

A Concise Primer On Concealment Holsters

Bruce N. Eimer, Ph.D.

"You never have trouble if you are prepared for it."

-- Theodore Roosevelt

Beginners at concealed carry often ask the question, If I carry my handgun loaded with a round in the chamber, how do I prevent an accidental discharge? The answer is that you have to have good equipment, and train with that equipment. The heart of your concealed carry package consists of your handgun and your concealment holster. Both should be quality.

Holsters are basic equipment. You cannot safely carry a loaded handgun without an intelligently designed, comfortable, and functional holster that precisely fits your gun. Most importantly, *the holster must cover and protect the trigger guard.*

It is unsafe to carry a handgun inside your waist band (i.e., so called "Mexican carry" inside your pants) without a holster. It is also unsafe to carry a handgun dangling around freely inside your pocket. Either carry mode could lead to something getting caught inside the trigger guard, which could cause an accidental discharge. This is not conducive to protecting the family jewels, and after all, you are carrying a concealed handgun for personal protection!

Your concealed carry holster is your handgun's "safe home" on your body. As such, it's a very personal piece of equipment. If you carry concealed most of the time, you will grow attached to both gun and holster, and they will become a part of you. So, you must choose a concealment holster for your carry gun that fits your lifestyle, environment, modes of dress, daily habits, body shape, size, and fitness level.

Categories of Concealment Holsters

In this article, I shall review four main categories of concealment holsters: (1) Paddle holsters; (2) Inside the Waistband (IWB) holsters; (3) Outside the Waistband (OWB) belt holsters; and (4) Pocket holsters. I shall discuss their main characteristics, important considerations in choosing a concealed carry holster, and I'll make recommendations based on my experience.

Do Your Homework!

After studying this article, you need to do some research. Start by checking out

manufacturers' web sites. Call manufacturers up, make sure you get a knowledgeable person on the phone, and don't be afraid to ask questions. A good manufacturer will gladly answer your questions. As an added bonus, if you can try before you buy, this is a good thing. However, this might only be possible at a defensive handgun training course, at a gun show, or in a reputable gun shop. All the more reason to take training, to go to gun shows, and to visit your friendly neighborhood gun shop!

Quality Holsters Are Works Of Art

Holsters are exciting. Once you get "the holster fever", and you will, you want to own every fine piece of leather or kydex that is made for your handgun/s. Then you end up with drawers full of holsters because you can only wear one at a time, and truth be told, you really want to wear one holster and one gun as your daily carry, and train with that equipment. However, looking at holsters, and acquiring beautiful ones, for a gun lover, is like a trip to Tiffany's for a diamond lover.

Essential Considerations in Choosing a Concealment Holster

In choosing the right concealment holster for you, some essential considerations are: (1) wearer comfort; (2) excellent concealment given your wardrobe; (3) smoothness and speed of the draw that the holster facilitates (given proper technique); (4) fitting the size of the holster's belt clip or loop to the width of your belt, and for other than pocket holsters; (5) the ease of one-handed re-holstering.

A Safe Investment

It is foolhardy to spend \$500 to \$900 on a handgun, and then skimp on a cheap, floppy holster. Both the handgun and holster are an investment in your safety and survival. So, you should be willing to spend anywhere from \$75.00 to \$150.00 on a quality holster that will last many years. Additionally, you will probably want several types of holsters for different modes of dress and situations.

Cant

Strong side holsters are made to ride or "drop" vertically, or to ride at some degree

of forward angle or cant. The cant typically varies between 8 to 20 degrees. The butt of the gun is raked forward and upward, and the muzzle is raked to the rear. Twenty degrees is considered an extreme, or radical forward cant. The more extreme the cant, the better the concealment, as it is the handgun's butt that typically prints the most. I prefer a 15 to 20 degree cant with the strong side holster worn at the midline of my strong side. This facilitates quick acquisition of a good grip on the handgun in the first stage of the draw from the holster, as my hand is naturally pushed up high on the backstrap.

Holster Materials

Should you go with a holster made of leather or synthetic kydex? Excellent holsters these days are made of both materials. In fact, some manufacturers have come up with holster solutions that are hybrids of the two materials. In making a choice, several considerations are pertinent.

Cowhide or Horsehide?

