

you don't get a response initially keep asking until help arrives. Consider using chanting or other group tactics to get the police to respond.

- * While you are detained stay as calm as you can. The police may try to unnerve, dehumanize and generally stress you out. Try yoga, singing, meditation, sharing stories, telling jokes, etc.
- * Police lie and manipulate. They will tell you things that aren't true (that your friends have blamed you, that you'll get out in an hour, etc.).
- * Think about what good can come of your arrest. Can you do a skill-share with you cell mates? Learn new songs? Talk about favorite movies?
- * Try to be supportive of your fellow arrestees. Everyone is probably stressed out – fighting or other nastiness just makes it worse.
- * If police are abusive in any way (emotional, physical, violating your rights, etc.) note the officer's name and badge number. Try to remember as many specific details of the event as you can. If you have a pen, write it all down!

If you get hurt or sick

- * The street medics are here to help. We are a volunteer group of activists with training in first aid, chemical weapons decontamination, and basic protestor health. Look for folks with red crosses on their clothes, or call out "medic!" We'll do all we can to help.
- * At some events there is a "medic treatment space" or "wellness center" where we can treat more serious injuries; provide massage, herbal medicine and other therapies; and provide care in a calmer environment. If there's a convergence center, ask there for the location of the medic treatment space, or flag down some medics and ask them.
- * If you can't find a medic, get away from the action. If the problem is serious, consider getting other help (such as calling 911 or going to a local hospital or clinic).

After the demonstration

- * For many people demonstrations are exciting and exhilarating. But even the most prepared and experienced protestor can get traumatized. Even if you don't feel stressed, try to take it easy for a few days. Your body and mind have been through an intense experience and may need time to recover. See healingtrauma.pscap.org/peer.html for more info.
- * If you have witnessed violence or been subjected to it yourself, you may have strong emotional reactions. This experience may trigger memories of previous traumatic events. If you can, talk over your experiences with people you trust as soon as possible. Talking about the specifics of what happened might cause more emotional trauma, so consider focusing more on how you feel. Try to do this before sleeping.
- * Eat nourishing food, get some sleep (after talking), relax.
- * Try to avoid alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs – they can increase your emotional responses to trauma.
- * Even if you don't feel terribly stressed you may have nightmares, a short temper or other reactions. This is very common, and may also be a sign that you might benefit from talking about the emotions brought up by your experience.

For more information

- www.action-medical.net (general street medic site)
- www.bostoncoop.net/balm (Boston, Massachusetts street medics)
- www.blackcrosscollective.net (street medics based in Portland, Oregon)
- www.takethestreets.org (New York City medic collective)

produced by medics from the BALM Squad (Boston Area Liberation Medic Squad).

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Stay Healthy So You Can Stay in the Streets

Some suggestions from the Street Medics on what you can do before, during and after a demonstration to stay well and keep fighting!

Before you leave home

- * Check the weather and prepare for it. See below for ideas of what to wear and what to bring.
- * Make sure you have solid housing plans. Housing is almost always tight at these events, and the police may harass folks on the street. Large demos often list housing options on the web.
- * Set up an emotional support system now. If you can, have a few days free when you get back. You may need time to process your experiences, catch up on sleep, and generally relax.
- * Set up legal support at home now. Even if there is a legal support system at the demo, it can't provide the same individual advocacy as the folks who know you. If you can, have a legal plan which includes someone who will not get arrested who is holding on to important information including your plan if arrested (give your name or not); who should be contacted if you are arrested; any medications, food or other needs you may have in jail; any responsibilities that need to be taken care of if you don't get home as planned (work, animals, etc); if you are likely to be targeted by police for anything (including gender identification and trans issues, race, previous arrest, immigrant status) and whatever else seems relevant. For more information on legal issues see www.nlg.org.
- * Consider talking with someone about your hopes, fears and expectations. By talking through what could happen and how you might respond you can prepare yourself for any difficult situations that might come up. See healingtrauma.pscap.org/peer.html for more info.
- * Find out as much as you can about the plans for the demo (via demonstration websites, indy media www.indymedia.org/en/index.shtml, etc), but don't count on this information too much, since it may change or it may be based on rumors or misinformation rather than actual plans.
- * Get training in skills and information useful for demos: know your rights, health and safety for demonstrations, nonviolence, direct action tactics, etc.

