

CONCEALED CARRY BASICS: HAVE A PLAN



Left: Concealed carry, which means “weapon out of sight”, is a compromise in terms of firepower. It’s all about avoiding a fight. For example, this Vector Arms AK47 rifle, even with an underfolding stock, is too big for concealed carry. However, this 9mm Model 3913 Tactical Smith & Wesson with integral light rail is just right.



Right: In order to effectively conceal a firearm, you have to select appropriate attire. You must dress to your chosen firearms. This person is effectively concealing four handguns on his person. His covering garment is a 511 Tactical Vest. He is carrying a Glock 19 in a strong side Hoffners kydex IWB holster, a Kel-tec .380 caliber 3AT pistol in a Comp-Tac kydex neck holster, a 9mm Glock 26 in the 511 vest’s cross-draw concealment pocket, a .380 caliber Seecamp pistol in a pocket holster in his support side front pocket, and a Spyderco Delica folder in his left front pocket.

What would you do if... you saw a stranger in your shed, that stranger had just dragged your granddaughter or your wife into that shed, you were attacked, someone tried to carjack you, someone began to beat you up, or someone broke into your house? People usually answer with, “I really don’t know!...You really have to be in the situation to know how you’d react...I’d probably freeze...” Such lack of preparedness is not conducive to survival.

SELF-DEFENSE AWARENESS

Self-defense awareness means having a plan for what you will do in a self-defense emergency. It has been said that to fail to plan is to plan to fail. If you don’t have a plan, and a violent incident should occur that you haven’t planned for, you will be caught short. That could spell R.I.P. However, if you have a plan, you will be much more likely to recognize what is happening and respond appropriately.

“OODA” The Ace U.S. Fighter Pilot, Colonel John Boyd, conceptualized the steps: **O**bserve what is happening, **O**rient to the problem, **D**ecide what to do, and **A**ct on that decision. This sequence of events

forms the basis for the acronym, “OODA,” and the faster you “OODA,” the more time you’ll buy.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDE

As discussed in the NRA’s Basic Pistol and Personal Protection curricula (www.nra.org 703-267-1500), your personal defense plan and personal security rest on the triad of acquiring the necessary knowledge and equipment, developing the needed skills, and cultivating the right attitude. Those who are more prepared and better trained are less likely to have to fight. If you carry a gun, you don’t want to fight if you can avoid doing so.

ACQUIRING NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE AND EQUIPMENT

1. Have one or more guns. The first rule of thumb is to have a gun. A firearm is the ultimate force multiplier, and two firearms are better than one. The second rule is to know how to use your guns. Get trained.

2. Choose the right guns for you! This is a personal decision that should be influenced by the desire to own quality

products that you can depend on to help you defend your life. There are many quality manufacturers in today’s firearms marketplace. The handguns that you choose should not be a function of the latest whiz-bang pistols advertised in the gun magazines. You should research what your particular needs are—e.g., how you dress, where you travel, what calibers you can handle, your hand size, etc., and choose accordingly.

3. Concealed carry holsters. You have to dress differently to carry concealed—for example, looser fitting clothing. Your firearm must be under your control at all times. Your handgun must be on or about your person, and never left unattended. Carrying a gun is a responsibility, and it isn’t convenient. If you are going to carry, it is your responsibility to assure that your gun is not taken away from you! The purpose of a holster is to keep your handgun secure and clean. Your gun should be in a holster when it is on your person. The gun must be hidden from view and only be accessible to you, its rightful owner. As with choosing a gun, your choice of a concealed carry holster is a personal



Pocket snubby or mid-size, inside-the-pants pistol.

decision that should be based on what your particular needs are—e.g., how you dress, where you travel, comfort, ease of draw, etc.

4. Be safety conscious. The primary causes of firearms related incidents are ignorance and carelessness. So get educated. There is no such thing as a firearms related accident! You must burn into your brain and muscle memory the four basic firearm safety rules: (A) Treat all firearms as if they are loaded and immediately ready to fire, all the time. “Unloaded” guns are handled no differently than loaded ones. (B) The muzzle of any firearm must not, at any time, be allowed to point in an unsafe direction. (C) Always keep your finger off of the trigger until your sights are on a target and you have made the decision to fire at the target. (D) Before firing, be sure of your target and that the area around and behind it is clear and safe.

