



WOMEN AGAINST CRIME SAFETY TIPS:

Personal Safety in Online Dating

Online dating is part of modern life, and is probably not going anywhere soon. In fact, a survey from The Knot¹ found that online dating is the most popular way engaged couples met in 2017. With more choices than ever, and more people using online dating every year, it's a frontier that's ripe for danger, especially where women are concerned. In fact, according to the Statistic Brain Research Institute², one in 10 dating profiles online are scams.

While online dating can be both extremely easy and exhilarating, it's important not to let your guard down. Follow these tips to keep yourself safe online, whether you're looking for a fun night out or a long-term partner.

1 USE TRUSTED SITES

Popular sites tend to have more security features than new or rarely used ones, so stick to the sites that tout their security features. Also, paid sites are less likely than free sites to have fake profiles or less savory individuals lurking on their servers.

2 DON'T GIVE OUT PERSONAL DETAILS

Keep your last name, address, and location safe until you really know someone. It's also a good idea to guard your email address and phone number, because a criminal can learn a lot about you just by those details.

3 NEVER GIVE OUT FINANCIAL INFORMATION

No one you meet online needs your bank account or credit card information, or information about your finances.

4 DO YOUR RESEARCH

You can find a lot about someone from their social media profiles, especially Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. You should also do a reverse image search on their profile picture and look them up on Google and other sites. A lack of a digital trail can be as telling as finding something. For real peace of mind, there is nothing wrong with paying for a background check on someone.

5 BE PATIENT

There's no need to rush to meet someone in real life the second you've matched online. Take your time to get to know them and listen to your instincts. This will not only help keep you safe; it will help save you from disappointment for when you decide to meet someone.

6 DO NOT FEEL BAD REPORTING SOMEONE

If they do something inappropriate or that sets off red flags in your head, trust that and report their profile. If someone is pressuring you or you feel uncomfortable, let them go and block them.

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When you feel like you've really hit it off with someone and you trust them enough to meet in real life, there are many safety tips you should follow to continue to keep yourself safe.

1 MEET IN A PUBLIC PLACE

If someone suggests meeting in a hotel room, their house, or a secluded area for your first date, you should be wary of their intentions. Meet at a restaurant, coffee shop, or bar; bonus points if you happen to know some of the staff who will be working.

2 LET SOMEONE YOU TRUST KNOW YOU'RE MEETING A NEW PERSON

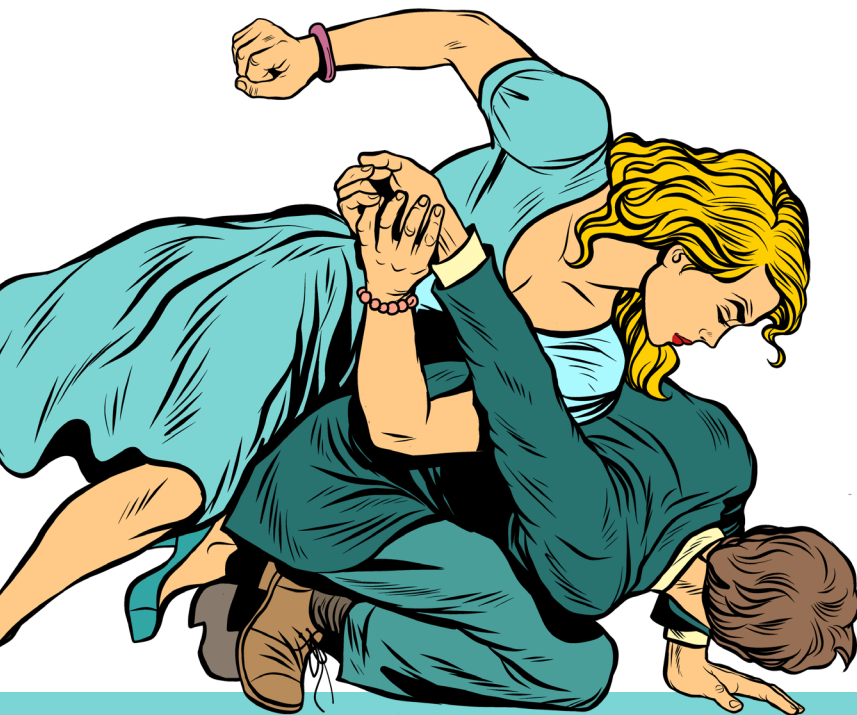
Whether it's a parent, sibling, roommate, or friend, make sure someone knows who you're planning to meet, when, and where. Plan to have this person check in on you after a certain amount of time to make sure you're not in trouble.

3 BE READY WITH AN EXIT STRATEGY

Even if the person you're meeting is not a serial killer, you may not hit it off and want a reason to leave. If you don't feel comfortable just saying you're ready to leave, you can use the excuse of another appointment, a long day at work the next day, or even resort to the pre-scheduled "emergency phone call" from a friend. There is no reason to stay longer than half an hour on a date that you're not fully enjoying, and absolutely no reason to stay on a date where you don't feel safe.

4 TRUST YOUR GUT

I can't say this enough. If your date looks nothing like their online photos or it's clear they were lying about something (like their hair is too long for them to be in the Army), you have every right to be suspicious.



For most women, online dating can be a fun way to meet new people. Following these safety tips can help keep you and your personal info safe from scammers, sexual predators, and other criminals.

For more personal safety tips, please visit us at **WomenAgainstCrime.com**.

¹The Knot 2017 Jewelry & Engagement Study, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/only-1-in-3-us-marriage-proposals-are-a-surprise-engagement-ring-spend-rises-according-to-the-knot-2017-jewelry--engagement-study-300552669.html>

²Statistic Brain Research Institute, Online Dating Industry Report, August 2018, <https://www.statisticbrain.com/online-dating-statistics/>