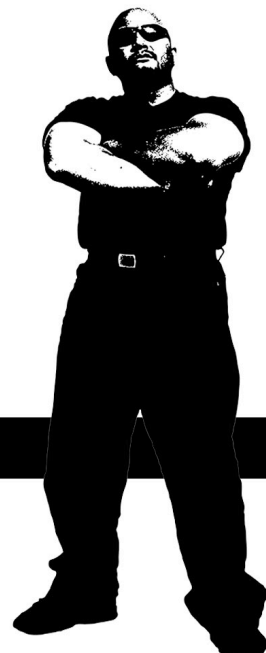


Cutting Edge Survival Strategies

SPECIAL ISSUE: FIREARMS

From The Battlefield To The Street!



In Module 4 Of 6:

**Does He Have A Gun?
Giveaway Signs!**

**WHEN To Make Your
Move (Or *NOT*)!**

**5 Steps To The
Perfect Disarm!**

**Long Gun Defense:
Civilians & Soldiers
NEED These Tactics!**

**Arm Yourself!
Choosing A
Personal Defense
Weapon!**

And Much More!



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DEFENDING AGAINST FIREARMS

Without doubt, the firearm is the best means of individual self-defense available to the average law-abiding citizen. Arguments can and have been made for a variety of other self-defense tools, ranging from clubs to knives and even to your fists and feet, but these are rationalizations at best and complete speculation at worst. No, there simply is no escaping the fact that the most powerful, versatile, and effective tool available to the citizen is the firearm. Be it the long gun or the hand gun, the firearm gives the citizen defender the means to prevail, from a distance, against multiple opponents who may be much stronger.



Very few people have no preconceptions about firearms the first time they pick one up. Our culture is saturated with conflicting messages about guns; our society is awash in information about firearms that is sometimes accurate and that is, much more of the time, based on myth and misinformation. Movies and television do not help; firearms are portrayed in our media as everything from toys to impossibly powerful, almost magical weapons of ultra-destruction.

Because of this, and because of the significant power that firearms *do* represent, training with firearms must be approached with considerable restraint, responsibility, and discipline. Firearms and even training guns must be treated as potentially lethal weapons. They must never be handled in a casual or cavalier manner. In short, firearms must be treated with respect at all times, and this respect must also be conferred on training tools that represent firearms. With this in mind, we may approach both the study of

self-defense against firearms (when a gun is wielded by someone attacking us, and we are not necessarily armed) and self-defense using firearms as defensive tools.

This training module has been created in association with ISCQC Network instructors Richard Nance and David Hallford, of www.wartac.com, whom we thank for their contribution to this training material.

AWARENESS

The first and most fundamental tenet of all self-defense, regardless of the tools used, is *awareness*. Legendary firearms instructor Jeff Cooper wrote of a color code of awareness levels. In it, “Condition White” represented someone who is not aware of his surroundings, someone who is walking along blissfully ignorant of possible dangers. A person in “Condition Yellow,” by contrast, is relaxed but alert. A person in “Condition Orange” has spotted a real threat of danger, and a person in “Condition Red” is actively engaged in defending himself from that danger.

While there are no explicit rules that say this and only this scheme should be used, it is quite common and very helpful when considering your state of individual awareness. Ask yourself: Do you spend your time, or at least a majority of it, in “Condition White,” unaware of what is going on around you? This is as simple as becoming engrossed in a book while sitting in a coffee shop, or becoming more focused on what is coming out of your radio or your wireless phone than what is traveling at seventy-five miles an hour down the highway behind you.

We all, at times, lapse into “Condition White,” blissfully unaware of the rest of the world. You would not be human if you did not experience these moments. In fact, if you never allowed yourself to relax, you would quickly develop mental and emotional problems — something akin to the “thousand yard stare” associated with overwrought combat veterans who have been “in the field” for too long. There is, however, a happy medium between walking through life in a fog and spending your every waking moment in a state of flop-sweating paranoia. That happy medium is the state Cooper called “Condition Yellow,” which we will define as a state of relaxed alertness. Whenever you are out and about, especially, but in

most times during your waking hours, you should cultivate the “Condition Yellow” mindset, in which you are aware of what is happening around you, alert for sudden changes (such as the approach or sudden disappearance of individuals), and capable of dealing with the unexpected without freezing or being caught flat-footed.

When at home, this is as simple as living your life in a relaxed state, prepared to deal with things like fire alarms or sudden noises outside. If someone knocks on your door, you answer the door calmly but with the knowledge that you don’t know who’s on the other side and you must determine any potential for danger before you do something like throw the door wide open and unchained. (It is implied that you should be leaving your doors locked while at home; this is just basic personal safety.)

While on the go or at work, living in Condition Yellow means you have a working knowledge of what is going on in your immediate vicinity. If you are driving, you are aware of the cars near you and behind you, and you note their behavior. If you are at work, perhaps in an office setting, you periodically stand up to stretch your legs and make a brief check of the activities happening near you, alert for things like raised voices or sudden silences that might indicate a problem with a coworker. Most of the time, your alert and ready state will help you deal with such mundane things as power outages and fire alarms, with the occasional pushy solicitor thrown in for good measure. There may come that day, however, when being aware of your environment tips you to the presence of danger.

This is the whole point of awareness in the context of maintaining your personal boundaries. The distance within which another person can touch you with hands or feet (the range in which he can strike you or kick you) is the range outside of which you should seek to keep most strangers. In some settings, such as congested urban environments, this will be virtually impossible, but for many of us, it is feasible to maintain a decent personal safety zone. Awareness allows you to adjust your movements, your body mechanics, and your body language accordingly, often preventing problems before they begin.