Leather rigs come in cowhide or horsehide. Cowhide is generally more supple, and has more give than horsehide. Thus, a cowhide holster is easier to break in and usually more comfortable, at least initially, than the same rig made of horsehide. However, a horsehide rig does offer better protection against moisture, which is an important consideration if you live in a hot and humid climate.

Also, horsehide is stiffer, and typically more durable. However, a good cowhide holster will still last for years. Lastly, cowhide is typically prettier. That is because it is easier to dye and it absorbs the dye

Continued on page 16

To the mainstream media,
helping a little old lady
cross the street is noble, but
using a firearm to prevent
her from being raped and
murdered is "vigilantism".

Find out what
Real Americans
think about gun rights.

--KeepAndBearArms.com

KEEP AND BEAR ARMS
GUN OWNERS HOME PAGE .COM

better than does horsehide. So, if looks and cosmetics are your main consideration, cowhide is the answer. But, we are talking about concealment holsters. This means they should never see the light of day or something is wrong!

Breaking In Your New Leather Holster

Often, a new leather holster is stiff and tight. This means it will be hard to draw your handgun from the rig, and it also may be hard to fully seat your weapon in the rig initially. The solution to this problem is to break in your new holster. This involves “working” the holster with your *unloaded handgun*.

“Working” the rig means pushing your *unloaded handgun* all the way into the holster, moving it around, and then drawing it out. This should be done 10 to 15 times. If the holster is really tight, then you need to carry out a simple break-in procedure called “blocking”.

“Blocking”

This involves putting your *unloaded handgun* inside a plastic bag, such as the bag the holster came in, and then pushing the bagged, unloaded handgun all the way into the holster. You move it around as much as you can and then draw it and re-insert it 10 to 12 times. You then leave the bagged, unloaded gun in the holster for a couple of hours. When you withdraw the unloaded gun from the holster and the bag, make sure to check that it is still unloaded. Then re-insert it and withdraw it, and you should find, with a leather rig, that the gun moves more easily into and out of the holster.

Leather or Kydex?

Kydex, which is a hard synthetic polymer, offers several advantages in a holster. Firstly, it is very durable. It retains its shape and can be banged around without damaging the holster. Because it retains its shape, it doesn't have to be broken in, as does leather--kydex does not stretch.

Adjustment Screws

What this means is that a kydex holster typically needs to have a tension adjustment screw to enable you to adjust the fit of the holster by either loosening or tightening it. Most do. They are located behind or below the trigger guard. Many leather rigs also have adjustment screws. This is a useful feature. Leather can shrink with heat, moisture from sweat, and humidity. Getting your gun stuck in your holster can be embarrassing to say the least, and fatal at worst.

Kydex rigs are typically more popular for competition and range training because they offer a faster draw. However, the down



Created especially for the popular Glock 26/27 sub-compact pistols the DeSantis “Style 086” two slot, leather belt holster features an adjustable tension screw, and snug, defined molding. Photo courtesy of DeSantis Gunhide.

side is that most kydex rigs do not conceal as well as leather rigs. The key word here however, is “most”. There are a few notable exceptions, such as the DeSantis kydex, vertical drop, Style 94 “Jackel” paddle holster, as shown in the photo, carrying a Smith & Wesson J-frame revolver. You can't get a closer, more concealed carry, and with the paddle feature, it's easy on and easy off.



DeSantis “Jackel” Paddle” Holster. Photograph by Bruce Eimer

Paddle Holsters

Paddle holsters, as their name implies, have a paddle attached to the rear of the holster body that slides between the inside of the pants and the wearer's hip. Some have a hook on the bottom of the paddle to keep the paddle from coming up and off when the gun is drawn. The main advantage of a paddle holster is that it's easy to put on and take off. But the trade off, and main disadvantage, is that, with most paddle holsters, especially with a heavy gun, the rig tends to tip outward from the body, causing the gun to print through a concealment garment.

Another notable exception is RM Holster's “Extreme Cant Paddle” or ECP. It rides extremely close and is an excellent concealment kydex rig.

Inside the Waist Band (IWB) Holsters

Inside the Waist Band (IWB) holsters are the easiest and most effective way to conceal a compact to full size handgun. The body of the holster rides between your body and your waist band on your strong side. Thus, you have to have enough room inside your waist band! When wearing an IWB, often it is necessary to wear a pair of slacks and a belt that is one size larger than what you normally wear.



