

## CHAPTER 18

# Utilizing Cover and Concealment Outside the Home

Shooting skill is only one of the factors that determine whether you prevail in a violent encounter. Of equal importance are the strategies you use to minimize the threat posed by your attacker and maximize the effectiveness of the response you make.

When you anticipate being confronted by an armed attacker, the most immediate tactical response you should make is to attempt to leave the area; avoiding or escaping from a threat is always the best course of action. If avoidance or escape is not possible, you should retreat and seek cover or concealment. In motion pictures and on television, people often seek cover or concealment only after they have been shot at. In the real world, however, you should seek cover or concealment whenever you encounter an aggressor, before he attacks. A protected position allows you to more safely assess the situation and decide upon your course of action.

The concepts of cover and concealment are sometimes used interchangeably, but actually are very different. *Cover* is anything that will protect all or part of your body when you are behind it. *Concealment*, on the other hand, is anything that will hide all or part of your body from observation. An object that provides concealment may not protect your body. By definition, objects that provide concealment do not necessarily provide cover. Objects affording cover, however, usually provide some level of concealment.



*Armed defender behind cover.*

The importance of cover lies in its ability to prevent injury during a violent confrontation.

Avoiding injury during an attack is critical. Anything you can do to minimize your risk of injury during an encounter with an attacker will increase the chance that you and your loved ones will prevail.

Cover provides protection not only from an assailant armed with a gun, but also from one using other weapons or even bare hands. At close range, a knife or baseball bat can be as deadly as a firearm. By putting a hard object between you and your assailant, you may be able to avoid injury while gaining time to escape or, as a last resort, to employ your firearm.

Concealment can help prevent an assailant from locating you or directing accurate fire at you. Proper utilization of concealment may also allow you to avoid or escape an attacker completely. Even when your assailant knows you are somewhere in the vicinity—in a nearby alley, for example—your use of concealment can give you an advantage.

It is almost always preferable to seek cover rather than concealment. Items providing

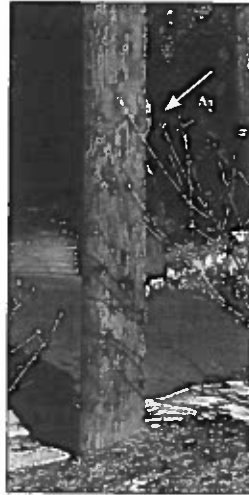
cover usually afford some level of concealment as well, so the choice between cover and concealment is usually not an “either-or” proposition. In defensive shooting situations, however, there are few absolute rules, and there may be occasions when it is preferable to choose a position offering concealment rather than one offering cover. For example, if a concealment position affords a better escape route, less exposure to a second attacker, or a better firing position than a position behind cover, you should choose the concealment position.

## OBJECTS PROVIDING COVER AND CONCEALMENT

Every environment contains objects that can provide either cover or concealment, or both. Items providing concealment don't necessarily need to be large enough to hide your entire body. In a pinch, even relatively small things—such as a trash can, a fire hydrant, or a discarded cardboard box—can disguise your outline, preventing an attacker from immediately detecting you. This is particularly true under low-light conditions. In general, larger objects, such as trees and bushes, mailboxes, freestanding telephone booths and so forth are preferred for concealment purposes.

Whether a given object can provide cover depends upon a number of factors. For example, the more material that must be penetrated by the bullet, the better cover is afforded. An empty trash can made of thin-gauge steel provides little or no protection from even low-powered cartridges; filled with household refuse, however, it may completely defeat many pistol rounds.

