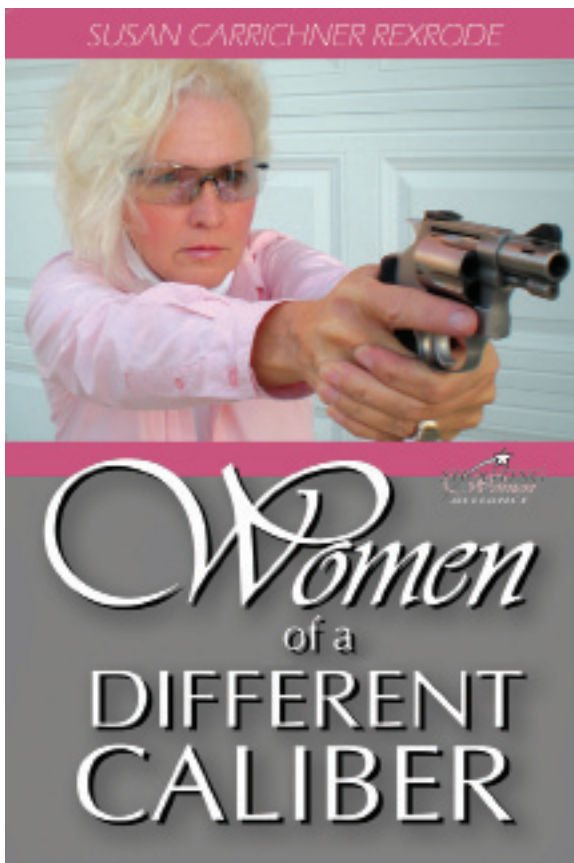




HANDGUN DEFENSIVE
TACTICS



was established under the direction of **Shooting for Women Alliance**, a non-profit organization dedicated to the education and motivation of women worldwide toward all the shooting sports and personal protection has to offer. SFWA is a Level II State Certified School which offers Instructor Training and Continuing Education Courses for both men and women.



An Inspirational True Story

After being held hostage in her house for 5 1/2 hours at knife-point and stalked for 2 years in the early 1990's, Susan decided to help other women (and a few good men) gain the knowledge and skills to help them if they ever had to defend themselves against an assailant. Since carrying a firearm for personal protection long before Handgun Carry Permits were available, and understanding the importance of becoming proficient with a firearm, she and her husband Rob have dedicated their time and talents toward quality and effective firearms education—

with an emphasis on providing what women want in an instructor. Plus, as an Attorney at Law, Rob has the ability to teach the legalities of carrying a firearm for personal protection as part of SFWA University.



SFWA has a strong volunteer base and is funded solely by donations. Thank you for choosing SFWA U! —*Susan and Rob*



*has invested its resources
to compile this material
for the purpose of providing a tool
for SFWA University Students
who are interested in taking their training
with handguns to a higher level
with regard to personal protection as a
handgun permit holder.*

