



PRESS RELEASE

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Darker Nights - Don't Take Fright, Take Control Says Safety Charity

With the clocks due to go back this weekend, the onset of darker nights makes people, especially the elderly, feel more vulnerable and afraid of crime.

However, the personal safety charity, Suzy Lamplugh Trust, advises

Don't Take Fright, Take Control'

Sarah Haddon, Director of Personal Safety at the Trust, says:

"There is no doubt about it, fear of crime on the streets does increase in the winter months, especially for the elderly and women, with many of them avoiding going out after dark altogether. This is a real shame and there is no need for it.

"We can find no statistics to show that crime increases on the streets in the winter months, however - whether it is rational or not - for some people their heightened fear of crime can have a very debilitating effect on their quality of life. Therefore it is important to get the message across to them that there are a number of simple, common sense precautions they can take in order to minimise the risks to their safety and improve their confidence".

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust offers the following advice if you out after dark:

- Plan ahead. Make sure you know where you are going and how to get there. If you are catching a bus or train, find out the times to avoid waiting for long periods at bus stops or stations. If you are planning to take a taxi or minicab home, then either book it before going out, or take the number of a licensed cab company with you.
- When walking, stick to busy well-lit streets whenever possible. Avoid danger spots like quiet or badly lit alleyways, subways or isolated car parks.
- If you do have to pass danger spots, think about what you would do if you felt threatened. The best idea is to head for a public place where you know there will be other people, for example a garage or pub.
- Avoid passing stationary cars with their engines running and people sitting in them and whenever practical walk facing on coming traffic to avoid curb crawlers.
- Stay alert and keep your mind on your surroundings – remember if you are wearing headphones or chatting on a mobile phone, you will not hear trouble approaching.
- If you think you are being followed, trust your instincts and take action. As confidently as you can, cross the road turning and look to see who is behind you. If you are still being followed, keep moving. Make for a busy area and tell people what is happening.
- Try not to keep all your valuables in one place. Instead place valuables such as wallets in an inside pocket or use a money belt.
- Try to keep both hands free and don't walk with your hands in your pockets.
- Consider carrying a personal safety alarm, which can be used to shock and disorientate an attacker giving you vital seconds to get away.

Sarah Haddon adds

“The most important thing to remember is that the risk of becoming a victim of crime is actually very small and by taking the above precautions, you will be reducing the risk even more. So don't take fright at the thought of the dark winter nights; instead plan for them, take control and enjoy getting out and about safely.”

For further advice on how to improve your personal safety visit
www.suzylamplugh.org
ENDS

Press/Media enquiries to: Jo Walker on 07747 611308
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Notes to Editors:

Suzy Lamplugh Trust, works to raise awareness of the importance of personal safety in order to help people to avoid violence and aggression and live safer, more confident lives.

The Trust works alongside government, the police, the educational establishment, public bodies and the business sector to encourage safety wherever people may be at risk - in the home, at work, in public and in schools and colleges, on public transport and when travelling at home or abroad.