

# BE YOUR OWN SAVIOUR

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*We, girls, are most unsafe when we step out of our homes but that doesn't mean we won't. We will go out and also learn to prepare ourselves to tackle what may come. Let's get straight to business then.*

## Commuting

Other than the appalling incidents of sexual harassments and even molestation inside public transports, you are at greater risk when you are travelling alone, especially in a CNG-run auto rickshaw. Call someone or pretend to call someone on the phone when you get into a CNG, and loudly mention where you are, that you know the number plate, have the police on speed dial, etc. Or, you might take a picture of the number plate and send it to your family or friends right before you get on the vehicle. Never doze off when travelling by yourself whether it's your own car or public transport and make it a point to keep your phone within reach.

If you are on the back seat and the driver is taking you on a wrong route intentionally – completely ignoring your questions – or you get to sense some kind of trouble and feel tremendously threatened, it helps to put your scarf around his neck and pull him against his seat. This is an extreme measure, mind you! In remote parking spots, check your car before getting in and then lock the doors and do not stop if any other vehicle on the road is chasing you or signalling you to stop. These techniques are frequently used to mug people or even worse.

## Shopping and Eating out

Don't check-in on Facebook or Instagram when you arrive somewhere. Instead, check in as you leave. This way no one will be able to digitally stalk you. When in a trial room, look out for hidden cameras and two-way mirrors. Try to make a call from your mobile. If you can't, there is chance of a hidden camera somewhere and it's no magic. There is science behind this.

To test a mirror, tap on the surface of the mirror with your knuckle. A normal mirror will produce a dull, flat sound. A two-way

mirror will produce an open and hollow sound because there is an open space on the other side. When you touch your fingernail to a two-way surface mirror, you can't touch your own reflection; instead, you will see a gap caused by a second layer of glass over the mirrored surface.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Awareness  
True self-defence

begins long before any actual physical contact. **The first, and probably most important, component in self-defence is awareness of yourself and your surroundings.** Your intuition can be powerful. Avoid a person or a situation which 'feels' unsafe.

## Self Defence

Many women worry that they will anger the attacker and get hurt worse if they try to defend themselves and end up being silent victims. If forced into physical altercations, always aim for the middle area of a person's body (neck, nose, genitals, etc) as they constitute of the weakest points.

Scratch, claw or gouge at your attacker's eyes. This will not only inflict pain, but may also temporarily debilitate their vision, allowing you to get away. Using the heel of your palm, drive your hand upwards against the bottom of their nose. If they are

behind you, use your elbow, throwing your weight into it. The neck is extremely vulnerable due to the presence of major blood vessels. The knee is vulnerable too from every angle, and a well-aimed kick can inflict substantial damage. The groin is a sensitive area and a target for a kick or elbow. Above all, learn to punch properly. YouTube tutorials can be very helpful.

## Safety Tools

Pepper spray can be a useful tool. Put in the peppers. Fill up with water and heat it up. Pour solution into bottle for spraying. Using it can be a little tricky since not all people are affected by it and if you're carrying it in your purse, you will only waste time and alert the attacker while you fumble for it.

Save emergency contacts on phone with the term 'emergency'

so people know whom to contact in case the person is found unconscious or in a similarly dire state. As ironic as it is, getting rid of security measures like passwords or pattern locks helps so that people can actually reach emergency contacts by accessing the phone. Telecoms services such as GP Buddy Tracker, Robi Locator and Banglalink Friend Finder can be your digital safety tools which will help your friends and family to locate you. Moreover, there are third party apps like 'Shake2Safety' and 'bSafe' that can send texts along with GPS location data though these might not be very feasible in the context of Bangladesh.

## Escape

This is by far your best option. You are more likely to be injured if you obey the predator and follow him into some dark alley than if you run away. So, run away, yell for help, and throw a rock through a store or car window to attract attention. If the criminal is after your purse or other material items, throw them one way while you run the other. Lastly, if you find someone following or chasing you, scream "AGUN" or "CHOR". It's more effective.

