How to Survive a Dog Attack

What are the most dangerous dogs in a dog attack? Pit bulls, Rottweilers and Presa Canarios are canines in a Top Ten list. Whether it's a single attack dog or pack of dangerous dogs following an economic collapse -- survival tactics can make the difference between life and death in a dog attack.

Update: What's the Best Weapon for Runners and Bicyclists in a Dog Attack?

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**How to Survive an Armed Robbery**
With crime on the increase and a troubled economy, more people are turning to armed robbery and more criminals and ex-cons are apt to strike repeatedly. Learn how to survive an increase in armed robberies.

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**Self Defense and Hand to Hand Combat on the Street**
Knowing self-defense can save your life in a robbery, attempted rape, or attempted abduction.

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**There's a reason why police dogs are effective. Picture an angry German Shepherd traveling at light speed with fangs bared...**

Let me put it this way: There have been plenty of criminals that have turned tail and run the other way. Unfortunately for these criminals, that may be the worst thing a person can do when a dog attack occurs.

The reality is that dog attacks do happen. Along with this, it's a rare person that hasn't at least felt threatened by a dog at one point or another. In fact, it's a rare person that hasn't felt threatened by a dog in their own neighborhood.

Besides, if you've been reading the articles at SecretsofSurvival.com, then you know that when it all hits the fan and we suffer a collapse, dangerous dogs are likely to be loose in several communities, yours may be included.

You see, loose, dangerous dogs are a vastly underestimated threat in a time of national collapse.

Today, many home owners own dangerous dogs that they do not take on walks around the neighborhood. Just because you don't see these dogs doesn't mean that they're not there.

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**Know What the Most Dangerous Dogs Are**

Pit bulls.
Rottweilers.
Doberman Pinschers.
Presa Canarios.
Akitas.
German Shepherds.
Mixed breeds.
Hybrid-wolves.

These breeds make up the Top 10 dangerous dogs of most lists you might come across.

Then you've also got dogs such as Bull Mastiffs (giants) that can be trained to be attack dogs, though not all of them are. Some dogs like German Shepherds and even hybrid-wolves (which is a high-content wolf bred with a dog such as a Husky or German Shepherd) can be trained to be friendly or they can be trained to be attack dogs.

Finally, military and police attack dogs are sometimes bought (at a high price tag) by civilians and then kept as protection at homes and commercial properties.

Continued below...

Now, ask yourself this: What happens in a truly catastrophic disaster such as an earthquake, hurricane, tornadoes, or even a WMD (weapon of mass destruction)? Dangerous dogs in several communities can end up loose as walls and fences are knocked down by earthquakes or catastrophic weather events.
Surprise Awaits Looters in Several Communities

Looters will unintentionally let loose dangerous dogs when they target the nicest neighborhoods and estates, opening gates, kicking down doors and unexpectedly coming face to face with attack dogs that have been waiting for this moment all their lives. These dogs are bred and trained to kill. Several looters are likely to be maimed and killed as dangerous dogs like Presa Canarios now have open doors and open gates leading into neighborhoods where these dogs have never previously set foot or even been seen by neighbors.

Do you even know what a Presa Canario is? You can bet that several home owners in your state own one. Then of course there are pit bulls, owned by a lot more people and in a lot more neighborhoods. These dogs have a dangerous reputation for a good reason. By far they have killed more people than any other dangerous dog in modern times.

So how can you protect yourself?

Be Prepared for a Dog Attack: Have a Weapon

The greatest fighters in the world are the ones that prepare themselves for battle the best. Thus, if you want to live through a dog attack, it would be beneficial to be prepared. In other words, have some things on you that could be beneficial in a dogfight.

**Pepper spray** - It's never a bad idea to have pepper spray designed to make something trying to hurt you think twice. Look specifically for dog repellant when you shop for pepper spray.

One thing to consider though, is this: Having pepper spray by itself doesn't mean you're safe from a dog attack (you'll read why in a moment). Further, sometimes it's best that you don't use any kind of spray with an angry dog.

By the same token, it could end up helping. So why not at least have it on you?
Sticks and stones may break his bones, but... well, who cares about names? Here's the thing: A good stick is worth a world of good. Why? Well they can be used in a variety of ways from hitting a dog on the nose, to more aggressive stances if that doesn't work. George Donahue at FightingArts.com even spoke of having a drumstick (real drums, not a turkey). In short, anything thin enough to get down a dog's throat and hard enough not to break.

