



Mind: Aging and the Fear of Crime

Body: The Effects of Chronic Fear on the Body

Spirit: Courage

Aging and the Fear of Crime



According to the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization), older persons experience five times fewer incidences of victimization than younger persons. They also report high levels of satisfaction regarding their own safety, give positive ratings to police on all measures, feel engaged in their communities, and believe their neighbourhoods to be safer than other areas.

Aging and the Response to Crime

Early research asserted that seniors were more fearful than younger persons about crime. In contrast, a more recent study now suggests that rather than being more fearful, they are more acutely aware of their increasing vulnerability.

Whether it's reports of violence in the news or our sense of reduced capability, it's natural to want to protect ourselves from harm. As we age, so do our physical abilities. Our reflexes slow down, our hearing and vision can diminish, and all of this can result in a feeling of exposure when interacting with the

world around us. Established behaviours and routines make us more easily recognizable to criminals, contributing to our susceptibility to crime. Here are some tips to stay safe without becoming overwhelmed by fear.

- 1) Get to know your neighbourhood well as an important first step. This helps make you aware of activities and persons entering your area outside the day-to-day routines.
- 2) Keep fit and healthy to help ward off any notion of easy targeting by potential criminals.
- 3) Be engaged and educated. Stay active and involved in the community. You may choose to participate in neighbourhood watch programs or join local organizations to create greater unity while taking advantage of increased sets of eyes and ears.
- 4) Stay informed about safety tips from reliable sources such as local police departments or community/senior centres.
- 5) Familiarize yourself with current scams to be aware of any potential fraud attempts or false information distributed.
- 6) Check in with family and friends. Establish a buddy system to check in on each other. Ask a

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buddy to accompany you when you go out at night, and if that is not possible, tell someone else where you'll be going and for how long.

7) Install safety hardware and software. Invest in lighting for your home and neighbourhood. Setting up motion-sensitive lights near the entrance of your home and around the perimeter can help alert you to any potential threats or intruders. Install cameras around entrances/exits of your home. Consider investing in an alarm system with a monitoring service to notify local law enforcement immediately if your alarm is triggered. Finally, utilize technology to help enable better security. Services such as home automation systems or smartphone apps can help you monitor your house while you are out and offers more peace of mind.

8) Secure all valuables and important documents such as birth certificates and Social Insurance Cards in a safe or safety deposit box.

Conclusion

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of crimes are not random acts of violence but rather crimes of opportunity. When criminals come across an unsuspecting target or situation that is easy to take advantage of, they have less risk and more reward. If you're aware and vigilant about your surroundings, you can be much more prepared for any potential criminal activity.

Feel more secure and confident in our communities by taking the steps listed above. You will be able to enjoy all the local area has to offer with a heightened sense of assurance that you are doing

what you can to stay safe. By staying informed and being proactive with safety measures, we can all go about our daily activities in greater peace.

Rhonda Latreille, MBA, CPCA
 Founder & CEO
 Age-Friendly Business®

The Effects of Chronic Fear on the Body



We all know about the fight, flight, or freeze response in reaction to an intensely fearful incident. Dr. Molly Moller warns that experiences of chronic fear can also have significant negative consequences on our physical health and include, *“headaches turning into migraines, muscle aches turning into fibromyalgia, body aches turning into chronic pain, and difficulty breathing turning into asthma.”*

Moller Moller, PhD, DNP, ARNP, PMHCNS-BC, CPRP, FAAN, associate professor, Pacific Lutheran University School of Nursing, and director of Psychiatric Services, Northwest Center for Integrated Health

Overcoming Fear

“Fear is a reaction; courage is a response.”
 Bohdi Sanders