5. Know the laws. It’s your responsibility to stay aware of changes that occur in the state and federal laws. Understand that the laws are different for every state. If you are going to transport a firearm into any state, it’s your responsibility to know the laws and restrictions of that state. Whichever state you’re carrying in, you must abide by their laws. In all

Comp-Tac C-T.A.C. IWB tuckable slides accommodate pistols with different length barrels and slides. Do you have a Commander-size and a full-size 1911? Perhaps you have a Glock 26, 19 and 17. If so, the C-T.A.C. slide can handle all of them.



jurisdictions, “concealed carry” means carrying an approved lethal weapon on or about your person in such a manner as to conceal it from the ordinary sight of another person. Open carry is a bad idea because it eliminates the advantage of surprise, and it is illegal in most jurisdictions.

Permit holders need to be aware of areas where they cannot have a firearm within the jurisdictions in which they carry. Permit holders should know what to do and what the laws of the jurisdiction require them to do if confronted by the police when they are carrying. Know how to interact with the police.

Most jurisdictions hold that, if a person is ever justified in the use of deadly force, it is only if he believes that such force is necessary to prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or another innocent person. However, jurisdictions vary in their laws regarding the duty to retreat in the face of an imminent threat.

Deadly force may not be used to protect property or to stop an escaping criminal. A fleeing person may not be shot while running from you. You do have a duty to avoid escalating confrontations and to avoid known trouble spots, and in most jurisdictions (check the laws), you do have a duty to retreat if you safely can, unless by doing so, you are likely to jeopardize your own safety or that of an innocent person.

6. Know how to operate and maintain your firearms. You should thoroughly read and familiarize yourself with the manufacturer’s operating manuals of your self-defense firearms. You should know the components of your defensive handguns, how they work, and how to operate and maintain your handguns. Keep your guns clean, and check their operation routinely.

7. Know what proper ammunition is. You must use the proper ammunition for your firearm. For example, 9mm parabellum (a.k.a. 9mm Luger or 9mm NATO) is not the same as 9mm Kurtz (a.k.a. 9mm Short or .380 ACP). Although

it is a good idea to practice with what you carry and test your carry ammunition in your carry gun, conserve your more expensive hollow point (HP) ammunition for personal protection and carry. Hollow points are less likely to over penetrate and more likely to create fight stopping tissue damage. Use less expensive, full metal jacket (FMJ) ammunition for practice. FMJs are not a good choice for personal defense and carry. In smaller calibers than .45 ACP and .40 S&W, they tend to be poor fight stoppers, and they also tend to over penetrate, which can create a safety hazard to innocent bystanders.

Make sure to regularly inspect your personal defense ammunition for imperfections and recycle ammo yearly. Don’t let ammo get wet and avoid using reloaded ammunition for personal defense and carry!



Know your ammunition.

8. Obtain your concealed carry weapons permit (CCW). If you want to carry a concealed weapon legally, you should apply for a Concealed Carry Permit in the state in which you reside if your state issues CCW permits on a “shall issue,” non-discretionary basis. If your state does not, the next best thing is to obtain a non-resident CCW permit from a state that has reciprocity with a lot of other states, so that you have the choice of carrying in the greatest number of jurisdictions.

Currently, the Florida Non-Resident CCW Permit is valid in 28 states. Even if your state does not issue CCW Permits, if you’re a US Citizen, you’re not a convicted felon, and you haven’t been convicted of domestic abuse, you should be eligible to obtain the Florida Non-resident CCW Permit. Even if you obtain your state’s CCW Permit, the Florida Non-resident permit is a good thing to have, as it will expand the number of states where you can carry. To learn more about obtaining the Florida permit, you can log onto the Florida Division of Licensing website: <http://licgweb.doacs.state.fl.us/weapons/index.html> as well as our website, <http://www.PersonalDefenseSolutions.net>.

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A good, firm grip on the pistol.

DEVELOPING NEEDED SKILLS

If you knew that there was going to be a gunfight at noon, what guns would you bring? The correct answer is: "None. I would be someplace else." Train to avoid a fight if at all possible.

