

Bear up!

There is no one checklist for surviving a bear attack and what is provided here are generalizations drawn from a variety of sources based on people's own bear encounter experiences. None of these approaches are guarantees of survival in a future bear encounter, as how a bear will react depends largely on the context, on how you (and any companions with you) react and the bear's own reasons, which will only become apparent as your personal bear encounter unfolds. Moreover, bears are very strong. Nevertheless, knowing how other people have survived informs you that it is possible to survive a bear encounter. Above all, always be prepared and seek to stay calm; being in bear country carries responsibilities of which you should be aware before entering. Bears have a very keen sense of smell and are mostly attracted by the smell of food. So if you're trekking or camping in the jungle, ensure that what you cook should not become a bear-magnet, drawing the bear to you. Bears are curious creatures and would not hesitate to investigate a smell / aroma of food being cooked or a leftover lying carelessly around a campsite. So do not drop food along the way, creating a trail for the bear to innocently follow. Ensure that the food cooked and / or leftover are duly disposed off, buried or incinerated in your camp / cooking fire. Ensure that the camp has a fire going, if you've settled for the night, however, at the same time, be very responsible towards the forests, as the forests you would be in, where you run into a sloth bear, are all deciduous forests, making them extremely vulnerable / susceptible to forest fire, which may cause a massive damage to both flora and fauna, if not handled responsibly. So please be advised to handle fire, with extreme caution, no amount of which can be claimed to be excessive, looking to the unpredictability of the fire and the combustibility of the dry deciduous forests of central India.

Please always remember, the best scenario is non confrontation.

So, please do not make the first move.

You have no means of knowing if the bear means you harm or intends to attack you.

Chances are more that it would not.

It would go to great lengths to avoid any interaction/confrontation with you, unless mistaking your presence as a threat for cubs or startled by your sudden appearance.

Sloth bears are a nocturnal insectivorous species of bear found wild within the Indian subcontinent. Sloth bears have shaggy, dusty-black coats, pale, short-haired muzzles, and long, curved claws that they use to excavate ants and termites. A cream-colored "V" or "Y" usually marks their chests. Sloth bears' nostrils can close, protecting the animals from dust or insects when raiding termite nests or bee hives. A gap in their teeth enables them to suck up ants, termites, and other insects. Sloth bears grow five to six feet long, stand two to three feet high at the shoulder, and weigh from 120 (in lighter females) to 310 pounds (in heavy males).

Most forest guards, wildlife biologists and even seasoned tourists will tell you that the 'sloth bear' is one of the most dangerous animals in the Indian forest. Victims that survive sloth bear-attacks will readily reinforce the need to respect and fear these animals in particular. They are

Bee Alert!

The best safety advice is to avoid an encounter with unfriendly honey bees. Be alert for danger.

Remember that honey bee's sting to defend their colony, so be on the lookout for honey bee swarms and colonies.

Be alert for bees. You can never underestimate the danger!

Listen for the hum of an active bee colony. Look for bees in holes in the ground, holes in trees or cacti etc.

Be alert for bees that are acting strangely. Quite often bees will display some preliminary defensive behavior before going into a full-fledged attack. They may fly at your face or buzz around over your head.

These warning signs should be heeded, that you have come into their area and are too close to their colony for comfort both theirs and yours!

When you are outdoors, in a rural area, or wilderness reserve, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye out for bees the way you would watch out for snakes and other natural dangers. NO LESS!

But don't panic at the sight of a few bees foraging in the flowers.

Bees are generally very docile as they go about their work. Unless you do something really outrageous, they will generally not bother you.

Bee Prepared!

There are a few things you can do to be prepared. One is to wear light-colored clothing. Experience has shown that bees tend to attack dark things. Dark clothing, dark hair, anything dark in color could draw the bees.

Avoid wearing floral or citrus aftershaves or perfumes when hiking. Bees are sensitive to odors, both pleasant and unpleasant. The smell of newly cut grass has been shown to rile honey bees.

Bee Attack!

Obviously, it is best to avoid

The Big Cat!