If it can be concealed, that may be even better (depending on the situation).

Also remember that preparation means more than weapons. Thus, you should always be highly aware when traveling outside. Beyond that, know where the more aggressive dogs are along the routes you're traveling and don't be afraid to call that neighbor and tell them to leash their dog.

In a time of collapse of course or even a "post-apocalypse" scenario, your neighbor may be dead, his dogs staying near their home, but attacking anything that passes by within eye sight or hearing range. Remember, dogs have better hearing than humans.

### How to Avoid a Dog Attack

Okay, let's say you are prepared and then that dog comes running out of someone's yard angrily at you. Be ready to pull out and fire off your pepper spray.

Some report that pepper spray can serve to only make an attacking dog more angry, and to not pull it out until the last moment (but of course if you time this wrong it may be too late for you) but we have first hand report from a colleague who teaches weapons for tactical solutions (Teanis Tillmon of Street Defense Research), that he has used pepper spray very effectively against charging, very angry pill bulls and other dogs. He adds that it can be more effective than a baton or even a firearm, stating he knows first hand about police who have still been charged after firing a gun.

Pepper spray, by far, is Tillmon's preferred weapon against a dangerous dog.

Before it comes to any encounter with a dog, though -- first, you should try to avoid the confrontation. And that means...
Do not appear threatening to the canine - Stare downs happen before boxing matches and MMA fights for a reason. Both competitors are obviously trying to intimidate one another. They want to let the other know that they’re ready for the confrontation.

Which is why you don’t want to stare a dog in the eyes. That’s threatening to a canine, and threatening is the last thing you want to be. Along with that, stay calm. If you don’t, the dog will either think you want a fight or are scared, both of which can be detrimental.

Beyond that, here are a list of considerations that could keep a dog attack from occurring once you've happened upon an aggressive dog.

1. You might try commanding the dog to "sit," or "stay." This could give you time to think or even get away.

2. Do not make any sudden movements. Rather, keep your hands down at your sides. This may serve to calm the dog down and show them that you are not a threat.

3. Do not turn your back on the dog. Canines often take that as a sign of weakness or an opening to attack. 4. Further, do not run away. That will probably only cause the dog to come after you. Dogs have a prey-drive. Attack dogs can have a very strong prey-drive.

4. Don’t smile. Bared teeth may signify aggression to a dog.

5. Back away slowly once the dog stops paying attention to you.

Oftentimes, utilizing the aforementioned in such a way will keep a dog from attacking. However, if this doesn't stop the impending attack, then there are further things to consider.

When All Hell Breaks Loose: Steps to Take Against an Attacking Dog

1. Put something between your body and the dog's teeth if you can. This could be a stick or something that separates the two of you. Of course, it could be a
jacket wrapped around your arm, etc. Remember, that if you give it an arm then you have another plus both your legs free.

Along with this, you don't want to end up on the ground with a dog.

2. If you understand Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, then you know that oftentimes attempting to simply pull your arm out of an armbar only serves to allow the hold to come together more easily. Along with this, pulling your arm from a biting dog will only help them to rip it to pieces.

Thus, this is a bad idea.

3. By the way, this is the time to try that pepper spray to the dog's eyes (once the attack has commenced). If that works, great! At this point, the pepper spray can have the best chances of working. The reason is this: If an attack dog is charging you, and you pull out your spray and fire it at the dog, the dog can be moving so fast it charges right through it, fighting now with it's mouth and teeth, continuing to bite even if some spray does get into it's eyes.

So, rather than spray as it's charging, you want to spray once you've brought the dog to a halt so that it can absorb the full brunt of the spray.

4. This is also the time that you might want to try that stick you brought. However, your best bet may not be to simply hit an attacking canine with it (though you could try that). Rather, attempt to shove it down the dog's throat. This may cause the canine to choke and give you back your arm.

If a stick isn't available, you might even consider shoving the arm the dog has down its throat depending on your situation as it could possibly have the same effect.

5. If none of the above work, then you're running out of options beyond trying to truly beat the dog at its own game (in other words, no pun intended, you're about to embark in a dogfight). Along with this, strikes to the eyes -- it's time to get mean -- or the throat may be in order.