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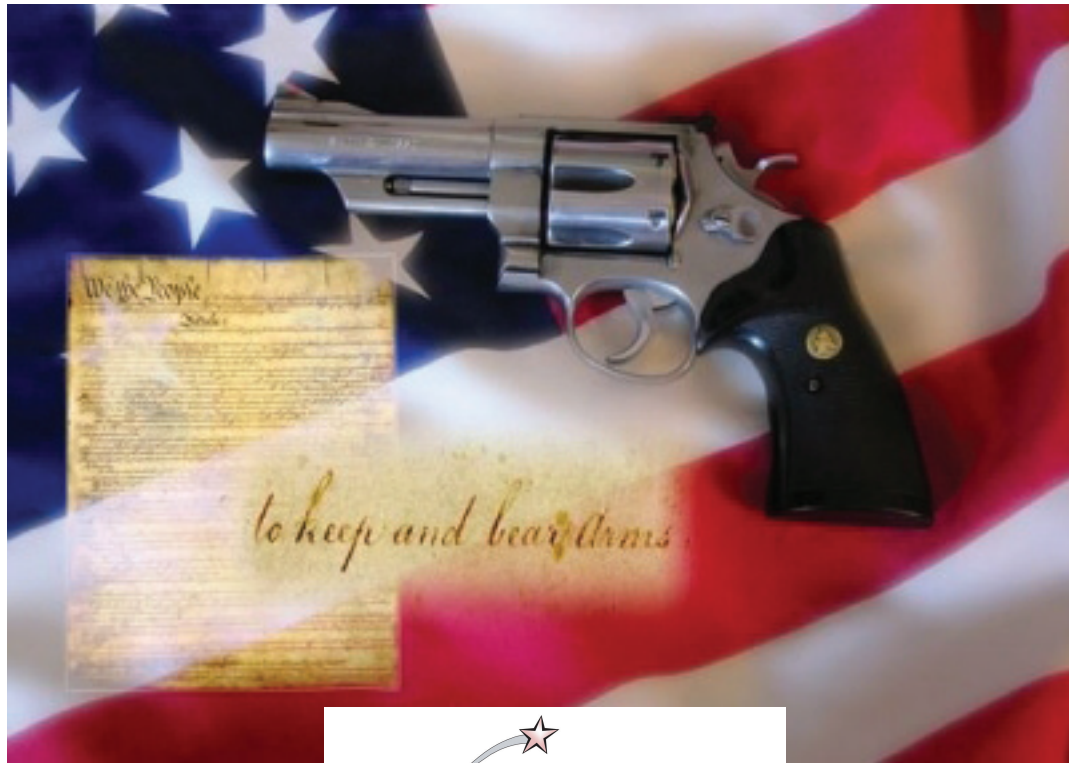
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This material is part of a SFWA continuing education class

Handgun Defensive Tactics

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*“The right to keep and bear arms shall not
be infringed”*

—The Second Amendment

*“The right to receive the highest quality
continuing education possible,
shall not be infringed”*

—SFWA University

1

LEVELS OF AWARENESS necessary to recognize and be more prepared to defend a potential attack

“I never saw it coming” is something you never want to experience—and worse, you may not survive. The first step in surviving an attack is recognizing the threat—the next is to act quickly and effectively. Sadly, law enforcement are not around when crime happens, and often you are on your own.

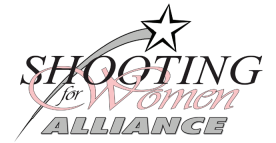
Survey.

- #1: Do you have a carry permit?
- #2. Have you or anyone you know personally ever been a victim of a violent crime? (car jacking, home invasion, abduction)
- #3. Have you or anyone you know personally ever been raped?
- #4. Have you or anyone you know personally ever been a victim of domestic violence?
- #5. Have you ever been in a situation where you were in fear for your life or were at the point of panic?

Stats.

Hours of day = type of crime
% of crimes that take place with a gun or knife
Stalking
Rape/attempted rape
Cities where citizens are armed have less crime

Levels of Awareness



Unaware



Aware



Alert



Alarm



Maintaining Awareness

2

THE MINDSET required to find the “Wonder Woman” in you

“Doing what is right is no guarantee against misfortune”

—William McFee, *Writer*

The decision is . . . Submit, posture, flight or fight?

Decide

Decide you are your own bodyguard
Decide it can happen to you
Decide you act on your instincts
Decide you will remain active vs reactive
Decide you will go nuts

Maintaining Awareness

What if ?

- Carjacking: throw the keys, jump out of the opposite door
- Abductions: start moving with all your strength
- Rape: FIGHT back, submission has proven to be the WRONG thing to do
- Plan escape routes from places you frequent
- Develop verbal code words (babysitting, something is wrong)
- Imagine worse case scenarios, what action to come out GOOD

Do's and Don'ts

- Don't be blinded by the day light
- Be Aware
- When in public, choose seats or stand where you can see around you, easily observe entrances and exits, and position your back to a wall or area where you will only need to observe a 180 degree area, if possible
- Lock your doors and set alarms when at home
- Plan Ahead
- Avoid Dangerous people, situations and places
- Don't be alone—not a sure deterrent
- Carry a LED type flashlight
- Move while you shoot, don't be a stationary target
- Avoid making yourself an easy target for criminals
- Avoid having a pattern of activity
- Avoid antagonizing others
- Do not respond to antagonizing behavior
- Look for escape routes/leave yourself an out
- If you can't get away, get close and go mad—go nuts, absolute madness is only key to success
- Get yourself OUT of the attack
- Evade the Blade/ Run from the Gun
- When attacker grabs your wrist= NOT available
- When attacker chokes you= 7 second rule, NOT available
- NEVER give up and fight like Wonder Woman gone nuts!

