

**ADVANCED  
TACTICS**

**SAFE  
ROOM**



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Thanks for having our back!

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## From The Editor

The safe room.

If your home is your castle, your safe room is the last line of home defense.

It's the place you retreat to when you have no other options.

It's the place from which you stage your last ditch effort to preserve your family from harm.

Or it's your first line of defense, where your loved ones retreat when things get dangerous.



Which is it? Or is it both? And how do you prepare a safe room anyway?

That's what this report was written to teach you. We reached out to one of our most esteemed subject matter experts, Massad Ayoob, who provided us with the information you find here.

The thing about a safe room is that, while it can save your life and the lives of your family, a safe room that is just a plan on a drawing board or an idea in your head can't do anything for you in a real-life emergency.

You've got to take steps to plan and execute a safe room NOW, before you need it.

It's my hope that this report will get you started.

As always, train hard, stay safe, and prepare now.

*Prepare. Train. Survive.*

Handwritten signature of Jeff Anderson in blue ink.

Jeff Anderson

## About The Expert

This report was prepared with the input of Massad Ayoob. Massad has been handgun editor of GUNS magazine and law enforcement editor of AMERICAN HANDGUNNER since the 1970s, and has published thousands of articles in gun magazines, martial arts publications, and law enforcement journals. He is the author of more than a dozen books on firearms, self-defense, and related topics, including "In the Gravest Extreme," widely considered to be the authoritative text on the topic of the use of lethal force.



The winner of the Outstanding American Handgunner of the Year Award in 1998, Massad has won several state and regional handgun shooting championships. Ayoob is one of approximately ten Five Gun Masters among the 10,000-member International Defensive Pistol Association, and was the first to earn that title.

Massad served 19 years as chair of the Firearms Committee of the American Society of Law Enforcement Trainers, and several years as a member of the Advisory Board of the International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association. In addition to teaching for those groups, he has also taught for the International Association of Law Enforcement Firearms Instructors and the International Homicide Investigators seminars.

Mas has received judicial recognition as an expert witness for the courts in weapons and shooting cases since 1979, and has been a fully sworn and empowered, part time police officer for 36 years. Ayoob founded the Lethal Force Institute in 1981 and served as its director until 2009, and now trains through Massad Ayoob Group. He has appeared on CLE-TV delivering continuing legal education for attorneys, through the American Law Institute and American Bar Association, and has been retained to train attorneys to handle deadly force cases through the Armed Citizens Legal Defense Network. Ayoob served for two years as co-vice chair of the Forensic Evidence Committee of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. He also appears in each episode of Personal Defense TV (Sportsman's Channel). To learn more about Massad and his training, visit him online at...

[www.MassadAyoobGroup.com](http://www.MassadAyoobGroup.com)

[www.WarriorLife.com](http://www.WarriorLife.com)



## **What Is A Safe Room? And How Does It Help?**

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*The safe room is your last line of home defense.*

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Understand from the outset that the safe room is geared, basically, for a home invasion.

The family is at home, there is reason to believe security has been breached, you hear someone kicking down the door... something like that.

The rationale of the safe room is that everyone gathers in that one spot.

*It is your fall-back area, your rally point, the of last-ditch, last-chance security inside the “castle” that is your home.*

The safe room does not have to be like in the Jodie Foster movie — a bunker or a steel-walled vault.

Typically it will be the master bedroom, but that’s negotiable.

It's going to depend a lot on how the house is laid out

Is your house a one-story home, or the tactically much more defensible two-story home?

You want to basically ensconce in that room...

- with survival and medical supplies,
- with communications,
- with cover,
- with all your family there, and,
- if you have made that choice, with a substantial firearm that you're skilled in using.

You want one member of the family to get on the phone with 911, explain the situation, describe you, and stay on the line.

As soon as you are on with the 911 operator, you want to give your address and repeat it.

The dedicated 911 with the address from the hard line call that comes up on the dispatcher's computer screen does not always work, and does not exist in every single rural community.

The other possibility is you'll do what you've planned to do, and if you've had to grab a cell phone, perhaps

the intruders have already cut the phone lines.

This has been known to happen.

No cell phone will give the location to police dispatch.

So you give the address.

You want to make the statement, "There is an intruder in my home."

**NEVER say**, "I want to report a burglary," particularly in a high-crime, high-activity area.

That's seen as an after-the-fact thing and it's actually a pretty low priority call.

The phrases *home intruder* or *home invader*, by contrast, will elevate the blood pressure of every police officer in a 30 mile area, and they are going to race each other to be the first ones to get there.

Meanwhile, you and anyone else in the house should retreat to that safe room.

The rationale of everyone withdrawing into one room is that it gives you a much more solid position in terms of defensive tactics.

If you've gone looking for the bad guy and you find him, as you duck away from him when his gun comes up, he moves, and you track him,

tunnel vision kicks in for at about two-thirds of people involved in gunfights.

You'll be focused on him, and it will be virtually impossible for you to maintain a visual mental track of what's behind him as you move and he moves.

There are damn few homes in the United States that have bulletproof walls.

We don't want the bullets going through the walls, and we especially

don't want them traveling toward family members.

By ensconcing all of our people in one room, we know that whoever we face is the intruder, and we know that we've already plotted out the position we're going to be in when we challenge him as he approaches that safe room.

This gives us a much safer field of fire and much safer situation for the good guys.





## **Location Considerations For Your Safe Room**

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*There are multiple considerations when laying out your safe room.*

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The placement of your safe room in your home is critical in your planning.

- The safe room should be a room that everyone in the family can reach quickly.
- The room should not be locked, at least not regularly.
- The room should be centrally located.

- There should be only one door leading in and out of the room.
- The room should have a land line telephone, if possible, although these can and have been cut by home invaders.
- The room should include a redundant cell phone and charger to use for calling 911.
- Preferably there will be only one door that leads in and out of the room.

When considering locations for your safe room, consider who lives in your home.

- Do you live alone?
- Do you have a large family with children in multiple bedrooms?

All your dependents have to be able to come together in the safe room if an invasion occurs.

*You want to factor in the slowest, weakest, and most incapable members of your household.*

These could be children, elderly grandparents, or dependents with reduced mental or physical capacities.

I don't want to be insensitive, but every family has a "weakest link," and that has to be considered in your safe room's location.

