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Summer Travel Precaution

Pickpocketing is the number-one risk vacationers face, admits Helga West, president of Witness Justice. "But there are tricks to make you pickpocket proof," she says. Tricks like:

1. Tying a ribbon on your luggage handle. Chances are, your suitcase is black or green- the two most popular colors. And thieves know it's easy to lift those bags because so many look alike! The solution? "Tie a colorful ribbon around your suitcase," advises West. "Thieves want to steal something inconspicuous, not something that draws attention."
2. Putting two rubber bands around your wallet- it'll be much harder for a pickpocket to quickly grab it. "The bands create friction, which makes it less easy to slide out of your pocket or purse," West explains.
3. Getting to the bottom of things. Keep important items like your wallet and identification at the bottom of your purse. Why? Because often pickpockets only have time to skim the top of whatever they're lifting- so if there's only Kleenex and other "junk" on top, they won't get anything valuable!
4. Saving phone calls for your hotel. What are two of the biggest distractions thieves look for when targeting victims? People talking on cell phones or engrossed in maps and tourist guides. Keep those items out of sight while walking along a street, and your eyes focused ahead. Crooks don't bother people who look like they know where they're going.

- Lisa Arcella

Karen Bailey