Self Defense Options

- Martial Arts
- Pepper Spray
- Defensive Devices
- Tasers
- Firearms
- Orders of Protection

It really is OK to FIGHT DIRTY

The family jewels:

Guys protect them—first stomp elsewhere, then go for the groin

Primary target areas:

Eyes, throat, groin

Secondary target areas:

Knees, kidneys, ribs, temple, solar plexus, nose



Find the **WONDER WOMAN** in YOU

- Don't be intimidated
- Think of yourself as **TOTALLY** armed
- Elbow pokes, teeth bites, finger jabs and pulls
- Use what is around you as a weapon
- Remember, that bad guys will stalk you, cozy up to you, and then use sheer force against you to assault you. (Sneak up, cozy up, beat up)
- You don't need a martial arts degree or be perfectly fit to fight
- Don't ever take the blame for some bad guy's crime
- Remember that **IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU!**
- In the aftermath, always keep telling your story and how you feared for your life from the actions of the assailant

3

HANDGUN RETENTION maintaining control of the firearm in the hand and in the holster

The **LAST** time to think about how well your firearm is secured in the place you carry it, is at the hand of an assailant.

Each year in this country, police officers are killed with their own firearms . . .

- Officer James Prince from North Carolina, killed with his own pistol during a traffic stop
- Sgt. Hoyt Teasley from Georgia, killed after a suspect assaulted another deputy and obtained a duty pistol while in a correctional facility
- Detective Sergeant James Allen from Rhode Island, disarmed and killed while interviewing a suspect inside police headquarters; and
- Lt. James Weaver from Virginia, killed by a juvenile suspect during a prisoner transport.

These are trained professionals, who have made the decision to protect people from criminals. Retention of your firearm is paramount to protecting yourself.

Fact is, the highest retention holster that you can proficiently use is best. Do not use a high retention holster if you can not get the gun out of the holster efficiently if you need it—you will be forced to use other means of retention and rely less on the actual holster.

Security (high retention valued) holsters can buy time and have saved lives. It is a proven fact that within 30 seconds of a combat situation, your physical abilities can deplete as much as 45%. When awareness has not prevented the attack and you are either exhausted or injured (possibly even unconscious) a security holster can save your life.

There are other handgun retention steps that must be observed before the assailant gets to the point that they can touch your firearm.

- Your mindset and awareness level
- Your holster/carry option
- Your skills

If someone attacks and attempts to disarm you, more important than any other component is your will to win. Despite possible injuries, possibly being smaller, not as physically strong or even being outnumbered, you can and must win the fight for your life and retain your handgun. At all costs, whenever possible, keep your strong hand free to access and protect your handgun

What to do if someone grabs at your handgun while it is in your holster:

Push down hard and forcefully on their wrists to break their hold or attempt

Use your hand-to-hand defensive skills to get away from them and/or move the part of your body with the handgun out of their reach

Back away and draw your handgun in self-defense, **ONLY** when you have effectively achieved separation from the assailant—to present a firearm **BEFORE** you are in control of the situation is deadly for you!

What to do if someone grabs at your handgun while it is in your hand:

Do not let go!—fight to keep it. (At all costs, maintain control of the handgun—even if you may experience physical pain or injury. If your assailant gets your handgun, well . . . let's not go there!)

Take your finger off the trigger until you have control of the handgun—you may shoot the wrong thing!

Break away from them and then shoot!

Once you draw your handgun, keep it pointed in a low-ready or ready position, close to your body to **AVOID** making it easy for someone to take it away from you!

Maintaining your handgun is a function of all three components of retention—the mind, the holster and retention skills—not just one part. By always paying attention to your surroundings and potential threats, by selecting the most secure handgun holster that you can quickly draw from, and by learning and practicing your retention techniques, you can keep control of your firearm and not be victim to it. In the end, it is you, your equipment and your training working simultaneously that will give you the edge you need to survive.