*A safe room should also be positioned at an area that is easy to defend.*

For example hallways are easy to defend, because you can set a trap for an intruder in a hallway.

Another example could even be a basement, with a set of stairs that are easy to cover and provide a made-to-order "fatal funnel" (we'll get to that).

## **Second-Story Safe Rooms Are Safest**

One of the best positions, in fact, is at the top of a set of stairs in a two story home.

Unless you've got a house on a hillside or you leave ladders laying around outside, you can expect that an intrusion is going to start on the first floor of a two-story house.

It's common sense and human nature that we as people choose the path that offers the least resistance.

Heck, that's why home invaders are criminals; they took an easy path in life requires violence — not an

education, a work ethic, or even rudimentary intelligence.

The ground floor is simply much more accessible to the intruder.

No one is going to try and scale your home to go through a window in most situations.

Many home invasions and break-ins are motivated by financial gain.

The idea is that the invaders are looking for something that can be stolen and sold, or just straight cash and credit cards.

Most criminals understand that the more expensive goods are kept on the ground floor.

These are things like televisions, video game consoles, and other easy-to-sell items.

With all that in mind, logically, the criminal is going to begin his break-in on the first floor.

If certain factors are met, a second-story safe room gives the homeowner a tactical advantage.

For this to work...

- Everyone must sleep on the top floor. A person sleeping on the ground floor would have to be retrieved before they could be considered

safe, and would be a factor you can't account for in a gunfight.

- When you take that position at the top of the stairs, you'll want to have everyone safely behind you. The alpha protector must immediately control the stairs.
- The defender at the top of the stairs must NOT go down to meet the invader, but rather hold his ground behind some cover and concealment until the police arrive.

At the top of the stairs, you'll have high ground.

Any intruder will have to go through you to get to your family.

Firing from the top floor into the bottom level also reduces the risk of rounds flying out of your house and into the neighbors' yards and homes.

A downward angle of fire means the rounds will likely lodge in the floor or the ground outside.

## **Single-Level Home Options**

If you don't live in a two-story home, you still have plenty of options.

Don't feel discouraged if you don't have a set of stairs from which to defend.

You will, however, need to use more caution with your angles of fire, because now you're shooting parallel to the ground, so you'll need to be sure of your backstop.

In a single story home you need to place yourself in a position that offers plenty of cover.

*That cover must be able to absorb bullets* (a topic we'll get to soon).

In general, you want to choose a room that can be used in the most advantageous way possible.

To do that, you'll need to consider your escape path, choke points and fatal funnels, and where the best cover can be had (or arranged) in your home.

## **Have An Escape Path: Is The Safe Room A Trap?**

One objection to the safe room is that it puts you in a location from which there is only one exit, typically.

You might think that using a safe room traps you and removes your ability to flee if things get worse.

To use a safe room properly, however, you do not simply want to be hiding in the room behind locked doors.

You want whoever is the alpha protector, the one skilled with a weapon, to be in the doorway to cover it in such a way that they can scan the approach to the safe room (the hallway, typically) and interdict an attacker before that attacker can reach the safe room itself.

That's the ideal approach.

There was a case a few months ago of a young teenage girl who was home alone, called her mother desperately and said, "There's a man who's broken into the house. I'm hiding in the bedroom."

She had hidden in her mom's bedroom.

The mother said, "Grab the Glock 40 and lock yourself in the closet."

So she did so, and when the guy tried to get through the closet door, she shot him through the door and put a bullet through his chest.

Wounded, he fled, and he was subsequently arrested and charged.

So rather than safe room as sort of spider hole, a place to entomb yourself and hope they don't find

you, you are instead using it to protect your loved ones while giving you a tactically superior position from which to fight.

Let's say you're a young couple with school age kids, and let's say you're still sexually active, and as a result you've put the kids' bedrooms deliberately across the house from yours.

In that situation, to get together where you're all in one place and there won't be a crossfire, the best plan might be for you and your significant other to run from your bedroom to theirs and use theirs as the safe room.

If you have an infant in the nursery, if you have a 90-year-old bedridden grandmother, if they're not going to be able to get to the safe room elsewhere in the house, then perhaps *their* room should be the safe room.

You and any other adult defenders in the home, preferably armed, move to that location and then establish your line of defense where you can protect the home's dependents.

You're not just holing up in there and hoping.

Essentially, you shouldn't leave the safe room until the police have arrived.

When you hear entry being made, if you are still on the line with the 911 operator, you simply ask the dispatcher, "There's someone at the front door. Is that your officers?"

If they tell you yes it is, you put down the pistol, or holster it if you have a holster on.

You do NOT want to be standing there with a gun in your hand when the police arrive, or they might mistakenly shoot you.

Also, keep in mind that first-responding officers might not be in uniform.

A home invasion is an extremely high-priority call.

Every cop within earshot of the broadcast is going to be heading there.

That may include a police officer, or even an off-duty cop, who has a scanner in his vehicle.

*Once you have your family locked down in the safe room, and you are in position to defend the safe room, you don't want to leave.*

You should stay put until the police arrive.

Another good idea is to have a set of keys in your safe room, including a

house key, a spare vehicle key, and potentially a gun safe key.

Attach each one of these keys to a separate key ring with a glow stick.

Put them in an easy-to-find location in the safe room.

Once in the safe room, you should go ahead and break the glow stick if it's night and just in case the power is switched off.

The extra house key can be critical when the police arrive.

Tell the dispatcher, "I'm throwing a glow stick attached to my house key onto the lawn on the West side of the house."

Cops are used to working toward compass points.

That will greatly expedite the process of officers entering the home.

This also makes it safer for the police to enter and spares your home from shoulders and kicks to batter down the doors or break in the windows.

Lines of communication are critical during this entire situation.

This is why it is critical to maintain communication with any forward attacker, anyone who may be trapping someone in a choke point.

Staying on the line with the dispatcher also means that he or she can also verify that the people entering the home are in fact the police and not MORE home invaders who have come to help the ones already in the house.

***There may come a time, though, when you must abandon the safe room.***

These events are few and far between, and you should only leave your safe room when lives are at risk by staying there.

For example if a fire starts, you don't want to stay in your safe room hoping the fire department makes it there.

***You should flee if there is a gas leak, a fire, any situation that would normally have you abandoning your home.***

This is why you have an extra vehicle key with the house key.

