

Take Responsibility For Your Personal Safety

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1. Who is ultimately responsible for protecting me and my loved ones?

We are all responsible for protecting ourselves -- knowing that education is power and power is the first thing that the criminal intends to take away from you! The responsibility for acquiring knowledge of defensive measures lies strictly where it belongs and that is with you and your immediate family. Outsiders can be great communicators, but very often they do not and cannot share your own personal risk profile. Therefore, they cannot know the optimal protective measures for you and your family.

Statistically, urban dwellers are at much greater jeopardy of criminal assault than are suburban or rural dwellers. Senior citizens and women are more likely to be victims of violent crime than are young and middle aged men. Thus, no one should allow themselves be caught unaware and unprepared should the need to defend one's self arise.

Just as in the animal kingdom, sheep and herds have a false sense of security. The proverbial "wolf" always eyes the weakest herd members and usually succeeds in eliminating them. If you look like food, you are more likely to be eaten. Don't be "sheeple".

Expect the worst and hope it never happens. Without adequate preparation, your chances of survival are markedly reduced. Therefore, a useful exercise adapted from the work of Col. Jeff Cooper (1989) is to practice mentally going over "what if" scenarios in your head. What if the worst happens? What will I do? For example, what if two armed men break into your home at 2:00 AM? What would you do? Mentally rehearsing self-defense strategies and tactics and preparing for them mentally and physically can help you in developing the edge you need to survive.

2. Where do I start? Where should I get information about self-protection?

A good place to start is the National Rifle Association's (NRA) web site (www.nra.org). The NRA has supplied academic support materials for firearms instructors for years to guide students through the various phases of competent firearms training.

The NRA also is probably the most prominent and legitimate organization dedicated to the preservation of your gun rights in the United States and the organization is true to the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution. It is dedicated to firearms safety education and awareness programs. Now, we realize that this may sound like propaganda, but it is the truth.

Two other organizations whose missions are to preserve our gun rights and disseminate educational information about armed personal defense are:

The United States Concealed Carry Association: www.USConcealedCarry.com

Gun Owners of America: www.Gunowners.org

Today it is certainly possible to find a plethora of information about firearms and firearms training on the world wide web or internet. However, source material is not always confirmable or reliable and is often biased. The savvy student will check out the reliability and validity of his or her sources on the web before betting his or her life on the information. Research is a valuable tool, but blindly giving yourself over to and taking as gospel the words of someone whose qualifications you do not know is idiotic. Research the credentials of the instructor or web author. Ask yourself such questions as, "do I want an instructor from Nome, Alaska presenting me with tactical training on self-defense in the inner city of Chicago? Likewise, would you want an instructor from the inner city of Chicago training you on survival in the Alaskan wilderness or outback?"

Books can also be a useful source of information. However, it is important to check out the timeliness of the material as well as the qualifications of the author/s in light of current advances in the field of personal defense and protection. There are numerous books written

about firearms and their use in personal defense and combat. Ask yourself such questions as: Is this book up to date? Is this book written for civilians or law enforcement or both? Has it been prepared by someone living in the Nevada desert for the last 20 years, or someone actively involved in present day security measures and the intelligence community? If you want a reliable book, pick up one dedicated to text rather than Crayola crayon coloring projects.

3. Who should I go to for training? How do I evaluate the quality of the instruction?

Qualified instructors should have certain qualities:

1. A genuine concern for the students as opposed to money issues.
2. Tactical experience gained through years of service in bringing an unprepared populace up to speed.
3. Presentation of various pertinent literature so the student can be equipped to evaluate the evaluator and qualifier who is also the instructor.
4. Personalized training as opposed to militaristic training.
5. The true gift of teaching is exemplified by the attitude that sees the student as an equal in all aspects rather than as a subject. This facilitates the possibility that the student can eventually become as good as or better than the instructor.
6. Egos should be put to the side and focus should be placed where it belongs; on survival.
7. A qualified instructor must have a thorough working knowledge of firearms, their components and operation. This is essential for communicating and teaching the skills needed for survival preparedness once the student has acquired the foundation concepts and materials provided by the instruction.
8. A qualified instructor should be able to demonstrate non-lethal as well as lethal defense measures so that you have those alternatives. Responses may happen in

milliseconds but one always has to have alternatives that are not lethal. We're not at the O.K. Corral. Therefore, it is not okay to mentally dwell there. We are citizens of the world community and responsible as such.

9. It should not be your instructor's first or even second priority to make money by selling you products. In fact your instructor should recommend that you shop around if he or she is legitimate and dedicated to you as a student. This can bolster the integrity of your instructor's qualifications. Be aware of "shell games". Think about it for a second. Are you going to place your life or the lives of those you treasure in the custody of someone who lacks integrity and only thinks about making a buck?
10. Evaluate the quality, attitudes and behavior of the students who have previously studied with a prospective instructor. How do they conduct themselves? Are they a model for how you want to act in the area of personal defense and the use of firearms? Are they sexist or racially motivated? Do they project the image you wish to project? In a nutshell, are they a good role model and are they professional? If they do, how do they evaluate the quality of the instruction?
11. Is the training provided in atmosphere of fun in addition to education to help me relax so I can absorb the information better? Or, is it combat footage from a bad Audie Murphy movie?

4. How do I avoid getting bad information?

Swelled egos are your first vital concern. Know it all attitudes will make themselves apparent within the first two minutes of a conversation. If you hear a lot of I's, it's time to say goodbye. If an instructor is pretentious or insulting, it's time to take your hat and leave. If you are asked to accept information on faith alone based on the instructor's inflated ego, you are bound to come up short, so fly out of there. If you sense any degree of condescension or worse yet, intimidation, you know you enlisted in the wrong army. If the information being provided is based on experiences in the Civil War, our suggestion is that you have a good

time by watching "Gone With The Wind" one more time, and don't waste your instructional time.

Competent training requires at least 20 hours over a spread out period of time in order to comprehend and maintain the information in one's muscle memory; the most important muscle being the brain to absorb and retain the information. A one or two day class firing about 5000 rounds will not facilitate long-term retention of the important information by most trainees. Good training requires building blocks not shock. The best reflection of an instructor should be his or her students. Finally, more expensive does not equal better training.

5. Who are people with self-serving agendas?

Honor above profits are our first consideration. An instructor that you can go to on a continuous basis for updates, clarity and genuine interest reflect best on our own selection of attributes. Facilities that demand that you purchase a particular firearm or other tool to complete their program makes them invalid by what appears to be on the surface just common profiteering. Everyone's defensive needs are different and as such, a "true instructor" will always seek to fit the tool to the individual as opposed to all fitting all individuals to the same tool.

Retail isn't always the best source of self-protection tools such as firearms. You will be better prepared to seek good equipment when you have learned how to intelligently examine whatever you are looking to purchase. Just stay away from the "monkey syndrome". This refers to being sucked in by the glitter of a lot of shiny objects in the case to pick up and play with which are often lacking in quality. Remember that the most profit is usually made on inexpensive items. True quality usually cannot withstand a large mark-up. As is true with most things, with defensive weapons such as firearms, you typically get what you pay for. This doesn't mean that you must surrender your firstborn to get a quality firearm! Quality can be had at a reasonable price if you are in the know.

When you purchase training, it is important to steer clear of instructors whose egos or self-serving agendas (i.e., monetary profit) supersede your personal needs.