

Queen's Park Trust

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Walking at Night Safety Guidance

Walking at night safely requires proactive planning and heightened environmental awareness. Stick to well-lit, populated routes and avoid shortcuts. Walk facing oncoming traffic, leave headphones at home, and wear bright or reflective clothing to stay visible to motorists.

Route Planning and Awareness

- **Vary your routes:** If you walk the same way every day, change your route periodically to avoid developing an observable pattern in your movements.
- **Choose the right paths:** Always prioritize streets with bright street lighting and open businesses over deserted or dark shortcuts.
- **Walk with confidence:** Keep your head up, shoulders back, and walk at a steady pace. Looking alert and assertive can deter unwanted attention.
- **Stay alert:** Hide your valuables (like phones or jewellery) out of sight. Avoid wearing headphones or getting absorbed in your smartphone, as these distract you from your surroundings.

Visibility

- **Be seen:** Wear bright, light-coloured clothing, or add reflective gear like bands, jackets, or clip-on LED lights to ensure drivers and cyclists can see you.
- **Walk facing traffic:** Whenever possible, walk on the pavement facing oncoming traffic. This gives you a clear line of sight to approaching vehicles and prevents you from being taken by surprise.

Technology and Support

- **Buddy system:** If you need to walk alone, call a friend or family member and talk to them during your journey.

- **Safety apps:** Utilize location-sharing and emergency features available on apps like [WalkSafe](#) or other safety services to map out secure routes and notify contacts if you don't arrive on time.
- **Know your resources:** Understand how to navigate safely and seek public help if you feel uncomfortable.

Stay Vigilant Whilst Walking Alone

Being aware of your surroundings is essential for your personal safety, so put your phone in your pocket and keep your ears free of headphones. Focus on what's happening around you, as this will better prepare you to respond quickly to any unexpected risks.

You don't have to be on high alert at all times, as this can induce unnecessary anxiety. It's about ensuring your attention isn't distracted by anything that could prevent you from noticing a potential threat.

Plan Ahead If Walking Alone

As we briefly mentioned at the end of the previous section, thinking ahead about the best way to get to your destination is crucial.

If possible, choose a journey that will take you through busy areas, where there are public facilities and shops. This means there'll always be someone around to [ask for help if you need it](#).

Should you regularly walk alone to and from the same place - for example, if you're going home from a late shift at work - try to have two or three different route options prepared.

You don't want anyone with bad intentions to be able to identify a pattern in your movements, so keep them guessing to stay safe whilst walking alone at night.

Only Walk Alone in Well-Lit Areas

Even if it takes slightly longer, you'll want to prioritise a well-lit and well-populated route with bright streetlights to provide an additional layer of security.

Avoid any streets or roads that are dark and deserted, choosing instead those which are illuminated by business fronts or residential dwellings.

An additional bonus is that these routes likely benefit from enhanced security provisions and provide better visibility for CCTV.

Share Your Route With Someone You Trust

When it's dark outside, it's all the more important not to go out alone without telling someone you trust your plans.

This can be for any reason, from taking the dog for a walk to visiting a friend's house. It might seem over the top, but this is where the old adage "it's better to be safe than sorry" couldn't ring more true.

Carry a Non-Violent Deterrent When Walking Alone

It can also be a great idea to carry a non-violent deterrent with you when walking alone at night. This could be pepper spray, a flashlight and/or a whistle.

Pepper spray can give you extra time to get away from a potential attacker, whilst a flashlight can be pointed directly at their eyes to temporarily blind them so you can escape (it goes without saying, don't do this to someone in any other situation!).

A whistle can help you to alert others in your vicinity that you're in trouble and need their help.

Wear the Most Appropriate Footwear

It'll come as no surprise to hear that the best choice of footwear for walking alone at night is a comfortable pair of trainers or running shoes.

However, if you're making your way home after a late shift at work, or a long night on the dancefloor, this is unlikely to be a practical option.

In such circumstances, you'd be wise to bring a pair of lightweight flat shoes with you in your bag; that way, you can change into these before leaving.

Keep Your Keys Close Whilst Walking Alone

This one is simple: make sure you know where your car and/or house keys are at all times.

Ideally, keep them in a secure pocket in your coat or the top of your bag, so they're ready for you to use and easily accessible when you need them.

Always Trust Your Instincts

Finally, when walking alone at night, you'd do well to trust your instincts and follow any gut feelings that you might be in danger.

If you suspect that you're being followed, even after taking all the precautions we've shared above, quickly make your way to the nearest public place (where there will likely be security teams who can help you).

At this point, get your phone out and call a friend or family member, letting them know exactly where you are and how long until they can expect you to arrive home.