RM Holsters ECP Paddle Holster. Photo courtesy of Jeff “Rocketman” Behrnes of RM Holsters.

Fasteners

An IWB is secured in place by either a single or pair of tunnel belt loops, snap belt loops, or clips. The advantage of snap and clip attachments is that they make the holster easier to put on and take off.

Mitch Rosen Extraordinary Gunleather is one of the best leather IWB holsters available, and at a price that won't bust your piggy bank, is Mitch Rosen's form molded “USD Express”. This rig is remarkably comfortable, concealable and quick. The belt loop has a one way snap for ease of putting the holster on and taking it off. However, once you put it on, you won't want to take it off!

High Noon Holsters “Tail Gunner” IWB with its unique rear stabilizer wing, helps to keep the holster from rotating or shifting positions.



Mitch Rosen “USD Express” IWB. Photo courtesy of Mitch Rosen

It features rough side out construction, a 15 degree forward cant, a leather lining, and a reinforced holster opening that is crush resistant to facilitate one handed re-holstering. Additional features include an open muzzle configuration, a stitched-in sight track, a tension screw for adjustment of tightness of fit and ease of the draw, and a slide guard to protect the wearer from being irritated by the pistol's slide, slide stop, safety/decocker, rear sight, and hammer. The snap straps will fit up to a 1-3/4 inch wide belt.

DeSantis Gunleather's Style 57 "Inner Piece" is a similar, fine quality IWB that works superbly, given its rear stabilizer wing. This rear wing keeps the holstered gun from flying out of your pants.

Galco Gunleather is the manufacturer of a large line of high quality leather concealment holsters. One of the best IWBs made,



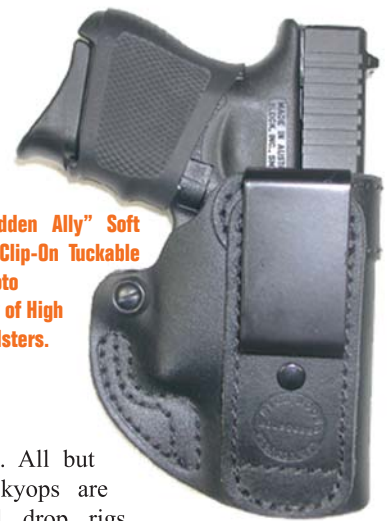
Galco's "Royal Guard". Photo courtesy of Galco Gunleather

the wearer to tuck his shirt completely over the holstered handgun between the body of the holster and the extension strut such that the only visible part of the rig is the belt clip, tunnel belt loop, or snap strap on the belt. A well designed "tuckable" rides with enough stability inside the waist band to be worn as a traditional IWB as well. To draw your handgun from a tucked in tuckable, you need only pull your shirt tail up out of your waistband, grip your handgun high on the backstrap as you would in the first stage of any draw, and then draw the gun.

High Noon Holsters' "Hidden Impact" and "Hidden Ally" clip-on tuckables ride vertically in the pants. This makes it comfortable to position the rig forward of the hip. Also, their clip-on feature allows for ease of putting on and taking off. They are very affordable, no nonsense, high quality rigs that exemplify the

axiom that form should follow function. Mitch Rosen's "Workman" tuckable IWB has a butt forward, muzzle to the rear cant, or rake, that enhances concealability by keeping the handgun's butt up close against the body. The snap-on belt loop at the top end of the extension strut, allows a key ring to be placed on the loop to disguise the loop's true purpose. Mitch's "Workman Express" is similar to his original "Workman" in terms of tuckability and quality, however, it attaches to the belt with a kydex extension/J-hook combination. It can be had in a vertical straight drop or canted configuration. With more compact pistols, such as the sub-compact Kahr MK9 or K9 and the sub-compact Glock 26/27, the straight drop works well. With larger pistols, such as the compact Glock 19/23/32 and the full size Glock's, the canted configuration is the better choice for better concealment.

Galco Gunleather's significant contributions to the tuckable IWB line of products are their very functional "Deep Cover", "Ultra Deep Cover", or "UDA", "Ultimate Second Amendment", or "USA", and "Skyops"



The "Hidden Ally" Soft Leather Clip-On Tuckable IWB. Photo courtesy of High Noon Holsters.

models. All but the "Skyops" are vertical drop rigs. The "Skyops" offers an extreme cant for those who desire this and Galco's unique "Y-hook" for exceptional stability. When you wear any of these models, only you will know you are armed. The "USA" and the "Skyops" are the most concealable as they do not have reinforced open tops. This means you sacrifice easy one handed re-holstering for deeper concealment. If deep concealment is essential, this sacrifice is worth it.