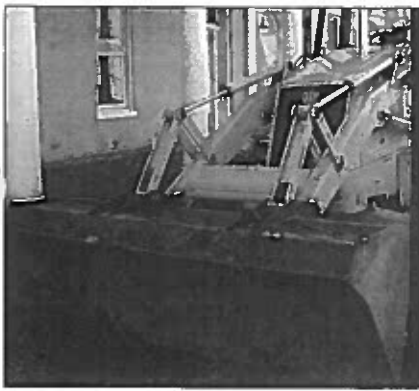
Objects that most people might intuitively think of as providing cover may, in fact, provide little protection. For example, a sheetrock wall in a store or office may not stop a .22 bullet. Grocery shelves, office furniture, public toilet stalls, car doors and the



*Defender (arrow) taking cover behind a telephone pole.*



*Objects providing concealment.*



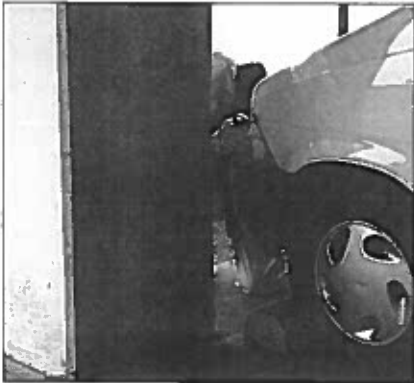
*Objects providing cover.*

like are also capable of penetration by typical pistol rounds. Even a thick hardwood door may be penetrated by a jacketed bullet from a moderate-power cartridge, such as a .38 Special or 9mm Parabellum.

Though most environments contain many things capable of providing concealment or partial cover, there are relatively few objects capable of providing complete cover. On the street, such cover is usually provided by cars and other vehicles, U.S. Postal Service mailboxes, steel dumpsters, and the walls of brick or concrete buildings.

Even if they are unable to provide complete protection from incoming fire, many objects can nonetheless provide limited cover—that is, they are capable of deflecting or slowing a bullet and decreasing its injury-causing potential. A degree of cover may also be provided by objects that are capable of stopping a bullet but are not large enough to completely shield your body, such as a fire hydrant or telephone pole. While it is always preferable to seek cover behind items affording complete protection, this may not always be possible. Limited cover is better than no cover at all.

The degree of protection an object provides from bullet penetration may depend upon the angle of the bullet strike in relation to the object. A shotgun blast directed straight against a windshield will penetrate it; fired at an oblique angle, shotgun pellets may be



*Defender making good use of shadows and cover. Defender minimizing his exposure behind cover.*

deflected. Similarly, in an office, a bookcase full of books, shot front to back, provides little protection. Shot from side to side (lengthwise), however, with the bullet traversing several feet of books, the bookcase may provide more cover, though less concealment.

Even when no adequate cover is available, you should still endeavor to conceal yourself behind any available object. The less of you an attacker sees, the less of you there is to aim at—and the harder you are to hit. Furthermore, your assailant may not have the presence of mind to realize that you are still vulnerable behind an empty trash can, a bush or a thin-gauge car body.



*Defender taking cover behind a fire hydrant.*

## IDENTIFYING LOCATIONS FOR COVER AND CONCEALMENT

On the street, in your car, in a store and in your workplace, you should survey your immediate environment to determine which objects may provide cover or concealment. Assess each item for the level of protection it may afford and its placement in relation to possible lines of attack and retreat.

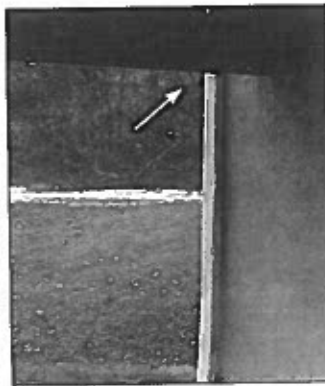
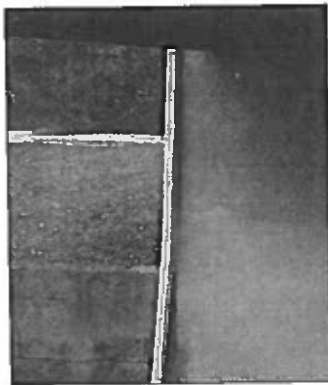
Look for cover in locations affording a good firing position, as well as an escape route allowing you to retreat to a position of safety. Avoid seeking cover in locations in which you would be vulnerable from attack by a second assailant.