Your escape plan needs to be done with utmost caution.

You of course want to remain armed, and the optimum scenario will have one adult leading the family and one adult following up the rear.

This ensures the way is clear and no one gets left behind.

In a situation where there is only one adult and multiple dependents, you want to remain constant surveillance for an enemy.

The best tactic to ensure that no one is left behind is running a rope from the leader to each of the dependents.

If they are quite young, tie the rope around their wrists.

Avoid walking through the house.

Instead, focus on escaping through the nearest window.

From there you either want to escape to a vehicle and hit the road, or simply keep moving through yards or over your property to safety.

Remember, move quickly, keep accountability, and have your gun up.

## **Choke Points And Fatal Funnels**

Last year, out in the Midwest, a young single mom was at home when two men kicked down the door.

She grabbed a gun and she grabbed her baby.

She put herself in the living room, hiding behind a sofa, that gave her a field of fire toward the door.

She leveled her shotgun at that door.

When the guys started kicking, she warned them she was going to shoot.

As they came in, armed, she opened fire, killing one. The other fled.

Her tactics were very successful, and she was not charged criminally or sued civilly.

It was a classified justifiable homicide under defense of self and family.

She showed a brilliant use of “choke points” in the defense of her home.

When you set up a safe room, that’s what you’re doing.

You’re setting up a choke point, a “fatal funnel.”

The military terminology would involve “defilade” and “enfilade.”

*Defilade* is essentially the military term for cover.

You have something between you and the opponent that hopefully can stop the projectiles from his weapon.

Ideally, if you're already in the safe room when he enters, you also have true concealment.

You know where he has to come, but he does not know where you are.

If you've picked a spot where he has no cover, essentially he is *enfiladed*.

He is in that choke point, that fatal funnel, and now he has already lost the engagement.

If he's on the stairwell, if he's in the hall with no door to duck through, if he's already through the door and anything he could hide behind is already behind him, he can't hide from you.

The action/reaction paradigm now favors you.

If you have to shoot, you have an excellent chance of surviving and of keeping your family safe.

Our military knows only too well how dangerous it is when, as they are clearing houses or rooms, an enemy armed and holding a fatal funnel or choke point can be.

That strategic position destroys the advantage our trained military personnel might have, and it also destroys the advantage of their superior numbers.

This is perfectly illustrated by the story of the young lady defending her home from a home invader.

Her tactics were very successful, and she was not charged criminally or sued civilly.

The doorway acted as a choke point, funneling the armed attackers in one at a time, allowing her to deal with them in turn.

Remember, though: *A choke point is only a choke point if someone is there to defend it.*

Perhaps the most famous use of a choke point was at Thermopylae, where a small force of Greeks, including the famed 300 Spartans, held off a massive Persian army for three days.

They were able to hold that pass because of the strategically chosen choke point, which destroyed the Persians' numerical advantage.

When you set up a safe room, that's what you're doing.

You're setting up a choke point, a "fatal funnel."

*Your goal is isolate the movement of a home intruder and keep them in your designated kill zone.*



A choke point can be used as an ambush, or simply a method to avoid getting outnumbered.

You can easily hold a larger force away by yourself when using a choke point.

A fatal funnel is similar to a choke point, incidentally.

Typically the terms can be used interchangeably, with the term *fatal funnel* being used to describe any doorway.

A fatal funnel can also describe a hallway and a set of stairs, for example.

As we've already discussed, a set of stairs can be one of the best choke points, or fatal funnels, available to you.

Both act as funnels where their travelers can only retreat backwards or advance forwards.

You can use both fatal funnels and choke points to your advantage, but you'd be wise to use them in coordination with proper cover and concealment.

## **Backstops And Overpenetration: Absorbing Bullets In Your Home**

When it comes to locating your safe room with regard to cover and concealment, we all have to look at the architecture we have as well as who is sleeping where.

This is essentially scoping out the battleground and determining beforehand where the ideal place is to be with a gun when an intruder makes his presence known.

Pay attention to where the natural points of cover are, and where in your home you can expect bullets to stay put rather than passing on through.

- Heavy bookshelves full of books are a good "bullet absorber."
- So are cast-iron fireplaces and major kitchen appliances like freezers and ovens.

Sadly, though, you just don't find much natural cover in most American homes.

That's why strategically placing your bookshelves is so important.

A .45 auto bullet, 230 grain, that would go through as much as 30 inches of muscle tissue-simulating ballistic gelatin, will generally stop after about six inches of hard-backed book material.

By themselves, bullets will travel through most interior walls of a home and through many exterior walls.

Your best option is to anticipate where the intrusion is most likely to be.

Where are YOU likely to be when this happens?

Typically these things occur in the deep-sleep hours.

*That means the single most likely place for you to be is in your bed when a home invasion occurs.*

Consider your plans in that context.

Ask yourself,

1. Where can I move from here that gives me the best command of an area where the intruder would have to come?
2. Where would I be in the best position to protect my kids and their bedrooms?

3. If the bedrooms are spread out, it's going to be more difficult to apply the safe room concept.

You may have to take the greatest risk of moving forward to an interdiction where those you love are behind you.

That puts them out of danger, absolutely, of your gunfire if you have to engage.

This goes hand and hand with the idea of reconnaissance.

When planning a defense, the military is not just trying to hold ground; they are trying to make their enemies move in a specific manner.

This is called *funneling*, and it makes your enemy move in a specific manner to a specific location.

This location is the most advantageous for the defending troops to engage.

Keeping this in mind, you want to plan the same way.

The most advantageous position is still using a choke point or fatal funnel, but also in a location where you can follow the four gun safety rules.

## Target Angles And Bullet Strategy

Remember one of those rules is to know your target and what lies beyond it.

**If you planning to engage someone in a hallway, then you want something behind them that can absorb bullets.**

**You also want to position yourself to meet them in a way that doesn't endanger other members of your family.**

What I mean is, you don't want to be standing directly in front of the room that your family is isolated in.

You shouldn't give much credence to the accuracy of criminals, and they could easily just fire round after round in your general direction.

You may have cover in front of you to stop his rounds, but do you have cover behind you to stop strays?

**Even so, I advise moving your safe room out of any line of fire, regardless of the cover provided.**

All it takes is one round to slip through for someone to be hurt or killed.