Retention training will be adapted to each person's individual needs and experience level but must include three things:

1. Based on gross motor skills—you must train to react with your normal body movements,
2. Work under stress—without the need to think but to be able to react instinctively, and
3. Be practiced—to build embedded muscle memory, so that you will be able to perform without thinking.

Something to consider . . .

If you will practice and train yourself properly, you will be better equipped than most law enforcement personnel or the assailant(s) trying to harm you in the few moments you will have to defend yourself. Keep in mind, it is a number of skills and split second decisions that will make the difference.

4

UP CLOSE ENCOUNTER defending yourself up close and personal

Hand-to-hand defensive skills:

Very often, you will be forced to defend yourself with your bare hands—before you can even draw your handgun in self defense.

You should learn basic hand-to-hand techniques that will help you defend yourself upclose and personal—it is not necessary to become a black-belt or accomplished martial artist, but you should spend more than a few hours learning basic fighting skills.

There are a few basic defensive skills that will help you gain access to your handgun more readily in an up close encounter:

- Use the open palms of your hands to strike your assailant in the face, eyes, nose, throat, groin, knees, kidneys, ribs, temple, solar plexus
- Move into your assailant, not away from them—to force them off balance and onto their heels—in an aggressive strong manner

- Strike the assailant with the strong hand first, then with the weak hand, until you can free up your strong hand to draw your handgun—never draw a handgun until you are in control of the moment and have sufficient separation to do so
- Do not panic, think clearly, and respond with the instincts you have
- Never give up!

Shooting at close range:

You will more than likely not be able to acquire a standard sight picture. The importance of training and practicing your defensive skills is paramount to being able to perform instinctively while in the grasp of an assailant.

Training, no matter how much you try to mimick reality, is NEVER like the actual encounter. You will not be able to safely create a situation where your fear level will rise to the state where deadly force is justifiable—therefore you must practice your skills as well as your mindset.

You must always be mindful of where your muzzle is in relation to yourself, the assailant and others.

Never pull the trigger while in a struggle unless you are in control of the moment.

5

DRAWING AGAINST NON-FIREARM WEAPONS

in sufficient time to succeed

The 21 Foot Rule:

When an assailant is 21 feet or less in distance from you, charging toward you with a knife or other blount or sharp object, most people, including law enforcement and other trained professionals, can not sufficiently draw and effectively shoot their firearm to stop them before being attacked. You must do the following to survive:

- Practice your draw and shot placement until you can perform both effectively within 1.5 seconds or less
- Add .5 seconds if you will be drawing from deep concealment—under clothing, inside a jacket, or from a carry purse
- **Do not use live ammunition until you have perfected your draw and muzzle control to the point that you do not cross any body parts.**

Questions:

1. Do you think that in that 1.5-2.0 seconds you will have time to rack your firearm?
2. Do you think that you will have time to acquire a sight picture before firing?
3. Do you think you will notice the person while they are still 21 or more feet away from you?
4. Do you think you will actually believe that they are going to hurt you?
5. Do you think you will live to tell about it?

Practice tips:

1. Do not practice with someone running AT you.
2. Face the target, have a person stand behind you and without warning take off running away from you—at which time, you will draw and fire a round. When the person running hears the shot, they stop running. Measure the space between you and the runner—if it is 21 feet or less, yes!
3. Do not use live ammo until you have sufficiently perfected your draw and muzzle control.

6

DEALING WITH DIFFERENT SENARIOS real life situations discussed, dissected, and tactical solutions discovered

Defensive Handgun Survival Priorities:

Many people focus on their equipment as if it was the single most important priority in survival tactics. Fact is, although equipment is important, it is really last on the list of priorities for survival.

- Awareness—the first defense against an attack
- Tactics—learn practiced responses and proactive measures to sustain an attack
- Skills with your equipment—much more important than the equipment, is your ability to use it proficiently and instinctively to protect yourself
- Your equipment itself—get the best you can afford, but most importantly, equipment that is suited to your individual capabilities and needs in the largest caliber you can effectively handle.

The Use of Cover vs Concealment:

Cover will protect you from getting hit by live fire.