Make use of natural shadows and less-illuminated areas when selecting locations for your cover and concealment. Select spots having a background that tends to break up your outline; avoid rear illumination that can clearly silhouette you.



*Defender (arrow) using low light to hide behind trash can used for concealment.*

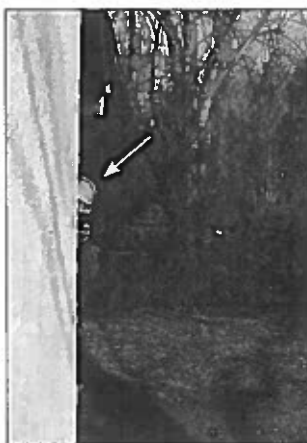
*Defender using quick peek technique to scan for threats around corner. The defender employs only the absolute minimum degree of exposure, and chooses a vantage point that is unlikely to attract attention (arrow).*



## TECHNIQUES FOR USING COVER AND CONCEALMENT

Minimizing your exposure in a defensive encounter is critical.

At times you may not be able to see around the corner of a building, the hood of a car, etc. Rather than slowly peering around the obstruction (which would allow an attacker time to detect you), use a quick peek to scan the area. Rapidly bob your head to the side just enough to get a “snapshot” of the area and just as quickly tuck it back behind cover. Your total exposure should be less than a second—too little time for an armed adversary to see you and react with an accurate shot. Also, if you peek more than once, vary the location you peek from. If you take several quick peeks from the same location, an assailant may aim at that spot and be ready to fire at your next appearance.



*Defender leaning out around wall that provides cover.*

On those occasions when it is essential to avoid being spotted behind cover or concealment, it is important to keep still. The eye is very sensitive to motion; a slight bob of the head or movement of the gun may draw an attacker's attention and give away your location.

When you must fire from cover, there are several important techniques you should utilize. To minimize exposure while firing from behind cover in a standing two-handed position, use the leaning out technique. First, assume the proper two-handed stance behind cover. Then, simply tilt or lean your upper body to the right or left (as necessary) just enough to acquire the target. Note that when leaning out to the support-hand side, you should not grip the firearm in your support hand. The shooting-hand grip is maintained, and you simply lean out as needed to acquire the target. The gun may be canted slightly, and your body will be slightly more exposed than when shooting from the strong side. When practicing the “leaning out” technique, be conscious of the amount of body mass that is exposed from each side, and adjust your position so as to keep as much of your body as possible behind cover.



*Gun's muzzle clear of cover.*

When shooting multiple shots from cover, avoid emerging from the same point every time you fire. Typically, as with the quick peek technique used to observe an area from behind cover, you should emerge only long enough to acquire the target and fire accurately (in most cases with a single assailant, a rapid pair of shots) and then duck back behind cover. When you re-emerge for subsequent shots, vary the point from which you fire. This may necessitate using different shooting positions (kneeling, standing, etc.) from behind cover.

You must also ensure that your gun's muzzle is clear of the object providing cover. Whether shooting over an object, such as a trash can lid or a concrete wall, or around the side of a building or mailbox, it is critical to ensure that the muzzle is clear of the cover. This is particularly necessary when the shooter cants the gun to minimize exposure from behind cover.

Moreover, you should avoid resting or bracing the handgun on or against cover. Contact with cover can impede the rotation of the cylinder of a revolver or the operation of the slide of a semi-automatic; both conditions can cause gun stoppages. Even when contact with cover does not cause gun malfunctions, that contact can degrade accuracy.

Take care to prevent the firearm from banging against cover during recoil. This is particularly important when firing through a narrow horizontal space, such as under a cross-member of a fence or the body of a car. If the muzzle is placed too close to the cover, recoil can smash the front sight against the cover object, possibly damaging the sight or preventing normal slide travel, or both. You can avoid the problems caused by gun contact with cover by staying back from the cover at least far enough to prevent the gun's muzzle from protruding beyond it. Maintaining this distance will often provide you with better mobility, as well as greater concealment and protection.

