

HIGHLIGHTS OF “THINGS I LEARNED WHILE GETTING OLD”

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GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

Phone calls: Always ask “who’s calling” before you state your name or say yes.

Don’t leave purse in your shopping cart or in your car while pumping gas.

Make copies of front and back of credit cards, insurance cards, etc. so you know the phone numbers to call if your wallet/purse is stolen.

Set up a family code word to stop spammers or possible kidnappers. If the perpetrator doesn’t know the code word, hang up. Children should run away to the nearest woman.

CARS/DRIVING

Keep your garage door opener in your purse. A car thief will not be able to enter your garage or home.

Never park next to a white van. No reason. Maybe I watch too many crime shows.

Buy a phone charger for your car. During a long power outage it may be the only way to charge the phone’s battery.

You can’t carry a gun but wasp spray will disable a carjacker. Aim for the eyes.

If you are pumping gas and a possible thief approaches you, spray them with gas. Not sure this works or if the gas stops flowing but I saw it on the internet.

Carry your car fob/keys while walking through a parking lot. If it has the “Where Did I Leave My Car” button and you suspect someone is following you, press the button repeatedly. Thieves hate noise that attracts an audience.

When you stop at a red light and the light turns green ALWAYS take a second to look to your left. So many people speed up for a yellow light and some risk it changing to red. Look LEFT first because the car in that lane is 4-5 feet closer to you than those in the farther lane.

HOME SECURITY

Lock your doors and keep them locked.

The best security is having a nosy neighbor.

Thieves don't like dogs because they make noise, get in the way and could attack. Put a Beware of Dog sign at your doors even if you don't own a dog.

To keep peekers from looking into your uncurtained windows, brush on white school glue – like Elmer's. Light still comes through but vision is blurred.

HEALTHY & SAFETY

When filling your pill box for the week shake out only what you need onto a clean sheet of paper. If you overshake, use the paper to get them back in the bottle. Putting them in your palm and putting back the excess could transfer germs or dampness to all the pills in the bottle.

Hospital "bracelets" contain a lot of your health and financial information. Cut them into little pieces or shred them.

Make a document with your health history, medication list and contact numbers on your refrigerator AND in your purse. Keep the information updated as needed.

To avoid falls, get rid of small carpets/rugs. If an extension cord is in your path, step ON THE CORD, not OVER it.

When taking a bath or shower, take your phone into the room with you and place it on a towel on the counter. If you fall you may not be able to reach the phone, but you can pull the towel down and the phone will come down too.

If your car fob has a Where Did I Park button, put it on your nightstand. If you should need help during the night keep pressing that button. Even if your car is in the garage neighbors will hear the noise and hopefully investigate.

BE A GOOD PATIENT (YOUR HEALTH IS AT STAKE!)

It can be exhausting filling our medical histories for every new doctor you see. Create a document showing your birthdate, allergies, chronic conditions, surgeries, meds you take and contact numbers. It's also helpful to medical people if you record how old your parents/siblings were when they passed as well as the cause. Having this, the doctor can diagnose your probable issue in minutes. Especially helpful if you end up in the ER non-responsive and your family has not yet arrived. Not that they would know or remember the year you had your appendix removed or that severe gout attack. Having this will allow you to write See Attached in the space where they want your medical history. Same with a Meds List.

TRAVEL TIPS

Always carry a small flashlight in your purse. Whether on the plane or in a hotel room if the lights go out you'll need to find an exit or the bathroom.

Take your room key home and cut it up. It's embedded with information about your credit card and other personal data.

NEVER put your address on your luggage tags. There are nasty people who see you're leaving your home empty for days. All you need to put on your tags is your first name and a phone number.

Buy Air Tags or a similar product to put in your suitcase. If it goes missing you can use the Find It app on your Apple device. Some people put these tags on their pets and could be used to track a teenager's whereabouts. Just sayin.

If you're traveling with a partner, put half your stuff in their suitcase and half of yours in theirs. At least you'll have clean undies if one goes missing.

DO NOT post vacation plans on social media.

When entering elevators pay attention to who boards with you. If you have any suspicions, exit the elevator making an excuse about a forgotten item. If you are threatened, push all the buttons. This will make the elevator stop at every floor.

When checking into a hotel, the clerk should SHOW you your room number, not yell it out so that others can hear. My husband and I once checked into a hotel and got a call supposedly from the clerk saying there was an issue with our credit card and could I repeat the number. I said we were on our way down for lunch and would stop at the desk. The clerk there said he never called us!!! Someone was trying to get our credit card info.

ACTIVE SHOOTER

We hear about this happening way too often. Best to be prepared.

Listen to your intuition. In my experience people who do weird things look weird, dress weird and act weird. Avoid them.

The authorities tell us to Run, Hide or Play Dead. Yeah, right. I'm too old to run, too big to hide and if I play dead I might not be able to get up off the ground.

If this event occurs outdoors DO NOT run with the crowd. A shooter's intent is to kill or injure as many people as possible. They won't stop to take aim at someone running off to the side.

When you enter any facility for the first time - medical office, house of worship, movie theatre, identify at least two exits.

When in restaurants or any meeting place choose a seat facing the door. This will enable you to notice suspicious activity – a group of rowdy people entering or a robber trying to hold up the cashier. Make an immediate exit, walking at a normal pace, NOT to the bathroom where you would be trapped, but to the KITCHEN where there are potential weapons like sharp knives, heavy pots, boiling liquids, scalding food and always a door to the outside. (they have to have one to take out the trash).

When authorities arrive and tell you to evacuate, walk out holding your hands in the air so they can see you have no weapon and are not the shooter.