Don't forget the basics

- * Do your best to get enough sleep.
- * Eat healthy foods, and be sure that you eat enough. Avoid fatty or fried foods since they stress your liver (see chem weapons below.).
- * Drink enough water – 3 liters (12 cups) a day, if you can. Start drinking extra water several days before the event to build up the fluid in your body. People can get dehydrated in cold and hot weather, so drink water whatever the weather.
- * Minimize caffeine, cigarettes, alcohol, and other drugs. They stress your system and may decrease your reaction time, making you more vulnerable.
- * Relax, focus, center. If you have something you use to relax yourself (music, meditation, whatever) consider doing this on the days leading up to and the days of the protests.

What to Wear

- * Wear clothing that protects your skin from sun, chemical weapons and injury. Consider long sleeves, pants, and a water-repellent outer layer. You can cinch clothing at wrists and ankles to keep chemicals out. Beware of overheating and getting dehydrated in all these clothes
- * If it will be cold, bring extra clothes since you may be standing around for a while. Try not to have fleece as your outer layer, since it soaks up chemical weapons.
- * Some people believe that detergents trap chemicals in clothes, so consider washing your skin and clothes in castile soap before the demonstration.
- * Don't wear contact lenses since they can trap chemicals (tear spray, pepper gas) against your eyes, and can cause permanent damage.



- * Wear sturdy, well broken-in, closed-toe shoes that you can run in. An additional pair of socks will help prevent blisters. Bring extra pairs of socks in case your feet get wet or dirty.
- * If there is a chance of chemical weapons exposure (there almost always is), protect your nose, mouth and lungs. Gas masks work best. They are also heavy, conspicuous, and very hot. You can also use organic particle respirators available at hardware stores. Or try a bandana soaked with apple cider vinegar. A paper mask underneath will decrease skin irritation. Other vinegars, lemon juice, and water don't work as well, but are better than nothing.
- * To protect your eyes use shatter-proof goggles, ski goggles or something else that forms a tight plastic seal (but not with foam against your skin, as this traps chemicals).
- * Wear sunscreen if there's any chance you'll get burned.
- * Any product containing oil (sunscreen, make up, moisturizer, etc) may trap chemicals on your skin, so consider going with just water-based products.

What to bring

- * Water. Bring lots of water – at least 3 liters (12 cups) a day – since people can dehydrate quickly in the heat. Even better than plain water, make your own rehydration fluid by mixing 1 teaspoon of salt and four teaspoons of sugar in 1 liter (1 quart) of water.
- * Food, especially high energy snacks like nuts, fruit, energy bars.
- * Any medications you take on a regular basis, in the original container along with a note from a doctor saying you must take this medication. If you can, have two bottles and two notes and leave one with someone else.
- * Any assistance devices you use (cane, etc) especially if you would need them if arrested.
- * A map.
- * Money, if you are concerned about getting arrested and might want to bail yourself out.
- * A camera, if you might want to document police actions or the demonstrations. Be aware that many protestors do not want their photos taken.
- * Extra clothes or sunscreen, depending on the weather.
- * A buddy! If you can, run with another person so you can protect and help each other. Talk with your buddy about how you are feeling, what is likely cause you stress, what you do to calm yourself down, and how your buddy can help you stay calm. Plan what you want to do if things get messy. Even better, work within an affinity group. For more information on affinity groups see the “direct action handbook” section of [www.nornc.org/](http://www.nornc.org/members.tripod.com/SOAWatchLocal/LocalPages/handbook.html) and members.tripod.com/SOAWatchLocal/LocalPages/handbook.html

What to know

- * Police use fear as a weapon. The more you are prepared, the less they can intimidate and control you.
- * The layout of the area. Think ahead about where you will go if there's trouble. Make a plan with your buddy/group for where you will meet if separated.
- * The plan for the demonstration and your group, as much as possible
- * The attitude of the cops, and how they might respond to protestors. Pay attention to what they are doing, where they are moving and what equipment they are carrying.
- * How to contact legal help if you are arrested or otherwise detained. Write the legal contact number in indelible ink on your skin, in a place where you could see it when handcuffed.
- * Where the medic treatment space is (see below), and where medics are on the street.

