

How to Leave

AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

The time that someone leaves an abusive relationship is the most dangerous. When the abuser sees their victim making a move to terminate it, they feel rejected and that they're losing their control over the person.

They will fight back to maintain control in any way that they can. It's during this time that mistreatment and violence often escalate and the victim is at the greatest risk of danger. Despite the risk, leaving an abusive relationship is always the right choice.

Here are tips for women who are planning and getting ready to leave an abusive relationship.





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- Your safety and protection are the number one priority. They take precedence over all social conventions, fears, and “what if” scenarios.
- Tell trustworthy people in your life what is going on. Do not keep the abuse a secret. Let them know that you might need help.
- Do not make your plans to leave known to the abuser.
- Be ready to sacrifice material objects and comforts. Your only job right now is to get out. Act as if your house is on fire and plan on only grabbing the essentials. You may get the other stuff back, and you may not. Those things won't matter if you get hurt.
- Do not break up with them before you physically leave.
- Arrange to change your residence to one that is unknown to the abuser. This can be tough but extremely necessary.
- Make plans for several options for a last-minute place to sleep in case you need it, such as hotels or friends' couches, and keep a pillow and blankets in your car if you can.
- Pick a time when the abuser won't be around your residence to quickly grab your must-have items within a few hours and leave the place for good.





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- In private, let your employer know that you need time off for a family matter. If they press you, or you feel comfortable, you can explain that it involves domestic violence. Legally, employers are required to give you the time off without consequence. Consider telling co-workers so that they are on the alert for visits by your abuser.

- Officially end the relationship. Once you've ensured your physical safety, notify your abuser and let them know that the relationship is over and you do not want them to contact you anymore. If you can, document this communication so that it can be used in court; screenshot the call time or text conversation.

- If you feel the abuser will not accept the end of the relationship, refer to "How to Protect Yourself from a Stalker" for more safety tips.

