



How to Survive a Wolf Attack

Three Parts: [Escaping an Attack](#) [Reacting to an Attack](#) [Camping](#)

Wolves are dangerous, powerful predatory animals. They usually do not show aggression toward people, but it never hurts to be prepared for the worst when you find yourself in wolf territory. If you are attacked by a wolf, do not run away. Maintain eye contact, make yourself look large, and make loud, intimidating noises. Get to a safe place as soon as you can.

Part
1

Escaping an Attack

- 1 Avoid areas where wolves have been seen.** Avoid being seen. If you see the wolf before it sees you, walk away silently. Stay vigilant. Remember: where there's one wolf, there are likely more wolves around. Wolves sometimes travel alone, but they almost always hunt in packs.
- 2 If the wolf sees you, back away slowly.** Always maintain eye contact, and do not turn your back. If you try to escape, keep the wolves in front of you. If the wolves get behind you, their predatory instincts may kick in. Slowly back away while facing the pack.
- 3 Don't run away.** Wolves are faster than you, especially when you're navigating the woods. Furthermore, running will cause a wolf's prey drive to kick in. If the wolves weren't chasing you before, there's a good chance that they'll start chasing you when you run.
- 4 Do not throw food to a wolf.** Feeding wolves helps habituate them to humans, making them bolder and less wary of our kind. Hand-fed wolves may be more likely to attack humans in the future, as they are no longer afraid.^[1]

Part
2

Reacting to an Attack

- 1 Act aggressively and loudly if approached.** Step towards the wolf, make noise, yell, and clap. Back away slowly. Keep acting aggressively, and keep making noise. Maintain eye contact with the wolf, and do not turn your back.^[2]
 - Do not try to fight the wolves unless you have absolutely no other option. Wolves are strong and smart, with powerful jaws and a killer instinct. There's a chance that you'll be able to fend off a lone wolf, but you don't want to find yourself at odds with a group.^[3]
 - Breathe deeply and try to keep calm. Wolves can sense your fear. If you panic, you risk freezing or running, thereby losing your ability to fight to save your life.
- 2 Fight back.** If the wolf attacks, fend it off with sticks, rocks, bear spray, air horns, or any weapon that you have.^[4] Find an easily-defensible position: stand with your back against a tree or a large rock. You don't want the wolves to get behind you.
 - Do not try to "hide in plain sight" or curl up into a fetal position. This will not stop a wolf from killing you. In most cases, an attacking wolf will only leave if you intimidate it and present a bigger threat than it is willing to chance.
- 3 Stay alert.** If you do manage to drive off the wolf, get to safety calmly and quickly. Climb a tree, a boulder, or another high landscape feature. If possible, get inside a nearby car or building.^[5]

- Do not relax just yet. The wolf may be skulking near you or your campsite, awaiting another chance. If a wolf is particularly hungry, it may try to attack again.

4 Band together. If you are in a group that's being attacked by wolves, make sure to keep all children and injured people in the center. When wolves attack herds of prey, they target the weakest link: young, the old, and the sick. No matter what, do not break the group up. Make sure that you have a person watching in every direction so that the wolves can't outflank your group.

- Wolves aim to find the weakest link in prey groups. They are viewing you all as prey. Children are the most likely to be targeted, as they are the smallest and the weakest. When wolves do attack humans, they attack children in an overwhelming majority of cases.^[6]
- This is how arctic wolves hunt musk oxen. They watch the herd from a distance, waiting for the flanks to open up when one of the adult oxen is distracted. They penetrate the interior of the herd to get to the weaker oxen within.

5 Keep a close eye on your dog. If you are hiking with your dog in wolf territory, keep the dog in your sight. Pick up its poop, keep it quiet, and try to keep it from peeing everywhere. All of these actions will attract wolves, and they will view you and your dog as intruders. Both wolves and dogs use urine and droppings—along with scratches from their claws and scent rolling—to mark their territory, and wolves may attack a dog that they feel is encroaching on their territory.^[7]

Part
3

Camping

1 Build a fire. If wolves are prowling around your camp, light a smoky fire to keep them at bay. Use green leaves and damp wood to make as much smoke as possible. When you have some smoking embers, move them near a tree, or disperse them between several trees. Apply sap or resin to the branches, and light them. Try to waft the smoke downwind toward the wolves.

- Wolves dislike fire and smoke because it appears dangerous to them. If the wolves have pups around (which is likely in spring, when wolf pups are born), then the fire may cause them to move to another den site if the breeding female believes that that safety of her pups is being threatened.

2 Create a defensive shelter. Use branches, stones, sharp sticks, and other solid objects to create a barrier around your site. If well-constructed, this may keep wolves from getting in – but don't forget that they'll still be able to smell you and hear you.

3 Make a lot of noise. Wolves howl to claim their territory, and they may interpret the noise as you claiming your territory. If you are in a group, sing and shout together. Be as loud and fierce as possible.

- Avoid trying to imitate a wolf howl. This may draw the wolf to you. Lone wolves howl to locate the other members of their pack, and wolves have been known to come running when humans imitate wolf howls.^[8]

Community Q&A

Why does the wolf get mad when you make noise?



It might get more aggressive but that wouldn't be likely. The more noise you make the bigger the fight you'll be and every wolf has its limit.