During the Demonstration

- * Drink lots of water. Really. Dehydration is dangerous. Prevent it.
- * If you can, take breaks to eat, drink, pee and relax.
- * Stay calm. If you start to get stressed, try to take a minute to relax.
- * Do your best not to get separated from your buddy and your group.
- * As you move keep an exit plan in mind at all times

If you are exposed to chemical weapons (tear gas, pepper spray)

- * If you have asthma or other breathing problems chemical weapons may cause a severe attack. Carry your inhaler, or avoid gas altogether.
- * Don't panic. Calmly walk to fresh air - up on a hill, away from the crowds, etc.
- * Even if you don't immediately feel affected by the chemicals get away from them, because they are still doing damage.
- * The horrible burning feeling is usually temporary. It lasts 20 - 30 minutes if the chemicals are not washed off.
- * Call for a medic, or someone who can do an eye flush. You can learn how to do an eye flush yourself at workshops given by medics.
- * As soon as possible get out of your contaminated clothes. Put your clothes in a sealed bag and either throw them away or wash them later, several times, in harsh detergent. Shower in the coldest water you can tolerate, using lots of soap. Keep doing this for a few days, since warm water can re-activate any chemicals on your skin. If you can, find out if the medics have a decontamination center set up.
- * After the immediate effects have passed, take it easy. You have just been exposed to toxic chemicals, and your body needs time to recover. Drink lots of water. Your liver filters the toxins out of your body, so try to avoid putting more stress on it with alcohol and drugs.
- * Long term effects of chemical weapons exposure include damage to the immune system and liver, menstrual disruption, possible miscarriage of a pregnancy and respiratory problems.

If it looks like you are going to get arrested

- * Your bag will probably be taken from you, so be sure that ID, meds and money are on your person (if you plan to give the police your name) You will probably get your stuff back, but there are no guarantees. If you can, consider giving your bag, keys and other important stuff to someone who is less likely to get arrested.
- * Make sure you have the legal #, if there is one, written in indelible ink on your skin, where you can see it if you are handcuffed.
- * You may not be searched for a while so consider having the following on your person (not in a bag): cell phone (beware of any sensitive #s in memory), food, extra clothes, pen, paper. Also consider eating any food you have, if it is going to get taken away.
- * If you want to get anything past a search, hide it now. Pens, phones, meds can fit nicely in the front of your underwear or bra but you also may get in trouble if they are found.

If you are put in plastic handcuffs

- * Plastic cuffs have caused long-term nerve damage to people's wrists. If you have pain, numbness or tingling in your hands at any time, immediately request that looser cuffs be put on. If one officer refuses, ask another, and don't stop asking until they change the cuffs.
- * Try not to move around too much, as this can tighten the cuffs. Consider requesting that your hands be cuffed in front. Ask if anyone in your group can demonstrate how to contort yourself so that you can get the cuffs in front.
- * If you experience pain, numbness or other unpleasant feelings after the cuffs are removed, get this documented ASAP by a medical professional, get in touch with local street medics, and see action-medical.net/library/aftercare/handcuffs.htm

If you have a medical problem before or during detention

- * If you have a medical condition that could cause problems while you are being held, consider telling the police ahead of time. This may encourage them to respond more quickly if you need help. If you or anyone in your group starts having a medical problem tell the police ASAP (if you have the person's consent), and request immediate professional medical attention. Do this early, as it may take a long, long, long time for the police to do anything. If