1. Rehearse disengagement responses to strange people on the street who approach you seemingly innocuously so that you do not fall victim to common ruses. For example, a panhandler comes up to you on the street and asks, "Hey Mister, can you help me?" Be ready for his come-on. As noted firearms trainer, John Farnam, of Defense Training International teaches, interrupt him half way through his sentence, raise your weak/support hand in a half-wave/half-dismissive chop and say politely, but firmly, and in a clear voice, loud enough for everyone nearby to hear, "Sorry sir. I can't help you." Continue walking without so much as dragging a foot. Leave no doubt in the possible predator's mind that he has selected the "wrong victim." Farnam points out in his classes, "successful disengagement can usually be accomplished via posture and firm verbalizations, but you must be practiced and have your 'tape-loops' ready to go!" (www.defense-training.com 970-482-2520)

2. Get good training. There are many good shooting schools these days. However, do your homework. Get references. Talk to people who have attended a given school so you don't waste your hard earned money and valuable time. A good place to find a list of shooting schools is on the

Packing.org website (http://www.packing.org/links/?ccw_topic=3). Concealed Carry Magazine also regularly runs articles that review firearm training courses.

3. Be well grounded in your defensive shooting fundamentals. There is a big difference between static target shooting and defensive shooting. For defensive shooting practice, find the stance or firing position that is most comfortable for you. Recognize that in a fight for your life you may have to shoot from an unconventional position. You may have to shoot from a retention position. This should be incorporated into your skills practice and training.

4. Get a grip. Your grip is how you hold your handgun. Your handgun is an extension of your hand. Your grip should be firm. It is your shooting platform. Learn to get a good grip on your pistol.

5. Learn how to use your sights. The shooter should look through the rear sight notch at the top of the front sight, which is placed on the point of aim on the target. The top of the front sight blade should be level with the top of the rear sight blades and centered in between them (i.e. EHEL: Equal Height Equal Light). The bullet will go where the front sight is pointed. Nothing should come between you and your front sight. Concentrate on your front sight.

6. Trigger "press" versus "squeeze". Learn to isolate your trigger finger as opposed to squeezing with your whole hand. That's called "milking" the trigger. Where does the front pad of the first segment of your trigger finger meet the face of the trigger? You bring the trigger finger into your hand. Learn trigger control.

7. Follow through. Don't move the gun away from the target after you fire. Give the bullet a chance to exit the barrel!

8. Learn how to maintain and clean your handguns. If you want your handguns to take care of you, you must take care of them! It is important to keep them clean and regularly check them for operational problems. You must learn how to field strip them for cleaning. You do not have to clean your guns after every time you shoot. However, you should field strip and clean them after every 250 to 500 rounds. Wipe your guns down after you're done shooting at the range. Be sure to follow all safety laws when cleaning your firearms. Do not allow yourself to get distracted.

CULTIVATING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

The recent, natural and human disasters precipitated by Hurricanes Katrina in New Orleans and Wilma in Florida demonstrated that there is no one to help us but ourselves. Survival is dependent upon sustaining a positive state of mind that orients us to victory. We must practice self-reliance. It is foolish to expect governments to be our parents and take care of us. Self-defense is a responsibility we have to ourselves, to those who love us, and to society. The Ten Commandments say "Thou shall not murder", not "Thou shall not kill".

In summary, whether or not you carry a handgun for personal defense, and especially if you do, you need to have a plan to avoid a fight if you can, and to be victorious over those who would harm you if you cannot. Having a plan means having the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude.

Additional sources:

Comp-Tac Quality Kydex Holsters.
www.Comp-tac.com 713-681-6881.

Cor-Bon Ammunition.
www.Corbon.com 800-626-7266.

Del Fatti Gunleather.
www.Delfatti.com 715-267-6420.

Glock USA.
www.glock.com 770-432-1202.

K&D Holsters.
www.KDHolsters.com 813-601-0504.

Personal Defense Solutions.
www.PersonalDefenseSolutions.net
215-938-7283.

Smith and Wesson.
www.SmithandWesson.com
800-331-0852.

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