

MOUNTAIN LION FOUNDATION

Cougar Safety Tips

Encounters with cougars are rare. But if you live, work or recreate in cougar habitat, there are things you can do to enhance your safety & that of friends & family.

-  When it comes to personal safety, always be aware of your surroundings. Wherever you are, conduct yourself and attend to children and dependents accordingly.
-  Landscape for safety. Remove vegetation that provides cover for cougars. Remove plants that attract wildlife (deer, raccoons, etc.). By attracting them you naturally attract their predator—the cougar.
-  Don't feed wildlife. Don't leave pet food outside. Both may attract cougars by attracting their natural prey.
-  Keep pets secure. Roaming pets are easy prey for cougars.
-  Confine and secure any livestock (especially at night) in pens, sheds, and barns.
-  Don't approach a cougar. Most cougars want to avoid humans. Give a cougar the time and space to steer clear of you.
-  Supervise children, especially outdoors between dusk and dawn. Educate them about cougars and other wildlife they might encounter.
-  Always hike, backpack, and camp in wild areas with a companion.
-  Never run past or from a cougar. This may trigger their instinct to chase. Make eye contact. Stand your ground. Pick up small children without, if possible, turning away or bending over.
-  Never bend over or crouch down. Doing so causes humans to resemble four-legged prey animals. Crouching down or bending over also makes the neck and back of the head vulnerable.
-  If you encounter a cougar, make yourself appear larger, more aggressive. Open your jacket, raise your arms, throw stones, branches, etc., without turning away. Wave raised arms slowly, and speak slowly, firmly, loudly to disrupt and discourage predatory behavior.
-  Try to remain standing to protect head and neck and, if attacked, fight back with whatever is at hand (without turning your back)—people have utilized rocks, jackets, garden tools, tree branches, and even bare hands to turn away cougars.