



Woman's World



pg 18 We tell you which of these B-town girls added some oomph with their hot legs

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pg 20 Is he taking forever to propose? Here are a few subtle hints you can use

Afternoon Despatch & Courier

MUMBAI | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2011



>> Depending on where you are and how many people you are surrounded with, you must fight back when faced with hooligans on the street

FIGHT OR FLIGHT?



After the tragic Keenan and Reuban case sent chills down everybody's spine, a city which was once popular for being one of the safest, unfortunately cannot be called so anymore. Not only does the incident raise questions about the city's safety but also leaves us wondering whether we can stand up against sexual harassment? We ask a few women whether they would fight back or flee if and when faced with 'eve teasing'

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

"I think women should stand up against eve teasing instead of letting it go or waiting for someone else to help them.



Women should first be fair to themselves. This isn't the time to sit back and watch but it's the time to raise

a voice and stop tolerating nonsense. Also, one way of giving it back would be by clicking pictures of the ones who tease or harass you and circulating everywhere, especially online. Usually, these miscreants are always hanging out at a specific place. If it happens like it did in Keenan and Reuben's case, then the way out would be to immediately call the police."
— Heer Khant, Student

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Afternoon

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We hunt down the best coffee houses in the city and tell you what to expect

« Food

We review the new menu at French restaurant Chez Vous

« Shop

We review The Dressing Room to find out if it's worth a visit this festive season

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Find out what Dublin has to offer as a travel destination

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Gig guide, twitter wars, new launches and much more

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WHO WERE KEENAN AND REUBEN?

A month ago, Keenan Santos, Reuben Fernandes and a couple of their friends were standing outside Amboli Kitchen & Bar, when a drunken man fell over one of the girls in the group. When Keenan and Reuben decided to stand up for their female friend and take the matter in their own hands, the drunken man returned with a mob who then assaulted the two boys. In the fight that followed, Keenan Santos was killed and Reuben Fernandes succumbed to his injuries 13 days later.

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"When I think about it, my brain says that I'd let it go because it would only get uglier if you do something at that point and there would be a ruckus. But I'm an angry person in general, so probably I'd fight back as a reflex action."
— Ritika Ramsinghani, Part-time stock broker

"It totally depends on the situation. You just know when you should react and when it's wiser to walk away. It's best not to do anything if no one else is around and if there's more than one of them. If it's on a deserted street, I would just walk away, really fast since you can never predict what will happen next or what can irk him. If it happens when I'm travelling via public transport, I'd definitely yell, abuse and attract attention."
— Shikha N., Design student

"It all depends on the situation at hand. I'd say that the most sensible thing to do is to walk away especially if there are no people around. Also, it's a good idea to move into a space where you feel more comfortable — more crowded areas such as a hotel or a café. As much as I hate saying this, I feel there is no way a single woman can fight a single equally sized male and win. Judgment is the better part of bravery. If there are cops in sight, approach them. But first, get to safety. Then think about complaining."
— Harini Calamur, Director of Cogito media

"Most people think it's easy to scream or fight or yell back when faced with such a situation but more often than not, you simply blank out. I'm generally a loud person so yelling back at people in my atrocious Hindi usually works but there are times when I find myself too stunned to respond. I would always choose to fight back because bullying is never justified no matter what the reason. Despite the time and place, you need to fight back. How you do it depends on you and the circumstances. Some cities are safer than others and when you know you're not in a secure position, especially if you're alone, you need to take a call. It's easier to fight back in groups than it is to defend yourself when you're alone in the dead of the night."
— Michelle, Digital professional

"If you are alone and you're being teased, it is best to pretend that you haven't understood what the person

is saying. It's sometimes better to play dumb. I'd say that it's better to move away into a crowded area and loudly call out to someone or get on the phone and tell them exactly where you are. If you're alone, for instance in the ladies compartment of a train, get off and move to a crowded general compartment. Try to let them follow you to a police station without them noticing but always get out before it gets physical. When we were younger and used to return from a game of hockey, people would try to push/paw us in crowded buses. When I would see the bus reaching the signal, I would ready my hockey stick and whack hard on the shin, then turn around very sweetly and say 'I'm sorry.' They never got on our bus again. These days, I don't think it is safe to allow male friends to fight for us as it automatically goes on to a war footing."
— Veera Sawkar, Founder of Veerash Travels