If you're visiting a place in which tigers freely roam, hire a guide to help ensure a safe journey. Do not move into a designated tiger country, unescorted or unsupervised. In as much as the Tiger would do all it can to avoid human contact, however, if surprised, threatened or injured / sick / young-adolescent / very old, it may even resort to attacking you.

Ensure that the local authorities, especially the forest authorities are aware of your presence, with a due permission from them and are in the knowledge of your movements and route. This not only ensures a rescue in times of emergency but also interventions if they learn of a movement of the tiger in your direction, even though you may remain unaware.

Ensure that you pay heed to the advice of the Forest authorities and also adhere to the guidelines and rules / regulations laid down by them, which are purely for your safety and also the safety of the animals, in whose domain, we are venturing and who remain unaware of our motives/intentions etc and would treat us, just as they would, any other animal.

Listen to your guide, allow him to take the lead and never panic.

Whenever possible, avoid areas in which a tiger may be present. If you do encounter a tiger, take the necessary steps to reduce the chances the tiger will attack, and know what to do if the tiger does begin to attack.

If you do ever find yourself in proximity to a tiger without an adequate barrier through which you might safely avoid them, immediately recognize that you are in clear and present danger.

However, do not panic, as it is your presence of mind and your controlled and calm response, which would save you.

If a tiger has not noticed your presence (quite unlikely though), try to get away before it sees you. You are more likely to attract attention by moving briskly, so simply wait until the tiger has moved on, of its own accord. Once it has, move safely

powerful animals and are known to sometimes attack and injure people even without any provocation. This is an integral part of their survival tactic in the jungle where they have to live alongside powerful predators such as the tiger. Most sloth bear attacks can be classified as 'defensive' attacks. When a human intrudes into its space suddenly, a bear may sense a danger to its life and respond by attacking.

The first thing one needs to do is to avoid getting into a situation where one may encounter a bear suddenly, such as avoiding dense shrub-covered localities, particularly in the evening and morning times when bears are likely to be active. And to avoid being alone in such places at such times.

In the event of an attack, if one is not able to move away or chase the bear away, it has generally been advised to protect the face, head, neck, and nape by lying on the ground face down and covering the nape with locked hands. It should be noted that sloth bears do not feed on humans, and at the most they will bite and claw. If no further provocation occurs they may retreat after the initial attack. It should also be noted here that there is no strict rule about the way a bear may attack or a failsafe guideline about how humans should react during such encounters.

The behaviour of a bear may be shaped by its past encounters with humans – in short, there may be personality differences in the way bears attack or retreat in such encounters.

The sloth bear is an ant and termite eating (myrmecophagus) bear. It is the only bear species that seems to depend almost entirely on these social insects for its protein requirements and thus, in this respect, it is unique among bears.

Dry deciduous forests probably hold a major proportion (about 50%) of the sloth bear population in India. Unfortunately, degradation of habitat by humans has been severe in this forest type.

Try to make yourself appear bigger than you really are. Hold your arms up above your head and perhaps spread your legs a little more widely apart (but not so as to unbalance yourself).

You could also raise your jacket above your head to give the impression of greater height but decide realize that this may mean less protection on your body should the bear suddenly attack you and you can't put it back on quickly enough. Don't use your jacket if it means removing a backpack.

If wearing a backpack, leave it on. It's slightly more protection than without one, especially if you need to "play dead".

Avoid making any eye contact--eye contact can be perceived by a bear as a threat and can provoke a charge or repeated attacks.

By the same token, never take your eyes off the bear in general--know what he is doing at all times.

Noise may or may not make things worse. Bears can be scared away with noise. Some people believe metallic noise scares off bears because it's "not natural" and there are documented examples of bears running away from clanging metallic sounds.

At night, use a strong flashlight or headlamp to shine lights in the bear's eyes, especially if a bear surprises you in your camp or tent. Even a

contact with honey bees. But sometimes contact cannot be avoided. In that case, it is important to know what to do when stung.

Almost all cases of bee attacks can be traced back to some provocation, such as a kid tossing a stone at the hive, or some noise or vibration, once disturbed by something.

Honey bees can range quite far from the source of irritation, attacking anything that looks threatening.

