

What To Do If You Are Attacked By A Pack Of Wolves



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Let's pretend you're out for a jog in the woods. Suddenly, you find yourself surrounded by a pack of wolves. There must be at least eight of them. Panic sets in. What should you do?

[Oliver Starr](#), who has raised dozens of wolves and did field work for Yellowstone wolf reintroduction, [provides a good answer on Quora](#).

Here are some of the key points (Starr gives instructions for the more likely scenario that you've entered a pen of captive wolves, but some of the advice



Patrick Bell/Flickr

can still apply in the wild).

- DON'T RUN! This will make you look prey, which is a bad thing. Remember, wolves are HUNTERS
- Don't "stare the animal down." This looks like a threat
- Don't turn your back on the wolves
- Make yourself appear scary: shout, throw stones, raise your arms over your head
- If you've entered an enclosure, back away slowly, moving toward the exit with your back against the fence
- Don't look scared or fall, this will encourage an attack
- If things get really bad, curl into a ball and protect your face

Read Starr's full answer below:

Let me preface this answer by stating that the likelihood of being attacked by wolves is incredibly poor. Not only because wild wolves are very fearful of people and try their best to avoid them, but also because your chances of being where wolves roam freely is also fairly poor. Wolves require about 10 square miles per wolf but since wolves form packs this really means something like 7 wolves together somewhere in a 70 square mile territory. If you are near wolves it's because you worked hard to be there.

A more likely scenario would be if you entered the enclosure of a captive wolf pack that had been habituated to people to some degree. With animals like this the risk of an attack is much higher. For the sake of accuracy, I'd prefer to use the second, much more likely scenario for

my response. Let me preface this answer by stating that the likelihood of being attacked by wolves is incredibly poor. Not only because wild wolves are very fearful of people and try their best to avoid them, but also because your chances of being where wolves roam freely is also fairly poor. Wolves require about 10 square miles per wolf but since wolves form packs this really means something like 7 wolves together somewhere in a 70 square mile territory. If you are near wolves it's because you worked hard to be there.

Whatever you do, don't run. Wolves are what is known as coursing predators meaning they take their prey on the run.

If you watch wolves hunt you'll immediately see this in action. Wolves will attempt to get the animals they prey upon to run. If they don't run wolves usually don't pursue the attack.

Here's a video that demonstrates this with arctic wolves and musk oxen:

In addition to not running I would suggest taking the following steps:

Do not try to "stare the animal down" Wolves appear to regard a direct stare as a challenge or a threat

Do not turn your back on the animal (s). If multiple wolves are threatening you some of them may try to flank you as you can see the lead animal doing in the picture above.

Try to make yourself appear large. If you have a jacket or shirt on, raise it above your head.

Shout at the animals.

If you can do so without making yourself vulnerable grab a few stones and throw them at the animals.

Back slowly away.

If you are working in an enclosure, get yourself to a position with your back to the fence and then keeping your back to the fence move towards an exit. Be careful not to trip. A fall could encourage an attack. In any case if you're working with captive animals in enclosures you should be working in pairs or at a minimum be connected to nearby help via a radio. This last advice holds true working with any large and/or wild animals. When you need help, you need it immediately.

If you are noisy, don't exhibit excessive fear and maintain control of yourself, this should be enough to get you out of trouble.

However if things go downhill from there your chances become worse the more animals there are. I survived a wolf attack from a captive male wolf and wrote about that experience in detail in another [Quora](#) answer here: [Oliver Starr's answer to Animal Behavior \(Ethology\): Would a lone adult wolf be able to take down an athletic adult human?](#)

Given what I experienced with just a single animal I find it hard to believe a person could fend off two or more wolves for any length of time should they commit to an attack.

At more than one wolf, I myself expect I would curl into the tightest ball possible and try to protect my head, neck, face and sides. Chances are, if the wolves really meant to hurt me, this strategy would only be effective for a very short time...

So, there you go. Safe walking out there.