When it comes to engaging an intruder if all that's behind them is air and opportunity, you need to change your position or fix the situation.

## You Are Responsible For Every Round You Fire

Remember that cover stops bullets, while concealment stops ONLY observation.

A quick YouTube search will reveal dozens of videos of people shooting everyday items you'd find in your home.

While these tests are often lighthearted and for fun, they do show without a doubt what a bullet can do inside your home.

Homes these days are built for affordability and efficiency, and very few people are concerned with stopping bullets inside them.

You are responsible for every round you fire — and the damage every round creates.

So if you are armed with a shotgun, a rifle, or a .45, you have to prepare for what your rounds can do and what an intruder's can do.

The good news is that you definitely can anticipate and prepare for what your weapon can do.

Just because you're behind concealment doesn't mean you're behind cover.

Having cover is simple.

You have something between you and the opponent that hopefully can stop the projectiles from his weapon.

Different weapons penetrate differently.

Handguns tend to be poor penetrators in most cases, with rifles and shotguns being more efficient at barrier penetration.

Other factors include ammo type.

Hollow point, frangible ammunition, and bird shot all tend to be poor at penetrating cover.

You should prepare your cover for the worst case scenario, and understand that your cover can only effectively take so many rounds before it degrades.

Ideally, if you're already in the safe room or behind your cover when the intruder enters, you also have true concealment.

You know which way an intruder has to come to get to you, you know the ways he has to move, and you know the cover he has available.

Unfortunately for him, he does not know where you are.

Remember that if you've picked a spot where he has no cover, essentially he is *enfiladed*.

Once he's in enfilade you can cut him off and slow his momentum.



## **A Second Safe Room? A Backup For Your Fallback**

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*Having a safe room is a good idea. Having a SECOND one is even better.*

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You've heard the old meme:

"Yo, Dawg, we heard you like safe rooms, so we put a safe room in your safe room so you can be safe while you're being safe."

While you could take this to the absurd extreme, the fact is, having a second safe room makes good sense.

Most people will choose a safe room close to their bedroom to prepare for a nighttime home invasion.

*But most home invasions actually happen during the day* — either because a burglar was "hoping" no one was home but then finds they're there, or the family comes home unexpectedly and now it's a dangerous scenario in which they debate whether to MURDER you so they don't go (or go BACK) to prison.

*No witnesses!*

The other reason this could happen is that home invaders who get a thrill out of capturing, intimidating, beating, (even raping and torturing!) families are actually HOPING that you're home!

*And daytime is an opportune time to strike if they've done their homework and know when you and/or your family members are home.*

That's just what happened to a defenseless mother in Millburn, NJ.

This monstrous home invader, who is a HUGE man, kicks his way into a woman's house while her husband isn't home.

With her small child watching, the invader beats her, savagely and without mercy, even though she's offering no resistance.

The whole thing was caught on a nanny cam set up in the living room and, I have to tell you, it's hard to watch.

But it underscores the idea that your "nighttime safe room plan" might be completely useless if the invasion happens when you're nowhere near your bedroom.

You may NOT be able to get to your primary safe room because it's upstairs... and your invaders got the drop on you on the ground floor.

It could also be a scenario where there are multiple gang members in your home...

...the exits are blocked...

...and getting to your safe room means trying to get by one or more of them.

Or you could simply be in a part of your home, when attacked, that gives you no easy escape path to your primary safe room

In any case, **it doesn't hurt to have a backup plan for an alternative safe room you may be able to get into and barricade yourself to stay safe.**

It doesn't necessarily have to have all the same supplies as your primary location (you may not want

to buy an extra gun just to stash there.)

It does have to be somewhere that you, and any member of your family, can reach quickly and seal themselves off inside.

Keep in mind that you don't want it to be right next to your primary safe room, because if you could get there, you WOULD.

Choose an alternate location somewhere else in the house, such as on the ground floor if your primary safe room is upstairs.

Fortify it using the same guidelines we provide in this report.

If you can afford to make a complete duplicate, then do so.

Otherwise, do as much as you can and as much as is practical in the secondary space.

*Just remember: the secondary safe room should NOT be near the primary safe room, but should also be easily accessible to the whole family.*

That's the whole point of having it.



## **Delaying Tactics**

### **Your Home Security Plan From Inside And Out**

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*Your safe room should not be your only line of defense.*

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Home defense should be thought of as a layered concept.

Your defense shouldn't start at the safe room.

It should END at the safe room.

Since the safe room is where your family is hidden, it makes little sense

to depend on only that one defensive area.

You start at the safe room and you build outwards, wrapping your defense around the safe room.

Throughout this guide, we've already talked about how you should be armed and positioned to intercept



any intruders moving towards your safe room.

You being armed, ready, and waiting at a choke point or fatal funnel is just another layer of the defense.

However, your defense doesn't end *there*, either.

*You want to consider your entire home as a defensive position and layer your defenses outward as much as possible.*

## **The Front Door**

Let's start with the front door of your home, the main entryway.

First and foremost you may just want to go ahead and replace it with a good, strong wooden door.

There are plenty of security doors with steel plates in the middle as well.

When combined with a solid set of locks, it's hard to beat.

Always go with a solid deadbolt, a nice heavy beast that is hard to kick and bend.

People tell you never to have a spring bolt lock by itself.

You need a deadbolt, pure and simple.

A spring bolt lock is the one that locks automatically and is equipped nearly universally on door handles

It's got the little spring loaded wedge shaped tongue on it that goes into the mortise when you close the door.

The problem with these as a primary lock is they're very easy to *loid*.

*Loiding* means you take a piece of plastic like a driver's license, shimmy it through the door, and it pushes that little spring loaded wedge out of the way and allows very quick entry by the intruder.

That's why none of us in the business would recommend you use that as a primary lock to prevent intrusion.

The deadbolt, by contrast, requires a physical turn from the inside to close it, but once it's closed it takes a chisel or heavy tools to break through it.

It's a good idea to have both a spring bolt and a dead bolt.

They work well in unison and as a team are hard to beat.

The reason I say that is if you or a loved one is being chased from the outside into your home, you'll have

to get the door locked and closed quickly.

Chasing someone inside a home is a tactic used by home invaders who ambush people as they open their doors.

If you barely have time to slam the door in the intruder's face, the spring bolt will hold it against them long enough for them to turn the deadbolt.