Concealment will hide you from view but not protect you

from being shot. You should know the difference and how to use both to your advantage:

Using COVER effectively:

- Be aware of the angle from which you emerge from cover to fire a defensive shot
- Emerge from cover as little as possible
- Do not assume that there is only one assailant as you emerge from cover
- Good cover will stop a bullet from hitting you (car engine, block or concrete wall, metal dumpster, or other solid object like a tree, or telephone pole, or steel pillar)
- Emerge from cover at different spots—pop up at different places from behind cover, rather than at the same location whenever possible
- Be careful not to let any parts of your body be exposed if at all possible when using cover—but if the cover is not large enough to completely cover all of your body, position yourself so that your vital organs, head and feet are unexposed.

Using CONCEALMENT effectively:

- Hide behind whatever you can to avoid being seen by an assailant as you move toward cover
- Be aware that concealment will not protect you from being shot, so do not linger in the same spot
- Remember that parts of your body may be visible to

an assailant if not totally concealed, making you an easier target

- Concealment is better than nothing at all

Remember, if you can see them, they can see you—but they may be able to see parts of you, even if you can't see them.

Multiple Adversaries:

When faced with multiple assailants, there are a few basic principles you should employ. The following will help you defend yourself:

- Shoot the one that is the biggest threat to your life first—it may be the one that is closest to you, but maybe not.
- Move your body to reduce the number of assailants that can see you—if one person is behind the assailant in front of them, they will not be able to see you; thus, they will have a harder time attacking you.
- Shoot each assailant one time, then reassess if any of them need to be shot again. Shooting each assailant multiple times in a row before moving to the next one will give the others more time to attack you.

- Do not let any assailant out flank you, or move more than 180 degrees of you—you may have to position yourself up against a wall in a slightly harder escape mode, than risk being attacked from behind.
- The time to shoot more than once at an assailant is when they are emerging one at a time from concealment or cover—as each one falls, be sure to scan the area for more potential attackers.
- Remember that you will develop tunnel vision and will not hear well once you begin firing so be sure to SCAN the area after dealing with an assailant, looking for hands, legs, arms, heads or other unexposed body parts.

Defense in a public place:

The safety issue of knowing your target and what is beyond is greatly multiplied when the public is near you during an attack. You must consider the following before using deadly force in a public place:

- Are you likely to injure or kill an innocent bystander by shooting at an assailant?
- Is the defense of another person warranted in a public place at that particular moment?

- If your friends or relatives are near you when you draw your handgun in self defense, they should run away from you to avoid being hurt by return fire directed at you—tell them not to disclose to others in a life-threatening situation that you are armed
- Very often, in public places, people or businesses are recording or photographing the premises—there may be hard proof of what happened at the scene
- Never shoot a warning shot
- Never pull out your firearm unless you intend to use it—threats are dangerous and will likely escalate an encounter

Defense in your car:

The best defense you may have in your car is your car itself. Your first choice should be to drive the car away from the scene, or use the car to stop the attacker. Doing the following increases your chance of survival:

- Lock your car doors at all times
- Never shoot from inside the car unless absolutely necessary
- Shoot with the muzzle outside the window to

avoid deafening yourself from the blast, breaking glass and hurting you or another in the car, blinding yourself with flying glass, or being hit with a ricochet from your own gun shot.

- It may be best to get out of the car and use it as cover—the engine block near the front wheel is best. Shooting from behind a car door like you see in the movies or on TV is not cover—bullets penetrate car doors easily.
- Be sure to take your firearm with you when you leave the car—in some states keeping a gun in a car is not legal, and most assaults happen between the car and where you are, not while you are in the car.
- Do not leave the handgun laying on the seat, under your leg, in the glove compartment, between the seats, in the center console, etc while driving.
- Taking a handgun out of the glove compartment, or other similar storage places in a vehicle is not natural, and will be too cumbersome to facilitate while under duress
- Avoid road rage—it typically takes two
- Keep the handgun on your person while driving, and be sure to clear any clothing that may be tucked under the seatbelt that would hinder you drawing

the gun to defend yourself

- Shooting from a moving car is discouraged

Shooting on the move:

Most trained professionals have great difficulty hitting a moving target when firing a handgun. Moving in a lateral direction is the best way to avoid being shot. No matter what, move!—do not become a stationary target. Sitting ducks don't survive when the quack of the gun is heard! You must remember to move:

- Moving targets are harder to hit
- Move toward cover for safety
- Move toward someone you are trying to defend
- Move get a better shot
- Location, location, location—move!