6. If that doesn't work, you could even try grabbing one of the dog's hind legs, according to George Donahue at FightingArts.com, and ripping up (thus putting the dog on its back in a submissive position). This could allow you to drag it.
Remember, though, that such a movement may put you at risk for ending up on the ground (a bad thing as it leaves your neck and other vital areas open to the dog). So proceed with care.

7. Of course, this is all assuming that you don't have a gun on you. Still, you would only use such weaponry as a last resort (even if one of these SecretsofSurvival.com scenarios did play out). Remember that most dogs act angrily only when they feel that you are threatening them or their family. Thus, the above steps could very well work before resorting to such tactics.

But that doesn't necessarily mean they will.

In the end, dog attacks can be vicious and bloody. In fact, they can be deadly. Along with this, being prepared can mean the difference between life and death. As with any survival scenario, you should choose life and be ready.

**Other Weapons to Consider in a Dog Attack**

**Pitchfork** - A pitchfork is dangerous to attacking dogs. They have been used successfully to kill attacking dogs (including pit bulls) in the past by farmers and families alike. Pitchforks are designed for bailing hay. But the multiple sharpened spear points are a dangerous weapon against attacking dogs.

**Baseball bat** - A baseball bat, especially an aluminum bat, is a great weapon against an attacking dog -- you just have to have the eye-hand coordination to swing and connect as it's rushing at you with it's teeth bared. Sometimes standing in front of a dangerous dog with a bat or club raised high can be enough to make it leave you alone (if the dog has previously learned to fear a club or threatening arm). Most dogs may turn tail after taking a baseball bat to the head or shoulders. But, in the case of a very angry, large, dangerous dog, one swing may only stun it temporarily. Be ready to swing again, hard and furiously. Use footwork to step back and then step laterally and step forward again after each swing hits. That way you're never in the same place and by using footwork (from boxing, martial, etc) you make it a bit harder for the dog to find anything to bite into, after it's been hit; hit the dog again and again until it finally flees or is out for the count.

**Survival knife** - If you're traveling through an area following a catastrophic disaster, realize that dangerous dogs may be loose -- especially in a "post-apocalypse" scenario. If you don't have any barbed-wire to wrap your forearm in, wrap it in some kind of heavy cloth (like a coat) and keep a survival knife
ready and in your hand, blade unsheathed. If a dangerous dog attacks, give it your forearm; as it sinks it's teeth in, stab repeatedly and viciously with your other arm just under it's front leg, or above the top of it's shoulder, through it's shoulder-blades and into it's organs. This dog doesn't have a chance; keep stabbing and don't let go of the knife.

**Taken to the Ground by an Attack Dog**

Ok, so the worst case scenario has happened, and a dangerous dog has taken you to the ground. Your first instinct should be to protect your throat and back of your neck by covering your head in your hands. With your head covered in your hands, roll your entire body fast (rolling on the ground is an easy movement for people -- throw yourself to the ground and try it sometime), at the same time rolling a forearm toward it's mouth. If a dog is going to bite anything, let it bite your forearm -- that is better than a dog biting your throat or face.

Once it has an arm in it's mouth, time to think fast. With your other arm, grab it's face, find an eye socket, and bury your thumb furiously into the dog's eye; destroy the eyeball; pop that thing, as disgusting as it might sound. But attacking the eyeball can cause this dog to finally let up.

If it doesn't let up, you have two more body parts to go for:

A) The other eyeball.

B) The carotid arteries in the neck. You'll need both hands to go for the carotid arteries; which an opportunity may present itself if the dog attacks a leg or you've ended up on top of the dog while rolling around. Clap both hands around it's neck and squeeze; reports say you can quickly choke a dog to death by cutting off the blood flow to the brain. Careful though; if you let it up too soon it may only be stunned momentarily and may suddenly resume the attack.

**A Pack of Dogs**

Against a pack of dogs you've got your work cut out for you. In some communities following a catastrophic disaster, after several weeks dogs may begin to band together and form packs. As food becomes scarce and days go by
without eating, tempers can increase and pack mentality can make these dogs a lot more dangerous than they were before the disaster.

