

# Note to self: Never kick a grizzly bear

Thomas Nerison had it coming. According to a story in the Great Falls Tribune, the 60-year-old Kalispell resident was injured by a grizzly bear last weekend while jogging in Glacier National Park.

While running on the Lake McDonald Valley Trail Sunday morning, Nerison heard what he later described as the sound of a dog barking and horses galloping on the trail behind him. Nerison had just stepped off the trail when he saw two 250-pound grizzly bears running toward him. One of the bears stopped close to him and for reasons left undisclosed, Nerison gave the bear a kick and then fell to the ground.

Now we've all heard about what to do during a grizzly attack — drop to the

ground, curl up in the fetal position and play dead. Nerison simply added another step: kick the bear first.

And while it may be a good idea to fight back during attacks by black bears and mountain lions, it's not advisable to resist while under attack by grizzlies. It only makes them madder.

After kicking the bear, Nerison poked it with sticks. Remarkably, the bear left after biting him only twice.

Nerison walked out to a road, caught a ride back to his car and eventually drove himself to a hospital in Kalispell.



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I've survived a couple of less dramatic close encounters with grizzly bears. I was once treed by a big boar in Yellowstone Park and a couple of years ago surprised two yearlings in thick cover during elk season. In the first case I fled, in the latter I shouted loudly at the bears who fled.

In neither instance was I close enough to kick them and hope if I had been that I would have had enough sense not to. If there's to be a fight, let them start it.

Why you'd want to kick a bear simply because it's within range is beyond me, but I wasn't there. It certainly sounds

like a stupid thing to do.

Nerison, however, may just like taking chances. He was running alone in grizzly country, not carrying bear spray, and initiated the attack.

His moronic behavior apparently prompted park officials to issue a "Duh," warning and remind hikers that while bear spray can repel attacking bears, it is not to be used like "Off" and should never be sprayed on hiking and camping equipment or around campsites.

Most folks already know this. Nerison may not. After all, he still holds with the "swift kick" theory.

Some people, I've come to realize, just shouldn't be allowed in the woods.

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