Blade-Tech's "Ultimate Concealment Holster" (UCH) is a real winner. It is made of hard, thermoplastic synthetic material. This tuckable IWB holster is adjustable for cant, or can be worn as a straight drop. It easily allows the shirt to be tucked into the pants, completely concealing the firearm and holster. The well constructed belt loop and tuckable extension



(Above Left to Right) Mitch Rosen "Workman" IWB. (b) Mitch Rosen "Workman Express" IWB. Photo courtesy of Mitch Rosen.

arm provide for a very stable ride of the holstered handgun inside the pants. This rig works equally exceptionally as a regular IWB, or as a tucked in IWB.

H.B.E. Specialty Leatherworks, brain child of master holster craftsman, Eric Larsen, manufacture's a remarkable rig that does everything an IWB should do, perfectly. This rig, the "G.S. Tuckable", is made of cowhide and horsehide, such that it is not as stiff as an all horsehide rig usually is, but yet,

Continued on page 26



(Above) DeSantis "Inner Piece" IWB. Photo courtesy of DeSantis Holsters. (Right) High Noon Holsters "Tail Gunner" IWB. Photo courtesy of High Noon Holsters.

and one of my all time favorites, is their famous "Royal Guard". The Guard offers exceptional comfort and durability. Constructed of premium horsehide with the rough side out, and a smooth leather interior, the Royal Guard facilitates a smooth draw and easy one handed re-holstering. Its one way snap-on belt loops will fit belts up to 1-3/4 inches, and with its forward rake and quality design, this rig provides excellent concealment.

"Tuckables"

Within the class of IWBs, an ingenious adaptation for maximum concealment is the tuckable belt loop extension -- brainchild of gun writer and holster maker, Dave Workman. Dave's unique concept, born in his original tuckable, which is available from D&D Gunleather (<http://www.defensetactics.com/dandd.htm>), has been copied by numerous holster makers. The tuckable feature allows

it is just as durable and moisture resistant. Cosmetically, the holster is beautiful, and spells Q-U-A-L-I-T-Y. The fine stitching and molding make this rig a work of art. It is almost too pretty to wear, but yet it begs to be worn, and when you put in on, you are not going to want take it off! It is that comfortable!

This rig works equally well as a tuckable or as a regular IWB. The construction of the belt loop and tuckable belt loop extension strut also spell S-T-A-B-I-L-I-T-Y. The reinforced open top and slide guard (which is just the right height) facilitate easy one-handed re-holstering and a comfortable wear. Eric Larsen is a master craftsman and a true artist.



Left: Galco "Skyops" Tuckable IWB. Photo courtesy of Galco Gunleather.

OWB Belt Holsters

Within the class of OWB belt holsters, the pancake style holster, that has a belt slot fore and aft of the holster body, typically rides closest to the body and conceals best. Such a rig can be had with either an open top or with a thumb break retention strap. Whether the top is open or has a thumb break, the top can be reinforced to help it stay open for ease of draw and easy one-handed re-holstering. However, the down side to a reinforced top is that it reduces concealment by giving the rig a wider profile. For maximum concealment, a non-reinforced top is best. A well made concealment pancake holster is form molded and retains its shape, without a reinforced top.

Quality examples include (1) Mitch Rosen's forward tilted, "5JR Express", (2) High Noon's forward canted, "Slide Guard" and "Sky High", and (3) Galco's radically forward raked, "COP 3 Slot", "Combat Master" and "Concealable" belt holsters.

Open Top or Thumb Break?

A thumb break retention strap provides secure RETENTION of your weapon. This is a good thing to have if you are going into



Blade-Tech's, "UCH" Tuckable IWB. Photo courtesy of Blade-Tech.

a crowd. It retains the gun in the holster by preventing the gun from being drawn unless the retention strap is released first. However, this adds an extra step to the draw. So, it requires practice. In one continuous smooth motion, your strong hand thumb must come down and push through the snap fastened thumb break to "break", or release, the lock on the gun, and permit you to grab the gun and draw it up and out of the holster.

