



Situational Awareness Concepts

Situational Awareness, SA, is being aware of your environment and those around you to enable you to predict, prevent, detect, and evade dangerous situation or threats. This includes the possibility of defending yourself and being prepared to do so.

1 – Identify Things Around You

- When you enter a new environment, or as you are traveling and passing through different areas, notice the objects around you. Is there anything that could be used as a weapon or self-defense item? Is there something to hide behind?
- Notice graffiti or other signs of vandalism or potential unrest.
- Regularly use your senses of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. Notice smells, sounds such as argument or fighting, and keep your mind in the moment by continually observing your environment.
- Be mindful and aware of your surroundings. Think about what could happen around you and how you would react to that situation. How you will think, speak, or move. Be conscious of your abilities and limits.

2 – Observe Other People

- Practice observing others without them knowing you are doing so.
- Use your peripheral vision.
- Try to predict their next move by studying their body language and how they carry themselves. Observe to see if your prediction comes true.
- Imagine all potentially dangerous situations that could occur and how you would react.
- Observe people for the potential of a hidden weapon. Are they walking with their hands in their pockets? Are they wearing heavy clothing on a warm day?

How to spot bad guys

One of the fundamentals of SA is to detect a potential threat through pre-attack indicators. Although these indicators can be subtle, when several are observed together, they often correctly indicate an attack is being considered.

- Person displaying unusual actions.
- Person is in a unusual place.
- They move in same direction as you and appear to be following or stalking you.
- Someone walking directly toward you in a focused way, especially if you are alone and not in an apparent pathway like getting in your car in a isolated place.
- Their hands are hidden.
- They are pacing or appear nervous or anxious. Especially if they are rubbing their face, neck or head.
- They are anxiously touching a spot of their clothing as to assure themselves an object is there.
- Person loitering near spot where you will be distracted or will not be able to evade them easily.

3 – Identify Entry Points and Escape Routes

- Remember the best confrontation is the one that never happens. You are always better off if you can avoid a conflict than to engage a predator.
- Always have an escape route[s] in mind, ideally in addition to your entry route.

4 – Be Hyper Vigilant

- As you move through an area such as a store, or down a sidewalk, continue to remind yourself of SA concepts and observe new environments as you enter them. Learn terms to remind you of SA concepts.
- Try to predict scenarios and how they would play out.
- Develop an action plan ahead of time.

5- Be Strategic

Protect your back:

- Instead of pulling into a parking space, back into it or pull through so you can more quickly exit quickly if needed.
- When dining or shopping, make sure the entrance points to a restaurant or shop are in view and you can observe those who enter.
- If you need to use your phone, or look through your purse, back up against a solid surface to protect you from a predator behind you while you are distracted.
- Use reflective surfaces such as reflections in windows or mirrors to give you greater visibility.
- Keep a sense of personal space.
- If in a crowd, try to avoid close contact or take another route.

6 – Limit Distractions and Don't be an Easy Target

- Put down your cell phone while in public or stand against a solid wall or object to limit your vulnerability when looking at it.
- If you are out and about with children, keep them secure and have something to keep them occupied so you are not always distracted by them squirming to get away.
- Keep your purse secure and closed. Do not let someone walk up behind you and see what is in your purse or easily grab it from you by cutting the strap. Purses are available with reinforced straps the prohibit a thief from cutting your purse strap and stealing your purse.

7 - Develop Confidence

- Practice makes perfect. Practice SA everyday in order to develop confidence your skills.
- Trust yourself and your instincts.
- Walk with a sense of confidence to discourage potential predators from choosing you as a target.

8 – Practice Personal Protection Techniques

- Develop your self-defense skills by deciding on what weapons or tools you will carry with you and how to deploy and use them.
- Review the chapter 20 in Lundin's book for self-defense techniques. Consider a self-defense class.

- Do not be afraid to call for help or make loud noises such as using a whistle.

9 – Be Routine

- Develop a routine of using your SA skills in everyday situations.
- Remember situations and scenarios and take notes if needed.
- Observe your neighborhood and surroundings regularly.
- Take a walk at lunch time from your workplace and observe your surrounds and people.
- Keep it up. Things change, do not become complacent and continually observe and make adjustments.

9- SLAM It

- Stop – Stop what you are doing and think about the situation.
- Look – Look around and observe as much as you can.
- Assess – Assess and develop a plan based on available information, your situation and skills.
- Manage – Manage your plan by executing it calmly and with confidence.

10 – Look at the Big Picture

- Use the skills and concepts above to put together a big picture of your situation.
- Follow the news and include regional, national and global situations to adjust your level of awareness and concern.
- Prioritize all information to develop your plan and continually adjust.
- Do not get comfortable with your knowledge or an environment. Continually adjust your plan based on current observations.
- Stay aware at home and work. Pay attention to changes.

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L6T4.Situational Awareness Concepts.220216