For example, a lot of self-defense training starts from the “hostage position,” in which an assailant is already behind the defender with an arm wrapped

around the defender’s neck, or perhaps with a gun pressed against the defender’s head. It’s fine to train from that point and to be prepared for this worst-case scenario... but at what point do we ask ourselves, “How did I *get* into this precarious position? What could I have done that would have prevented this entirely? Was I asleep on my feet, and is that why someone with a weapon has crept up behind me?”

Being aware of your environment and of potential threats within it can help you avoid that hostage scenario entirely. If you see suspicious individuals operating close to you, and you do your best to angle away from them (or even assert your personal space by actively challenging them as they approach), you can circumvent the process through which that predator hoped to take you unaware.

Remember, as you practice living in “Condition Yellow,” that this is not a state of hyper-vigilant paranoia. It should feel relaxed but ready; it should be sustainable and should become a habit. When you know what is going on around you, you will be better prepared to deal with the unexpected — and you will have as much warning as you are likely to get if something *does* go wrong.

SIGNS SOMEONE HAS A GUN

All this awareness is directed toward a specific goal, which is identifying potential threats in your environment. This clearly begs the question, in the context of training for and with firearms: “How do I know if someone has a gun?” While it is not always possible to know, there are many indicators that someone may have a weapon, including a firearm. Knowing what to look for can help you spot both potential threats and, in some cases, fellow armed citizen defenders. (The problem is that you won’t always be able to tell one from the other; use caution whenever you encounter someone whom you believe to be armed.)

Bulky clothing, especially of the type favored by urban thugs and street people, makes it very easy to conceal a firearm, even one of significant size. The waistband, in the front and in the rear, is probably the most likely place for such a weapon to be carried. Watch the hands for telltale movements toward the waistband, therefore; people who are carrying firearms often will pat themselves and otherwise periodically

check the weapon through their clothing. They may also engage in abortive, repetitive movements that look like almost drawing the weapon, as they practice the motion in their minds and work their way up to deploying the gun.

Less bulky clothing, or clothing that is open (such as concealing outer shirts or jackets) may give you glimpses of a carried weapon as the clothing shifts or as the person wearing it bends over or reaches for something. Watch the waistline. Look for metal clips and other retaining devices, especially clips or straps that don't appear to be connected to anything else (the sign of a "tuckable" holster). Also keep an eye out for the telltale straps of shoulder holsters, which may look like suspenders. Most "street people" don't carry their firearms in holsters, but there are exceptions, and spotting your fellow armed citizens is always a good idea if you wish to know what is going on around you.

It's worth taking the time to familiarize yourself with the various types of holsters and firearms concealment systems on the market. Most people don't wear "fanny packs" anymore; the few who do often are people who are carrying firearms in such packs, which are still popular among some gun owners (especially for hot weather). Hot weather raises another flag, too — if you spot someone who seems to be over-dressed for the temperature, one reason for that might be that the extra clothing is necessary to conceal a firearm.

As always, simply being aware of what people do, how they behave, and what they're carrying visibly will go a long way toward helping you determine if someone may be armed. Very few people truly take the time to watch the people around them; very few gun owners' weapons are as completely concealed as they believe them to be. Keep your wits about you and your eyes opened; you'll be surprised what you may see.

DECIDING TO DISARM

This brings us to the most difficult scenario for which we train, concerning firearms: You have, despite your best efforts to remain alert and aware, found yourself confronted by an assailant who has a firearm. You are not armed. You must then decide whether to comply with the assailant's demands — always an iffy prospect — or to resist. When

confronted with a gun, the obvious and most dangerous element of the confrontation is that weapon; you must therefore make the decision of whether to attempt a disarm.

Because of the great danger involved in attempting a disarm (you may be shot in the attempt and there is no getting around that), many instructors will tell you that the only time you should attempt such a move is if your life is most definitely in danger. As one fellow worded it, one attempts a disarm "if he's going to take your life or if he's going to take your body." The latter scenario, of course, would be a rape — a prospect that carries with it the very real possibility of death, either during the act or as a result of incurable sexually transmitted disease.

The concept here, obviously, is that in the case of a run-of-the-mill holdup, mugging, or robbery, the assailant wants your money and will go away when he gets it. It's not worth dying for, after all. The problem with this notion is that in many cases, even when a victim complies with an armed assailant, that victim is still shot for his or her trouble. The demand, "Your money or your life" often becomes "Your money *and* your life" when faced with a dangerous criminal. It can be very tricky (if not impossible) to know the mind of someone desperate enough to face you with a loaded gun, demanding your wallet... but only you can make the decision to comply or to resist.

If you believe, as we do, that it is almost always better to fight back, to resist, then circumstance dictates that you take the disarm whenever the assailant is in range and the opportunity presents itself. The stipulation here is that it is better to fight back, and perhaps even be injured or killed while fighting back, than it is to comply only to hear, "Thanks. Now here's a bullet."

Once you have made the decision to attempt the disarm, you're locked in a struggle for your life. It's all or nothing; you must give everything you can, and fight as hard and with as much focused, explosive power as you can muster. Once you're in it, you're in it.