If a solid wood security door costs too much, you can choose a solid steel security door with a good deadbolt.

This storm door can cost under a hundred dollars and looks similar to a screen door (but it's made of steel).

This is just another layer between you and an invader.

## Alarms

On the other side of the door you can install a simple door alarm.

These micro alarms are available in every big box store in the country and cost about 4 bucks apiece.

They can emit a 120 db worth of earsplitting siren, alerting you and your family that something is wrong.

These are very simple.

One end goes to the door, the other on the wall, and when they are separated, it goes off.

This isn't the same as a monitored system, but the whole point is to scare the invader with an unexpected, loud noise that makes him think he'll be discovered.

These alarms can be equipped to windows, too.

You can buy several of them at a price almost anyone can afford.

Every barrier you can put in place to deter an intruder is a positive.

## Other Security Measures

Home defense isn't just the gun or just the alarm.

It's a holistic system, meaning all the parts work together.

You need good solid doors, good solid windows, and locks on both.

Windows can be secured in a number of ways, but most people don't want to install bars.

There are some alternatives.

One is a security company like 3M, which makes a **film that holds a window pane together** if someone tries to shatter it.

It's not impenetrable, but it provides you with a few extra minutes of reaction time, which is time in which to get armed and ready.

**Door chains** have a place, too.

They keep a layer of protection in place if you open the door to an external threat by mistake.

They may seem flimsy, but they do buy time, and a few extra seconds matter.

A **door limiter**, the solid bar you find in hotel rooms, is even stronger and just as effective.

A **peephole** is also good because it lets you look out the door without actually opening it.

Peepholes, however, can be easily defeated with a simple thumb over the lens.

This is where we can turn to high-tech monitoring systems.

A **closed-circuit TV or webcam** is an excellent choice.

The cost of these has really come down in recent years.

Don't forget the power of light in low-light situations, either.

A few lights with motion-activated sensors can really improve your security perimeter, and for not much money.

Remember, home invaders are vermin.

Much like roaches, they hate the light.

There are some lower tech options, too.

For example, you could plant a **small prickly plant or other bush** under your windows to deter people from getting close or looking/climbing in.

It should be tall enough to touch the window sill, the spikier the better.

You want to make the potential home invader as uncomfortable as possible as they try to break in.

Make them work for it.



## **Fortifying Your Safe Room Against A Home Invasion**

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*Having a safe room is not enough. It must be fortified.*

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When choosing your safe room, you want something pretty solid, with multiple points of access and egress if possible.

That means the bathroom generally is not ideal.

Bathrooms are usually very small, and the door is the only cover you have.

The bathtub, while it may be pretty solid, is not situated at a height where you can get behind it and

have it stop bullets from a man who is standing.

Also, many modern bathtubs are not strong enough to withstand bullets.

Even if they can't kick your door down, a shooter can just shoot through the door, and there would be very little room for you to get out of the way.

Typical bathrooms in modern homes will have windows up high for privacy, which means if you have to get a kid out that window, or you need to escape because you perceive yourself about to lose the fight, it's going to be that much harder to get out of there.

Not only that, but a lot of these windows are quite small — far too small for adults to fit through.

There's not much you can put in a bathroom that will stop bullets.

There simply isn't the room to install any form of bulletproof material.

Can you imagine installing a heavy duty book shelf in your bathroom?

## **Bookshelves**

Your master bedroom, or a kid's bedroom, probably has more room for something that can soak up bullets.

If each kid's bedroom has a heavy bookshelf full of books, and so does the master bedroom, that gives you a chance.

The best part of using bookcases is that they appear completely normal in any household.

They aren't suspicious and simply make you and your family look well read.

You don't need a massive, 6-foot or bigger book shelf, either.

A waist-high bookshelf, behind which you can crouch, is just as effective.

Don't get wrapped up trying to turn your home into Sherlock Holmes' study.

If you put a bookshelf right outside the door of the master bedroom, that gives you room to take a step out and remain safe.

A small bookcase at the top of a set of stairs is another option for two-story homes.

When you do that, you've got something pretty bulletproof between you and any gunfire that might come your way.

One of your bulletproof bookcases should be set at whatever choke point and fatal funnel your are

planning to use to isolate and control an intruder.

## **Backstops**

At the end of this fatal funnel it would be wise to have something placed against the wall that can be used to absorb any missed shots.

This cover allows you to scan the hallway, the living area, or the doorway in front of you.

This cover can soak bullets up and provide you a distinct advantage when it comes to a gunfight.

An attacker armed with a melee weapon like a knife or bat can cover 21 feet in about a second and a half.

This cover also gives you a much better buffer zone and *reactionary gap* before the opponent is right on top of you.

It puts something between you and them to prevent their melee attack.

## **Gun Safes**

Once you have cover placed inside your safe room, and in your engagement zone, you can focus on improving the actual room.

When locating a safe room there is, however, no hard and fast rule,

because American architecture offers an infinite number of possible layouts.

As far as the size of the room, you want to be able to fit your entire family into a single room, and then you need to be able to get low and stay behind cover.

You also want the room big enough to get something pretty solid in the room, something people can duck behind.

If the master bedroom is big enough, put your gun safe in that bedroom rather than in the basement.

If your collection is rather large, keep at least your self defense weapons in your safe in your room.

Your hunting and sporting weapons can go in another safe somewhere else if they won't all fit.

A safe is a good choice because it's big, it's heavy, it's steel, and it's large enough for you (or you and your wife) to crouch behind or even stand behind.

The added benefits of having multiple guns and ammo staged there should be obvious, of course.

**Make sure the responsible people in your home know how to open the safe and access the firearms.**

- If this is a combination safe, everyone needs to know the combination, and how to use the actual dial or electronic lock.
- If this is a key-based safe, all responsible people should have access to a key for the safe.
- If this is a biometric safe, then every responsible person needs to have their fingerprints saved in the system, and they need to know how the safe is used.

Now, when it comes to securing the safe room, if you can afford it, a metal security door with good solid locks is an excellent idea.

This can be even more expensive if you have a door frame that isn't strong enough to support a heavy metal door.

Others may also have a hard time talking their spouse into installing a heavy metal door in their bedroom.

Alternatives include an adjustable door security bar.

This bar wraps partially around the door knob and extends to the floor.

The bottom portion braces the bar against the door and keeps it closed.