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Why would you make children and injured people targeted more? They are more vulnerable so you should protect them right?



You aren't making them targeted more, the wolves see them as easier prey. That is what you do, protect them. You put them in the middle so that wolves can't get to them.

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Has anyone been in this situation and how rare is it?wikiHow
Contributor

There have been people in this situation, although it is somewhat rare. Proper planning will decrease the chance of an encounter with one. It is always better to be prepared than scared and to know how to keep away from encountering wolves by being aware and sensible.

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What do I do if a wolf bites me?wikiHow
Contributor

If you are bitten by a wolf, call 911 and go straight to a hospital. Being bitten is unlikely unless you provoked it, but it is certainly possible. You may need either a rabies vaccination or a booster shot for a rabies vaccination, just in case.

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If I have a knife to defend myself and stab the wolf will it turn more aggressive or will it retreat?wikiHow
Contributor

It depends on where you stab it. If it's a more fatal wound it would retreat but if not, yes, that does hold the potential to make it more aggressive. You want to be especially careful with stabbing one of them if it's a pack you're dealing with because they will hurt you if you critically wound one of their own. Their packs are tightly knit.

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Why do I have to keep eye contact at all times?wikiHow
Contributor

Because if you try to turn around to get a weapon or something the wolf could sneak up on you and attack.

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Can a large dog like a husky scare away a wolf?wikiHow
Contributor

Possibly but if the husky is submissive, it may get frightened and attack out of fear and thus you may no longer have a dog. If your dog can be dominant enough, then you have a better chance that way as long as you help out your dog. However, relying on a dog is not good advice as most times, the dog is in as much danger as you.

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What should I use to defend myself?wikiHow
Contributor

Sticks and rocks are the most likely weapon available to you in the wild, but if you have anything like a knife, that will work too.

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What should I do if I see a wolf around my house?wikiHow
Contributor

Remain calm and seek shelter as soon as possible. Once you are sheltered, make as much noise as you can to scare off the wolf.

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How can you fight it without killing it?wikiHow
Contributor

Aim for the nose, eyes, and face. Be too loud and assertive to be worth the effort. Curling into the fetal position and covering your neck with your hands will most likely lead to being bitten, but not killed. If you end up killing it in self-defense, don't blame yourself, because it's better it than you.

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Can you answer these readers' questions? RefreshOn **How to Apply for Citizenship (USA)**, a reader asks:

My green card expires 1/23/2017. Can I apply for citizenship now? (I've met all requirements). Or should I renew the green card now and apply for citizenship later? Thank you

Your answer...

Reply

On **How to Manage Your Home Waste**, a reader asks:

How do I control the smell of compost?

[Reply](#)

On **How to Contact USPS**, a reader asks:

If the stamps I designed for use on "forever" stamps to the Citizen's Stamps Advisory Committee are approved, when and how will I be notified if they are chosen to be distributed?

[Reply](#)

Tips

- Lone wolves will rarely attempt to attack you head-on. Make yourself look larger and more intimidating by spreading your arms, flapping your jacket, and holding things in your hands. Wolves have a natural fear of humans.
- If wolves are trying to attack you, don't run! Wolves have evolved to chase fleeing prey, so running away will activate their natural hunting instinct.
- If possible, research wolves before heading out into wolf-populated area. The more you know about wolf behavior, the better your chances of survival.
- Wolves are highly protective of their young, and they don't appreciate strangers touching their cubs (or may abandon the pups). If you encounter wolf pups, avoid them!
- Don't treat the wolf as if it were a dog. Wolves have a biting power of 1,500 lbs. per square inch. That's much more painful than an average dog bite!
- If you see a wolf in your neighborhood in the winter/spring months it is likely it is a young wolf that has recently dispersed from its pack and doesn't know about humans yet. It may seem curious about you, that's normal. It's a good idea to scare it away so the wolf doesn't get in trouble in the city.
- Keep your eye on the wolf, but remember to NEVER EVER look it straight in the eye! This will only make it more aggressive.

Warnings

- If you are bitten by a wolf, call 911 and go straight to a hospital. This is unlikely unless you provoke them, but it is certainly possible. You may need either a rabies vaccination or a booster shot for a rabies vaccination, just in case.
- Do not try to outrun a wolf or a pack. Hold your ground in a group and keep children in the middle. Throw rocks at the wolves, make a lot of noise, and try to make yourself intimidating. One in five wolf hunts ends empty-pawed, usually when the prey stands its ground.
- Do not leave children unsupervised when hiking, camping, or otherwise moving through wolf territory. Children are vulnerable due to their size and lack of strength. They may also fail to recognize the signs of danger.
- It was once said that "the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack". If the wolves are in a pack formation, you may be outnumbered and it may be harder to drive them away. This is especially true if the pack is very large. Wolf packs are usually no larger than six, but may occasionally include up to thirty wolves in select few places, like Yellowstone.

Sources and Citations

1. http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/species/livingwithwildlife/pdfs/living_in_wolf_country.pdf
2. http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/species/livingwithwildlife/pdfs/living_in_wolf_country.pdf
3. <http://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/outdoor-skills/survival/When-Wolves-Attack-Noah-Graham-Survival.html>

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