



## How To Combat Home Invasions

By Jeff Wade

You are startled awake by an intruder in your home. What would you do? What would your spouse do? Or your children? Across our nation, statistics imply that our crumbling economy is sparking growth in at least one area: the national crime rate. One of the most violent crimes is home invasion. Often, home invaders will pose as utility or delivery personnel to gain entry to your home. To combat these ruses, just trust your instincts: Don't open the door if you feel uncomfortable. Ask for ID. Look for a vehicle bearing company logo. Call the company to confirm validity of the visit. Chain-locks installed out of children's reach will prevent them from opening the door to a friendly voice before you have a chance to see who's there. Should the worst occur in spite of these precautions, here are three tips for maximizing your chance of survival.

**1. Plan ahead.** Make decisions ahead of time as to your family's stance on sensitive issues like defending material possessions (not worth it!), hostage policies and use of deadly force. When your heart is pounding and seconds count, it is too late to make these tough decisions objectively.

**2. Include your children.** Children are extremely receptive to clear-cut directions. Just stick to procedures and avoid graphic depictions. Home invasions are often thwarted by children calling 911 or running for help unnoticed while the criminals are busy immobilizing the adults.

**3. Focus on escape.** This seems obvious but gets a little tricky when you involve a hostage. Remember - an escaped family member is essentially a checkmate: The police are inevitably on the way. Conversely, if invaders contain everyone in the family, you are at the mercy of the merciless. There is no need to live your life in fear. However, a little precaution and discussion is well worth the investment to protect your family.

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