The worst time to make this life-or-death decision is when you're already in a life-or-death situation. Often, you can make the decision *ahead of time*. Whether it is the decision to attempt a weapon disarm, or some other critical, life-threatening situation, you

can assess a potential threat and say to yourself, “Well, if he does this, I’ll do this. How far does he have to go before I will react?” You then say to yourself, in making your decision ahead of time, “Here’s how far I’m going to take this. At this point, at anything beyond this point, I will act... but I will not go beyond *this* point.” This, of course, is very subjective, and will differ from person to person.

When, then, is being threatened with a weapon truly a threat to your life and not just a demand for your money?

Any weapon is a deadly weapon. Any firearm, when pointing at you, must be considered loaded and ready to kill you. You do not have the luxury of trying to second-guess the assailant. You cannot stand there and debate whether there is a round in the chamber, or whether the attacker really “means it.” If he’s pointing a gun at you, any gun, he’s not just trying to scare you. He’s threatening your life and, given the opportunity, you must neutralize this threat and take away that gun.

Always, when considering the disarm, watch the assailant’s hands. This is one of the first things law enforcement officers learn. It’s a curious thing: We’re trained, socially, to look at a man’s eyes when we shake his hand... but the whole custom of shaking hands has to do with making sure someone you encounter isn’t carrying a weapon. His *eyes* aren’t going to hurt you. His feet may hurt you, but rarely will they kill you. It is *hands* that kill — hands that hold weapons.

If those hands you are watching so carefully suddenly disappear into pockets or waistbands, you must respond. You cannot wait for the weapon to appear. The threat is real; you dare not wait. You must then fight through the fear you will invariably experience as you realize: “I am fighting an armed man who wants to kill me.”

CONTROLLING FEAR

There’s no other way around it. When you’re facing down the barrel of a gun, you’re going to feel fear. As with any combatives technique, you must train as realistically as possible so that this “fear” is at least somewhat familiar to you. You don’t want to train without this critical element and then freeze up during a real encounter.

You must therefore simulate a real attack as closely as possible. This is more than just having a training partner stick a “blue gun” in your face. The best method for training realistically is with Airsoft-type guns — guns that shoot small plastic projectiles and which add an element of realism to the exchange.

When possible, get Airsoft weapons that look as real as can be had. You want that psychological advantage that comes from getting used to staring down a “real” weapon.

Your training partners, in turn, must do their best to add the element of unpredictability and fear that you will face on the street. They must be rough with you. They must be brutal in their words and in their willingness to push you around, to take what they want. They must make you feel genuine concern for your wellbeing — concern that prompts you to act despite the danger represented by the gun.

When you train with this element of fear, with this uncertainty, with this unpredictability, the disarm scenario will itself trigger this frame of mind in you. When you train this realistically, you will be well-prepared should the scenario ever occur in your day-to-day life. Your brain will be preprogrammed for such a scenario; it’s as if you already have a well-defined roadmap for your response. (This is one of the reasons visualization and scenario training is so useful: it maps out these responses ahead of time.) As a result, you will be much less likely to freeze up when you encounter the unexpected threat of a man with a gun.

YOUR FIRST OPTION: RUN

In the movie *Lethal Weapon*, Mel Gibson, fires a smiley face into the target from about 30 meters away. I can tell you that this simply won’t be happening. Even with practice, it’s very hard to hit the center of a target from even a relatively short distance with a handgun, particularly for people who don’t fire or practice with their weapons very often.

Statistics maintained by the department of Justice, released a couple of years ago, detailed the shootings by law enforcement personnel in the United States for which information had been gathered. These statistics showed that trained law enforcement officers, in the actual course of their duties, missed what they were

shooting at something like *seventy-five percent of the time*.

This is not so surprising. In the adrenaline rush of a life-or-death scenario, fine motor skills suffer greatly. The human body, under threat, is reduced to gross motor skills and the habits ingrained through training. Police officers have emptied entire fifteen-round magazines at individuals and not hit them a single time because their hands were jerking all over the place. The officers just... missed, and we're not even talking about long ranges. We're talking about five to seven feet away, which is the typical distance at which a self-defense shooting takes place.

Given the success rates experienced by trained police officers, consider the average street criminal. They don't practice much with their handguns, if at all. They play videogames instead of unloading thousands of rounds at the range under professional instruction. They do silly things like hold their pistols sideways and at strange angles. They're more interested in looking cool and in being feared than they are in learning how to use their weapons. Most of the time, they don't carry their guns in holsters, and most of the time, they don't carry extra ammunition.

What does all this mean for you? It's actually good news. If the average police officer misses his targets 75% of the time, there's a very good chance that a street criminal shooting at you, even from very close, will miss you. This gives you some room in which to operate. It gives you hope. It gives you a chance. It also means that your first and most desirable option is to *get the hell out of there*. In other words, run.

If you can run, do so. If there's a chance you can get behind something that will afford you cover — a car, a wall, something, anything — then do so. Don't stand there and attempt a disarm, knowing you could take a bullet at any moment. Put distance between you and the assailant, particularly if there's cover that you can use to protect yourself.

The greater the distance between you and the assailant, the better your chances of simply running away become. This is true, in part, because — even though we said you cannot know the mind of an assailant — *we don't know if he intended to shoot you anyway*. It's possible he really *did* just want your money, and wasn't prepared to commit murder.

If he only wanted to rob you and you turn and run, screaming, in the other direction, he might just give up and flee rather than draw attention to himself. Criminals want easy targets; they don't want to have to work for what they do. They'll take the path of least resistance and simply move on to the next victim.