You've probably seen someone use a chair to keep a door closed on television.

*This is the exact same idea.*

The bar extends and becomes much smaller to be stored with ease.

These bars became prominent in New York during the mid eighties when crime was high and people couldn't afford anything fancier.

They proved effective, though, and are still popular.

Another option that can be used in conjunction with this security bar is a simple doorstop.

*A good, solid rubber or wood doorstop can be kicked under a door and provides another layer of security.*

**Focus on making sure you have a good, strong door with a deadbolt.**

Extra locks are easy to install, affordable, and don't draw much attention.

Frankly, throughout the house, a good solid door with a good solid lock makes sense for every member of the family.

Even the bathroom door can benefit from a solid lock.

A home invasion could happen when you or one of your family members are at your most vulnerable.

Obviously, your specific needs will determine whether that is a possibility.

If you have a child who has behavioral problems, for example, you may not want to give that child the ability to lock himself away from you.

Or you may have an elderly person with medical conditions who requires attention, like dementia or Alzheimer's syndrome.

So debate the merits of each lock accordingly.

## **Dealing With Windows**

Single story homes are going to have to contend with windows.

It's rather rare to see a family home without windows built into the bedrooms.

If you've coated the windows with security film as we've discussed before, you know they are relatively safe.

However, windows can still be used to observe your family, and you should attempt to prevent that.

If you have an intruder prowling around your single story home, he may be looking into your windows to recon that home from the outside.

A good set of heavy curtains that are closed at night, or when you're not home, is a simple, economical advantage.

Curtains are another security advantage you can have that doesn't draw any attention to your home.

If you are only going to place curtains in one room of your bedroom, make it your safe room.

## **Intercoms**

Another useful system to consider is intercoms.

There was a time when only rich people could afford these systems.

These days any home can be equipped with intercoms relatively inexpensively.

These give you several advantages.

Communication is the key to success in any police and military action.



It there can become a powerful tool for home defense.

If family values allow it, in terms of privacy, you can get an intercom system that would allow you, in the master bedroom, to monitor sound any room in the house.

This can be a godsend for you in determining who is where, what room they are in, what direction they are moving, who is talking, and so on.

This can aid you in even knowing how many people have broken into your home.

This is all actionable intelligence you can use to better defend your home, in other words, and to better inform first-responders.

Intercoms are also a great way to alert your family to get to the safe room and give them instructions.

And you could even use it to inform invaders, with authority, "Police are on their way. I have a gun and I will shoot you if you do not leave immediately."

That by itself could end an intrusion in a lot of situations.

If most know they've been detected early, and the home owner is willing to kill them, they may change their mind and bail.

Anyone who stays there after that warning is issued is willing to do violence to you and your family.

So be prepared for that.



## **Equipping Your Safe Room To Survive A Home Invasion**

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*Survival, communications, body armor, illumination... they all matter.*

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Your safe room should have everything you need to survive, defend yourself and your family, and wait out the invaders while help is on the way.

That means there are a LOT of essential survival, communication, and self-defense items your safe

room should contain... and you should be stockpiling these items NOW, before you need them.

Survival kits and safe room supplies can be purchased online and in certain stores, so look around and see what you can find.

Remember, too, that a safe room is not just for burglaries and home invasions.

A properly designed safe room can also be used to keep you safe from natural disasters like hurricanes and tornados, if you choose the appropriate location in your home (such as a second half-bathroom in a basement).

Every family's needs, and every individual situation, may differ, but the goal is the same: Establish in your home a securable, lockable location to which you can retreat during a disaster or a violation of your home.

Consider the following items and supplies to be secured and organized inside.

## Survival Equipment

- **Strobe flashlight.** This is in addition to your personal tactical light. The trick, with the strobe flashlight, is to set it up in a location AWAY from your "hunker down spot" in your safe room and shining at the door the home invader would have to come through to breach the space. The best location for this is in a spot farthest away from the opening of the door, so that

the invader would have to open the door all the way. That would make YOU the last thing he sees.

Using this strobe location, when he comes in, not only will he be disoriented, but he'll also be blinded and think you are where the flashlight is. If he's armed, he'll shoot THERE, not where you are. Meanwhile, you are a safe distance from his shots and have him in your sights while he's lit up, disoriented, and distracted.

- **Escape ladder.** If you're on the second floor, your attackers may think they have you pinned down. A rope ladder stashed away in the safe room may allow at least one person to escape to get help even if you have to create a diversion elsewhere in the house.
- **Fire extinguisher.** A home invader may go so far as to set fire to your safe room door to try to smoke you out. Being able to extinguish a fire from the inside may make their plan backfire on them where they have to hightail it out of there. Of course,

you're left with escaping a fire, but at least you have a means to extinguish a path to safety if needed. Besides, many home invaders will simply set fire to the house to cover their tracks and you'll want to be able to have access to a fire extinguisher to make sure you're not just left for dead.

In addition, a fire extinguisher makes a handy dispersion tool to aim at an attacker when you want to catch him off guard or temporarily blind him so you can escape or attack.

- **Smoke mask.** Even serious burns can be survived, but a small amount of smoke in the lungs can kill. Fortunately, recent advancements in filtration have resulted in simple facemasks ([www.SmokeMask.org](http://www.SmokeMask.org)) that can filter out smoke from a fire. These are small, easy to use, and relatively inexpensive.
- **Trauma pack.** Even though you may be well protected in your safe room, it's possible you could be injured from broken glass, shot or cut during the initial attack or even attacked while in

position (such as your attacker shooting through a door or wall). Not having a first aid kit on hand could mean you either watch a family member die in your arms or be forced to open your safe room door to get help, subjecting you and the rest of your loved ones to the madmen waiting outside.

Store a "trauma pack" in your safe room to be used for major injuries such as massive bleeding. Include special packs such as "QuickClot"® that are highly effective at stopping bleeding for moderate to severe wounds, including venous and arterial bleeding. This will provide you with short term stability while you plan a better escape or help arrives.

## Communications

Some means of calling the outside world in order to call police and ask for assistance is necessary.

Land lines can be cut by tenacious home invaders.

Simply taking an extension off the hook somewhere else in the house could prevent you from calling out.

A cellular (mobile) phone backup (not a cordless phone) is essential and it enables you to call for help and to keep the phone with you.

