



# How to Avoid an Alligator Attack

It is safe to say that we all want to escape the fate of Timothy Delano, an 18-year-old resident of Ft. Myers, Fla., attacked by a 10-foot-long alligator at a popular canal swimming hole, and Sophie, the 12-year-old basset hound caught in a gator grip at a golf course when the reptilian behemoth suddenly lunged from a pond.<sup>[1]</sup> Both survived, but much worse for the wear. How can you, your child, or your pet avoid such a traumatizing, life-or limb-threatening event? Read on.

## Steps

**1 Don't feed the animals!** When you feed an alligator, it loses its fear of people, which means that the next snack you might be feeding it is yourself, not to mention an unsuspecting person may get attacked by the alligator. According to Naples, Fla., officials, feeding an alligator could lead to a fine or even land you in jail. And it is also a sure death sentence for the animal; officials will "harvest" an un-intimidated alligator immediately.<sup>[2]</sup> Feeding alligators additionally makes them harder to find because sated gators, no longer in need of food, can find plenty of places to hide.

**2 Educate yourself on the habits and ways of alligators.**

- Alligators tend to get hungry and active between dusk and dawn.
- Male alligators prefer open waters such as canals and ponds while female alligators dwell in marshy areas to protect their young.
- Although you will mostly find alligators in fresh inland waters, a small percentage can be found in salt water, too.
- Alligators are "opportunistic feeders"; they eat anything in sight, including other alligators.

**3 Swim in designated areas only.** If you can't resist swimming in canals or ponds, do not enter the water or be anywhere near it between dusk and dawn. Bear in mind, however, that anyone acquainted with alligators would never recommend swimming in non-designated areas.

**4 Avoid walking or taking a jog near the water's edge.** Take special care to keep children and dogs at a very safe distance; they are the perfect meal-sized portion for a hungry alligator.

**5 If you find yourself being chased by an alligator, run away from it at a 45-degree angle.** This way, the alligator would have to make a conscious decision to move its thousand-pound corpus in another direction, which is no easy task.

- It is commonly thought that you should run in a zig-zag motion to escape the animal's field of vision. This tactic, however, will nonetheless allow the alligator to keep you in view, if only intermittently, and continue the hunt.

**6 Use common sense and take personal responsibility.**

**7 If you see signs that say there are alligators in a certain lake, river, or pond be very careful when walking there.** While most alligator filled lakes are fenced not all of them are so be careful.

## Community Q&A

We have lots of gators in the woods surrounding our home in Kissimmee, FL. We can hear them all night long mating. Should we be worried?

wikiHow  
Contributor

As long as you know where they are located, and don't decide to go trudging off in their direction, you should be fine. But depending on how close they are to your home, you might want to call out an expert to see about fences and gates to protect you and your family from unwanted visitors.

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### Tips

- View this [excellent video](#) on safety tips from the *Naples News*.

### Sources and Citations

1. <http://www.nbc-2.com/global/story.asp?s=12538814>
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