

Runners: THINK SAFETY!

Running is such a large part of our community. We are so fortunate to have an abundance of rail trails, local running clubs and groups, charity runs and other activities. But we runners, even as part of a group, should always keep safety in mind. All runners should be aware of a possible need for self-defense, especially if running alone.

That's why we are holding a multi-session seminar on this very topic. We will discuss run planning, awareness and avoidance techniques, the use of electronics that can make us more (or less) safe, and self-defense techniques if avoidance is not possible. The program comprises four sessions, with a group run during the second and third sessions. The final session includes a 5K race in which participants will apply their learnings.



MEANWHILE, I'D LIKE TO SHARE THESE TIPS WITH YOU.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

- Let your family know where you will be running and a rough return time.
- Alter your route so you are not always going the same way.
- Research possible hazards.
- Be aware of how you dress (potential grab points such as jacket hood or ponytail).
- Bring your phone.
- Decide what else you will carry to use defensively if needed.
- Don't wear headphones, especially the noise-cancelling variety.
- Plan to run with someone else or in safer places.

DURING YOUR RUN:

- Look around you, not just ahead of you.
- Avoid treed areas and dark, narrow paths.
- When passing someone, call out in time for them to notice and give a wide berth.
- Never run to your own home if someone is following you. Run to someone else's home, or at minimum, take an indirect path (cutting through yards, etc.).

By PJ Darcy, Sensei,
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- Avoid using social media, such as posting your route on shared apps.
- Don't crowd other runners. Instead, use good trail courtesy. Leave space between yourself and others, which allows you to look ahead for obstacles and dangers.
- Stay away from large crowds of people you don't know.

During the seminar, we will teach you how to verbally defuse situations and do your best to avoid physical confrontations. If physical contact is unavoidable, we will teach you simple, effective, hands-on techniques that will get you safely home. The cost for all four sessions is \$80 per person. Payments for the session 4 race will be donated to charity.

Sessions 1 and 2 will be held March 25 and April 15 at the AQMAI dojo in Wappingers Falls. **Session 3** is on May 6 at a location along the William R. Steinhaus Dutchess Rail Trail. **Session 4** is on June 10 at a location to be determined.

For more information or to register, please call (845-298-2177) or email us, at AQKKJJ@gmail.com.

SEE YOU ON THE TRAILS! ♦

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