Once the bees get riled up, the most important thing to do is RUN away as fast as possible. Do not try to retrieve belongings nearby.

Do not try to stand still in an attempt to fool the bees. That may work with a snake under certain circumstances, but honey bees won't be impressed.

Do not try to fight the bees they have the advantage of numbers and the gift of flight.

The more you flail your arms, the madder they will get. Just run as fast as possible.

A bee can obtain speeds of from 12 to 15 miles per hour, but most healthy humans can outrun them.

So, RUN! And when you run Keep Running !

Honey bees have been known to follow people for more than a quarter mile.

Any covering for your body and especially for your head and face will help you escape. While outdoor enthusiasts can hardly be expected to go around in bee suits, a small hand kerchief or mosquito net device that fits over the head could easily be carried in a pocket.

People who have been attacked say the worst part is having the bees sting your face and eyes.

Any impairment of your vision will also make it more difficult to escape.

So even though a net over your head may leave the rest of your body exposed, it will allow you to see where you are going as you run away from the colony or source of the bees.

but deliberately towards safety, ideally in the opposite direction. Try to remain calm and back away slowly. In the event that a tiger is tracking you or has begun to snarl at you and seems ready to attack, try to stay calm.

Do not look the tiger in the eye, but do turn towards the tiger. Back away slowly while fighting the urge to turn your back and run.

Keep walking backwards until the tiger is well out of sight, then turn and move quickly away from the location of the tiger.

Leave your possessions behind as you walk away, as these may momentarily distract a curious tiger. If you cannot vacate the area entirely, attempt to hide.

Tigers are not as capable of climbing as are some other jungle cats, so climb a tree until you can escape.^[6]

Once you've hidden, you may attempt to distract the tiger by throwing things away from you to lead them in that direction.

However, use extreme caution in doing so, as you're probably more likely to attract attention to your hiding spot.

As such, it is better to throw stuff off of your path before you hide.

If you are a good climber, there is a chance that you can escape by climbing a tree, as tigers, unlike leopards are not very confident climbers, as they are heavier and as such avoid doing so, unless in extremity. However, the first priority should be to evacuate oneself from the area.

Make yourself big. Try to look and feel brave. Whatever you do, do not run. Running away from a tiger is all but inviting it to attack you.

Inciting a chase can literally prompt an uncertain tiger into attacking.

While slowly backing away, stand up as tall as possible.^[2]

Make yourself look like less of a helpless prey animal by standing up straight.

Crouched down, you look weaker and smaller – both of which will increase the chances that a tiger will attack.

Repel an attacking tiger with noise. Even simple sounds may frighten a tiger off if they are

camera flash can temporarily blind a bear in poor light or the dark.

Avoid any sudden movements and never run. Animals that chase prey for a living react to movement and running trips an innate reaction to give chase until caught.

REMEMBER: A bear is able to run over 64 km/h, so don't harbor notions of outrunning the bear!

Though the bear can't run a long distance and endurance can perhaps be on your side, however, this would only work if you have a sufficient distance between yourself and the bear, giving you a head start.

Never hide in something as flimsy as a tent. The bear won't be fooled into thinking you've disappeared.

The common advice about climbing a tree is--don't. This is because bears (especially sloth bears) can climb trees very fast.

So, don't climb a tree, as they can climb very easily.

Try to create some distance between you and the bear--distance is your ally while you defend yourself.

Barehanded, you lack a safe enough reach to harm the bear without him harming you even more rapidly. Do your best to put something large in between you and the bear, like a tree or a rock.

Even though it's hard, try to stand perfectly still and stand your ground when a bear is charging you.

Some bears will be nonplussed by the lack of movement and stop considering you as a threat. However, do be readying yourself for an attack, such as preparing pepper spray or sticks, etc. during the charge.

Don't use the spray or hit the bear unless you are sure the bear is attacking--some bears make several bluff charges before deciding you're not worth the effort and you wouldn't want to unnecessarily arouse the bear's wrath when she might just simply grow bored and wander off again.

After a bluff charge, talk softly, wave your hands slowly above your head and back away slowly.

Note that if a bear rears up on her hind legs--this is often an attempt to see what is happening rather than an immediate launch into an attack. Stay still and let her assess you; she may find you unworthy of further interest.