Since most semi-automatic pistols eject to the right, special care must be taken when firing a semi-automatic pistol from the left side of cover. With the pistol held vertically close to cover, an ejected case can bounce off the object providing cover and into the ejection port, jamming the pistol. To prevent this, a semi-automatic pistol fired from the left side of a solid wall, mailbox or other cover should be canted to move the ejection port away from the cover and to produce an ejection trajectory that will minimize the chance of case bounce-back.

Keep in mind that the various positions used for shooting from cover share the same basic characteristics as other shooting positions:

- Consistency
- Balance
- Support
- Natural Aiming Area (NAA)
- Comfort



*Defender canting gun when firing from left side of barricade to prevent brass from going back into ejection port.*

## MOVEMENT TO COVER AND CONCEALMENT

In any defensive encounter, try to keep as much distance as possible between you and your assailant. When your assailant is unarmed or armed only with a club, knife, tire iron or the like, increasing your distance from him may remove you from immediate harm and give you the opportunity to escape the encounter or, if that is impossible, to take appropriate measures to stop the attack. An unarmed attacker who is allowed to approach too closely may succeed in blocking your firearm or taking it from you. Even when your

attacker has a firearm, it still makes sense to move away as far and as quickly as possible.

During an encounter with an aggressor, try to move not only away from that person, but also toward a source of cover. Again, remember that you should not wait until you are shot at or otherwise attacked to seek cover. Also, always seek cover after you have fired shots, even if your shots seem to have stopped the attack. Just because an assailant has gone down and appears incapacitated does not mean he or she is no longer dangerous. Your attacker may be stunned or shamming, or may suddenly “come around” with a burst of violent energy.

Practice moving backward and laterally toward cover. There are specific techniques for both types of movement, which allow you to maintain your:

- View of your assailant or of an area (a doorway, alley, etc.) where that assailant may appear.
- Firearm in a ready position or shooting position for the quickest possible shot if necessary.
- Balance while moving, preventing stumbling on obstacles or making unnecessary sound.

**Movement**—either backward or lateral—is a good idea after firing shots, even if the distance moved is only a few feet. As noted previously, many violent attacks occur in low light, and an assailant may be able to pinpoint your position primarily through your muzzle flashes. Changing position will make it more difficult for an assailant to locate you.

**Moving Backward.** The proper technique for moving backward is relatively easy to master with practice. The knees are bent and the hips are lowered, making your center of gravity lower and increasing stability during movement. Your eyes are kept focused on the attacker or on the area from which danger may come.

There are two methods for moving backward. With both, movement is commenced by extending your lead foot rearward with the toe down and the heel high to feel for obstacles. This is necessary because you may be required to move in darkness or low light, and in any event must not look away from the attacker or danger zone to check for obstructions or debris. When the toe contacts the floor, the rest of the sole of the foot



*Defender moving rearward to cover. Note that the foot moving rearward (arrow) is lowered to the ground with the toe touching first to feel for obstacles.*



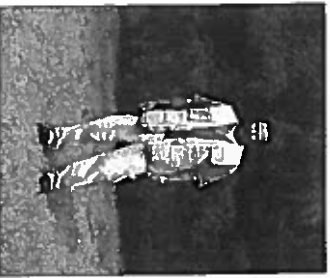
*(continued). Defender completing rearward movement to cover, extending gun to fire if necessary (left) and then moving laterally to move directly behind object providing cover.*

rolls down until the heel touches the floor. Your weight should not shift to the rear foot until that foot is fully flat on the ground. In this way, if the foot encounters an obstacle or an uneven surface, you can move it to a different location that is clear of debris without causing a loss of balance.

The difference in the two methods lies in the way steps are alternated. In the first method, the same foot always serves as the lead foot, with the trailing foot brought in line with the lead foot but never behind it. This is a technique that may be used when you are unsure of your footing; and retention of balance is more important than speed. In the second technique, both feet alternate as the lead and trailing foot. After the lead foot has been placed firmly on the ground, the other foot becomes the lead foot, and the same procedure is repeated. This technique allows faster, if less stable, rearward movement.