Now, if he was going to shoot you, you've done the right thing by making this harder for him. You've started creating distance, and the chances are that he'll miss you. It's hard to hit a moving target. It's hard to hit a moving target at a great distance, too. If you do take a bullet, there's a good chance the wound won't be life-threatening... though of course that's a gamble and nobody appreciates such odds.

Another thing to consider is that once you run away — once you put yourself somewhere else — you're in a better position by definition than you would be if you allowed the assailant to direct you to another location, or to make use of the original site he chose, to his advantage, to accost you. Criminals choose to make their moves in venues favorable to them. You don't want to stay where he chose to attack you in the first place, because he obviously chose it for its vulnerability. You *definitely* don't want to let him move you to another location, for you can be sure he's picked this to guarantee privacy. Your chances of survival drop significantly if a criminal moves you to a second location.

This brings us to the decision point. If someone *out of reach* approaches you with a gun and says, "Come over here," or perhaps, "Give me your money," it's a good idea to make a break for it, to turn and run. Because he's out of range, he could shoot you before you get close enough to attempt a disarm. This makes running and putting distance between you and him your best (if not your only) option.

When you do run from an armed assailant, don't just run in a straight line. Move in an unpredictable zig-zagging pattern. Use any cover available to put objects between you and him, even things that won't necessarily stop a bullet but that obscure his view of you.

Also, know what you're running *to*. Assess your surroundings and try to run toward cover, especially large obstructions like buildings. You want to force the shooter to have to move before he can get a shot at

you; it will be much harder for him to line up that shot on a moving target while he is *also* moving.

If you can get out of his line of sight, such as around the corner of a building, this is the time to run in a straight line, to make as much distance as possible. Once your assailant rounds that corner, however, you must resume moving in an unpredictable pattern. Don't give him an easy target to line up, lead, and shoot.

WHEN TO MAKE YOUR DISARM MOVE

The goal of the disarm is to get your hands as close to the muzzle of the gun as possible. Fortunately, it's often the case that when someone puts a gun on you, they'll tell you to put your hands up. That's perfect, because the assailant is anticipating movement on your part. Your movement will not shock him, at least at first.



There's a popular video floating around the Internet that shows a law enforcement officer attempting a disarm. The camera in his squad car recorded the whole thing. The criminal in question was really out of reach, and the officer turned in such a jerky manner that the assailant caught the movement out of the corner of his eye. The criminal simply jumped back. The disarm was unsuccessful and the officer's life was put in jeopardy. Your initial action, therefore, is *VERY* important. When you make your disarm move, it must be as fluid as possible.

When showing students these disarm techniques, often the first thing the instructor must tell them is to

slow down. Don't try to do it so fast when you make the attempt. Fast and jerky is *not* as effective as smooth and fluid. (There's an old saying: Fast is smooth and smooth is fast. It means that once you move fluidly, speed comes naturally.)

Once you have your hands in the right position, perhaps engaging in conversation with the assailant to distract him, it's simply a matter of turning the body to grab the wrist of the gun-hand. Your training will kick in if the opportunity is there, because the technique is relatively simple.

Making sure you are in the correct position, and slowly moving to get into position, are the key to a successful disarm. If the assailant is too far away or at a strange angle, you must be patient; you cannot force the disarm if you are out of position. If he wanted to shoot you, you'd already be shot. You have some time in which to operate, unless his demeanor changes drastically. Don't try to make something work if you're not quite ready, unless you sense that you are about to be shot and there's no other alternative. Do your best to modify your position, and therefore the situation, as quietly as possible. Don't make aggressive moves; don't challenge the assailant. Simply get into position and then take his gun away.

FIVE STEPS TO THE PERFECT DISARM

The disarm technique we advocate is a five-step method:

- **Grab**
- **Pull**
- **Turn**
- **Employ Combatives**
- **Create Distance**

The benefit of this five-step method is that it will work against someone holding a gun to your head, holding it low to your abdomen, holding it to your chest, and from either side of your body. It will even work from the rear with slight modification. While there is no single answer to every problem, this method comes pretty close to being a universal gun disarm solution.

Let's take the method step by step.

GRAB

Without moving your feet, you're going to grab at the wrist of the weapon-bearing hand. It's important that you grab the wrist and not the forearm. If you grab the forearm, he can still use his wrist to angle the gun and get a shot at you.

Also, while a lot of disarm systems advocate grabbing the gun hand or even the grips of the weapon itself, the assailant holding the handle of that gun has a much better grip than you're going to get. If he simply pulls back, he'll pull the weapon out of your hand. If you don't let go, he'll simply pull you directly into the line of fire, on your centerline. You *must* control the gun at the wrist.



With your free hand, you will grab the slide of the weapon (assuming it's a semi-automatic pistol and not a revolver). You'll do your best to rack that slide back, toward the assailant, slightly.

If there's a round in the chamber, the weapon may still be capable of firing, but moving the slide of a semi-automatic weapon *out of battery* often will stop it from firing, or foul it if it does attempt to cycle through to a second shot.

If the weapon is a double-action revolver, you will grab the frame and cylinder with your free hand. Really get a death-grip on that cylinder, because you want to stop it from turning. A double-action revolver operates on a type of clock-work mechanism; it can't fire until the cylinder rotates into place and the

hammer drops. If you stop the cylinder from revolving, you prevent the gun from firing at all.

The exception would be a single-action revolver, such as the "old West" type of six-shooter that must be manually cocked before each shot. If such a weapon is already cocked when you grab the cylinder, you won't be able to prevent it from firing at least once.