If you're attacked by a pack of dogs, even as few as three dogs, you're going to have a hard time making it out of this attack without injury. With just a knife you might stab the first dog, but not before the other two sink their teeth into you and begin biting and tearing.

As unlikely a scenario as this may seem for people, in a time of collapse it would be smart to travel with multiple people, each armed with a weapon for self-defense. There will be packs of dogs in several areas and you may come across a pack of dogs more than once.

Defending Against A Pack of Dogs

You might want to have a strategy, where you take a position you can defend against wild dogs anytime you come to a new area. Look for parked cars and trucks -- you can fight from the back of pick-up trucks and most dogs won't be able to get to you. You may also be able to climb on to the hood of a car and swing or shoot (such as a bow and arrow) your weapon from there.

Once in a new area, use noise to entice a pack of dogs to your location. The same methods that work for hunting wolves in Canada and even parts of the U.S. will probably have a good effect on dog packs also. Dogs themselves are actually not far removed from wolves, genetically. Remember they can breed together; they're the same species. The same dynamics that take place in wolf packs will take place in dog packs also; they can likely be hunted using the same tactics that wolves can be hunted.

Wolves are territorial and also curious animals. A good wolf-howl can cause other wolves to howl or bark in return. Use a good wolf-howl to draw in a pack of dogs.

Wolves are also drawn to young or dying animals -- these are typically an easy meal for a wolf. Wolves can be hunted using "predator calls" (a device) that makes a sound to mimic the sound of a specific animal, such as a field mouse, rabbit, or elk. You can carry a "predator call" in your backpack or you can simply practice making animal sounds by studying the sounds of wildlife and then doing your best to mimic them. Use these calls to draw in a pack of dogs.
Drawing in a Dog Pack to a Position You Can Fight From

What you want to do is catch the attention of dangerous dogs and draw them to an area where you can fight from -- such as the back of a parked pick-up truck or even a porch in the front or back of a person's house, one that you've blocked off with boards, for example -- one that allows you a position to fight from without a dog actually getting to you.

Shark Cage

Picture a gorilla cage with bars. Or a shark cage that an underwater diver might film from.

If you can build a makeshift "cage" and then draw a pack of dogs (or even wolves, if you're in the mountains, or coyotes), you'll have a safe place to fight from, where canine teeth can't get to you.

What do you build this cage out of?

Anything tall, straight, and solid that you can scavenge. It could be planks from a fence or deck, for example.

Knock apart the deck or fence with a hammer, until you have plent of wood to work with; dig holes in the ground, and position them in a circle (creating a "cage"); finally, use braces at the top and rope to fasten the "cage" together at the top; this way it doesn't press apart if dogs lunge at it or try to get through.

Keep enough space between planks that you can see through and thrust your weapon through, but close enough together that a dog can't get it's head through. You can inflict injury on a pack of dogs from where you are protected within the cage you've put together.

Chain Link Fence to Defend Against Dogs

You can also do this with a chain link fence; though if you choose to use a chain link fence you'll need to use a weapon such as a spear with a sharpened
point that is narrow enough to thrust through holes in the chain link; a pitchfork can work also, though it won't have the same reach as a spear.

In a time of collapse, it might be smart to collect chain link fencing (just cut it down off existing fence in commercial areas) and surround your living area with it.

Shot Gun

If you have the means and the ammo, a shot gun is a great weapon to use against a pack of dogs or even wolves.

Be able to reload quickly, just in case these dogs or wolves are a bit too eager, perhaps more hungry and less daunted by gun shots than usual.

Take Down the Alpha

When it comes to a pack of dogs, just like wolves, try to spot the alpha male and even an alpha female — a pack of dogs can be a lot like a pack of wolves. The alpha male may be the most dangerous and vicious of the pack. Aim for him first. The reason he's the alpha is that he's the toughest and most vicious of the pack. Wounding or killing him first just might send a message.

Intimidating a Dangerous Dog or Wolf

When you have no other choice, you can try to intimidate a dog or pack of dogs or even a pack of wolves (this also works with mountain lions; don't try it though with African lions).

Yell and scream with rage in your voice at the dog louder than you've ever yelled or screamed before; shout with violence in your voice; roar (yeah, I said "roar"). Stand up tall and waive your arms threateningly; throw rocks, act dangerous and unstable. Continue to yell. Scare the pants off this dog.

