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“Anti-Mugger” speed and distance

Thursday, December 06, 2012

Yesterday I wrote about my innate sense of “good enough.” I should also add that I try to train so that I CAN hit another level when I need or want to. I refer to this pace as “escape the mugger” speed. There’s another gear in reserve. I know it’s there because occasionally I’ll take off with the field in a race and not realize until the 1 mile mark that it was a personal record mile. That’s not smart in a race, but in case of danger, that’s when to give it all you’ve got.

Growing up in Brooklyn I was taught early on to minimize my chances of being a victim.

I learned to:

- Walk confidently and with purpose
- Not walk close to buildings or parked cars
- Avoid known dangerous areas
- Be aware of my surroundings

Even now I never listen to music when walking/running outdoors.

My Mom told me to sing when walking home from the bus stop at night.

“Muggers never bother anyone acting STRANGE!” LOL

I don’t know if any of this was responsible, but fortunately, I never had to deal with a mugger. However, my daughter did. When in college and out running on a Sunday morning, a guy got out of a parked car and grabbed her. She fought him off and ran to the 7/11 for help, returned with the police and they caught the guy.

So along with my “good enough” reasonable pace, I also do interval training and strength training too. I know there’s no way to be 100% victim-proof, but I want to give myself every chance I can. I’m not naïve. I know I’m not faster and stronger than your average criminal, but maybe the extra effort needed can discourage him.

It’s the same mindset that makes me lock the deadbolt on my door. I can’t stop a determined burglar, but if I make his job more difficult, maybe he’ll decide it’s not worth the time and trouble.

In any case, I want to do what I can for my health and also for my own safety.

Be careful out there!

(Thank you to LOLATURTLE whose comment on yesterday’s blog entry prompted my topic this morning.)

Edit: There’s one more time I’ll go for that higher gear. If in the last tenth of a mile before the finish line, I see a woman who looks like she’s in my age group, then you’ll really see me kick it in. I really do like to win stuff.

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WOLFKITTY

Absolutely! This week I ran in my neighborhood at night for the first time, no music, just me and (the darker and quieter than I anticipated) night.



I tried to do all you suggested. One other thing is to not get too distracted by your cell phone or other tracking device as you run. I didn't have music, but I was trying to get my GPs to work on my return part of the lap and I nearly ran into someone. I realized what a dumb move that was, so I was on an even higher alert when I was almost home and a car stopped on the dark road ahead-- I went down a street that was more like a normal neighborhood and let them think I was walking home. By the time I circled back around they were gone.

But then right as I was crossing the last street home, a pickup stopped in the middle of the road in front of me! The guy rolled down his window and asked how to get to the hospital (on the same road, but with a dead end in between). Even though his request was seemingly valid, I kept my eyes on him the whole time and kept almost 200 yards between us, stayed on alert. He drove away and I jogged around the corner back to my house quickly.

One of my fears about getting smaller is that I might be more of a target for people wanting to hurt me. But then again I have to remember that I'll be more nimble and stronger. Plus all of the other benefits. ;)

Take care!

Jocelyn

3112 days ago



CD13252816

Thanks for all the great ideas. I plan to put some of them in action. The "Brooklyn Effect" is good for all places. You just never know. You'd like to think the best of people but at the same time realize that the feeling may not be mutual - and think fast! When I lived alone I was always, and still am, very careful of my surroundings. Better to be cautious.



3112 days ago



CD13136117

Great advice - you are a smart lady!! Be prepared - always a great idea!!

3112 days ago



CELIAMINER

Such a good reminder! I don't wear ear buds when I am walking or jogging because I want to be able to hear traffic approaching from behind, and I want to maintain my situational awareness without distraction. However, recently I've been considering listening to music...perhaps I need to rethink that.



I've had a couple of scares along the way, one with two guys who kept driving around the block or turning around to "follow" me as I walked. I gradually ramped up my speed to a jog and kept switching sides of the street to the opposite of where they were until I finally got to an area with more traffic, and they went away. The other was in the St. Louis airport parking garage, where I saw a man approaching my car in a strange manner. He faced straight toward the terminal, but he was angling toward me. I jumped out of the car and RAN into the terminal. It could have been nothing, but I was taking no chances.

3112 days ago



CAKEMAKERMOM

I'm glad your daughter was able to fight back and got away safe, plus she managed to help the police catch the guy so someone else doesn't have to deal with him.

3112 days ago



COCK-ROBIN

Good advice! And it's a way to have fun while running.

3112 days ago



STRIVER57

i try to pay attention and i try to be careful where and when i run ... but i don't think i could or would run without music.

3112 days ago





WILSONWR

Another great blog - and I liked your added edit!



I once came upon a scene in the Washington DC mall area where a man was pulling a \$5 bill from a sleeping man's pocket. I told the man to put the money back. He said he didn't take anything (I saw him put the bill in his pocket). I told him once more to give it back, but he denied it again. I put my hand in his pocket to retrieve the bill, and he suddenly said, "I've got a gun." Talk about adrenaline kicking in! I wrapped my arms around the guy tightly and tried to search him as best as I could under the circumstances. He had no gun, though, and I gave the \$5 bill back to the gentleman that was sleeping. The other man took off running. After that incident, I was trembling for an hour, thanking how foolish I had been and how lucky I was. I guess I was a little naive, but I just couldn't see letting him get away with that. Today I try to think out things a little better before I act, and I try to be much more aware of my surroundings. It's a shame we live in a world where there are those that want to hurt others, but we have to be prepared.

3112 days ago



SPEEDYDOG

Wow! What a blog! When your are being chased you probably have a couple more gears you haven't used yet. Very scary about your daughter being attacked. I am so glad that had a happy ending.



I personally love speed training. It is that distance stuff that I have to work on!

I am a pretty big guy and was an offensive lineman in college. Yet, I know I am not victim proof. My son, James, was on offensive lineman for Colorado State and is quite a bit larger than me. Someone tried to mug him using a knife! My son stupidly disarmed his attacker. My wife was chased by a guy that came out of a parked car just like your daughter. My wife escaped. My wife is a speedy little thing and my son has reactions like a cat and bone crushing strength.

Thanks for such a thoughtful blog.

Bruce

3112 days ago



SUZYMOBILE

There's an excellent reason to "push"! I've got a black belt in taekwondo, but I have no illusions about being able to fight off someone bigger, faster, or more well armed than I. I try to remain aware, carry my cell phone tuned to my Attack Alarm app, and am prepared to scream my head off in a most unladylike way if necessary. Dogs and bears are a whole 'nother story. Luckily there are no bears here.



3112 days ago

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