Being a good witness:

Sometimes your best defense in a situation is to choose NOT to shoot, remain quiet or un-noticed and take notice so that you will be able to be a good witness. You must do the following if at all possible:

- Remain a bystander
- Pay attention to details
- Stay quiet, un-noticed, out of harm's way
- Call 911
- Secure the scene (do not let anyone tamper with or remove evidence)
- Do not allow anyone to approach a downed assailant
- Be the point of contact for law enforcement when they arrive on the scene
- Give a brief description of what happened to law enforcement, even before they approach the scene
- Be sure firearms are put in a secure place before law enforcement arrives

Shooting from different positions:

During an encounter with an assailant, the chances of you always standing squarely on two feet is unlikely. Thus, it is important to practice shooting from different positions which include: standing, sitting, prone and even laying on your back in the event you are knocked over or tackled.

7

EMERGENCY and TACTICAL RELOADING getting more firepower under duress

Emergency and tactical reloading is one of the essential skills you must master to have a chance at surviving an encounter when shooting more rounds than what you have in your handgun is necessary to stop the assailant(s).

There are basically two styles of reloading a firearm during an emergency—tactical and speed loading.

The difference is:

Speed loading is the fastest way to unload and reload a firearm. During this process you are not concerned with where the magazine or speed loading device lands or whether or not you are wasting live rounds. In Tactical loading, the object is to also keep control of the magazine or the emptied rounds in case any of them are still able to be fired.

Revolver Speed Loading Process (assuming you have both hands available):

- Open the rotating cylinder with your weaker hand
- Turn the firearm over in a vertical position so that the empty casings will fall out when the ejector rod is pressed

- Press the ejector rod in a fast, forceful motion
- Flip the firearm over in the opposite direction to permit “dropping” of the rounds into the chamber easier and faster
- LOOK at the empty chambers as you load the rounds
- Drop the speed loader (no need to throw it out of the way)
- Close the cylinder and begin firing

Revolver Tactical Loading Process (assuming you have both hands available):

- Open the rotating cylinder with your weaker hand
- Turn the firearm over in a vertical position so that the empty casings will fall out when the ejector rod is pressed
- Press the ejector rod in a fast, forceful motion BUT CUP your hand under the cylinder to catch the rounds in the event any of them may not have been fired
- Place the emptied rounds into a pocket or other place for safe keeping
- Flip the firearm over in the opposite direction to permit “dropping” of the rounds into the chamber easier and faster

- LOOK at the empty chambers as you load the rounds
- Drop the speed loader (no need to throw it out of the way)
- Close the cylinder and begin firing

Semi Automatic Speed Loading Process (assuming you have both hands available):

- Pop the magazine out with your weak hand keeping the handgun in a vertical shooting position
- Allow the magazine to drop out without touching it
- While the magazine is falling, grab the replacement magazine with your weak hand
- LOOK at the magazine entry point to assure that the magazine is actually going into the intended slot
- Slam the magazine in to assure it has seated properly
- Close the slide (use of the slide release is faster than racking the slide)
- Begin firing

NOTE: Should the slide have remained shut prior to reloading, rack the slide eject whatever round is in the chamber to assure that a new round is in the chamber before firing

Semi Automatic Tactical Loading Process (assuming you have both hands available):

- Grab a replacement magazine with your weak hand
- Pop the magazine out with your strong hand keeping the handgun in a vertical shooting position
- Catch the empty magazine in the weak hand as well keeping them separated with a finger
- LOOK at the magazine entry point to assure that the magazine is actually going into the intended slot
- Slam the replacement magazine to assure it has seated properly
- Place the ejected magazine in a safe place (pocket, holder, etc)
- Close the slide (use of the slide release is faster than racking the slide)
- Begin firing

NOTE: Should the slide have remained shut prior to reloading, rack the slide eject whatever round is in the chamber to assure that a new round is in the chamber before firing

Techniques for reloading semi-automatics when you do NOT have both hands available:

The one-handed, semi-automatic reload should only be used in an emergency when the dominant hand is disabled due to injury or attack. It should be a last-ditch technique and not a “trick” or exhibition method to chamber a round once the magazine is in the pistol.

