Where to Walkies has provided some basic hints and tips on staying safe while out dog walking, awareness is the most important aspect of staying safe and self-defence, while out dog walking. Don't be a target by practicing the following:

- Walk strong and with purpose
- Keep your head up high
- Be aware of your surroundings

Walking like this can have a positive effect on your leadership with your dog as well as helping towards personal fitness and posture. How you hold your body is important to walking comfortably and easily, with a good posture, you will be able to breathe easier and it will help you will avoid back pain.

- Stand up straight.
- Think of being a tall and straight. Do not arch your back.
- Do not lean forward or lean back. Leaning puts strain on the back muscles.
- Eyes forward, not looking down, rather 20 feet ahead.
- Chin up (parallel to the ground). This reduces strain on neck and back.
- Shrug once and let your shoulders fall and relax your shoulders slightly back.
- Suck in your stomach.
- Tuck in your behind and rotate your hip forward slightly. This will keep you from arching your back.

Walk the Walk

You burn calories when you walk, keep active & balance your diet with regular dog walks.

Being Attack from Behind while Dog Walking

The most common angle of attack is from behind. Make it known in your demeanour that you will not be surprised from behind. As you walk, check all around you move your head to look side to side and behind you. If your dog is off lead and you are on a park in the evening, try throwing the ball behind you while you walk helps to keep you aware of your surroundings and means that your dog has further to run to retrieve the ball and return to you.

Keep Your Hands Free

Have your personal protection equipment accessible, hands, ready for action. Do not be overloaded with leads, ball chucker's or bags. Have one hand free to hold up between you and the criminal or to defend with. Hands full of leads, toys, bags increase your chances of distraction, which is just what a potential attacker is looking for. WhereToWalkies recommends a dog walking over the shoulder bag, something that is large enough to carry the dog walker's essentials in poo bags, leads, and a ball, some treats, hand wipes and antibacterial gel, small torch for the winter and something for personal protection like a key-ring personnel alarms. Having a dog walking bag like this means that everything you need is ready to pick up and take out the door, which means you have that bag ready to pick up your dogs poo, you have the ball to play with and the treats to reward with and the alarm if you need it.

Dog Walking Safely Near Traffic

When walking with your dog 'be seen', wear light, bright or reflective clothing, Hi-Viz and reflective clothing is freely available in shops and on-line for the walker and their dogs. If wearing a florescent coat isn't your thing get one for your dog, help to see them when out walking and keeps them safe and warm when worn in the winter months.

Walk Toward the Traffic

Most people walk or run with traffic, which results in not being aware of a car or van coming up behind you before they stop, open the doors, and abduct or attack you. Additionally, you will be able to see if a car gets out of control and heading toward you.

Rounding Corners

Walk around corners wide, at least 3 feet away, you never know who is behind the corner, ready to surprise and jump you, let your dog walk in front as you approach the corner as your dog will know if someone is there before you and give you warning and unnerving a potential attacker.

Dog Walking on the Pavement

Walk down the centre of the pavements, away from walls and parked cars. This creates distance and time between you and potential threats from people waiting in alleys or behind parked cars.

Walking with Music and Books

We would not advise the use of headphones or reading as you walk with your dog, not only does it mean you cannot hear your dog if he needs you it also opens you to a potential attack. Doing either of these will dramatically reduce your level of awareness of the environment around you. Walking with an mp3 device means, you will not hear if anyone approaches you on foot or in a vehicle. With reading, your focus is not on the path ahead of you, but lost in that book or magazine, also if you use a electronic book reader it an incentive to attack and steal the valuable device.

SUMMARY: Pedestrians are most vulnerable to crime and violence. Learn what you can do while walking to reduce your chances of being a victim of violence.



5 Tips for Protecting Yourself While Out Walking With Your Dog

People who enjoy being outdoors, exercising their dogs will reap the many benefits, including fresh air, increased fitness levels, and more. However, walking with the dog you are also potentially placing yourself at risk of assault. One way to lessen the risk of an assault is walking with a friend or in a group, but this may not always be a feasible option for people. Here are five important safety tips that you should follow if you intend to walk with your dog outdoors alone.

- **Always Carry a Fully Charged Mobile Phone and Identification.** Some prefer to not be weighed down by any extras while they are out walking with their dog, but carrying your mobile phone will provide an extra level of safety in the event you are uncomfortable or approached by a stranger. Many modern smart phones also have built in GPS which can provide maps and navigation while out dog walking. There are also applications that you can download to your mobile phone which means that you can be tracked by using the phone signal and log your position. This can only be seen by others on another mobile phone or on a laptop that the user has been granted permission to track you and your position, if you were to have a fall you would be easy to locate. That way, if you are not back when expected, your potential whereabouts may be more obvious. It can also come in handy if you need to call for a ride in the event of a twisted ankle or surprise rain storm! If you must walk alone, it is wise to let someone know when you left, where you intend to go, and when you expect to return.

- **Consider Your Routine:** While most dog walkers have established routes that they prefer to follow, it is wise to vary your route and routine regularly. Avoid going on the exact same route at the exact same time each day, this also keeps it more interesting for you and your dog. Keeping to a predictable pattern can make you a potentially “easy mark” for an attacker. When your location is a bit less predictable, you may be able to avoid being followed on your regular route.

- **Always Be Aware:** Stay acutely aware of your surroundings at all times. Notice if the same car passes you multiple times. Notice if someone is following you or appears to be watching you. Notice if a car slows nearby. Call the police at once if you are concerned, it's better to be safe than sorry. Above all, remember what your mother told you when you were younger, and don't talk to strangers.

- **Stay in Populated Areas:** Most attacks on dog walkers will tend to occur in parks or on less travelled routes and paths. Although these are often very pleasant places to exercise, never travel in these locations alone, regardless of how safe you think the park or area to be. If you have to walk your dog on a evening, late at night and when the dark nights move in try to walk in well lit areas and if that isn't possible walk in groups

- **Carry a Self-Defence Product,** such as defence spray or a hand alarm, know how to use it. These non-lethal, inexpensive and small products can be bought on-line and come in all shapes and sizes, from key-rings to small hand held. These products allow you to deter an attacker long enough for you to get away, attract some attention, possible assistance, and only costing a few pound. By making a noise of 130+ decibels by just pressing a button or using just one quick and painful spray to their face. These products will also come in handy in the event you come across an aggressive dog that starts to follow or chase you.

SUMMARY: Don't avoid exercising your dog in the great British outdoors, just be prepared & street smart. Common sense should always prevail when you & your dog are out walking.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn even more about being safe, there are many ways to access additional information.

- **Books** Self-defence books covering the foundation of personal protection and security. Includes recommended books.
- **Videos** Self-defence DVDs and videos serve as excellent supplemental learning tools as you see self-defence techniques performed.

- Training Live self-defence training from qualified instructors allows more personalized training, technique correction, and practice with partners.
- Information Additional websites that provide self-defence and personal protection information.

