

5. *Stand Tall*

Bullies are less inclined to pick on someone who appears confident, so even if you don't feel that way inside, do your best to project that image on the outside without being cocky or aggressive. You can do this by looking at the bully, keeping your shoulders square and your chest back. When a bully taunts you, do not show emotion if you can help it. Many bullies will give up if they can't provoke a strong reaction to their nastiness.

6. *Know Your Battleground*

Train yourself to look around and assess the scene where a bully confronts you. Check to see whether the bully has friends nearby, whether there is anything you can use to defend yourself if you have no other choice. During your encounter with the bully stay alert and be aware of changes in the bully's mood, the bully's tone of voice, and body language. If the bully grows more aggressive and moves toward you, be ready to walk or run away, call for help, or defend yourself.

Map out possible escape routes. Look around to see whether there is anyone nearby who might help you. Don't be afraid to ask strangers for help as a last resort. You can also just go stand by an adult to discourage the bully from attacking you. If you have a cell phone, make sure you program into it a quick-dial code for an emergency number for friends, family, or the authorities.

7. *Respect the Bully*

Sounds crazy, right? Some people become bullies to mask their insecurities and low self-esteem, so insulting them or putting

them down may only turn a bad situation worse. As difficult as it may be, try to treat the bully with respect even if you aren't getting any in return. The bully's mood may be out of your control, but you don't want to add fuel to the flames.

8. *Stay Out of Reach*

It may seem obvious, but you should try not to go anywhere where your bully can confront you alone. If there is a playground or shopping mall or some other place your bully frequents, stay away. If your bully is confronting you at school or someplace else where you have to be, please try to keep as much distance between you and the bully as possible, especially if there is no one else around to help you.

Self-defense experts advise staying at least two or three steps out of reach. I advise you to stay two or three miles away if possible! You don't want to make it easy for the bully to grab you or to get in your face verbally. If the bully tries to close the distance, you have the options of retreating at a brisk walk—don't run if you can help it—or you can ask respectfully for the bully to stay back. If you walk or run away, make sure to keep checking to make sure the bully is not pursuing you.