Despite your attempts to prevent the gun from firing, there is a very good chance that it's going to go off at some point during the disarm. That's just reality. What we must do, therefore, is try to make sure our vital organs are off the line of fire if a bullet does come out of the gun.

Be very aware, as you are grabbing at a handgun, that if a round does discharge, certain things will happen. There will be a very loud noise, which you might or might not hear because of the *auditory exclusion* that occurs under the stress of a violent encounter.

There will likely be a bright muzzle flash. And there will be the discharge of hot propellant gases when the round discharges. This discharge may burn you and could even burn you very badly depending on the position of your hand on that gun. This is a sacrifice you must be willing to make. A few powder burns are nothing if the alternative is death.

You may even take a round to some part of your body during the altercation. Again, if the alternative is dying, it may be far preferable to take a bullet through your hand or through your leg. A shot through the hand may leave you with a permanent injury... but a shot through the heart will leave you permanently dead.

Your fighting spirit will carry you through. This is, really, all about what you're willing to sacrifice. Will you sacrifice a hand to live? Will you sacrifice a leg?

What if the life you're trying to save is not your own, but the lives of your family, your loved ones? Most of us would gladly trade quite a bit, up to and including our own lives, in order to make sure our spouses and children are safe.

PULL

After grabbing the gun, we next forcefully bring both hands to our chest. This pulls the weapon into us, strange as this may sound. We pull it toward our body where we have *leverage*.



Even a smaller person can perform this move against much larger people, because we use our entire body to leverage the weapon.

TURN

Next, we turn with our entire body, rotating around and down. You aren't just rotating in a horizontal plane, parallel to the ground; you're rotating in a way that forces the weapon downward. This torques the assailant's hand in the same way that a reverse wristlock operates, allowing you to extract the gun.



EMPLOY COMBATIVES

Once you've taken the assailant's weapon, it's time to bring the fight to him. You can hit him with an elbow or a palm heel and then create distance by running away. You can also employ an arm sweep takedown simply by placing your right arm against this right arm, forearm to forearm, forcing him down. He'll fall to the ground. Your left hand will still be holding his wrist (as depicted in the photos here), so he'll literally fall down and disarm *himself*.

Some systems teach you to employ combatives to take out the attacker without actually worrying about disarming the gun. The theory is that it's simply too difficult to take the gun away first, or that he'll resist too much when you attempt your disarm if you don't first "soften him up" by striking him. Such systems teach you simply to attack the assailant, overwhelming him with blows that prevent him from using his weapon and place him on the defensive.

This isn't a good idea. Even if you get off the line of fire and punch the assailant repeatedly, you're going to be placing the assailant out of range to disastrous results. Imagine that you've grabbed the weapon and are now striking him again and again, with palm heels or punches or whatever. Each time you strike him, you're pushing him away from you... and bringing the barrel of the gun onto line with your body, with the muzzle pointed directly at you.

This kind of thing is common among martial arts instructors with no realistic background in dealing with weapons. They treat firearms as if they're simply clubs, and they treat disarming firearms as if they're simply trying to take away an inanimate object like a stick. What they forget, when training with their blue plastic handguns, is that a gun is a coiled serpent waiting to strike. At any moment, a round can come out of that gun. That round can kill you. Any time you're training a firearm disarm tactic and the muzzle of that training weapon is pointing at you, you may consider that a potential kill shot.

Another misconception taught in handgun disarms is to turn the weapon around and use it as a striking tool, hitting the assailant with the magazine well or the magazine portion of the weapon. This is not a good option. During the disarm process or while using the gun to strike, the muzzle may be pointed directly at the

defender. That's just too much of a risk to take; you could end up shooting yourself while beating the attacker with his own gun.

Absolutely anything can happen when dealing with handgun disarms. A finger can be caught in the trigger guard, causing a round to discharge into your chest. It's imperative that during the entire disarm procedure, the muzzle of the weapon is pointed away from you and preferable directly at the assailant. If the gun is going to discharge, which it very well might, it's far preferable to have it discharge into the bad guy.

CREATE DISTANCE

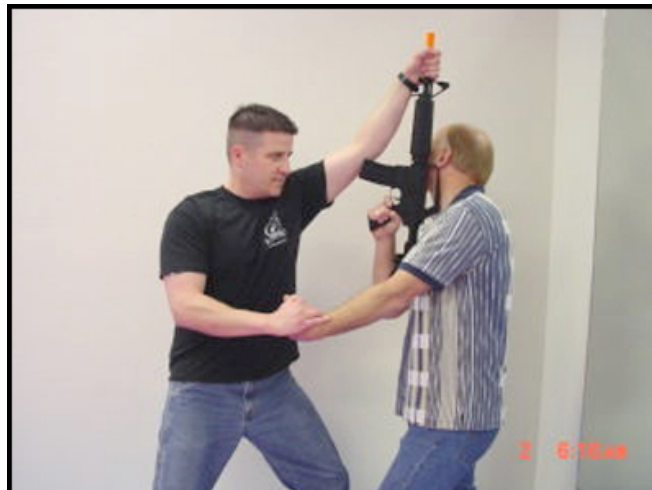
A handgun is a weapon that succeeds at a distance. Once you take the handgun, you want to *create* distance. You don't want to be there. If you were able to disarm him, obviously it's possible for him to disarm *you*, and you don't want that to happen. You want to use the distance to your advantage. As you create distance, assess the situation. Are you able to escape and simply run?

