

## **PERSONAL PROTECTION ITEMS**

It seems we all need to carry more of our personal possessions around with us these days.

Cash in your wallet or purse; checkbooks, credit cards, personal organizers and mobile phones are just some of the everyday items that are sorely missed if they are stolen.

All these possessions might seem invaluable, but according to the police the best advice for hanging on to your possessions is "only take what you need with you".

They suggest you learn to minimize the amount of possessions you carry with you. If you don't need a camera with you, don't take it and the same goes for cash and credit cards, only take what cash you need and don't take all your credit cards with you, just the ones you are likely to use.

Keep your purse or wallet somewhere where you can feel it, such as an inside jacket or trouser pocket. Pockets you can zip or button are best. Check every now and then to make sure you still have your wallet or purse on you, but don't make this too obvious as pickpockets can spot you doing this.

Likewise, keep your mobile phone out of sight - in a zipped up pocket is best. If you carry a bag, strap it across your chest and keep hold of it, but at the same time try not to look overly cautious. Keep the zip or opening towards you. Be aware that back-pack style bags are especially vulnerable to thieves.

Do not leave your bag unattended in a public place, such as in a pub, coffee bar or shop. If you're trying on shoes in a shop for example, don't walk even a short distance away from your bag. Keep it with you or ask the shop assistant to hold it for you.

Try to appear relaxed, but at the same time be thoughtful about your surroundings. Pickpockets like busy streets and crowded places, and someone bumping into you could well be a pickpocket. If this happens, check you still have your things with you, but again don't make it too obvious that you're doing this.

If something is stolen, go to the nearest police station or call the police. However, don't dial 911 unless you have actually caught someone in the act and have managed to apprehend them. Think carefully before chasing after someone or trying to restrain a thief. The value of what they have stolen may be minor compared to the consequences of being attacked. Always put your own safety first.