Also, with many pancake holsters a thumb break tends to cause the rig to hug closer to your body, improving concealment—definitely a good thing!



H.B.E. Specialty Leatherworks "GS Tuckable". Photo courtesy of Eric Larsen of H.B.E. Specialty Leatherworks.

Mitch Rosen, DeSantis, High Noon, and Galco all make excellent thumb break OWB holsters.

The down side, however, to a holster with a thumb break retention strap, especially for concealed carry applications, is that releasing it adds an extra step to the draw. Thus, it can retain your weapon too well, and spell R.I.P. when you need to grab your weapon fast—not a good thing! Obviously, if you are going to wear this equipment, you have to practice drawing your unloaded gun from your holster so that it comes natural in a pinch. It's a muscle memory thing.

Keep in mind that a thumb break retention strap can only prevent a gun grab from being successful if you do your part—which means being alert, aware, and in Condition Yellow at all times, until the need arises to transition into Condition Orange or Red. However, generally speaking, because we are carrying concealed, a thumb break is not a necessary device to have in most situations. People shouldn't know you are carrying!

Open or Closed Muzzle?

So called, "belt slide" holsters are made with open muzzle ends so they can holster the same pistol in different barrel lengths (e.g., all of the small or large frame Glock).



Photo Above: Two Quality Concealment Belt Holsters: Galco "Cop 3" with Thumb Break and Mitch Rosen "5JR Express" with Thumb Break. Tom Krein "TK-8" Defensive and Utility Fixed Blade.

Photo Below: Two More Quality Concealment Belt Holsters: High Noon Holsters "Sky High" with Thumb Break, DeSantis Open Top "Speed Scabbard". Emerson Defensive Folding and Utility Kerambit.



The advantage of course is you save money as the same holster works with all of your Glock. The down side however, is that your muzzle and front sight are not protected. For this reason, I prefer a closed, molded muzzle, and each of my handguns has a holster that is specifically made for it.

Cant or Rake?

A vertical drop, or straight up and down carry is desirable if you tend to wear the rig on your strong side forward of your hip, at the strong side appendix position, or in the cross draw (i.e., non-dominant side) appendix position. Otherwise, if you wear your holster on your strong side at your hip, at your strong side midline, or slightly behind your hip, a forward angled cant, or rake, is a better choice. In this angle of carry, your handgun's muzzle is raked to your rear and its butt is raked or canted upward and forward. The strong side forward rake, enhances concealability.

Snap Straps Or Tunnel Loops?

One remarkable OWB concealment belt holster is Lou Alessi's "CQC/S". The "CQC/S" is a forward canted, reinforced open top, leather, high riding, pancake belt slide, with snap belt loops fore and aft. Its unique construction keeps the rig stable and close to the body. The snap belt loops make it easy to put the holster on and take it off, because you don't have to rethread

your belt! Many have copied Alessi's design, but no one has matched it in quality or functionality. It's a comfortable rig to wear all day, under a shirt, sweater, sweatshirt, or jacket.



Glock 23 in Alessi CQC-S – Front View. Note the well reinforced open top and the design of the fore and aft snap belt loops. They keep the holster and butt of the Glock tight in to the body. Photo courtesy of Craig Chadwick of Lightning Arms Sports (www.lightningarms.com)

Pocket Holsters

Pocket holsters are designed to carry small caliber pistols or small frame revolvers in a front or rear pants pocket or jacket pocket. In my experience, the most functional pocket holsters (1) are made for the front pocket, (2) do not create a tell tale bulge that prints G-U-N, (3) keep the gun positioned upright and in the same position in your pocket, (4) are comfortable all day long in your pocket, to the degree that you can forget the rig is there unless you need it, and (5) stay in your pocket when you draw your gun. It is more than embarrassing in an unfriendly social situation to draw your pocket gun sandwiched in its leather rig!

Seven cleverly crafted and unique products that fit the bill to the "P" in Pocket are: (1) the rough side out, soft leather, wallet style, flap pocket holster made by Jason Schafer of **JS Holsters**, (2) the ambidextrous "Pocket Grabber" made by **High Noon Holsters**, (3) the ambidextrous **DeSantis** "Style N38 Nemesis" "which is made of a viscous, sticky, synthetic material, that keeps this pocket holster in your pocket when you draw your pocket gun," (4) **Mitch Rosen's** "Pocket Softy" and "No. 18", (5) **Galco's** ambidextrous "Front Pocket Horsehide Holster", (6) **Greg Kramer's** hard molded, horsehide front pocket, wallet style pocket holsters, and (7) **Andrews Custom Leather's** pocket holsters. What's more, owning one or more of these pocket holsters is easy on your pocketbook!