There are a few things that you can try to do that might lessen the bear's chances of successfully attacking you.

First, try to defend yourself on a steep slope or grade; in doing so, you can ensure that any bear will at least have a difficult time standing erect, thereby reducing his full weight force (from a standing position, a bear can benefit merely from using his own weight to harm you).

Note that attacks from the side may be difficult for the bear to see well (bears' neck muscles and jaw structure make it difficult for them to rotate their necks easily, limiting their viewing range from the side), so you might be able to take advantage of this if it comes to blows. However, be aware that a bear will likely attack horizontally as well, which can inhibit your own horizontal strikes.

Bears, as far as scientists can determine, have as good eyesight as humans. While this may deteriorate with age (as with humans), don't rely on alleged poor eyesight as a defense method (namely, don't play hide and seek in full

If you do not happen to have a net with you, grab a blanket, a coat, a towel, anything that will give you momentary relief while you look for an avenue of escape. But the covering device is not going to protect you for long. The idea is to use it to help you get away.

If you have nothing else, pull your shirt up over your face. The stings you may get on your chest and abdomen are far less serious than those to the facial area.

Try to find shelter as soon as possible. Take refuge in a house, tent or a car with the windows and doors closed. Some bees are bound to enter with you, but it will be darker and probably cooler inside which will confuse the bees and you should be able to swat them easily enough.

Even if you do get stung a few times, remember that each bee can only sting once.

As long as the number inside the shelter with you is small, you have the advantage.

Although it may be tempting, **DO NOT JUMP INTO WATER!** The bees will wait for you to come up for air.

Once you are away from the bees, take a second and evaluate the situation. If you have been stung more than 15 times, or if you are having any symptoms other than local pain and swelling, seek medical attention immediately.

Many of the safety measures we have just reviewed would be difficult to apply under the excitement of an emergency situation if you have not mentally prepared yourself ahead of time.

Most people taking part in normal outdoor activities do not have to go to any extraordinary lengths to be prepared, just keep in mind where you would go to escape honey bees, and be on the lookout for danger.

So once Again.....

RUN away quickly. Do not stop to help others. However, small children and the disabled may need all the assistance you can offer **AND YOU SHOULD**. As you are running, pull your shirt up

not accustomed to the noise. Make noise with anything you have, especially if it makes a loud or unnatural sound.^[3]

If you have a signal flare, light it and hold it in front of you.

Jingle or shake any metal or glass items against one another.

If you attempt to shout at the tiger, do so with full confidence.

Any nervousness that is betrayed by your voice may incite the tiger to attack.

Advise to keep spray such as the Pepper Spray or small Pressure Can Horns with you.

Do whatever you can to survive. If the tiger begins to physically attack, it is unlikely to stop.

Continue making as much noise as possible, and use whatever you have to shield yourself and strike back in self defense.

Cover your face, head and neck as much as you can, by folding your arms over your head, so that they touch the back of your neck.

Avoid playing dead; if the tiger is attacking out of an interest in eating you, it will simply proceed unencumbered.

Remember that your best chance of survival is convincing the tiger to flee, which will require you to frighten or injure the tiger.

Do not antagonize a tiger in any way. Never antagonize a tiger or large animal of any type. Tigers in particular respond to aggression with aggression and will defend themselves by attacking.

Do not throw anything at a tiger or attempt to hit it with something.

In the event that you are attacking a tiger in order to distract it from mauling someone else, use whatever you have to strike the tiger as hard as you can.

Keep shouting at the tiger, both to intimidate it and to distract it from its victim.

Give old or injured tigers a wide berth. While an old or injured tiger may seem feeble or in need of your help, they may actually be especially dangerous.

Even if a tiger is in poor health, it should be treated with extreme caution.

In the wild, you're actually more likely to see a tiger in poor health, as tigers that are

view of the bear).

Do a straight-line/gut kick if you have to/can. Straight line kicks can be effective--this is the kind of kick performed by police when breaching a door. Strike quickly and draw your leg back fast before the bear has a chance to swipe your inner thigh (if the bear manages to do so, you're effectively disarmed).