Dogs and wolves can be scared off. This is a method that has worked for people in the past. I have to admit though — though this might work just fine today on your next bike ride or jog through a rural area on a loose dog you come across, there's a good chance it may not work during a time of collapse
or even a "post-apocalypse" scenario when multiple dangers are likely to be in the land. Dogs and wolves may simply be unphased by intimidation tactics, should that day come.

**Pit Bulls May Be More Dangerous Than Wolves**

Be wary of using intimidation tactics on pit bulls. You probably shouldn't even try. This is one breed that may be more aggressive than even wolves and your aggression is only going to trigger more aggression in a pit bull. Why? Several generations of pit bulls have been bred for aggression, which may include the pit bulls that have just spotted you.

Wolves in the wild, on the other hand, aren't bred for aggression, though they can be extremely aggressive by nature.

A pit bull is like your crazy Uncle Larry: Pit bulls are sometimes "not right" in the head. They don't make good guard dogs for a camp simply because they pose a risk of attacking people who belong to the camp -- especially children.

While a wolf in the wild might take more predictable actions, a pit bull is just too unpredictable. You better have a Plan-B for dealing with pit bulls. Don't count on trying to intimidate any pit bulls you encounter.

**Pit Bulls Are the Most Dangerous Dogs**

The unfortunate thing about pit bulls also is this: Not only are they the most dangerous dog with by far the most maimings and killings than any other canine in the U.S. (including wolves), there are also a high number of pit bulls. Most likely someone in your community owns one; some communities have more than one pit bull owner, owning more than one pit bull. Some are probably great pets, though may still be dangerous to others, especially if they get loose following a collapse or widespread disaster. Hope for the best -- but be prepared for the worst.

Getting caught unprepared by a pack of vicious dogs is probably one of the most painful ways to die. Unfortunately, it's likely to happen to people in multiple communities should society as we know it fall to the ground.
Update: What's the best weapon for a bicyclist to use on a dangerous dog? Police stun baton

A reader commented on this article (see "Comments" section below): "I recently started bicycle riding and went on a 35 mile ride last weekend and I ended up on a road called Indian School road just east of Scottsdale, AZ. This is rural Indian land and went past one house and one huge dog started racing towards me, then to my horror I saw about 8 or 9 other equally large dogs (not sure of breeds, but mastiffs, dobermans, rottweilers, etc) also racing towards me - I pedaled like crazy and they caught up with me, snarling, snapping away at my feet, it seemed like forever, but maybe they were at me for 0.25 to 0.5 miles and eventually they dropped back. Scariest moment of my life. I really believe I would have been mauled to death if I came off. I won't go on any land like this again, but a question, what kind of gun should I get that would be effective here and also practical on a bike?"

Response: I had to do a bit of research to find something that is likely to do the job you need it to do (mace, pepper spray, ultrasonic noise devices are just likely to fail you in a situation like this). You could carry a shot gun, but can you get to it in time before a pack of dangerous dogs gets to you? Not likely. Weeks could go by, you'll be complacent, it might be in your backpack.

I checked out a forum by triathletes (runners, bicyclists, etc) and after all my reading today, have to say that one product that's recommended (and proven) is a stun baton. All things considered, this is possibly the most effective self defense product that a bicyclist can use in a hurry, on a pack of dangerous dogs that's giving chase.

As you're pedaling and the first dog comes up on your legs, point the baton down and press the stun button. You've got a three foot buffer between you and the dog. The voltage in one of these is going to paralyze the first dog; if that doesn't scare off the rest of the pack, use it on dog # 2 as he gets close to your pedals. The only trick to using this device is that you need to make sure this thing is charged (has electricity stored inside).

REFERENCES:
First Class Dog Training: Free 20 Minute Video on Preventing Dog Attacks
George Donahue: Dealing with Dog Attacks
How to Handle a Dog Attack
You can mount it to your handlebars so that you can get to it easily as you're riding, or strap it to your back. Practice pulling it and using it as you're riding. Here's a second link to a bicyclist forum where you'll find a first-person account of this stun baton's effectiveness: [review of police stun baton on triathlete forum](http://www.secretsofsurvival.com/survival/dog_attack.html#89VwAj8yYRPlMJic.99)

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