I use my Mitch Rosen "No. 18", my JS Holsters wallet style pocket rig, and my High Noon Pocket Grabber to comfortably and securely carry my Kahr Arms PM9, MK9, and MK40 pocket rockets. For my .380 ACP Kel-Tec P3AT, .32 ACP Kel-Tec

P32, .380 ACP N.A.A. Guardian, my .32 ACP Seecamp, and my small Smith and Wesson J-frames, nothing beats my Galco horsehide picket holsters. I also favor my High Noon "Pocket Grabber" and Pocket Reload", my Mitch Rosen "Pocket Softy", and my DeSantis "Nemesis" for small caliber pocket handguns. Last, but far from least, for my .38 Special J-frame snubbies, Greg Kramer's horsehide, wallet style pocket holster, and Galco's horsehide, front pocket holster cannot be beat.

Andrews Custom Leather manufactures the most intelligently designed pocket holsters on the planet. I use them to comfortably carry my Kahr PM9, Kel-Tec P-11, or Glock 26/27 in my strong side pocket. Having a 9mm or .40 caliber pocket rocket in your pocket is easy and safe with a fitted sleeve from Andrews. These cowhide leather gun sleeves fill your pocket and keep your weapon upright for a smooth draw. Their shape and rough-out finish keep the rig in your pocket when you draw your gun, and the fitted sleeve breaks up the outline of the gun to prevent "printing".

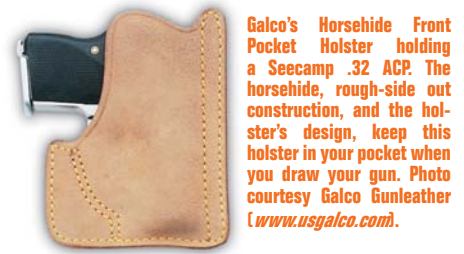


Andrews Custom Leather Right Handed Pocket Holsters (Outside sleeve (Top) and Inside Pocket (Bottom)) for Glock 26/27, Kel-Tec P-11 and Kahr PM9. Courtesy Andrews Custom Leather.

Arm Both Pockets and Practice With Both Hands

It's best to have right and left handed versions of the same pocket holster for each pocket gun. Thus, when you're carrying a more substantial caliber handgun on your strong side in an IWB or OWB holster, you can carry your pocket gun in your support side pocket. However, make sure that you practice drawing from your support side pocket!

With a doubly confirmed unloaded gun, alternate practice drawing from your strong hand and support hand pockets in a designated, safe, "dry practice" area at home. Also, practice deploying your pocket



Galco's Horsehide Front Pocket Holster holding a Seecamp .32 ACP. The horsehide, rough-side out construction, and the holster's design, keep this holster in your pocket when you draw your gun. Photo courtesy Galco Gunleather (www.usgalco.com).



DeSantis "Nemesis". Courtesy DeSantis.

gun from your pockets at the range. Become used to carrying a pocket sized handgun in your pocket. It's the best way to assure you'll be armed most of the time, and when you need to be.

Personal Defense Options and Solutions

In sum, the more options you have for concealed carry, the more solutions you'll come up with to satisfy your personal defense needs. Hopefully, this article has made you aware of the wide range of holster options available for concealed carry. Remember, "You have the rest of your life to solve your problems. How long you live depends on how well you do it." (famous quote by Clint Smith)..

In future articles, we shall cover additional concealed carry options – shoulder rigs, belly bands, waist packs, etc. – as well as gun belts.

