

# 10 Ways To Protect Yourself Against Identity Theft

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As the popularity of credit cards and Internet shopping grow, so does the chance that you will become a victim of Identity Theft. One's information can be easily accessed by anyone who has your social security number and other identifying information such as credit card bills or processed checks.

Before becoming a victim of identity theft you can go on the offensive and practice prevention in 10 basic steps. These steps will not guarantee that your information does not get into the hands of a criminal, but it gives you a better chance against a syndicate of International identity thieves.

1. Buy a Shredder. Shredding your old bills, invoices, receipts and credit & bank statements is the first and possibly most effective way to stop dumpster divers from access your information. Before throwing away anything with private information, shred it.

If you're not sure that the info can be used to steal your identity, shred it anyway.

2. When using an ATM be wary of those standing next to you. If someone is standing too close behind you, do not be afraid to ask them to step back.

3. Hidden camera detectors. In addition to prying eyes, also be aware of surveillance devices in stores, ATMs, gas stations, and anywhere you may be using a credit card or signing your name. There are many small and affordable hidden camera frequency detectors on the market. For more information see [AntiSpyCam.com](http://AntiSpyCam.com).

4. Treat your checks like money. Would you stuff your mailbox with wads of cold cash? Mail theft is probably easier than dumpster diving when it comes to stealing private information, and much cleaner. Mail checks by dropping them off at the Post Office and if you do order bank checks via the web or mail, have them delivered via registered mail or FedEx.

5. Biometrics services like fingerprint or voice recognition are becoming popular in the war against identity theft or account hacking. Voice biometrics works by digitizing a profile of a person's speech to produce a stored model voice print. Many banks are now offering this service, ask yours about adding this to your bank account security options. More info on Voice Biometrics at [VoiceVerified.com](http://VoiceVerified.com)

6. Make a list of all of your credit card numbers, passwords, usernames and bank account numbers and guard them in a safe place. Do not keep them on your computer, especially if you use peer to peer file sharing software.

7. When applying for a credit card request that your photo be placed on the card. There are also companies which will place your photo on your checks. For more information see [UniqueChecks.com](http://UniqueChecks.com)

8. Write on the back of your credit card "Ask To See My ID" , most people at the register treat credit cards like cash not asking for ID. If they do not ask or forget to do so, ask them why they have not.

9. When you move be sure to register your new forwarding address with the Post Office and also inform all of your credit cards, banks, and subscriptions services personally of your new address. If they are still sending private information to your old address, cancel your card or account.

10. Don't carry your social security number or credit cards you don't use on you. You are not required to carry a social security card so lock it up. If you're not using your credit cards, keep them in a safe place with your social security card.

Mrs. Suzuki is a freelance technology and marketing writer and has never had her identity stolen.