

# Carjacking Pt 1: Facts & Tips

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## Carjacking Statistics:

Carjacking facts (National Crime Victimization Survey, 2004):

■ From 1993-2002, there was an average of 38,000 carjacking attempts nationwide annually (50% of which were successful).

■ Almost 2/3 of carjacking incidents occurred within five miles of the car owner's home.

■ Carjackings take place any time (most between 10PM and 2AM), anywhere and in every type of neighborhood.

■ Men committed 93% of carjackings. Males were victimized more than females; African Americans more than Caucasians; Hispanics more than non-Hispanics.

■ A weapon was used in 74% of carjackings.

Full report:  
<https://permanent.access.gpo.gov/lps115803/lps115803.pdf>

**Carry a canister of Pepper**



## The Facts

Forcible auto theft, a/k/a carjacking, is considered a dangerous crime because carjackers are unpredictable, usually armed, often violent (47% of the time resulting in injury whether the attempt was successful or unsuccessful); and the "jacking" can result in other serious crimes such as murder or sexual assault. However, carjacking remains an under-researched, poorly understood crime. The latest statistics I found were from 2004!

If all the carjacker wants is your car, don't resist; especially if the carjacker has a gun or weapon. Give it up and get out of there. Sometimes, under certain circumstances, other tactics CAN be effective, for example, simply accelerating the car and driving off fast. Just remember that cars aren't bulletproof.

Sometimes, however, the carjacker wants more than your car and takes the driver along (especially a woman). Being kidnapped in this manner is so dangerous, the Police advise putting up extreme resistance rather than going along. (*See "Carjacking Pt 2: Avoidance/Stalling Strategies" for options*)

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*Avoid a kidnapping at all costs. Unless you have other escape options in place, strongly consider fiercely resisting, EVEN if the carjacker has a weapon: Throw the car keys on the ground or in his face to blind him, yelling to attract attention, then start running to a close safe place (in a zigzag pattern if the carjacker has a gun). If you have no other options, be prepared to fight.*

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**Preferred carjacking locations.** Carjackers strike in parking lots, shopping centers, convenience stores, or similar places where people are pulling into or out of parking spaces. They also like gas stations, car washes, ATMs and fast-food restaurants where cars are parked at a drive-through window or waiting in line for service. Any spot close to a highway is also favored (facilitates a quick getaway), as are intersections with stoplights or stop signs.

## Common ploys carjackers use.

■ Pretending to be a stranded motorist needing assistance or pretending to be a Police Officer in an unmarked car pulling the unsuspecting driver over.

■ Staging minor traffic accidents (for example, the carjacker and an accomplice bump you from behind on the highway and then steal your car when you get out to exchange license and registration information).

■ Disabling a parked car, often by flattening a tire, then offering assistance and ultimately stealing the car; or flashing lights or waving to get the victim's attention on the highway, indicating that there is a problem with the victim's car, and then taking the car once the victim pulls over.

■ Following a victim home or blocking the victim's car in a driveway.



**Make a Safety Plan for a carjacking scenario, including taking a yearly self defense course!**

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**Because of sophisticated anti-theft devices and locking mechanisms, many law enforcement experts now consider carjacking the quickest way to steal a car.**

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**No absolutes exist in crime scenarios and no advice can address every variable. Evaluate each situation individually and only respond in the way you judge will ensure your safety or survival. Sometimes nothing can be done to prevent an undesirable outcome.**

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*Visit [crimeprevention101.com](http://crimeprevention101.com) for Carjacking Pt 2: Avoidance | Stalling Strategies and for Pepper Spray information AND receive a free eBook "All-Time Top Tips for Keeping Yourself Safe!"*

## The Tips

1. If you see a stranded motorist on the highway, don't stop your car and get out. Indicate to the motorist you've called 911 or highway emergency service for help...and do so. You never know, the distress might be real.
  2. If you're being hailed by an unmarked police car (especially if you don't feel you were violating any traffic laws), keep going slowly to a more populated area before you pull over. Indicate to the "officer" to follow you since you're going to cooperate and at the same time call the "real" police, let them know your fears and give them your location. That way a real police officer can confront the "fake" police officer and straighten everything out.
  3. Beware of minor traffic accidents. If you're bumped suspiciously while driving, for example, motion the other driver to follow you and go to a safer place to exchange information, like a gas station or shopping area.
  4. If you find something wrong upon returning to your parked car (like a flat tire) and a "friendly" person is nearby offering assistance, don't accept the help. Call your own. If you break down on the road, stay in the car with doors locked and windows slightly cracked. If someone stops to offer assistance, tell them you've already called or ask them to call the police or a service station—nothing more. A canister of pepper spray and a membership in an auto club that provides road service is invaluable here.
  5. Park in the open. Avoid spots that are dark, isolated or visually obstructed by foliage as best you can. Avoid parking next to divider walls or large cars like vans. *Keep walking* if you feel someone is loitering suspiciously near your unoccupied car and observe the situation from a safe distance. Wait until the person leaves before you try to get into the car, or find someone to escort you (such as a security guard at the shopping mall or a policeman).
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- Give up your car, your money and any other property requested if it'll enable you to get out of a carjacking situation unharmed.***
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6. Be observant when entering or exiting your car. Keep keys in your hand in the event you need to get back in quickly should someone appear out of nowhere.
  7. Lock the doors when you get in your car and while driving. In city traffic, consider driving with your windows rolled up or slightly cracked. Stay especially alert at stop signs, traffic lights, intersections, and pulling in or out of parking spaces.
  8. If you feel someone is following you on the highway, drive in the center lane rather than the curb lane so you can't be forced off the road. Blow your horn constantly to attract attention to yourself. Don't be afraid to make a scene or seem crazy. Better to be embarrassed than in danger.
  9. If you do get forced to the curb, one option is to put the car in reverse as soon as possible and see if you can back away. Another option is to pretend to stop and then drive away fast when the carjacker approaches. A third option is to get out your pepper spray and be prepared to use it.
  10. If the carjacker is holding you hostage in the car and you're driving, consider crashing the car near a busy intersection to attract attention (conversely, find a way to make the carjacker crash the car if he's driving). If you get forced into the car trunk: Have a trunk release latch put in the car if it doesn't already have one. That way, you'll be able to get yourself out when the car is stopped in traffic.