

Avoid | Deny | Defend™

Read More About This Lifesaving Plan

Avoid: Be constantly aware of your surroundings. Conventional wisdom tells us that there are three bad things we should always attempt to avoid: bad people, bad locations, and bad times. Remain vigilant when you are forced to be in these situations. You cannot hide inside your houses for fear of becoming a victim during an active shooter event. You should always assess your surroundings, especially if you find yourself in locations that may be a target for these types of events.

Always know the escape routes that you could take in the event someone starts shooting or some other disaster befalls you. This includes marked exits, windows and stairwells. At the first opportunity to leave the confines of the building, you should do so. Remember that most active shooters use the building as a natural barrier from the inevitable law enforcement response. This is the reason most who commit this act remain inside the structure. If you do get out of the building, call 911 as soon as possible and report. It is important to remember that this can be done prior to the shooter firing the first shot. Stay aware and learn to trust your gut. If something does not seem right, chances are they are not right!

Deny: If you find that you cannot get away from the shooter by exiting the structure, you must now move to deny the shooter unfettered access to you and those around you. You can do this by moving into a room and locking the door. It is important to understand that this should only be the first step. A locked door alone will only serve as a temporary obstacle for someone who is dedicated on getting inside the area you control. Use furniture to barricade any access points to your location. If the shooter does to get through the door lock, the items used as barricades will be the next barrier they have to overcome. In most cases, this will require the shooter take at least one hand off of his weapon to move through the barrier, which may give you an opportunity to move to the next level, ***defend***, with the shooter at a disadvantage.

If you have control of the lighting in the area, turn off the lights. This will aid you in two ways. First, it will give the appearance that the room you are in is empty and that the shooter should continue past your location to find more victims. Second, if the shooter does gain access into your room, the darkness will be to his disadvantage. You will have been inside this darkened environment and your eyes will become dark-adapted. The shooter will be coming from light to dark, giving you the advantage of sight over the shooter if forced to defend yourself.

Remain quiet and out of site. Prepare for the next step should it become necessary. This step will be to take an active role in defending your life and those innocent lives around you.

Defend: It is important to remember that the shooter is trying to kill you. If you find yourself in a situation where your attempt to ***avoid*** and ***deny*** has failed to keep you from becoming a victim, you must defend yourself or die. Hiding under a desk like in a tornado drill will only delay the inevitable. Prepare to fight for your life. In most situations, the shooter is outnumbered by the victims 10 to 1, or 20 to 1, or even 50 to 1. These are pretty good odds if you can get two or three others to help you swarm the shooter while he is at a disadvantage. Do not fight fair. Use improvised weapons (fire extinguishers, printers, heavy staplers, scissors, broom handles) and attack the shooter's weak spots.

Position yourself where you can surprise the attacker. Usually this will be in close proximity to the door. The change in lighting conditions as well as the additional obstacles placed in his way will give you the small window of opportunity to attack. Grab the gun and point it in the direction away from other victims. At the same time, have others attack the shooter's head and eyes while others attack the groin, knees and feet. Once you begin the attack, fight as if your life depends on it... because it does.

Tell yourself you are going to win at all cost. Refuse to give up no matter how overwhelmed the odds may appear. The emotion of fear is natural in a situation like this. Turn this emotion into something else and do not let fear paralyze you. Turn fear into anger and rage and attack. You have the RIGHT to survive this event. Remember, shot does not equal

dead. Prepare yourself mentally to be shot. If you are shot and are not incapacitated by the injury, continue to fight for your life.

Many people will be either unwilling or incapable of fighting back. If you choose to hide, make sure you are hiding behind something that will stop bullets. Have a plan to fight or continue to avoid if your hiding spot is discovered by the shooter. It is important that you have a secondary plan.

Some victims have escaped the shooter by playing dead. This is risky because many of these cowards continue to shoot their victims even after they are dead. Remember, they have gone through a dehumanizing process in their minds before committing this act. There is no out if this is the tactic you choose to use. If the shooter calls your bluff, you are dead.