**Avoid shooting while moving.** The proper procedure is to shoot, move, shoot, then move again.

**Moving Laterally.** When cover is located to one side, rather than to the rear, or when you find yourself backed up against a wall, only lateral movement may be possible. To move laterally, first bend your knees and drop your hips (though not as much as when moving rearward). Then extend the lead foot to the side with the outside edge held down in order to feel for obstacles. The inside edge of the lead foot plants in position first, and the foot rolls to the outside edge as the weight is shifted to the foot. Do not shift your weight to the lead foot until that foot is fully flat on the ground. In this way, if your foot encounters an obstacle or an uneven surface, you can move it to a different location that is clear of debris without causing a loss of balance.



*Defender moving laterally to cover. The feet do not cross each other when stepping to the side.*





*(continued). Defender completing lateral movement to cover. The body is lowered to minimize exposure behind the object used for cover.*



*Sequence of foot movement when moving to the left to cover. (A) Right foot is brought into left foot, but does not cross it; (B) left foot is extended to the side; (C) edge of left foot is turned down as foot is lowered to feel for obstacles.*

Note that the feet do not cross during this lateral movement. Once the lead foot is planted, the trailing foot is brought inward only until it can be planted alongside the extended lead foot. The lead foot extends again, repeating the process. As with backward movement, avoid shooting while moving. The proper procedure is to shoot, move, shoot, then move again.

Learning to use, and move to, cover and concealment can be as important in a defensive encounter as the ability to use a firearm effectively. The proper use of cover and concealment should be included in your dry-fire practice, and, if possible, your live-fire drills as well.



## CHAPTER 19

### Presentation and Fire From Different Positions

In many different shooting disciplines, the firing positions are prescribed by the rules, making each stage predictable and consistent. Real-world situations are never predictable, however; no two are ever the same. In one case, you may be standing right next to cover—a mailbox or concrete wall; in another, you may be in the middle of a parking lot with no cover for 50 yards in any direction.

The ability to respond to the wide variety of confrontational situations that may occur requires the use of a variety of techniques, including the varied shooting positions presented in Chapter 16: Shooting Positions. In this chapter those positions are revisited and integrated with the presentation of a pistol from concealment and with the effective use of cover. In addition, three new techniques—presentation starting from a seated position, presentation from standing to prone, and presentation from standing to lying on the back—are introduced.

#### PRESENTATION FROM STANDING TO KNEELING BEHIND LOW COVER

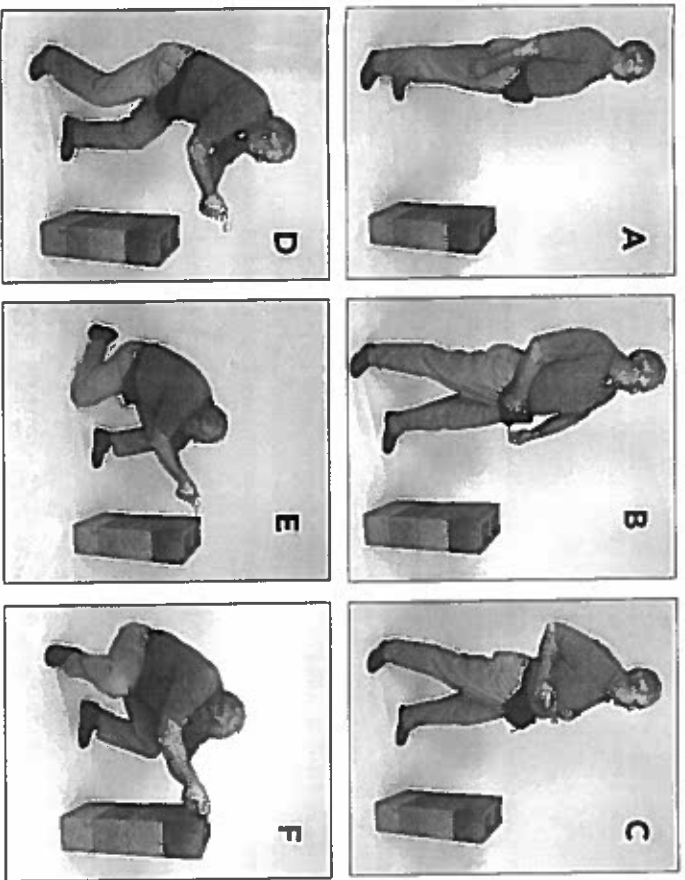
The various kneeling positions presented in Chapter 16: Shooting Positions, allow you to fire effectively while taking full advantage of low cover. In addition, a kneeling position may be used to present a smaller target when there is no cover, or to give more support and thus greater accuracy. You should develop the ability to quickly assume a covered kneeling position as an automatic response to a deadly threat.