If on a hill though, realize that if the bear is lower than you, he will lead his attack with his head because of the difficulties of standing, so you'll need to aim the kick accordingly.

Where you can, strike and move uphill, strike and move uphill. Staying uphill may give you more of a chance to inflict enough damage to the bear to give you a chance to escape.

If you're confronted by a bear that wants to attack you and you're with companions, they can play a vital role in scaring off the bear. More people means more noise and an impression of too many attackers versus the bear will often put an end to any thoughts of an attack.

If there are only a few of you together, say two or three, the bear may not be as intimidated and may still seek to attack. However, the advantage of being with companions is that you can defend each other.

If a bear is attacking you and you're with other people able to help responsibly, try the following:

Keep communicating clearly with companions when attacked by a bear.

Tell each other what you're about to do as both reassurance and certainty of actions.

Stay calm and try not to shout unless it's part of your noise strategy.

Avoid leaving any person alone with the bear.

The strategy should be to stick together as much as possible, to help increase the impression of a group that is hard to part.

Avoid leaving alone any individual who could be singled out for attacking.

In particular, protect young or vulnerable people.

Do your best to shield children or panicking persons who form part of your group.

Keep them close so that the bear doesn't perceive them as an easy pick and do your best to reassure them to dampen down fear or panic reactions.

As stated earlier, don't ever run. Walk away as you can and as fast as you can, heading in a direction away from the bear and toward safety.

Keep something defensive in your hands, such as dirt, pepper spray, sticks, etc., in case you need to resort to defending yourself again in an instant.

Try to move away noiselessly so as not to attract any more attention. It's probable that you will be in shock but do what you can to get back to a safe place.

Whenever backing away from a bear, do so facing the bear so that you can continue to watch the bear. Speak in a low monotone, as if to reassure the bear (and probably yourself).

over your head to protect your face, but make sure it does not slow your progress. This will help keep the bees from targeting the sensitive areas around your head and eyes. Continue to RUN. Do not stop running until you reach shelter, such as a vehicle or building. A few bees may follow you indoors. However, if you run to a well-lit area, the bees will tend to become confused and fly to windows. Do not jump into water! The bees will wait for you to come up for air. If you are trapped for some reason, cover up with blankets, sleeping bags, clothes, or whatever else is immediately available.

Do not swat at the bees or flail your arms. Bees are attracted to movement and crushed bees emit a smell that will attract more bees.

Once you have reached shelter or have outrun the bees, remove all stingers. When a honey bee stings, it leaves its stinger in the skin.

This kills the honey bee so it can't sting again, but it also means that venom continues to enter into the wound for a short time

Do not pull stingers out with tweezers or your fingers. This will only squeeze more venom into the wound.

Instead, scrape the stinger out sideways using your fingernail, the edge of a credit card, a dull knife blade or other straight-edged object.

If you see someone being attacked by bees, encourage them to run away or seek shelter. Do not attempt to rescue them yourself.

unable to hunt as well as they are when healthy will seek out easily accessible prey, such as livestock.

This will bring them into closer proximity to humans than tigers are usually comfortable with.

Avoid young tigers as well. As mothers of all types are known to do, mother tigers will readily come to the defence of their children.

Don't approach a cub or attempt to interact with it in any way.

If you encounter a cub, vacate the area immediately.^[9]

Don't pee in a tiger's domain. An innocent bathroom break may be interpreted by a tiger as an act of aggression, and they may perceive you as a threat if you urinate in their territory.

A better case scenario is when you're in a group of two, three or more.

In which case, the first reaction of the tiger would be to avoid attacking you, unless, injured, disoriented, ill or threatened/with cubs etc.

Form a circle, facing outwards, with your backs to each other, start backing away quietly and very slowly, without causing any undue alarm.

If the tiger begins to approach you, immediately raise your arms and start shouting and making noise, while continuing to back away, without causing any panic.

The tiger is a very sensible animal and is able to gauge the threat perception and would generally never attaché if outnumbered and outflanked.

This would be your best way out.

Ensure that you stand tall, remain calm and make noise together, "only if the tiger approaches the group".