

HOW TO ESCAPE FROM A BEAR

1 Lie still and quiet.

Documented attacks show that an attack by a mother black bear often ends when the person stops fighting.

2 Stay where you are and do not climb a tree to escape a bear.

Black bears can climb trees quickly and easily and will come after you. The odds are that the bear will leave you alone if you stay put.

3 If you are lying still and the bear attacks, strike back with anything you can.

Go for the bear's eyes or its snout.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A BEAR

- Make your presence known by talking loudly, clapping, singing, or occasionally calling out. (Some people prefer to wear bells.) Whatever you do, be heard—it does not pay to surprise a bear. Remember, bears can run much faster than humans.
- Keep children close at hand and within sight.
- There is no guaranteed minimum safe distance from a bear: the farther, the better.
- If you are in a car, remain in your vehicle. Do not get out, even for a quick photo. Keep your windows up. Do not impede the bear from crossing the road.

While all bears are dangerous, these three situations render even more of a threat.



Females protecting cubs



Bears habituated to human food.



Bears defending a fresh kill.

HOW TO AVOID AN ATTACK

- Reduce or eliminate food odors from yourself, your camp, your clothes, and your vehicle.
- Do not sleep in the same clothes you cook in.
- Store food so that bears cannot smell or reach it.
- Do not keep food in your tent—not even a chocolate bar.
- Properly store and bring out all garbage.
- Handle and store pet food with as much care as your own.
- While all bears should be considered dangerous and should be avoided, three types should be regarded as more dangerous than the average bear. These are:
 - Females defending cubs.
 - Bears habituated to human food.
 - Bears defending a fresh kill.

Be Aware

There are about 650,000 black bears in North America, and only one person every three years is killed by a bear—although there are hundreds of thousands of encounters. Most bears in the continental U.S. are black bears, but black bears are not always black in color: sometimes their fur is brown or blond. Males are generally bigger than females (125 to 500 pounds for males, 90 to 300 pounds for females).

- Bears can run as fast as horses, uphill or downhill.
- Bears can climb trees, although black bears are better tree-climbers than grizzly bears.
- Bears have excellent senses of smell and hearing.
- Bears are extremely strong. They can tear cars apart looking for food.
- Every bear defends a “personal space.” The extent of this space will vary with each bear and each situation; it may be a few meters or a few hundred meters. Intrusion into this space is considered a threat and may provoke an attack.
- Bears aggressively defend their food.
- All female bears defend their cubs. If a female with cubs is surprised at close range or is separated from her cubs, she may attack.
- An aggressive reaction to any danger to her cubs is the mother grizzly’s natural defense.
- A female black bear’s natural defense is to chase her cubs up a tree and defend them from the base.
- Stay away from dead animals. Bears may attack to defend such food.
- It is best not to hike with dogs, as dogs can antagonize bears and cause an attack. An unleashed dog may even bring a bear back to you.