ALWAYS be certain that live ammo is removed from the practice area and secured in a lockbox or safe. Brightly colored plastic or polymer dummy rounds should be used when practicing.

The first step is to study the front and rear sights of your semi-automatic. Most Glocks, SIGs, Berettas, Smith & Wessons, and similar popular pistol platforms have prominent front- and rear-sight combinations. Prominent sights are your most important component to a proper one-handed reload. The sights will be used to grab onto and to make contact with leather, denim, or other fabric.

One technique is the “leather gun belt” reload. Leather is extremely dense and will provide an excellent surface for the sights to grip. After inserting a fresh magazine, flip the pistol over using a one-handed grip and rack the slide against the gun belt while pressing the front and rear sights together against the belt. It’s important that the front and rear sights be pressed against the leather as a group to gain the best angle and hold on the slide to enable the grip and frame to be moved to load a round.

It is possible to do this with either the front or rear-sight group singularly, but it's difficult and takes a lot of practice.

Make sure the muzzle is pointed in the safest possible direction, away from the body. Practice chambering the dummy round in two positions—one while standing, a second while prone on a flat surface to simulate an incapacitated position.

Note: Remember to move the grip and frame of the pistol in the direction of the muzzle when you dig the sights into fabric, denim or leather, as you will be racking the slide in a backward manner.

Another one-handed reload method involves using the upper or lower leg surface area of your pants which will preferably be sturdy fabric. This area offers a wide surface for the sights to grip through and gain a strong grip. After inserting the magazine into the pistol, grasp the entire grip and frame of the gun with your weak (non-dominant) hand. Turn over the pistol, gain a stronghold into the fabric, and rack the slide. This is easier than the gun belt technique, but it requires practice.

This drill may seem intimidating at first. Please remember to move the grip and frame of the pistol in the direction of the muzzle when you dig the sights into fabric, denim or leather. As long as you do this with enough force, you will allow the slide to move back enough and subsequently forward to chamber a fresh round and bring the gun into battery. You can always use the weak (non dominant) hand to eject empty magazines.

If you're right-hand dominant and that hand is disabled, use the index finger of the left hand to drop the magazine and use the left hand to practice the one-handed reload. Most semi-automatics have the magazine release button on the left side (shooter's first-person perspective). Others provide ambidextrous controls.

In some cases, there may still be enough feeling left in your disabled hand to insert a fresh magazine. You can then use your non-dominant hand to properly seat the magazine in the gun by using something sturdy as a base to slam the firearm down on top of the inserted magazine—rather than slamming the magazine into the gun.

Techniques for reloading a revolver when you do NOT have both hands available:

Loading a revolver with one hand is similar to loading a pistol—you still have to drop the empty cases, reach for spare cartridges, load the gun and close the action to get back into the fight, but there are few twists.

The main twists are dropping the empty cases and filling the cylinder with fresh cartridges. Most of us use one hand to hold the gun while using the other to hand to eject and reload, but in the current example, one hand is disabled. The technique required to load a revolver with one hand is control. You have to be able to move your hand around multiple times without dropping the gun.

The most common way to manipulate a revolver for a one-handed reload is by pressing the gun against the body when relocating the hand on the gun.

- After opening the cylinder, press the grip against your side before moving your thumb around and into the open cylinder
- Then, reach your fingers around the frame to press the ejector rod
- Once the cases have dropped free, spin the gun in the hand and insert it into your holster, or belt, or waistband with the grip facing forward so as to permit the cylinder to remain open on the outside
- With the gun stabilized, load the gun
- Then, twist your arm to grip the handle so it can be drawn from the holding position
- Flip the cylinder closed—a practice that should only be done while training with one hand or in a real-life situation when two hands are not an option
- Return to the target and resume firing

As with all training drills, be sure to use dummy ammunition, especially when the training that is more about gun manipulation than shooting.

During all reloading procedures, KEEP the muzzle pointed in a SAFE direction.

“Oooh, oooh, oooh, staying alive, staying alive!” . . . Seriously, an essential factor in surviving a life threatening situation is the “will” to live.