You can even now purchase “emergency” cell phones (commonly called “burners”) with no monthly plan that you can just keep stored away on a charger in your safe room indefinitely with no expense.

When you call for help, make sure you tell law enforcement:

- How many home invaders there are (if you know)
- That you are armed (if you are)
- Where you are located in the house (what floor, front/back, left/right, etc.)
- What you are wearing

Once you’ve told law enforcement this information, **DON’T CHANGE YOUR POSITION** if you can help it!

You don’t want to get shot by those responding who mistake you for the invader.

## Food And Water

If you choose the bathroom for your safe room, water is abundant and you have the plumbing needed for personal emergencies.

Stockpile some food, such as energy bars, just in case you have to make an extended stay.

## Remote CCTV

Closed circuit television cameras aren’t just for perimeter security.

They’re quite useful inside your home too!

Modern wireless cameras are small, discreet, and can even allow you to view the goings on within your home from any internet connection.

So check this out – by placing cameras around the inside of your home at strategic places, you can:

- Confirm whether the home invaders have actually left the premises or not
- Know exactly when they plan to attack your safe room (by hiding a camera that faces your safe room door on the outside of the room).
- Communicate to responding law enforcement the exact location of the invaders before they enter your home
- Allow police to view the inside of your home from their own internet hookup (just give them the login information when you contact them to report the invasion)

- Record as many details as possible of what the criminals look like for later identification

While it may not be feasible to stash a fully charged laptop computer in your safe room, internet technology and cell phone integration is becoming more advanced by the day.

Imagine pulling up your cameras on your phone and see every move that takes place in your home at any moment you wish.

Believe it!

## **Self Defense Weapons**

If you can secure in your safe room a legal weapon, such as a locked shotgun or a handgun in a push-button safe, do so.

The weapon you keep in the safe room is there to defend you should the invaders attempt to breach your last line of defense.

Weapons, by themselves, are not enough, though.

You should also have a means of protecting yourself and identifying threats in low light.

## **Hiding A Gun In Your Safe Room**

For hiding a gun in the safe room, don't feel like you need to spend a ton of money on this back-up.

Most criminals will practically poop their pants the second they hear a gun firing at them, even if it's a cheapo .308 or even a .22 (which will still sound like a cannon, to their surprise, in the confined space of your home).

Besides, if you're preparing the right way, you're already wearing your concealed firearm anyway and this backup should be something your spouse or able-bodied child can handle to back you up (or use alone if you're not home).

A smaller-caliber weapon is ideal for this, but it's your call.

## **Body Armor For Your Safe Room**

Ideally, you could keep two vests on hand, one for you and one for your spouse.

It takes only seconds to throw them on.

You won't always have those seconds, but if you do, it makes a tremendous difference.

This isn't paranoia.

Do you already own more guns than you can comfortably carry?

Well, investing in body armor is like that.

You may not need it, but it's nice to have the option, especially if an armed intruder breaks into your home.

Body armor is perfectly legal for anyone who's not a felon to own.

Indeed, it's perfectly legal for anyone who's not a felon to *wear*.

There are some states that prohibit its possession by felons and there are some states that will have enhanced penalties for committing a crime of violence while wearing it.

The rationale of that is if he was wearing the vest, he entered the crime with a high expectation of being in a gunfight and therefore is a particular danger to society.

For the person who is that good within the law, it's no problem at all. Now, when shopping for a ballistic vest, make sure you get a minimum

of Level 2, with Level 3A being better.

Level 2 defeats .357 Magnum, .45 caliber, most 9mm handguns, and buckshot from a shotgun.

Level 3A can defeat those as well as the hottest magnum loads and .357 Sig, which is a very potent cartridge.

This isn't a military flack vest we're talking about.

This is a Kevlar vest or some equivalent modern fiber.

They feel stiff when you pick them up, but after they break in, it's like wearing a heavy sweatshirt under a regular shirt.

Sure, they are a little warmer, but not nearly as hot as having a bullet go through your body.

Basically all the civilian needs is something that's good quality, rated for the predictable threat.

Do not, however, trust used body armor.

The fibers can be compromised by so many things.

If someone inadvertently dry cleans a ballistic vest, that vest will be compromised.

Bleach can also compromise the body armor.

Buy a new vest and follow the instructions to the letter for keeping it clean.

Remember, too, that a “bulletproof vest” is merely “bullet resistant.”

Most rifle bullets will penetrate them.

Keep in mind also that a bulletproof vest over the back of a sturdy chair still offers some ballistic protection, but only for a little while.

Essentially after the first couple of shots, what would have been a torso-sized panel has turned into a ball about the size of a soccer ball that’s been pushed halfway between the spokes of the chair.

One thing you can consider also is purchasing a ballistic shield.

Police have used them, the so-called raid shields, for many years.

It will be a Lexan viewing port.

The more sophisticated ones will have a pushbutton switch that activates a blinding light that goes forward towards your opponent.

But basically you carry it like a medieval swordsman would carry a shield, except it’s much bigger.

These can be pricey, but there’s no law against you having it.

Historically the armor makers have made it a policy to sell only to police equipment dealers or police departments.

So it may take you some looking around to find a police equipment dealer who knows you, trusts you and realizes you’re a card carrying good guy that’s comfortable selling it to you.

But that said it would certainly be worth having in the closet.

## **Illumination For Your Safe Room**

You need illumination in your safe room so that you can use it to properly identify your target.

(This, again, is in addition to the strobe flashlight we mentioned before, which you use as a distraction technique.)

There have been plenty of horrible incidents in which a home defender shot a friend or family member simply because the defender didn’t realize that person was not an intruder.

You need enough portable light so that you can make absolutely sure



the person in the sights of your handgun is the bad guy.

Consider, however, having a light that is SEPARATE from your handgun, not mounted directly to it.

I treat the flashlight mounted defense gun or police gun the way I would treat a telescopic sighted hunting rifle.

You and I both know how furious we would be if we were out in the hunting field, and we look across the valley and here's some guy pointing a rifle at us because he's scoping the area with his telescopic sight, because he's either too lazy or too damn cheap to buy a set of binoculars to do that job properly.

That is exactly what we're doing when we search with a light that's mounted on the gun.

Everything we are looking at, we're pointing a loaded gun at.