LONG GUN DISARM

When it comes to disarming someone with a rifle or shotgun, the same components are there. You still want to move offline and move the muzzle of the weapon away from your body. You still want to acquire the weapon, attack the gunman, and create distance. The techniques are mechanically different simply because the long gun requires the assailant to have two hands on the weapon.



What we do, immediately, is dislodge the front hand. The weapon becomes a heavy lever when he's holding it from the rear, so we're going to move that lever upward towards his face. The entire time, the weapon is pointing away from us, which is good.



Other than that, the principle is the same as that for the handgun disarm. The key principle here is that of using two hands against the assailant's single front hand, which capitalizes on the inherent weakness of that forward grip on the long gun.

Imagine someone holding a rifle. Their forward hand is not clutched around the entire weapon. It's very easy to move the gun up and out of that grip. We get off the firing line, redirect the muzzle, dislodge the front hand, and lever the gun up and into the assailant's face.

TRAINING FOR DISARMS

As we've already said, it's best not to train with the common red or blue plastic "training guns" because we want something with a bit more realism. Airsoft guns are ideal for this. From a motor function standpoint, they're very good training aids because, after you take the gun, you can tap the magazine, rack the slide, and assess the situation. The old "tap, rack, assess" drill taught to law enforcement officers and civilian shooters alike can come into play for enhanced realism.

Another critical factor is that with Airsoft guns, you can pull the trigger and fire a "round." That's something those inert lumps of gun-shaped training

plastic can't offer. You may need to pull the trigger in a life-or-death situation... and you may accidentally pull the trigger during a disarm. Being able to add this element to your training is critical.

You're not going to be attacked while barefoot wearing a gi. You should train in the type of clothing that you normally wear, day to day. If you're not a civilian, this means you should train in your duty uniform with full gear. If you're a civilian, you should be sure to train in whatever mode of dress is most common for you, whether that's a suit or a t-shirt and a pair of jeans. Then, train in all types of clothing and footgear so you know what techniques will work whether you're wearing shoes, a jacket, body armor, etc.

Most importantly, be safe when training. Especially if you're using Airsoft guns, which fire pellets, you must wear eye protection to prevent injury to your eyes. Be aware, also, that performing disarms with fingers in trigger guards could result in broken fingers if the disarms are done too quickly or forcefully. Keep this in mind.



Another important safety tip is to make sure, when training with realistic weapons, that bystanders cannot see you and become alarmed, possibly calling the police. You do not want an Airsoft gun in your hand when a police cruiser pulls up on you and your training partner in a back alley. He won't see that circle of orange paint at the end of the barrel; he's going to see

that you're holding a gun. Make sure your training takes place in a controlled environment, where police and other spectators won't think you're actually pointing a gun at someone.

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS

Don't assume, once you have an assailant's weapon, that it is operable or even loaded. If you've successfully disarmed the attacker and have the gun trained on him, thinking that it's loaded and ready to fire, you may be in for a surprise if he knows the gun was never loaded in the first place. As you're pulling the trigger over and over again only to discover the gun doesn't even work, he could be repeatedly thrusting a knife into your gut.



Take the time to learn the mechanics of handguns so that you can effectively "clear" the weapon after disarming. This means dropping the magazine, clearing the chamber, and checking to make sure the weapon isn't loaded. (If it's a revolver, it means opening the cylinder.) Again, don't assume the weapon you've just taken and cleared even works. Get away if you can.

In closing, remember that it's not always appropriate to turn a gun on someone and even shoot them simply because they presented it and you disarmed them. There are issues of civil and criminal liability in our crazy justice system. There are some circumstances in which you would be justified in shooting an attacker... and others in which you would not.

Use your head, train safely, and understand the power and lethality that firearms represent. Obey the law and make sure your actions are justified. It's a narrow course between jail, legal limbo, and death.

ARMING YOURSELF: CHOOSING A PERSONAL DEFENSE WEAPON

Ask twenty different firearms "experts" about the right gun for home-defense, and you'll likely get twenty different answers. This is because the "right" personal defense weapon is largely a matter of subjective personal preferences. There are, however, some basic guidelines you must follow in choosing any firearm. We will do this in the context of the home-defense weapon, but your own purposes may vary.



A *home-defense gun* is, by definition, a weapon kept in the home, accessible to those inside the home in case of some attempted break-in. Whether the break-in is an angry ex-boyfriend pounding on the door, a determined home invasion by practiced criminals, some other burglary, or even civil unrest washing into your neighborhood from the world outside, you keep a home-defense gun because you wish to be able to protect your family and yourself in what is your last refuge: the place where you live.

Because a home-defense gun is not carried with you outside the home (necessarily), it can be larger and otherwise less concealable than a firearm that is carried with you. It might also be a rifle or a shotgun, rather than a handgun. It can have a variety of accessories

mounted to it that would be uncomfortable for daily concealment and carry, such as flashlight mounts, extended magazines, and other gizmos. (If the weapon is a personal carry piece, obviously, we must scale down accordingly.)

Regardless of what you ultimately choose, keep the following guidelines in mind:

Choose only an established firearm in an established caliber.

The firearms industry, perhaps more so than other industries, sees a lot of fly-by-night, here-today-and-gone-tomorrow firearms companies. Every so often, a new gun company with a new (or perhaps not so new) product brings its gun to market, hoping to take the gun culture by storm. A few actually succeed and go on to become established brands (remember when a new, plastic-framed gun called the "Glock" was introduced to this country?). Some do okay, but are never really all that popular outside a circle of real diehards, and achieve "cult gun" status. Many more are introduced only to see their firms go out of business, leaving buyers of the new gun with an eventually useless lump of metal for which replacement parts, accessories, and service are impossible to get.

