The Mountain Men know that nature can be cruel and that out in the wilderness a man can easily find himself sliding a step or two down the food chain. So what should you do if you find yourself face to fang with one of our most ancient and deadly rivals? How do you survive a wolf attack?

1. Avoiding triggering an attack

If you find yourself unexpectedly faced with a wolf, your first priority is preventing this from escalating into an attack situation. Avoid making eye contact with the wolf as they interpret this as challenging or threatening behaviour. Avoid showing your teeth for the same reason. Lower your head and bow slightly – the wolf will see this as a submissive and non-threatening behaviour. Back away slowly but do not turn your back on the wolf. Fight the urge to turn and run – if the wolf sees you running, it sees you as prey. You cannot outrun a wolf.

2. Dealing with imminent threat of attack

If the wolf begins snarling, snapping and lunging towards you, you need to switch from submissive and non-threatening behaviour to asserting yourself and showing the beast that you are not an easy target. Hold your arms up, draw yourself up to your full height, and shout loud
and aggressively. If you have stones or other objects to hand then throw them. In this situation is highly unlikely you will be able to actually face a wolf down or scare it off completely – what you are aiming for is to make the creature back off so that you can continue to make your escape.

3. Escape

Try to get to a group of people. Wolves are much more likely to attack a lone individual than a group of people. If you find yourself in a group and under attack by a wolf, or pack of wolves, group yourselves together with children, elderly, or injured persons at the centre of the group. Stay together; if an individual breaks from the group, the wolf’s instinct will compel it to hunt the person.

Head for a fire. Wolves hate fire and a smoky campfire will discourage a wolf from coming too near.

If you are alone, climb a tree. Wolves cannot climb trees. You may be in for a long wait however and could find yourself surrounded by a full wolf pack in time. Still, a long wait up a tree is still better than being attacked.

4. If you are attacked

If the wolf is on you before you can escape, it is recommended that you curl into a foetal position, hiding your face and taking care to cover your neck with your arms as thoroughly as possible. Wolves go for the neck and throat when they attack. You will be bitten but you stand a much better chance of surviving. As soon as you are able to do so, try to get back up on your feet and once again challenge the wolf as in Step 2.

5. Fighting back

If the wolf is not backing off and you have no opportunity for escape, use anything you have to hand to strike at the creature. Aim for the face and its nose in particular as this is highly sensitive and a well placed blow can stun the animal. Once again you are looking to show the animal that you are a threat and not an easy kill. If you can demonstrate this clearly enough it is still possible that the wolf may retreat. In 2005 a Saskatchewan man named Fred Desjarlais got a wolf that attacked him in a headlock before a group of his co-workers helped to chase it away. Some biologists recommend making a fist with your hand and shoving it down the wolf’s throat to prevent it from biting; if a wolf can’t breathe, it should decide that attacking you isn’t worth the
effort.

Failing that, I'm afraid it's kill or be killed.

John Reppion