"My reaction depends on many things such as the gravity of the situation, the number of people around and how angry it actually makes me. I believe walking away is a wiser choice. When I think about it, even if I do fight back, it still leaves me irritated and does not change the horrible feeling I am left with."
— Resya Ramachandran, Media professional

"I shudder every time I think about the Keenan-Reuben case and what our culture has come to. I would definitely fight back in an eve teasing situation and I think everyone must raise a voice. If you do, people will certainly come and help you. Of course, if you're alone on an empty street, it's better to walk away thinking that barking dogs will always bark but I will make a noise about it whenever the situation seems conducive."
— Aditi Mittal, Stand-up comic

"Generally if they are on a bike or something, I simply ignore. But if they are on foot and I am in a big group or surrounded by people, I pick a fight and make a noise. I have even called the police once."
— Rashi Vidyasagar, Student

"It depends on the severity (weird looks, verbal, physical) and who I'm with (alone, with women, with children). If it's verbal, unless it's very persistent for instance, while waiting for a train, a man at the station keeps saying something, I will ignore it. If I'm with my children, I will leave the area immediately. However, if it's physical, I've found that I tend to react by screaming and lashing out physically with an umbrella or whatever is at hand. I believe it is very important to raise your voice and make a noise about it rather than just letting it go. Besides, eve teasing is a term from another

time when boys who liked girls would try and make them laugh or charm them. What happens today is utter disrespect for women, violence towards them and one step away from rape or molestation."
— Genesia Alves, Journalist

"I think the first step towards countering sexual harassment is dissolving the traditional roles of women. There is nothing that a woman 'should' do or 'has to do'. When a woman is sexually harassed today, she feels like she is the one to blame. This guilt is socially placed. She asks herself, 'What am I doing wrong, what am I doing to encourage this behaviour', when in most cases she does nothing but walk down the street. People have to accept man and woman as the same which starts at the very fundamental family unit. Parents have to stop treating genders differently if they don't want their daughters to be harassed. A woman should not have to choose between fight and flight. She should not have to wonder when to let it go. For society to progress, we need women to be able to think and live without fear so that their children and families may think and live the same way."
— Avantika Hari, Director, Land Gold Women

"My problem is my loud mouth. I have a bad habit of retorting all the time regardless of the situation but I think sometimes just ignoring it is the best thing to do because most of these men are just hooligans and have no future and don't care about anyone else."
— Sapna Bhavnani, Hairstylist

"What is crucial to understand is that any person who behaves in this manner is mentally disturbed, you are not dealing with a sane person. They cannot be reasoned with the way you would with someone of your own intelligence, so why try? They don't consider what they are doing as wrong and trying to educate them is futile and silly. The best thing to do is get into a rickshaw or taxi and get away from the place. Even if you have male friends with you, do not provoke such people, you are only encouraging them. They want your attention and leaving the scene as quickly as you can is the safest thing to do."
— Malti Bhojwani, Life coach

"Eve teasing should never be accepted by women under any circumstances. The best thing to do is approach the cops every time someone passes a lewd comment, gesture or makes a woman uncomfortable. Nothing justifies a man challenging the dignity of a woman in any way, what a woman wears and how she chooses to dress can in no way justify her being teased harassed or embarrassed."
— Farah Oomerbhoy, Fashion designer



WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE BEING FOLLOWED/ ALONE & THREATENED

CHOOSE WISELY: Mostly the way you react will be a reflex action but always decide wisely what you should do in such a situation as you can't predict what the person will do next. He will either be intimidated or you might just irk him further so don't end up being foolish in an attempt to be brave.

PLACE AND TIME: If you're alone and there aren't many people around, it is always wiser to let go off the situation, no matter how horrible and helpless you feel. If you're in a public place and you know

that the people around will come to your rescue, you can go ahead and grab their attention. If you think your rickshaw or cab driver is trying to pull stunts, get off at the next signal or crowded junction and hail another ride.

PEPPER SPRAY: With the standards of safety for women in the city become increasingly questionable, more and more women are resorting to keeping a pepper spray handy with them at all times. It will not seriously harm your attacker but

will buy you enough time to escape from the situation safely. Pepper sprays will be available at your local drug store or try www.chilliguard.com.

HELPLINE: If you feel violated and didn't find it wise to react when faced with eve teasing but still want to do something about the situation, dial 103 and register your complaint. Whether it will make a difference or not, you can leave it up to the concerned authorities but you will be satisfied with the thought that you did your bit.