The same is true of firearm calibers. Companies introduce new proprietary calibers all the time, sometimes basing those cartridges on past, accepted, popular rounds, but adding their own new twists to them. Take, for example, the .357 Sig, or the .32 NAA, or the .45 GAP. These are new cartridges bearing some similarity, or owing some development history, to the established .357, .32 ACP, and .45ACP cartridges with which many shooters are familiar. Unfortunately, if the calibers don't catch on and become popular, guns that shoot them will become very, very hard to feed, if not simply more expensive.

When you choose your home-defense gun, therefore, make your life easier by choosing a gun whose design and caliber have both been around for some time and that have become reasonably popular. It will be a lot easier for you to buy ammunition, spare parts, and magazines (if your gun is an automatic) if you choose a gun that has been around for long enough to prove that it is reasonably popular among a large

number of shooters. One of the most established, popular handguns, for example, is the 1911-pattern pistol in .45 ACP. If you were comfortable with such a gun and chose it as your night-stand pistol, you'd likely not have to worry about finding ammunition or parts for it. These are in abundant supply.

Don't choose an overpowered caliber.

The typical home is made of wooden studs to which drywall sheets ("sheetrock") has been attached, typically with insulation in between. This will NOT stop most bullets! When contemplating discharging a firearm inside your home, you must be keenly aware of what is behind and beyond your target. If you line up on a home invader and he's standing in front of a wall that fronts your daughter's bedroom, you had better be damned sure of your shot or not take it at all.



For this reason, avoid overpowered cartridges that are likely to penetrate deeply. A .44 Magnum revolver or a shotgun loaded with deer slugs is probably the wrong choice for home defense, particularly in a small home (and definitely in an apartment building). Just about any rifle cartridge will penetrate deeply through the walls of a home, too. That .50 Action Express Desert Eagle with the flashlight and laser module might make you feel adequately backed up in case of a home invasion, but it might also shoot through your bedroom wall into the bathroom where your wife, unaware of the intrusion, is taking a shower. Keep these factors in mind. You must choose a reasonably effective caliber but penetration cannot be overlooked when considering the home-defense equation.

Choose a weapon with which you are comfortable, with which you can and will practice.

A gun that doesn't feel comfortable in your hand (because it feels too big for you, let's say) or that kicks so badly you're afraid to fire and practice with it (online video sites abound with clips of people slapping themselves in the face with guns too powerful for them) is not a good choice for home defense. It will be awkward when you attempt to use it under stress, and you will not be inclined to practice with it.

Always choose a gun that fits your hand well, that you can carry and lift with ease. A heavy shotgun that is otherwise perfect for home defense, but which you cannot pump properly because of a shoulder injury, is not the right choice. The gun must fit you and must be easy to use and practice with if it is to meet your needs. Once you have chosen your firearm, you are also obligated to train with it (under competent instruction) and to practice with it until you are very comfortable operating it. The *worst* you do in training is the *best* you can *expect* to do in actual application under stress.

Choose a weapon that can be secured in a readily accessible (but still childproof) fashion.

There are a lot of trumped up "statistics" and other pieces of misinformation floating around out there falsely claiming that a gun kept in your home presents a greater danger to you and your family than the dangers prompting you to keep the gun in the first place. While this is anti-gun propaganda, there is a very real danger presented by any firearm that is not properly secured in the home (especially homes with children of any age). You must NEVER leave a loaded gun unsecured or "hidden" anywhere in the house. If the gun is not on you, it must be locked away in some fashion so that unauthorized use is prevented. The unauthorized user might be a burglar, an apartment complex maintenance man who's let himself into your home with a key, or your very own children. Prevent accidents and misuse by making sure your gun is locked up.



There are a number of ways to lock up your firearm so that it is still readily accessible for home defense. There are push-button mechanical and electronic safes on the market that let you place the loaded gun inside, then tap a finger-order combination to pop the door open very quickly. There are other locks and mounts that let you completely secure the weapon, sometimes enclosed in a clamshell of some sort. There are also trigger locks (though these should never be used on a loaded gun) and full-sized or compact safes. However you choose to secure your gun, do it in a way that allows you ready access to the weapon, but which does not itself present a danger (such as placing a trigger lock over the trigger of a gun that is loaded — a formula for creating a negligent discharge).

Choose a weapon that is completely legal.

There are a lot of gun laws that make very little sense, and many of them vary at the state level. When you choose your home-defense gun, make sure nothing about your gun is in any way illegal. Just because you were able to buy the gun and/or its accessories doesn't mean their legal. Certain combinations of firearms and accessories are illegal when the individual components are not, too. For example, it is possible to buy "handguns" that are basically cut-down long guns, such as the pistol version of the MP5 semi-auto firearm from Heckler and Koch. When you combine this pistol with the forearm grip used on the MP5 submachinegun, your legal semi-auto pistol has become an illegal "any other weapon" as defined by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

Some states also have magazine limits, such as New York (as of this writing). In New York, a pistol with a 10-round magazine is legal, but the same pistol with a 17-round magazine presents an illegal combination. If you are forced to use your firearm in self-defense in your home, your actions and the weapon you use will be scrutinized very carefully by law enforcement and by your district attorney. If anything you have done is not completely justified, and if your weapon (combined with its accessories) is not completely legal, you will face potential legal problems. A little homework beforehand can save you a great many problems.



