

HOW TO FEND OFF AN OBSESSIVE EX

1 Make your rejection final and firm.

Do not give your ex a chance to manipulate or negotiate. Refuse all offers for dates, favors, and “friendly meetings.” Express your wish to be left alone. Make sure your body language sends the same message. Do not touch during the rejection, but look your ex firmly in the eyes.

2 Do not discuss the past.

Never mention the good times you had together. Instead, speak enthusiastically about how happy you are now, and make it clear that you have moved on with your life.

3 Immediately sever all ties.

Return all of your ex’s belongings (including any gifts to you) in one shipment. Do not prolong the process. If your ex continues to call, get a new, unlisted phone number. Do not call or send cards, letters, or e-mails; these will result in a mixed message and may give your ex hope of reconciliation.

4 If your ex will not leave you alone, sound a warning.

At the first sign that your ex is not listening to you, announce that if the unwanted behavior persists, you will take action. Threaten to contact the authorities, and be prepared to do so. Do not give in to any threats that may come your way. Be ready to secure

a restraining order or civil protection order if it becomes necessary for your peace of mind.

5 Inform your family, friends, and co-workers about the situation.

Having larger, stronger friends around may serve as a deterrent.

6 Keep a paper trail.

You may need evidence later. Save any relevant letters, notes, e-mails, and voicemails—anything that can prove unwanted attention. Maintain a log or diary of your ex’s actions and report any unlawful behavior to the police immediately. Report phone calls from your ex to both the phone company and the police. Write down your caller ID log, if you have one.

7 Inform the authorities.

Do not let fear of retribution stop you from taking action. If your ex persists in contacting you, becomes easily enraged by your rejections, is overly interested in your private life, or shows up in unexpected locations, he or she has become a stalker. Take legal action immediately and obtain a restraining order.

8 Move.

Make sure that your new address is unlisted. Contact the department of motor vehicles and the voter registration bureau to have them block your address. Forward your mail to a P.O. box, and do not accept any packages unless you are certain who sent them.

9

Take steps to preserve your safety.

Get a cell phone and carry it with you at all times. Consider getting a guard dog and taking self-defense classes.

Be Aware

If your ex shows up where you work, notify co-workers of the situation and vary the times you come and go from work. If possible, have someone accompany you as you approach the building.

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