

Safety Tips For Solo Runners

By Paul Greer

San Diego City College

Associate Professor of Health and Exercise Science

& San Diego Track Club Coach

The extra importance of safety



My biggest pet peeve with respect to running safety is athletes' use of earphones while running. In light of the tragic death of Chelsea King, I am more convinced than ever that ipods and other mobile MP3 players should not be used in some areas of San Diego - areas like Lake Hodges and Lake Miramar which are less inhabited and areas where there is heavy traffic. In fact, most marathons and races ban these devices now. These audio devices are a huge safety concern for coaches since the devices remove one of the athlete's key senses - hearing. How will a female athlete know if someone is approaching her from behind if she is wearing ipod ear-buds which prevent her from hearing anything but her music? At the very least, runners, female runners in particular, must remove one of the ear-buds from their ears to retain some of their ability to hear what is going on around them.

The extra importance of safety

In quiet areas like Lake Hodges, runners, female runners in particular, need to run with someone else. This also applies to running during the evening hours when it is dark. No one should be running alone at night or in secluded areas. To me, this is just common sense. San Diego County is a dangerous place at times and runners need to **be fully aware of their surroundings at all times** and to take precautions before heading out on a run.



The extra importance of safety

Female runners should carry a whistle so if they are approached by someone who seems suspicious, they can blow the whistle and draw attention to themselves and the situation. I know this might come across as paranoid, but a whistle is a small device and is easy to carry and use. The last thing a dangerous person wants is attention drawn to them.



The extra importance of safety

At all times, be familiar with your running route and what is happening along the route. In particular, pay close attention to suspicious individuals who are in parked vehicles watching runners or others.



The extra importance of safety

Runners should always have a cell phone with them on a run and should have the phone pre-programmed to quick dial 911. This way if someone attempts to harm you, a quick call to the police will make the police aware of your location



The extra importance of safety

Finally, in light of recent tragic events, I believe that all middle and high school students should be required to take a four-week class reviewing safety concerns and solutions so that they know what to do in situations where they feel unsafe. A mandatory safety curriculum should be created for all middle and high school students. We adults owe this to our precious children.

