



pg16 Hit or Miss: We take a look at Madhuri Dixit's fashion highs and lows

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Afternoon Despatch & Courier

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Being called "baby" is just the beginning of the never-ending list of "endearments" that women get called on a daily basis... by complete strangers! **Rhea Dhanbhora & Samreen Samad** tell you what you can do to prepare yourself for the catcalls and protect yourself in when you're out alone...

# OYE BABY!

>> Sleazy stares and feeling like a piece of meat is what a walk on Mumbai streets is like for many women in the city



Gynelle Alves

**T**ravelling within the city is a troublesome experience for most women. And not just because of the crowded trains, over packed buses or rude rickshaw drivers. Leers, liches, catcalls and even groping has unfortunately, become part of our lives.

Rebecca D'Souza (name changed) tells us, "While leering looks and catcalls are easy to ignore, some things can get too much. I was walking on a busy road with my boyfriend once at around 9pm. Since I was with a man and the road was packed, I didn't have my guard up. Suddenly, a bike zooms past us and I feel a hand reach out and grab me. By the time I had registered what had happened, he had gone. My boyfriend was furious and when the guy on the bike took a U-turn and rode back (I still don't know why he would) my boyfriend rushed forward, knocked him off and we started shouting at him loud enough for a crowd to gather. The biker had the audacity to call me a liar. I was seething with rage and although he got a good beating, I don't know if that helped because I couldn't take back what had happened."

With eve teasing being so rampant and a case almost every other day of rape, molestation and all sorts of crimes being committed against women, it's time to stand up and protect ourselves.

## HOW SAFE ARE WE?

There are conflicting views on whether the city is safe or unsafe. Senior International Krav Maga Foundation Instructor for Maharashtra, Sadashiv Mogaveera tells us, "Well, it's as safe or unsafe as you make it. Truth be told, over 90% of crime against women can be prevented if they simply increase their awareness of their surroundings. The attacker's biggest advantage is the element of surprise. The victim's biggest disadvantage is her oblivion."

## HANDLE IT

How many times have we walked down a street and been hooted at, brushed past and followed? It doesn't matter how cautious you are — sometimes there's just no keeping sleazy characters at bay. Life Coach Malti Bhojwani gives us a few suggestions to help us stay more secure:

- When in an establishment, tell the culprits off and complain to the management or your male friends. However, in a public place, get away from the scene or situation as quickly as you can.
- Walk confidently and look as if you own the world. A strong, confident look will help you avoid unwanted attention.

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