If it turned out to be our teenage son who came home late and is letting himself in, or maybe even snuck out to be with his girlfriend and we didn't even know he was gone, I'll trust you to have the discipline that you're not going to suddenly be startled and flinch and shoot him, that you'd have the discipline to have kept your finger away from the trigger.

But even in that best case resolution, that kid is going to remember until you die and he's standing over your casket at the funeral the night you pointed that loaded gun at him.

That's why I tell people, continuing the analogy of the light mounted gun and the telescopic sighted hunting rifle, no responsible hunter is going to use the scope on his rifle to scan for game.

But when you believe you've seen the animal, as that rifle comes to your shoulder and you look at it through the scope and the four power magnification, maybe the eight power magnification, maybe at dusk it's one more safety check.

It's one more opportunity to make sure that's a legal buck, not a doe standing among the branches.

It's one more opportunity to make sure it is a deer and not some dumb guy wearing the wrong color during hunting season.

The flashlight on the gun, when you level down on the person you believe to be the intruder, the flashlight on that gun is the final verification that this is a shoot target, not someone who has inadvertently done something incredibly stupid that they do not deserve to die for.

One thing all of us should do is tell those friends of ours, or relatives, or members of the extended family that have those keys, "You've got to remember this is an armed household. When you come by, shout out and identify yourself. Ring the doorbell first, even if you don't think I'm home.

This can avoid tragedy later.

Nobody intends to make a mistake.

The more work we put into preventing such a scenario in the first place, the better off we will be.



## **Tactics And Training Tips**

### **For Using Your Safe Room**

### **In A Home Invasion**

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*It's time to role-play some home defense.*

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Most of us did fire drills when we were in school.

You need to do intruder drills with your kids for the exact same reason.

### **Role-Playing Home Defense**

The physical experience will burn into their minds that, if a crisis

happens, this is the plan that we will follow.

See how quickly they can get to the safe room.

See how quickly you can put on body armor if that is involved.

See how quickly your kids can respond when you shout to them or tell them over the intercom that they need to “go to lockdown” and get behind something solid.

There’s another aspect to consider, too.

If you do not have firearms in the home, you need to drill getting into a safe room and hiding there behind secured doors, because without a gun, you have no really effective way to interdict intruders.

A sword or a baseball bat just isn’t going to cut it, if you’ll pardon the pun, except as an extreme last-ditch weapon of desperation.

Stay on the line with the police, lock the bedroom door, and be in a position where if that door is kicked in, you could instantly swing that bat or that sword to the head of whoever’s kicking down that door.

You have to be really critically sure that it’s not the police officers that you have summoned who have

made entry that are now coming through that door.

I realize that there’s a pretty big gap between a big kitchen knife and having an actual firearm, but a knife is certainly better than nothing, and there have been a number of justified self-defense knifings over the years.

That said, though, it puts you in very close physical contact with the attacker.

It is much more dangerous and it doesn’t have anywhere near the deterrent value of the gun.

## **Interdicting A Home Invasion: An Example**

In any attack or invasion, momentum is key.

If you can stop an intruder’s momentum you gain a significant upper hand.

Let’s consider how one could use a set of stairs as a choke point... and how a choke can be used in general as a defensive position.

It’s 3 AM, you live in a two-story home, and you hear something crash against the door.

You realize that someone is trying to kick open your door.

You grab your Mossberg 500 and make sure your spouse is getting the kids together and calling the police, all at the same time.

You move to the top of the stairs, when you have a short book case that's filled with books and offers you both cover and concealment.

From this position you can completely cover your stairs.

No one can come to the second floor without going through you first.

You are armed with 8 rounds of buckshot that, when fired, will act like a horde of angry hornets — angry metal hornets that are extremely lethal.

You're behind cover, and at this time you are now playing the most brutal game of hide and seek ever.

You wait until you see the intruder come around the corner.

You put that set of ghost ring sites on the bad guy and maybe you click the safety off.

You don't waste time racking a round into the chamber; the round is already there and the gun is ready to breathe fire.

Once those sights find a home on the dirt-bag's chest, you issue your challenge.

Keep it short and simple, and put some authority behind your voice as you do.

Hit him with a "Don't move," and pack some authority behind your words

Don't squeal, don't let your voice crack, and say with some confidence:

**"Don't Move!"**

Remember when issuing your challenge that you're not out to give them the *Hamlet* soliloquy.

This isn't an action movie where you say a witty line that freezes your enemy in terror.

Keep it simple.

At your first syllable he's going to be startled.

Hopefully your cover and concealment isn't so great he can't see the shotgun aiming at him.

Maybe it's dark anyway and he can't see it.

If you don't think he can see the gun and really get the point, you can say,

*“Don’t move or I’ll shoot!”*

This is going to startle the intruder, and hopefully take him by surprise.

At this point you are acting and he has to react.

The most common reaction to the startled response is for the intruder to freeze.

If that happens, that’s great.

That’s icing on the cake.

You’ve got him under the gun and you’ve used the choke point to stop his advance, and kill his momentum.

You’ve introduced an unexpected element and you are not bluffing.

You can back up what you are planning.

Every now and then, though, you’ll get a bad guy who’s really hyper with good reaction time, and he will instantly turn on you when you try to challenge him.

There’s something in human nature that says if you started to say something, finish saying it before you act.

That’s why it’s best to use short syllables with a pause in between,

such as “Don’t [pause] move.”

If he turns, that pause between “don’t” and “move” kind of closes off the pipeline and prevents that natural tendency for you to finish what you were saying before you act.

It also gives you much faster reaction time if you do have to shoot, such as if he spins on you and comes up with a gun

At this point only three things can open.

**If he’s dumb he may try and advance or attack.**

If he decides this, remember you have a right to defend your life, your family, and your property, so do what’s necessary.

**If he’s smart, he won’t move, and hopefully he’ll put his hands up.**

Then you and him can play the most awkward staring contest ever until the police arrive.

**The third option is the scumbag turns around and takes off running.**

When he does this, you can’t shoot him in the back, even in your home.

Do not pursue him, do not follow him.

Just let him go.

If he retreats it's still a peaceful resolution to the situation.

It would be better if the police got to put him away, but hey, what can you do?

The presence of weapons, though, changes everything.

Either way, when you isolate an intruder into a choke point, you are in control, and you have the ability to protect your family from any attacker.

Regardless of the actual outcome, you should be in control of the situation the entire time, and choke points make that possible.