SOURCES

Andrew's Custom Leather. 386-462-0576. www.andrewsleather.com
Blade-Tech Industries. 253-581-4347. www.blade-tech.com
D and D Gunleather. www.defensetactics.com/dandd.htm
DeSantis Gunhide. 516-354-8000. www.desantisholstec.com
Emerson Knives, Inc. 310-212-7455. www.emersonknives.com
First American Ordnance. 800-982-4009.
www.holster-connection.com
Galco Gunleather. 800-874-2526. www.usgalco.com
H.B.E. Leatherworks. 801-916-9248. www.hbeleatherworks.com
High Noon Holsters. 727-786-7528. www.highnoonholsters.com
JSHolsters. 434-239-7210. www.jsholsters.com
Kramer Handgun Leather. 800-510-2666. www.kramerleather.com
Krein Knives. 479-736-3444. www.kreinknives.com
Lightning Arms Sports. 503-643-8198. www.lightningarms.com
Mitch Rosen Extraordinary Gunleather. 603-647-2971.
www.mitchrosen.com
RM Holsters. 225-262-7446. www.rmholsters.com.

Dr. Bruce Eimer is a licensed clinical psychologist, hypnotherapist, and author in Pennsylvania and the owner of Alternative Behavior Associates www.hypnosisgroup.com. He is a Life Member of the NRA, an NRA Certified Firearms Instructor in Pistol, Home Firearms Safety, and Personal Protection, a Glock Certified Armorer, and the co-author of Essential Guide to Handguns: Firearm Instruction for Personal Defense and Protection www.looseleafaw.com. He can be reached by email at dr.bruce@hypnosisgroup.com. Bruce is a member of IALEFI, the International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors.

ARMED SENIOR CITIZEN

BY BRUCE N. EIMER, PH.D

“Don’t be a deer caught in the headlights of the Kenworth of life!”

—Clint Smith

Trust is not cheap. It can cost you your life! The elderly woman had just been telling her daughter the day before how much she trusted her cleaning lady, how nice she was. Nevertheless, her daughter advised her not to leave the cleaning lady with her keys. She did anyway. Two days later, when the elderly woman came home at around 9:30 PM from the movies, she was assaulted in her apartment by an intruder who had let himself in with those keys. The intruder beat her into unconsciousness. Now she was barely hanging on to life in the ICU.

The police picked up the woman’s assailant after questioning the cleaning lady. It turned out that he was the cleaning lady’s old boyfriend, and he admitted to the crimes. He had been recently released from prison, where he had served 3 years for a string of similar crimes all of which involved elderly victims.

**TRUST IS NOT CHEAP.
IT CAN COST YOU YOUR LIFE!**

Photography by Bruce N. Eimer, Ph.D



Be Suspicious

The morale of this story is, *don’t take anything or anyone for granted!* Be suspicious. Don’t give away your trust. Never give out your keys! You might end up in shock and awe, and that’s not a good thing! As the famed defensive firearms trainer, Clint Smith says, “Don’t be a deer caught in the headlights of the Kenworth of life!” That means, don’t be easily or overly impressed with people’s apparent good intentions. Most people have a dark side, and it could be a boyfriend that just got out of the pen.

Stay Aware And Stay Conscious

Trust no one. Apathy and unawareness can lead to unconsciousness—permanently! If you look vulnerable due to physical disability or limitations as a result of aging or physical illness, expect people to try to take advantage of you. But, if you are trained to safely use and carry a firearm, and you are legally permitted to carry concealed in your jurisdiction, capitalize on the important variable of the “surprise factor”.

For example, an acquaintance who is in her sixties and challenged by lifelong orthopedic problems associated with childhood polio, surprised me the other day when she shared that she was a shooter and a concealed carry weapons permit holder. Her outward appearance is of an alert, situationally aware, confident, mature woman, with a notable postural list and limp, who walks with a cane. I would have never guessed



Karambit in pocket.

she packs heat. In all likelihood, neither would a predatory criminal, and that spells S-U-R-V-I-V-A-L for my acquaintance, and a real bad day for anyone who would attack her!

Never Open Your Door Wide To Strangers!

This means the door to your home and your personal security. Mother was right all along. Call the police if you see anything suspicious, and lock your door as soon as you enter your home and your car. Don't walk through isolated parking lots unaccompanied or unarmed!

Always Carry A Flashlight

Always carry a flashlight when you are out as well as when you are at home. It will come in handy. When you go to open your car door, first check under and in your car. Before you enter your home, have your flashlight ready. When you answer your door, use your peep hole to see who is ringing or knocking. Have a flashlight ready to shine into the eyes of a potential miscreant if you choose to open your door. A bright light will temporarily blind an unwelcome caller and give you time to slam the door shut. If he has his foot in the door, slam the light into his noggin!

