

PERSONAL SURVIVAL TACTICS

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I read articles in the national magazines that promote all sort of gimmicks and accessories that they say will save your life every time you find yourself confronted by bad guys.

I will concede that some of the items advertised do work and do the job well. For instance, night sights work wonderfully. If you have ever shot in very low light conditions, you know that sight acquisition is tough if not impossible. Tritium sights are great and can put you on target in almost total darkness. I have seen shooters equipped in this manner actually score better at night than they did in daylight. Night sights make you focus your eyes on the sights, and during the daylight many shooters have a tendency to have their eyes focused on the target. While I do advocate night sights, I am not sold on the laser sight for handguns. While they are very accurate, they can be traced back to the source. I personally do not want to send out any signal or light beam that may draw fire from an adversary. Laser sights do work, but using them is a matter of personal taste.

There is nothing on the market that will work every time. Nothing out there replaces good tactical training. It is a proven fact that when you find yourself in a lethal confrontation, you will do what you have practiced. If you have not practiced proper procedures and tactics you stand a large chance of losing any confrontation.

Going out to a range and shooting is good and no doubt will improve your shooting ability, but this will not keep you alive if you encounter one or more thugs hell-bent on taking your property and even your life. While pinpoint accuracy is desirable, it is not your most important asset in a gunfight. Sudden trauma to the body's organs causes shock, and shock causes a quick end to the confrontation. I am not suggesting the "spray and pray" tactic that we see on television; I am advocating well-placed hits on as many vital organs, in the shortest span of time possible.

Let's look at the distance most altercations occur. Police officers need to be very accurate out to fifty or sixty yards - a half of a city block. In some cases where a sniper or suspect is armed with a rifle or other long-range weapons, officers may be required to shoot at even more extreme distances. Now that I'm retired from active law enforcement, you and I are not on the street to apprehend criminals; trouble for us usually comes from very close range. Some mugger or assailant is apt to accost us by suddenly appearing from between parked vehicles in the mall parking lot or while crashing through the door of your home during a home invasion.

Ninety five percent of the confrontations involving us regular civilian folks occur at three to five feet--nose to nose and toes to toes; up close and damn personal. At this distance you will not have time to even aim your weapon. I know, the so-called "experts" say it doesn't take any more time to acquire a proper sight picture than it does to "shoot from the hip". I suspect these "experts" have never been there for real. I hear the "Weaver" and "Isosceles" stances being touted as the only way to go when needing a combat shooting platform. These are both very good stances if you are clearing a hostile area or while shooting competition, but in defensive

shooting situations that I've been involved in--and there have been a few--I never once was able to tell my adversary to wait while I get into a proper stance. In reality, you are going to have to react from whatever position you happen to be in at the time. Attacks do not come when you are expecting them. You are attacked while you have your hands full of packages or something else. You will be looking away or not paying attention to what is going on around you. You may be even in a sitting position in a restaurant or in your vehicle. If possible get balanced on your feet. Shift your weight forward, out over the leading foot and knee. This will help reduce muzzle flip and recoil, thus letting you get the weapon back on target more rapidly. Remember, it may take more than one shot to stop an attacker.

Moving while you shoot is imperative. **DO NOT BE A STATIONARY TARGET.** Do the unexpected. I own a beautiful German Shepherd that will bait you by ducking her head and tucking her tail, looking like she is scared to death of you. About the time you drop your guard a little she attacks with a vengeance. Not a bad tactic! That is one that you might want to put back in the corner of your mind and use if the need arises. Once the fracas starts, act suddenly and with all the aggression that you can muster. Duck straight down and move forward and into your attacker and duck under and past his gun. Draw and shoot as you go. If at all possible shoot for the head; this will stop the attacker instantly in most cases. Head shots usually stop an attacker in his tracks. They are however pretty hard to accomplish by most people. Head targets are almost always moving, bobbing and weaving and are harder to hit than the chest and torso areas. If head shots are not possible shoot for the center of mass, the chest area. That is the largest target and is the easiest to hit, and most of the vitals are located in that area. Never stay out in the open, find cover if possible. Duck behind cars, utility poles, or any thing that will stop or slow incoming bullets if you are on the street. Heavy bookcases, waterbeds, refrigerators, etc. are pretty fair cover in the home.

Carry your concealed firearm in a manner that is both comfortable and accessible. Being able to bring the weapon into play with either hand is desirable. Inside the pants at the rear of the strong side waist carry is my recommendation. This carry is easily concealed and is comfortable. From this position it is almost impossible to block your draw, especially if you are moving into the attacker. He will not expect that--surprise him!

I do not recommend ladies using purses for concealed carry holsters. If a thug grabs the purse, he or she has your purse, pistol, billfold, keys, money, and even your address. In fact, they now know all about you and can attack you at any time of the day or night. I recommend Fanny Packs with a steel cable sewn into the waist strap. This will prevent the strap from being cut and grabbed. Place the billfold, money, keys, and weapon inside and cover the bag with a loose fitting T-shirt or other clothing. Carry other articles usually carried in the visible purse. I told my wife that this would at least distribute the forty pound weight that is normal for most of her purses. Inside-the-pants holsters when wearing slacks or shorts and thigh holsters when wearing a skirt also work well.

We receive requests daily for tips and instruction on how to stay alive. Tactics are very important. Being able to draw your weapon smoothly and quickly is a must. Practice by drawing the UNLOADED pistol from actual carry positions. Practice in front of a mirror is helpful in improving speed and smoothness. Handle the weapon, **UNLOADED**, with both the strong and

weak hand until it almost becomes an extension of your hand. Try to practice by setting up scenarios designed as near to the real thing as possible. Some of the combat style shooting sports, IPSC and IDPA, while being a game, can improve your ability and dexterity. Practice often. You can practice for home invasion defense, inside you home. **MAKE SURE THE FIREARM IS UNLOADED.** Prepare for any possibility--you must spend some time on this project.

I hope these few tips are useful. If you desire hands-on instruction, please call us at SHOOT-N-IRON Practical Shooting Academy: (405) 273-4822.