8

POINTS TO PRACTICE tips and tricks to help improve defensive skills with a handgun

- *Keeping your finger off the trigger while practicing*
- *Drawing a firearm from concealment*
- *Drawing and reholstering a handgun while looking straight ahead*
- *Acquiring a sight picture asap—if only for the moment before you pull the trigger*
- *Becoming a moving target, rather than a sitting duck*
- *Awareness at all times*
- *Reloading the firearm (use only dummy ammo) in the dark, with one hand, lying down, with your eyes closed, etc.*
- *Speed and Tactical Reloading*
- *Clearing ammunition and mechanical malfunctions*
- *Use verbal commands that are not normally spoken during an encounter when co-training*

- *Moving into your assailant and when they are off balance, step back to acquire sufficient separation to safely draw your handgun with control of the muzzle*
- *Scanning and assessing the area after shooting an assailant*
- *Hand-to-hand defense moves*
- *Review in your mind what you would do if... ?*

Remember, the first one to hit their target in a shooting usually wins—so practice, practice, practice

9

TYPES and CALIBERS of HANDGUNS that are good selections for defense with a handgun

With all of the different handgun options available today to be used for personal protection, it is understandable that selecting the type and caliber best suited to your skill level and your individual needs might be overwhelming—especially when after you purchase one, it is not returnable



like a pair of shoes that you decided did not fit after all. Thus, it is important that you make a fully informed decision before you make the investment.

Let's start with the fit. When a firearm “fits” a person's hand, the following is true:

- the fingers on the strong hand will be able to wrap around the grip sufficiently to maintain control of the firearm when it is fired.
- the pad of the trigger finger should touch the trigger lever naturally
- when the firearm is placed in the “v” of the strong hand, the barrel will be in alignment with the forearm and the fingers will wrap around the grip as required with the trigger

finger pad resting properly on the trigger lever

- the shooter can squeeze the trigger without cocking the hammer first
- the shooter can hold and control the handgun with the strong hand only

You should be able to effectively control the firearm with and without the use of the support hand—and become proficient with it, which is more than just effectively hitting an “x” on a target at the range.

You must be able to clear a jam, operate the action without delay, see the sights clearly, and shoot it with precision, if you plan to rely on it to stop an assailant(s). The ability to properly maintain the firearm goes without saying to assure it is ready when you are.

The “caliber” of firearm you should carry is the largest caliber you can adequately control. Using a smaller caliber handgun from that point down will be a choice made mostly on the size of the handgun you can sufficiently conceal with the clothing you are wearing or the purse you are carrying at any given time.

Contrary to some opinions, .22 caliber handguns can do a lot of damage to an assailant when used tactically correct. For example: a .22 round that hits the throat, up the nose thru the brain, the temple, or a vital organ is deadly. If a

smaller caliber firearm is all you can handle proficiently, then that is all the firepower you should carry for personal protection.

Smaller caliber firearms like a .22, .25, 32, or even a .380 are usually smaller in overall size—many will fit in the palm of a normal size hand, which can be a safety hazard because fingers can easily find their way out in front of the muzzle.

A popular caliber of revolver used for personal protection is a .38—which ammunition options come in a number of impact designs and power levels. Next, the .357 revolver is a powerful choice that is often very concealable.

Semi-Automatics are popular carry selections in both compact and fullsize models in 9mm, 40, 45 calibers—which offer more “stopping power” in the cartridge itself. People who prefer semi-auto style handguns regularly select .380 caliber compacts when they want the benefit of easier concealment.

Do not be misled by those who state that it takes a large caliber of handgun to stop an attacker—there have been many instances where a assailant was hit with multiple shots from a .45 caliber handgun and lived to tell about it. The most important part of using a handgun for personal protection effectively is the will to live, the training and skill developed with the handgun, and the ability to perform under duress by relying on learned muscle memory

and instinctive response from practicing with the handgun.

Basically, when it comes to deciding what type and caliber firearm should be selected for carrying a handgun for personal protection, consideration should be given to:

- ability to conceal the firearm (on the body or in a carry purse/holder)
- caliber that the shooter can adequately control
- proficiency of the shooter with either a revolver or semi-automatic while under duress (not just during a relaxed shooting session)
- more than one type/caliber per permit holder





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