Don't let a con-artist rip you off

Many con-artists prey on people's desires to find miracle cures for chronic conditions and fatal diseases.

To outsmart con-artists, remember these tips:

- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Don't let greed or excitement overcome common sense. Wait 24 hours and consult a trusted friend or lawyer before making any decisions.
- Be wary of high pressure tactics, need for quick decisions, demands for cash only, or high-yield-low-risk investments.

Take a stand

- Join or help organize a Neighborhood Watch group. Make sure the meeting sites are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Work with local law enforcement to improve responses to all victims or witnesses of crime. Role-play how people with disabilities can handle threatening situations.
- Work with rehabilitation centers and advocacy groups to offer a presentation to schools and other community organizations on the needs or concerns of individuals with disabilities.



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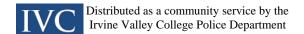
National Crime Prevention Council

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CRIME PREVENTION FOR PEOPLE WITH **PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**



Safety First! BE AWARE. STAY ALERT. REMAIN CALM AND CONFIDENT.

Look out for yourself:

- Be cautious and aware of your surroundings, whether on the street, in an office building or at the shopping mall. Stay alert when driving, or waiting for a bus or subway.
- Send the message that you are calm, confident, and know where you are going.
- Be realistic about your limitations.
 Avoid places or situations that put you at risk.
- Know the neighborhoods where you live and work. Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, restaurants or stores that are open and accessible.
- Avoid establishing predictable activity patterns. Vary your daily routines. By never altering your schedule, you increase your vulnerability to crime.

Before you go on vacation:

- Plan ahead. If you are traveling by car, get maps and plan your route. Have the car checked by your mechanic or a knowledgeable friend before you leave.
- Leave the numbers of your passport, driver's license, credit cards, and travelers' checks with a trusted adult.

- Put lights and a radio on timers to create the illusion that someone is at home while you are away. Leave shades, blinds and curtains in normal positions.
- Stop mail and deliveries or ask a neighbor to take them in.

At home:

- Install approved locks on all your doors. Sturdy deadbolt locks are best. Make sure you can easily use the locks you install.
- Install peepholes on front and back doors at your eye level. This is especially important if you use a wheelchair.
- Get to know your neighbors. Watchful neighbors who look out for you, as well as themselves, are a frontline defense against crime.
- If you have difficulty speaking, have a friend record a message (giving your name, address, and type of disability) to use in emergencies. Keep the tape in a recorder next to your phone.
- Ask your police department to conduct a free home security survey to help identify your individual needs.

Disabled people face many physical challenges. This makes them vulnerable to would-be assailants who assume the disabled are incapable of protecting themselves.

Out and about:

- If possible, go with a friend.
- Stick to well-lit, well-travelled streets.
- Avoid shortcuts through vacant lots, wooded areas, parking lots or alleys.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Carry a purse close to your body not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- If you use a wheelchair, keep your purse or wallet tucked snugly between you and the inside of the chair.
- If you use a knapsack, make sure it is closed securely.
- In case of an emergency, always carry your medical information.
- Consider carrying a portable cell phone in your vehicle.

On public transportation:

- Use well-lighted, busy stops. Stay near other passengers. Sit by the driver.
- Stay alert! Do not doze or daydream!
- If someone harasses you, make a loud noise or say, "Leave me alone." If that does not work, hit the emergency signal on the bus or train.

