



SHOOT-N-IRON Academy

Self Defense Misconceptions



SELF DEFENSE MISCONCEPTIONS

by Paul W Abel

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It was spring and the grass was beginning to turn green. Buds were popping out on the Post Oaks and other trees. The sun felt good on the backs of the young man and woman, Bill and Jan (not their real names) doing some early spring plinking in the field behind his residence. He had built a small, safe range a short distance from the house. He was teaching his lady friend how to shoot a new five shot Lady Smith, .38 special revolver that he had given her just last Christmas. After some coaxing she had acquired a concealed carry permit. She was doing real well, hitting just about everything she shot at. In fact she was having a lot of fun at his expense as she was outshooting him. Her confidence was at a high point, knowing that she was now ready to defend herself and even defend Bill if it became necessary.

A few weeks later they were suddenly startled by the front door crashing open and seeing two masked intruders coming into the living-room, one of which was brandishing a double-barreled shotgun. She was in the kitchen and saw through the doorway the man with the shotgun, without cause, shoot Bill at point blank range. She grabbed her little .38 special and fired five shots at the assailant, all five slugs finding their mark in the bad guy's upper torso. As he went down, he swung and fired the other barrel of the shotgun at Jan. It is doubtful that she ever knew what hit her. The gunman died a few moments later.

Bill lost his lady and the use of his arm. The second bandit was caught by the Sheriff's department a little later and is now doing a long stretch in the Penitentiary. This didn't give Bill back the use of his arm or bring Jan back.

This story or one like it occurs all too often. Jan knew how to shoot but she didn't know how to defend herself. A lot of people in Oklahoma have acquired concealed weapons carry permits and bought a pistol just like Bill and Jan. They've fired it enough to become familiar with how it works and are now confident that they can take care of themselves if and when trouble comes. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Jan might be alive today if she had known to use concealment and cover. What is concealment? Concealment is something you can get behind like a wall, a doorway, a stuffed chair, or some other object that is designed not stop incoming bullets but will conceal you from view. Sheet-rock walls and hollow core doors do not stop shots fired at you. What is cover? Cover is something that you can get behind like a refrigerator, maybe a washer and dryer, a heavy cabinet full of utensils or even a large metal safe that will either stop or deflect bullets away from your

person. A heavy mattress and especially a waterbed may be pretty good cover. Forget what you see in the movies, like the cowboy hiding behind a poker table during a shootout--that doesn't work. When outside, trees, cars, and brick walls all afford some protection. Always try to place something heavy and thick between you and your attacker.

As in Bill and Jan's case, we never know when an attack may occur. I remember when I was a kid we never had our doors locked. I don't think we even locked them when we were away. Most of the locks used what we called a skeleton key and would open any of the doors on most houses. We don't enjoy the same sense of safety now that we had back in those days. Nowadays it is smart to keep the defense gun real handy. If an intruder makes entry into your home, you have almost no time to get your weapon and defend yourself. If the gun is in the bedroom or some other location in your house, you will not have time to get it. It is a shame that we cannot be safe in our own homes, but we are not. If you have the gun on your person or immediately at hand, you have a chance. Practice an in-home drill (with the firearm empty!), depicting every conceivable possibility that might happen in your home. I hope you practice fire drills; do the same for intrusions.

Most of the folks that I talk with tell me that they shoot for practice at tin cans, or paper targets on the range. This is good as far as it goes. It just doesn't go nearly far enough. These targets are stationary. I have been in a number of shooting situations and never have I been in one of these confrontations when the target was not moving. In fact I can't remember any such occurrence in which I was not moving also. Practice with that in mind. Use a little ingenuity. A step or two in different directions as you fire, makes you a moving--and much harder--target to hit.

I see a lot of people doing their practice at fifteen to twenty yards away from the target. This is good, but over the years I have found that almost all of the lethal confrontations actually occur at twenty feet or less. The distance across a room will likely be the furthestmost you will encounter. A large majority of incidents will occur at three to four feet or even less. Sometimes it will be in the grasp of someone. I suggest that you do more practice from an "up close and personal" position. I am not saying to abandon the practice at greater distances because if you can hit from back there it will make it easier when you are up close. The flaw in that theory is when you are up close, you do not have the same amount of time that you have at the greater distance. Law enforcement officers do need to practice at greater distances.

More than likely if you are unfortunate enough to find yourself in a defensive shooting situation you will have to come from behind. It is not politically correct or even lawful to walk around with a pistol in your hand and at the ready. If your attacker already has a weapon in hand, then you are starting from behind. You must be able to draw your firearm from concealment, fire, and hit the bad guy before he gets you. In other words: "DO, before being done unto". Most folks that I know cannot accomplish this task. Sadly, a large percentage of the people carrying guns for defense are as slow as the seven year itch. It is not that they can't learn to do this but they have never been taught. In the winter months a small revolver can be carried with your hand on it inside a coat pocket. The gun can be fired without it's being removed from the pocket. That can be one heck of a surprise to an attacker.

You may just have to fend off an attacker by hand until you can draw your weapon. Ladies placing an armload of packages into the back seat of their cars are susceptible to attack. There are schools available that teach defensive firearms or hand-to-hand tactics. Shoot-N-Iron Training Academy offers complete firearms and unarmed self defense classes, including courses for seniors.

It is important to know what to do and what not to do if you ever find yourself in the position of having shot someone. If the incident occurs at your home and the assailant runs or staggers back outside before dying, **DO NOT DRAG THE BODY BACK INSIDE THE HOUSE**. Even if you are right and legal as far as the shooting goes, you will be in deep stuff if you make this mistake. I know, you've been told to do this by a lot of people almost all of your life. **THEY TOLD YOU WRONG**. Do not do it. Leave everything just as it was when the incident happened. It will work out ok. It is a good idea to talk to an attorney before making any statements to anyone other than who you are, etc.

Acquire a cell phone. Keep it handy. Recharge it at night in your bedroom. Someone intending to break into your residence will in all likelihood cut your phone lines before committing the act. He does not want you to be able to call authorities. He also wishes to disable any alarm system from calling out automatically. He cannot disable your cell phone.

Time and space limit this writing. Get yourself and your loved ones some proper training. You would not trust the friendly neighborhood preacher with your financial well-being or the banker with your religious matters; find a professional to help you with your defensive training.