An article of this length cannot possibly cover all the information you need to keep in mind when choosing, practicing with, and perhaps ultimately using a firearm. These five guidelines, however, are most-follow rules for selecting such a weapon. Keeping a gun in the home is a great benefit in terms of self-defense, but it is also a weighty responsibility. Treat it accordingly and make your decisions armed with this information. ▲

CONSIDERING HOLSTERS

When you've made the choice to arm yourself, you may in fact choose to carry that weapon on a daily basis as the holder of a CCW (Carry Concealed Weapon) permit. There are multiple options in holsters for concealed carry, and you really should carry a holster for best results. Let us discuss, briefly, the options available to you. You may then go on to make an informed choice.

Holsters may be leather (which is traditional, holds up well, and looks classy), Nylon (which holds moisture less than does leather, but is cheaper) and Kydex (which is not flexible and holds up very well, but which can be hard on a gun's finish). Regardless of material, holsters are generally defined by where on the body they carry the gun.

The most basic of holsters is simply a holster attached to your **belt** on the outside. This could be a holster on the strong side (on the same hip as your dominant hand) or it could be cross draw on your support side, shifted forward of your support-side hip. It might also be mounted at the small of your back (dangerous if you fall on the hard object directly over your spine) or shifted to one side or the other behind you.



The advantages of this arrangement are that it's relatively comfortable, depending on placement, and there are many quality belt holsters available. The downside is that a belt holster is not usually easily removed and is only as good as your belt. Some belt holsters, especially when used with inexpensive, weak belts, will flop around (especially when you change

positions such as for sitting) and just won't work well. A belt holster is also not the easiest holster system to conceal, if you must conceal your firearm.

Paddle holsters are an attempt to combine the advantages of a belt holster with the ease of removal of a clip-on holster. A paddle holster consists of a panel of rigid material that fits against the body, stabilizing the holster overtop your belt line, pushing some of the weight of the gun up off the belt. A good paddle holster is a belt holster that you can remove easily, but which will stay rigid and in position while worn. The paddle holster, like the belt holster, is harder to conceal because it rides outside your clothes at your hip, but it's generally comfortable and can put the pistol higher on your beltline (which some prefer). Strong-side carry outside the belt with either a belt or paddle holster also facilitates a fast, positive draw.

The letters **IWB** stand for "Inside the Waistband." There are many types of IWB holsters, ranging from cheap Nylon holsters with plastic or metal clips (which often do not fit well – the clips can come loose easily and the holsters may not be custom tailored to the gun) to more expensive Nylon or leather models (with metal clips or leather straps). Some models are available that allow the wearer to tuck a shirt in over the holster, completely covering the grip.



The basic advantage of an IWB holster is that it covers most of the gun inside the pants, leaving only the grip for the user to conceal. A good IWB holster can also be very secure, because the pressure of the belt holding the weapon against the body aids in

retention. Cheap IWB holsters, however, often ride too deeply (fouling a proper grip on the draw) or can come loose too easily (especially if their clips disengage or pop out). Many users also find that IWB carry can be extremely uncomfortable, because the gun digs into the side of the body (especially when sitting). Placement on the body (ranging from in front in the “appendix” position, to fore or aft of either hip) can mitigate this discomfort and varies from person to person.



A **shoulder holster** makes it possible to carry even a very large gun very comfortably. Shoulder holsters can be vertical, pointing the barrel of the gun up into the armpit or down at the floor. They are very hard to conceal, as the shoulder straps tend to peak out unless you're covered in yards of cloth. They are also difficult to use when shooting around groups of people, for the shoulder draw quite often causes the muzzle of the gun to sweep people to the shooter's left (if he's right-handed). Some argue that the shoulder draw is also prone to being jammed

because it is an obvious, relatively slow, cross-body movement.

Ankle carry puts the gun on the ankle under the pants leg. While this is discreet and can give the shooter a place to hide his piece without the need for wearing an untucked or layered shirt, it is difficult to pull off comfortably and well.

Most ankle holsters, to be secure enough, will restrict blood flow at the lower leg. They are hard to get to in an emergency (unless the shooter is already sitting) and may even make it harder to walk comfortably (with the added weight above one foot).

As you can see, every single holster option has both advantages and disadvantages. There is no “best” holster for this reason. Every person is different, which means that every scenario, every set of carry requirements, and every wardrobe choice varies from individual to individual.

While it is not necessary to spend a fortune on a holster, don't go the cheap route for the sake of budget alone. It is worth your time to purchase a high-quality holster that will last a long time and retain your weapon securely. Remember...you're trusting your life to both your firearm and its carry system. And we tend to think your life is worth a few extra dollars! ▲

Coming Up In Module 5: How To Defeat **Multiple Attackers!**

Defeating one violent attacker in real street combat can be difficult enough...but when you and your loved ones are cornered in a parking lot by 4 or 5 gangbangers looking for a cheap thrill, you'd better be able to up the intensity!

What you need are savage close combat tactics that will ensure your survival and your loved ones' safety...and the insider secrets to mastering the “multi-fight” is exactly what you'll find in next month's training module, including...

- **Who to hit first!** A lot of combatives instructors get this completely wrong and their advice (and your first guess) **could get you killed!**
- Is it possible that **you have an advantage** in a multi-fight? (It's slim...but it's there IF you know how to identify it and **USE IT!**
- **SOLO TRAINING DRILLS!** You don't need a group of drunken buddies to help you prepare for this worst-case scenario! You can **start training the right way** today all by yourself!

And Much, Much More!