Go Armed

Carry a gun, knife and flashlight on you as much of the time as you can. It's a war zone out there! This also means having your gun in an instantly accessible place in your home should you need it. Think of it as a security blanket which means you still must establish good cover. .

Develop safe gun handling and good marksmanship skills so that they are reflexive if you should ever need to use them for real. So, go to the range regularly and practice, practice, practice your shooting skills. The lead won't kill you, but if you are unprepared, a predator might!

Vary Your Routines

Keep your shades drawn at night. Don't let uninvited eyes in on your party. Vary your daily routines. As we get older, we tend to become more set in our ways. This is not good. It makes us too complacent. By varying our routines, we counter complacency and add stimulation to our lives. Furthermore, predators and stalkers don't feel comfortable if they have to track an erratic target. They like to prey on nice and predictable victims. So, don't become predictable and don't become a victim!

Seniors are typically thought of as being predictable because they typically are! Well, you can get your Social Security Check by mail. Just don't check your mail at the same time every day! Don't go

shopping on the same day and same hour of the day each week. Shop on different days and preferably at more than one market.

Be Deceptive and Cunning

It helped thousands survive in Europe during World War II. It will help you survive today as well. Don't fall for the predator's deception. Say no to overpersuasive attempts to get your attention and compliance. For example, when approached by people who persist in trying to persuade you to help them, go for their sales pitch, let them in your house so they can use the telephone, check your gas meter, etc., stand firm and say "no go away or I'll call the police."

Don't be afraid of insulting people or being rude. Your life is worth more than that. It's better to be thought of as rude than to be found dead. I want you to enjoy your early retirement. Don't let some dirt bag retire you!



Karambit in second stage of draw.

If you are attacked by a predator, fight aggressively in every way with great viciousness. Your attacker has no heart--not if he would prey on you. Thus, he deserves no quarter.

Convince yourself beforehand that if you are attacked you will win the fight. Convince yourself that *No dirt bag is ever going to take your life before your time.*

Disparity of Force

Capitalize on the obvious disparity of force between you and your attacker. That means your attacker will not expect you to fight back. That gives you the advantageous element of surprise. Additionally, if you have to shoot an attacker to stop him from killing you, or causing you grievous bodily harm, a jury of your peers will understand that were it "but for" your gun, you would have been food.

If attacked fight back viciously and but expect to get hurt, maybe badly—but



Emerson Pocket Karambit on table.

fight and prevail. It's a survival issue. Tell yourself, no matter what, you will survive. Getting hurt is better than the alternative especially if you launch a valiant counter-offensive.

This is not to say, that you shouldn't escape or run away if you can, because you should. But if you can't, do what you have to, to survive.

Carry a knife and a gun

At least you can use the knife if for nothing else than for cutting fruit! A sharp blade (either a one-handed opening folder or a fixed blade) is the ultimate close quarter fighting tool. In a close-up, sudden attack, you may not have a chance if caught unaware (you shouldn't be in the first place, but . . .) to draw your gun.

Ernest Emerson's folding Karambit is a great knife to carry in your pocket. The pocket clip allows you to carry it clipped in your pocket at the ready. With its patented wave opening feature, you can draw the knife from your pocket in one swift motion, and as the knife opens, have it in your hand ready for deployment in a reverse fighting grip. The pocket clip can be switched to either side of the handle for left or right handed pocket carry.

Cheat to Win!

You are elderly. Bluff if you have to. Fake a heart attack. It will momentarily disorient your attacker, and buy you time. How you carry yourself may determine whether a predator picks you or the next person. Remember that if you look like food you will be eaten. Get tough. Don't feel sorry for strangers. Remember: You are on your own out there. So watch your 360 and stay safe!

Sources

Emerson Knives, Inc. 310-212-7455. www.emersonknives.com.

Dr. Bruce Eimer is a licensed clinical psychologist, hypno-therapist, and author in Pennsylvania and the owner of Alternative Behavior Associates www.hypnosigroup.com. He is a Life Member of the NRA, an NRA Certified Firearms Instructor in Pistol, Home Firearms Safety, and Personal Protection, a Glock Certified Armorer, and the co-author of Essential Guide to Handguns: Firearm Instruction for Personal Defense and Protection www.looseleaflaw.com. He can be reached by email at dbcruce@hypnosigroup.com. Bruce is a member of IALEFI, the International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors.