



# American Gun

## ASSOCIATION REPORT

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## GRIP ANGLE AND GLOCKS

*I like Glocks. In fact, I've got 5 firearms that are either Glocks or based on the Glock and take Glock magazines. They're reliable, accurate, and my experience carrying and shooting the same Glock for over 13 years is that they eat anything that I put in them.*

Don't get me wrong...I LOVE my 1911s and I'm pretty fond of my other handguns as well, but I have a particular affinity for Glocks as a result of carrying my Glock 27 next to my skin the majority of the time, year in and year out.

I've read debates for years saying how poor of a gun Glocks are. I never understood the criticism. I'm not at the level of professional shooters, but I've shot better in competitions than countless guys with \$2000 1911s with my humble Glock 27 subcompact. My Glocks have eaten hundreds of rounds at a time in classes without malfunctioning and they've just performed like tanks for me.

And then, a couple of years ago, I traveled to a class with a guy who had won several Glocks at Glock tournaments. The

interesting thing was that he didn't like Glocks at all. In fact, he told me that he trained with his XD for 50 weeks out of the year and only pulled out his Glock to train with for 2 weeks before the Glock tournament every year. But I still didn't understand why.

Earlier this year, I was going through some advanced training and the instructor started Glock bashing. I'm used to it and usually just space off until whoever's talking gets done and moves on to something worth listening to, but something he said actually made sense and I tuned back in.

John Browning designed the 1911 with an angle between the barrel and the grip that happens to be the angle that most people's fist is at when they throw a punch.

The Glock, on the other hand, has a grip angle that's just a few degrees more. This happens to be approximately the angle that martial artists punch with if they've learned to concentrate the impact of their strikes on the knuckle of their index finger and middle finger rather than across all 4 fingers.

Here's where this comes into play. After reviewing thousands of lethal force encounters with handguns, it becomes obvious that under extreme stress and high pulse rates, people instinctively punch their firearm out one handed and pull the trigger. As they're punching under stress, very few people end up firing with their handgun straight up and down and most have it canted to the side somewhere between 10 and 11 o'clock from the shooter's

perspective as if they were throwing a punch.

Keep in mind that this isn't an issue when shooting competitions or qualifiers. It is specifically an issue when stress levels are so high that gross muscle movements and reptile brain thinking take over and your body responds with a lot more instinct than thought.

The result of this is that if you're shooting a Glock and you do a high volume of consistent training or you've done extensive training to focus the impact of your punches on the knuckle of your index finger and middle finger, you'll probably hit close to what you're aiming at.

But if you're used to punching traditionally with all 4 knuckles, there's a good chance that your shots with a Glock will go high and to the left when you're under stress. Incidentally, this matches up with analysis of over a decade of after action reports of officer involved shootings.

So, how do you take this fascinating bit of trivia and turn it into something other than simple fodder for debate with your gun buddies?

**The answer depends to a certain extent on which of the following two groups you find yourself in...**

1. **Those who have Glocks.**
2. **Those who don't.**

If you have a Glock, go through the following drill. You can do it either while practicing dry fire after following all necessary steps to make sure that you do NOT have a loaded weapon or you can do it with a loaded weapon at a range.

1. **With your firearm at your side or holstered, pick a target that is 5-10 feet away.**

2. **Close your eyes.**

3. **“Punch” your firearm at where you think the center of the target is.**

Use the same stance that you’d use if you were punching a heavy bag. This probably means that your feet are slightly more than shoulder width apart, your shooting leg is back slightly, your weight is equally distributed between your legs, knees bent slightly, shoulders rolled forward and closer to your target than your hips are.

4. **Open your eyes and see where you are, in fact, aiming.** Try to keep your firearm exactly where it is and move your eyes as necessary to line up with the sights to see where you’re aiming.

5. **Either mark where you were aiming with a pen, shoot (if safe), or make a mental note and repeat 5-10 times.**

Wherever the majority of your rounds land will roughly be your natural point of aim and will probably be what your groupings would look like in a highstress lethal force encounter unless you regularly do firearms training under stress.

If the group is tight, but high and to the left, then you’re going to want to either do a significant amount of dry fire / airsoft training / range time to change your natural grip angle to match the Glock or find a handgun that matches your grip angle.

If you don’t really have a group and the shots are random then you are going to want to do a significant amount of dry fire / airsoft training / range time to establish a consistent natural point of aim.

The next time that you go shopping for a pistol, whether it’s a Glock or not, I suggest that you go through the 5 step process above with as many firearms as you can and pick the firearm that best matches your instinctive grip angle.

Regardless of whether you have a handgun that matches your current natural grip angle, the more you train with your firearm and the more stressful your training, the more likely you’ll be to hit what you need to if you find yourself under high stress in a lethal force encounter.

This drill can be particularly useful when working with new shooters, as it helps you stack the deck in their favor for having positive experiences early on with shooting.

You may be asking yourself what I’m going to do with my 5 guns. On one hand, I train extensively with both my Glocks and with my 1911s and am able to acquire my sights quickly with both grip angles. On the other hand, I know that my skill level would improve faster if I would focus on a single grip angle rather than dividing my training and that I would perform better under extreme stress if I only had one platform that I worked with.

I KNOW I’m not getting rid of my 1911s. If I stick with my Glocks, I may get the grip angles changed. On the other hand, Springfield XD’s have most of the strengths of Glocks along with the grip angle of the 1911 AND metal drop-free magazines.



# How Well Does Your CWP Protect You? (My thoughts on CWP)

BY JENNIFER OGLE

**T**he number of people obtaining **Concealed Weapon Permits (CWP)** is quickly increasing, and for valid reasons.

I obtained my CWP and am aware of the 8 hour course and its instruction.

It reviews the State's carry laws and reciprocity with other states, discusses the carrier's discretion when shooting in self-defense situations, responsibility and liability with respect to shooting scenarios, and the course requires each applicant to qualify at a range. The CWP course instruction is mandated by the State and is typically the only "formal" training that most conceal carriers obtain! (Other than target practice at a range).

While applicants learn the legalities and responsibilities of being a conceal carrier, they are typically not educated on when and how to draw their weapon in a high stress situation.

Upon their completion of the CWP course, most conceal carriers obtain their CWP and feel that

since they have a gun they are "Good to go!"

But are they really?

I recently spent three months training on gun drills. The training was initially implemented at my dojo due to the increasing number of students obtaining their CWPs. We addressed "what if" scenarios for when we are attacked by someone with a gun or knife and "what if" scenarios of being attacked by someone unarmed, all-the-while we (the victim) were carrying concealed weapons.

The initial outcome was not expected.

I quickly learned how difficult it was to draw my concealed weapon when the attacker was right on top of me, or to draw when I had a weapon pointed at me. It is impossible to reach in my clothes, grab my weapon, draw, point, and then shoot at a subject who with a simple twitch of their trigger finger will decide my fate.

As my instructor said, "You can't outrun his finger, so you must outrun his mind."

In our class we were presented with hundreds of “**what if**” scenarios. We had real guns pointed at our heads, faces, torso, throats, etc. from different angles and distances. Our attackers would yell and curse at us, shove us, strike us in the head with the barrel of their weapon, and even pair up and we would have two guns pointed at us at once!

Sometimes we could give the attacker our wallet or keys and he would go away. But, most of the time, even after complying, our attacker would want more or become more aggressive, thus providing us with many different scenarios in which we must respond. In the beginning of our training I, for one, was eager to draw my weapon—after all, I have a CWP!!

It ended much like an old western shoot out—who was quicker? It wasn’t me, nor any of us when we were the victims. Trying to get our weapon out from the holster and pointed toward the attacker before he pulled the trigger was impossible...initially. And, for the ladies who carry in their purse, the purse is probably what your attacker is going to demand or initially take from you. If you hand it over you just gave him a loaded gun, possibly another one. And, if that isn’t what he wants, any quick movement toward your purse will cause him to react.

In our training, we learned not to be so eager to draw our own weapon or too eager to grab his. Instead, we were trained to get the subject talking.

Ask him, “What do you want?” Get him to yell at you. Get him to command you. While he’s talking he isn’t thinking about pulling the trigger or attacking you at that specific moment.

And, while you are “**talking**” to your attacker is when you set yourself up, get your hands positioned, look at your options, determine which direction you are going to go, and you can close the gap between you and your attacker. This concept of getting him talking provides me the time and opportunity I need to get close to my attacker’s weapon in order for me to retain his weapon.

But, just because I get my hands on his weapon doesn’t mean I’m free and clear. We discovered quickly that we needed to always be cautious as to where his weapon was pointed. My moving his weapon in front of my body may cause an accidental discharge, or in the event of a knife I could cut myself, that could be fatal to me. So, we were required to be cautious as to how we positioned his weapon, our weapon, and our body.

It is similar to a math problem with hundreds of different variables—only with the correct equation will you obtain the correct answer—except in a self-defense situation...

...The wrong answer can be fatal.

It was a grueling and exhausting three months of training. My wrists were sore from the weapon being torqued a hundred plus times a class. My grip strength was diminished and my hands were torn to shreds by the sharp edges of the gun sights. I was bruised from head to toe from running into elbows, knees, or the gun itself. It is extremely hard training. It is extremely intense and if it isn’t taken seriously then we are sure not to survive. We were not training to “win” but training to survive. We made it as real as possible, short of putting a round in the chamber. While everyone should undergo similar training, it is clearly not for everyone’s preference. During the training I learned

a lot about myself. I learned in order to survive I needed patience. I needed to remain calm. Yet, I needed to make my attacker think I was terrified. He needed to think his intimidation was working. If I looked like a challenge then he was more cautious and would take care of me early. During our training we learned acting skills. I would beg and cry and act confused, all the while setting myself up.

This **mental training** was the most exhaustive and the most difficult of all.

We as humans are taught to be proud and stand our ground. Unfortunately, the manner in which we defeat our attacker becomes misconstrued and human nature kicks in and we think that bowing our chest out, gritting our teeth, and flipping on the rage switch is the necessary response. This is incorrect and, quite frankly, a topic for a whole other discussion!

During our training we discovered that we very rarely drew our own concealed weapon. The opportunity was not always there. Instead, we learned to first survive his attack and if he had a weapon we learned to retain his weapon before we could safely draw ours.

When we would “rush” to draw ours we almost always died (got shot). I remember getting tunnel vision and forgetting that my attacker already has his weapon drawn. Or, that my attacker is beating the crap out of me while I’m trying to get my weapon out.

It was a very humbling experience, as I “died” a thousand deaths during this training. It was also a very enlightening experience. I carry

yet I don’t feel safe because I have a weapon. I feel safer with the knowledge I learned over the past three months. I also feel more aware that at any point my weapon can become my demise, especially if I let my focus be drawn my weapon instead of dealing with my attacker.

My training made me realize several weaknesses in the conceal carry concept.

In South Carolina, most CWP courses are typically taught by retired / former law enforcement officers but the course curriculum is mandated by the State. The training provided to officers by the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy (SCCJA) is more in-depth than the 8 hour CWP course. Officers are trained in shoot / don’t shoot scenarios, tightening their shot patterns, aiming for specific target areas, rapid fire, shooting from the hip, shooting during high stress situations, and “weapon retention”—a phrase that is spoken often in the criminal justice field. The SCCJA trains officers on how to retain their weapon if they are attacked so their weapon does not end up in the hands of their assailant. Officers are also trained on how to disarm someone with a gun or knife through the use of hand-to-hand combat. It is very difficult training and takes hours upon hours of practice to potentially feel confident in applying a disarming technique. However, the State feels this type of training is important and implemented it into their class for all officers.

So, I pose this question:

***Why not blend some of these same weapon retention concepts in with the required CWP course curriculum?***

Another weakness I observed was that many CWP instructors teach with a mindset that their students share their similar knowledge and/or experience, but this is simply not the case. Many CWP applicants are civilians with little knowledge about weapons or weapon retention. Officers are comfortable with carrying their “duty” weapon, which is typically worn on their hip, in a specially designed retention holster and carried in plain sight. Of course, some departments permit conceal carry in ankle holsters and such. However, an officer’s main weapon for the duration of their career is worn in a retention holster outside their clothing. Officers open carry because it provides a quicker draw response without the hindrance of their clothing getting in their way—the less obstruction, the quicker the draw, the more likely of their survival. This is a great concept and I understand many states are entertaining the idea of “open carry” for civilians. However, currently in South Carolina, civilians are only permitted to carry concealed—under our clothing, in our purse, somewhere on our person, unseen by others, and purportedly only to be accessible by the conceal carrier.

The irony is that it really isn’t accessible to the carrier. Provided you have the time and ability to expose and draw, you might be ok.

But, what about when your attacker is right on you?

How easy is it to draw that concealed weapon?

In case you haven’t tried, it is extremely difficult—speaking from experience.

In speaking with many CWP carriers, they



admit that they never considered how difficult it would be to draw their weapon. They admitted that this was not a topic of discussion during their CWP course. Because many conceal carriers do not consider the “what if I can’t draw” scenario, I feel they are getting a false sense of security by relying too much on their weapon to save the day. I am uncertain as to why CWP courses do not address the furtherance of gun training. Perhaps because gun defense tactics are difficult and require dedication to the levels the average person is not willing to commit or perhaps because most CWP instructors are unwilling to provide that level of training, as there is no State requirement they do so. It is unsettling that so many conceal carriers simply do not know the flip side to carrying.

We learned quickly during these past three months that just because we have a weapon doesn’t mean we can get to it and use it. I’ve known of many cases, that despite their training, officers lost their own gun during struggles.

So why bother even obtaining a CWP if the gun will not always “save the day”?

The purpose of a CWP is to be further prepared to defend oneself, a constitutional right of every American. Self-defense is not just one act or one type of training.

## SELF-DEFENSE IS AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING CONCEPT.

It is just as much mental as it is physical; just as much fist as it is foot; just as much knife as it is gun.

CWP courses and conceal carry are just facets of self-defense. They are not the only means of self-defense.

Unfortunately I hear all too often “I don’t need martial arts training, I’ve got a gun.”

This mindset is ignorant and dangerous. The mere fact they own a gun and can shoot at a paper target does not mean they are proficient enough to use it to defend themselves in a real life, high stress situation. Target practicing is not realistic training for the purposes of conceal carry. Stress factors such as fear, aggression, physical contact, adrenaline, and an armed attacker are absent at the firing range. After all, those paper targets don’t shoot back! I am not inferring that target shooting is a waste of time. Target shooting is also another facet of self-defense. One should never draw their gun without aiming. Nor should one draw their gun if they have no knowledge of how it works.

It only seems appropriate that if one is permitted to carry then they should be responsible and knowledgeable in every aspect of that weapon.

I understand that it cannot be expected that all conceal carriers become well-rounded, skilled fighters. However, the furtherance of the carrier’s training should at least be discussed, explained, and advised during the CWP course. A conceal carrier should never finish a CWP course and think with any confidence “I got this! I’m good to go.” They should instead finish the course with the understanding that they now know just enough to get them killed, possibly quicker. They should finish the course with the understanding that they need additional training. And, they should finish the course with an understanding of what training options are available and suited for their purpose. A certain way to assure that conceal carriers have a true understanding of their responsibility as gun owners would be to incorporate additional discussion about weapon retention into the CWP training curriculum. Unfortunately, I cannot foresee any physical weapon retention training actually being provided or required by the State. But, CWP instructors could at least be required to acknowledge and discuss the issue of weapon retention. CWP courses need to make civilians understand that to ensure their safety they cannot rely solely on their gun. They must be just as knowledgeable in how to draw as when to draw.

It is my right as a citizen to own and carry a gun to protect myself.

However, it is my duty and responsibility as a conceal carrier to acknowledge that my mere ownership of a gun will not save my life.

**GUNS DON’T SAVE LIVES, TRAINED PEOPLE WITH GUNS SAVE LIVES.**

## **ABOUT JENNIFER:**

*Since 2000, I have been a dedicated practitioner and student of Donjitsu Do, a combat style martial art devised by my husband, Shihan Don Ogle. My husband and I own and operate a small dojo tucked away in the upstate of South Carolina. I am a former law enforcement officer and graduate of the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy. I also have experience working in private security. However, my true training came from years of sifting through the realities and non-realities of practical self-defense.*

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

<https://www.facebook.com/jennifer.g.ogle>

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# SAVING MONEY & SURVIVING: SAVING MONEY ON GUNS AND AMMO

In the United States, we have some of the best laws in the world when it comes to firearms. Sure, some make very little sense, but as a whole we are a very free person with access to a variety of different weapons. As preppers with a survival mentality we must recognize the usefulness of guns, and that any prepper needs to have at least one weapon to defend themselves with. The main problem with these firearms is price, firearms are expensive, and they are a very serious investment.

The actual firearms themselves are just the beginning of the investment, and are probably the largest cost in the beginning. So what's the rest of the investment? Well,



for handguns you will need a holster or two, extra magazines, mag pouches ammo of course, you may want to get night sights. Rifles will need magazines, mag pouches ammo, slings, and possibly an optic. Shotguns are the easiest you need a shotgun, some ammo, a sling, and something to carry ammo like a bandolier. You should also look to get some formal training.

So recognizing all the factors of an investment how do you fit this into your budget? If you

do well for yourself and a budget isn't an issue, you can stop reading now. If you, like most of us, have a strict budget to attend to, you are always looking to save a buck or two here or there. So what do we do? Well, first we recognize the investment needed and address it.

## HOW MUCH?

So how do we save money on the gun, and the rest of the investment? First off you have to do your research when first choosing a gun. Knowing what kind of guns should a prepper have is the first step. We are going to break guns into 4 categories: rifles, shotguns, handguns, and rimfire weapons. Each of these weapons has a distinct purpose, and they are all useful for a prepper.

So we recognize the weapons we need and my first tip is to go to a gun store and start holding weapons and learning a particular price range. While you're there start looking at the cost and availability of ammo for the weapon, as well as any necessary accessories. Go to the gun store with the idea that you are not buying anything. (To be courteous, let the shop owners and workers know you are just looking). While you are here make a list of the weapons you like and the calibers they are chambered in.

## FIRING UP THE GOOGLE MACHINE

With this information in hand, it's time to start your research. So let's say you've chosen a nice Taurus pistol. I like Taurus

weapons; they are often a good value for the money. A big problem is finding extra mags for some Taurus pistols. I had a lot of trouble finding magazines for my Taurus 709 Slim, and when I did, they were 41 dollars apiece, plus shipping since no one local sells them. That being said I do not want to pick on Taurus, because I can find magazines for PT92 and they average around twenty bucks for high quality Mec Gar magazines.

So a big consideration is being able to find magazines, and how affordable they are. Your gun may come with two magazines, or even three, but it's always good to have spares. This isn't because you are expecting to empty five magazines in a firefight, but because mags can break, bend, or otherwise fail. Most of the time a company's older pistols will have more support for magazines, simply because it's popular enough to warrant the extra support.

The same goes for rifles, but the selection here is more limited. The two most popular rifles in the world, and in America is the AK 47 and AR 15. Each of these rifles has a number of different manufacturers, especially for the AR 15. AR 15s on average tend to be more expensive than AKs. Both weapons have a very wide selection and availability of magazines. A cheaper alternative to the AR and even a little cheaper than the AK is the Kel Tec SU 16. This rifle is a 5.56 semi auto rifle, and accepts AR 15 magazines.

Another consideration for pistols is holsters. A cheap universal nylon holster will not hold for very long and will often offer little protection for the holster and little support.



Support is important when concealing the weapon, and carrying it all day. Expect to spend between 30 to 60 dollars on a quality holster. You can easily spend much more, upwards of a hundred for a military style thigh rig. My favorite budget holsters are BlackHawk SERPAs, 5.11 Thumbdrives, and Galco Combat masters and the Galco concealable. Leather or kydex (plastic-polymer material) is the way to go.

For rifles or shotguns I suggest a good sling and several options exist out there for different users. These include the most basic two points, one-point and three point slings. My favorite sling companies are Blackhawk, Viking Tactical, and Blue Force Gear. BlackHawk makes an excellent shotgun sling with a 15 round bandolier for storing rounds attached.

Now when it comes to choosing a caliber I will not suggest what's the best caliber because a lot of different effects come into play when talking about best calibers. I am simply suggesting ammunition you will be able to find

and afford easily, that works quite nicely.

## GUNS NEED FOOD TOO

For pistols, I stick to 9mm, 40 S&W, 45 ACP, for semi autos, and 38 special or 357 magnum for revolvers. These rounds are available at any gun store, as well as near any big box retailer like Wal Mart. They are all capable rounds are very common, as well as weapons chambered in the calibers.

Rounds like the 357 SIG are powerful, and capable, but are also uncommon and expensive. The same goes for foreign surplus weapons. Weapons like the Tokarev and Makarov series of handguns are popular and very cheap. Unfortunately the ammo is not widely produced and has been becoming more and more expensive.

For rifles I'd stick to the 5.56/223 and 7.62 x 39 for semi automatic rifles. 5.56 and 7.62 x 39 are the calibers of the AR 15 and AK 47 respectfully. The 7.62 Nato / 308 are common, but somewhat expensive, as are the semi auto weapons that use the round. For a bolt action rifle the 308 is a good choice since you will not be using the weapon for close range fighting, therefore less ammo will be used.

An exception to the foreign surplus ammo rule is the Mosin Nagant rifles. These bolt-action rifles are very cheap and so is the ammo for them. You can typically purchase a case of 440 rounds for between 80 to 120 dollars. The one thing to be aware of is the surplus ammo for this weapon is corrosive and it is important to clean your weapon properly after firing it.

When it comes to shotguns you are limited

to three different rounds. These are the 12-gauge, the 20-gauge, and the 410. These three calibers are very common, with the 12-gauge being the most common among the three. The 12-gauge is also the most powerful. Shotgun can be fitted with different adapters to fire different calibers. A company called Short lane produces 410 and 20 gauge adapters that fit into a 12 gauge and effectively converts the caliber for a single shot. This does allow some remarkable versatility for a 12-gauge shotgun.

In terms of rimfire this is a hard one at the moment. Normally I would suggest 22-long rifle. Unfortunately, there has been a great demand for 22-long rifle and it has been increasingly hard to find reliably. This being said, it's still a good choice but requires an effort to find. The 17 HMR is a good choice, it's more common at the moment, but is still a little pricey for rimfire ammo.

## POLICE TRADE-INS

An excellent way to catch a good deal is to look for a gun store that deals with police trade ins. Police trade in are most often handguns and shotguns. This is an excellent way to get a solid deal on a name brand pistols. Glocks are often less than 400, in fact I purchased my first Glock police trade in for 330, and it came night sights, a holster, and four magazines. You can also find Sig Sauer pistols, and Smith and Wessons as well.

## PROMOS

Always ask about any promotions on certain

guns. Gun companies occasionally attach mail in rebates to weapons, or extra accessories. These accessories include magazines, holsters, slings, night sights, or even optics.

## MY PICKS

So before we wrap it up I figured I could pick based on my experiences with the following weapons, their prices, and their overall cost to own, including holsters / slings, ammo, magazines, etc. For you non-people of the gun, I'm hoping this will make your own research just a bit easier.

**HANDGUN CANIK TP 9 - 319.95** The Canik TP 9 is a Turkish made semiautomatic pistol that is a clone of the Walther P99. This pistol is quite well made for its price point; in fact, it's one of the best deals on the market today. The pistol is double/ single action, striker fired, and interchangeable backstraps. Included with the pistol is two 18 round 9mm magazines as well as a Kydex holster with push button retention, and a cleaning rod and brush.

- **MAGAZINES** - 24.99 per 18 round magazine
- **HOLSTERS** - One included, but will work with Walther P99 holsters
- **AMMO** - 9mm Luger/Parabellum- 14.99 +/- per box of 50

## SHOTGUN H&H PARDNER PUMP

**12-GAUGE** - 190.00 The Pardner pump is a budget clone of the popular Remington 870 shotgun. The Pardner pump 12-gauge is perfect for self and home defense, or as a hunting shotgun. The 12-gauge is the most popular

shotgun caliber in the United States, and is the most available. The Pardner pump can accept all the accessories the Remington 870 can, and the market for accessories is huge.

- **SLING** - 19.99 BlackHawk Shotgun sling
- **AMMO** - 100 rounds of Federal birdshot 20 +/- 25 rounds of buckshot 11.99 for Suprema 00 Buck

### **RIFLE - Century Arms Romanian AK 47 -**

499.00 The AK 47 rifle is the most popular rifle in the world. Magazines and ammunition for it are readily available, and quite affordable. These models from Century Arms are plain Jane AKs and that's really all you need. However, there is a large accessory market for the AK 47 and allows customization for the end user. The 7.62 x 39mm round is quite capable for both self-defense and hunting. The AK 47 is not a sharpshooter's rifle, but it is more than accurate enough for self-defense.

- **AMMO** - 7.62 x 39mm 5.50 +/- per 20. Bulk ammo available
- **MAGAZINES** - 14.00 for Magpul Pmags as low as 7 dollars for foreign Thermold magazines
- **SLINGS** - Condor Cobra 28.99

### **OPTIONAL OPTIC - Vortex Strike Fire 129.99**

**PARTING SHOTS** These are my picks for the best budget weapons out there. The only reason the SU 16 did not make the rifle list was the fact I do not have a lot of hands on. I have fired only 200 rounds with an SU 16,

but I have owned a Romanian AK for nearly a decade now and fired many thousands of rounds through it.

My suggestions are not the gospel, though. They work for me, but you may prefer something else. My best advice when choosing a weapon is to rent, or borrow a few guns and test them out. Get a good feel for what you like and what's for you. Remember to always consider ammo, and accessories, as well as promotions, police trade-ins, discounts and deals.

## **CHOOSING ONLY ONE**

If you can only afford one weapon I suggest a semi auto rifle. A rifle is very versatile and a semi-automatic weapon can engage targets at close, medium, and even some longer ranges. A rifle can be used for selfdefense, and hunting, in general semi auto rifles are jacks-of-all-trades, but masters of none. There are weapons like shotguns that out there that are better at close range, and bolt-action rifles are typically better at longer ranges. However a shotgun is a poor long-range weapon, and a bolt-action rifle is difficult to use for quick follow up shots that close range typically requires.



# Concealable Body Armor Not Just for Law Enforcement Anymore

BY DAVID MORRIS

Mention body armor and most people have images of police officers, SWAT teams, tactical military units, even bomb squads.

But today many people in the civilian sector also find body armor to be a useful and comforting security measure. In fact, more ordinary citizens are discovering just that.

The concept of wearing body armor is as old as recorded history.

Men have always sought various types of materials and devices that could protect them from injury in combat and other dangerous situations. Early on, this consisted of clothing and shields made from animal skins.

Soldiers in ancient times wore clothing reinforced with pieces of bone, metal or leather to protect themselves from arrows and spears.

In the 8th century the Norsemen developed the concept of “chain mail.” By the 15th century this evolved to the metal clothing we recognize as the armor worn by knights for protection against lances and the sword.

## The Beginning of Soft Armor

We believe the first recorded use of soft armor was in medieval Japan. It was manufactured from silk, and the concept survived until the latter part of the nineteenth century.



In the late 1800's the U.S. military explored the possibility of using a soft armor made primarily of silk. It was looked at even more seriously following the assassination of President McKinley in 1901.

The problem was that these early silk versions of body armor were only effective against low-velocity projectiles (i.e. 400 f.p.s.).

In the twentieth century, with each improvement in body armor there was an exponential advancement in firearms technology.

In World War II, we saw the introduction of the flak jackets.

Constructed of a special ballistic nylon, these flak jackets gave the wearer some protection against fragment projectiles. But they didn't work very well against pistol and rifle bullets. They were also very bulky and awkward.

## The Search For Modern Body Armor

The quest for concealable, comfortable and effective soft body armor was pushed forward with some urgency in the 1960's.

In that decade (from 1966 to 1971) the number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty doubled.

Due to this trend, the organization that is today the

National Institute of Justice initiated research into a lightweight body armor that could be worn all the time. This eventually led to the use of Aramid fibers such as Kevlar, Spectra, Twaron (Fiber X), Dyneema, Goldflex, and more in body armor.

### **Right Back Where We Started**

A friend of mine who works with Killogy Group, Col. Randy Watt (US Army Special Forces), once was talking about the irony of body armor.

In the middle ages, warriors would strap on their armor, helmets, backup knives and swords, and go off to battle.

Firearms easily defeated armor, so man-portable armor went away for a few hundred years.

Then, in the mid-20th century, it returned, except now it is synthetic threads instead of steel, a sidearm instead of a knife, and a long gun instead of a long sword.

But the warriors inside the armor are much the same...in their attitudes, abilities, and in the rituals that go along with getting armored up for battle.

### **Today's Body Armor**

The last 40-50 years have been a time of incredible technological advancement. Body armor is an example of just one more product that has benefited from these advancements.

Today's body armor is lighter, thinner, more effective, and more comfortable than ever before. The key is in a whole new generation of materials, compounds and fabric blends, engineered to dissipate energy away from the point of impact.

### **What Body Armor Can Do For You**

From a comfort and visibility standpoint, body

armor is now more wearable than ever. Because of this, people (other than law enforcement) can now consider it as a viable option when it comes to their personal safety.

The first people who come to mind as candidates for wearing body armor are those who work in the private security and/or executive protection field. Other likely users are people who work or live in a high crime area, or have to pass through one. This list includes truck drivers, taxi drivers, convenience store workers, night workers, and hospital employees to name a few. Even doctors are buyers of concealable body armor. After all, it's well-documented that crime does not discriminate. It doesn't happen just in "bad" areas anymore.

### **What I've Got & When I Use It**

We've got a couple of different soft body armor systems: a level II from Second Chance and a level IIIa from Paraclete. Level II is designed to stop all common handgun rounds up to the 44 magnum and is what most law enforcement wears. Level IIIa is designed to additionally stop 44 magnum rounds and provide protection from fragmentation.

Both the II and IIIa armor levels are relatively lightweight, easy to conceal, and easy to wear for extended periods of time. I wear mine for certain security jobs, but I have two uses for mine that most non-security/law enforcement people will be able to relate to.

I shoot a lot. And I take tactical classes fairly regularly where I'm running and gunning on a range with a combination of people I trust and strangers of different levels. A few years ago, I was in a class where I did not trust the judgment, surefootedness, or skill level of one of the other students. Whenever this guy shot, I made sure I was either behind one or more students or behind cover.

I decided that day that it was silly to have body armor sitting at home in a situation like this and that I'd wear my body armor to classes from then on. Sometimes I feel a little silly putting it on, but about half of the time I notice that the instructor(s) have armor on as well.

The added benefit of doing this is that poor fitting body armor can interfere with both your concealed and open carry draw stroke. If you don't practice with your body armor on, you won't know how to wear it or what modifications you need to do to your draw stroke when wearing body armor.

The second application that I have for body armor is as a part of my home defense plan. My plan, in the event of a home invasion, is to first grab my sidearm from next to the bed. If possible, my next move is to go to my closet and put on my body armor/load bearing vest.

After a lot of trial and error, I figured out how to safely get it on quickly and easily in the dark without taking my sidearm out of my dominant hand.

If there's still time, my next step is to retrieve my long gun, holster my sidearm, and defend my family.

This three-step plan gives me the flexibility to be able to react within a few seconds with a handgun, or with body armor and a long gun within 20 or so seconds if the situation allows.

### **Alternatives to Vests**

Since most body armor is, in its most basic form, simply layered fabric, it can be used for a lot more than just concealable body armor.

You can buy body armor vests, Carhartttype coats, clipboards, backpacks, seat covers, desk panels, car door panels, luggage, and inserts for backpacks/ luggage in Ila, II, or IIIa.

### **New vs. Used and Where to Buy**

National Institute of Justice tests have shown that used soft body armor panels are as effective as new panels, and since many police departments buy their officers new armor every year or two, this may be a good option for you.

I would suggest that you only buy used body armor from an officer that you know and who you know takes care of their equipment and who knows that their particular make/ model/year of body armor wasn't subject to a recall.

Some factors that can make a difference in how long soft body armor will last are how many times it was exposed to moisture and improperly dried, whether it was stored flat (better) or hung, whether it was ever stored folded, and whether it was stored in extreme heat (trunk of car).

There have been some batches from several manufacturers through the years that have been just plain bad. In fact, thousands of our soldiers and Marines were deployed with defective Interceptor body armor in the early-mid 2000s. What this means for you is that you want to make sure you're buying used body armor from someone you trust and who knows their stuff. You may get a "smokin" deal on level II body armor at a gun show only to find out too late that it was previously recalled and won't even stop a 9mm bullet.

Two resources that I would recommend are [BulletproofMe.com](http://BulletproofMe.com) for information on body armor, new body armor, used body armor, and some alternative products. For more innovative alternative body armor products like clipboards and backpacks, check out [BulletBlocker.com](http://BulletBlocker.com).