Whatever kneeling position is to be assumed, the presentation sequence is the same. Your gun is presented from the holster, holster purse or fanny pack in the usual manner, as when you are in a standing shooting position; the kneeling position is assumed only after the gun is pointed forward, to minimize the chance of crossing the body with the muzzle.

After this movement is safely mastered, you may overlap the final phase of gun presentation with the start of the kneeling movement. That is, you may begin to lower yourself into a kneeling position only after you have rotated your pistol's muzzle toward the threat. Don't wait until you are fully kneeling to draw your gun; that can be awkward and time-consuming.

Also, do not put your trigger finger inside the trigger guard when you rotate the gun toward the target; wait until you have completed the kneeling movement. This will prevent an inadvertent discharge should you be jarred when your knee hits the ground.

Practice going from a standing position to the different kneeling positions, with first dry-fire drills and, after considerable practice, with live ammunition. Use kneecaps to protect your knees. Experiment with cover of different heights, at different distances. This will allow you to develop a feel for the best kneeling position to be used with a particular



*Presentation from standing to kneeling behind low cover: Starting behind cover (A), the gun is accessed, pulled from the concealment device and rotated toward the target (B,C), the hands join and extend the gun as the knees begin to bend and the support-side foot slides forward (D) and the shooting-side knee is placed on the ground to complete the position (E). The gun may be fired if necessary. The same procedure can be utilized to go from a standing to a squatting position behind low cover (F).*

type of cover, as well as the best technique—stepping forward, stepping back, or dropping straight down—for going into a stable kneeling position.

## **PRESENTATION FROM STANDING TO SQUATTING BEHIND LOW COVER**

When there simply isn't enough time to go into a kneeling position, or when you want to have the ability to move instantly after firing, a squatting shooting position can be adopted. Although faster to get into and out of than the kneeling positions, the squatting position is not quite as stable, and it is difficult to maintain for extended periods of time.

When presenting your gun from a standing position and assuming a squatting position, you must complete the presentation sequence before you drop down into a squat. As with the process of going from a standing to a kneeling position, you can accelerate the process slightly by beginning the squatting movement right after the pistol is rotated toward the threat and the gun is being fully extended.

With first dry-fire and later live-fire practice, go into a squatting position behind cover of different heights; on the street you cannot count on finding cover that is conveniently the same height as that you practiced with. Also, experiment with varied foot positions in the squat. Depending upon their flexibility, strength or balance, or their particular shooting position, some shooters find it more comfortable or stable to put one foot or the other slightly forward, or to have a slightly wider or narrower stance.

## PRESENTATION FROM SITTING TO STANDING

Few people practice shooting from a sitting starting position; nonetheless, in real life, the first hint of an attack may occur while you are sitting in a chair in your workplace, in a fast-food restaurant or on a park bench.

To present your gun starting from a sitting position, first rise to a standing position, then begin the presentation sequence. Do not attempt to draw your gun from a sitting position.



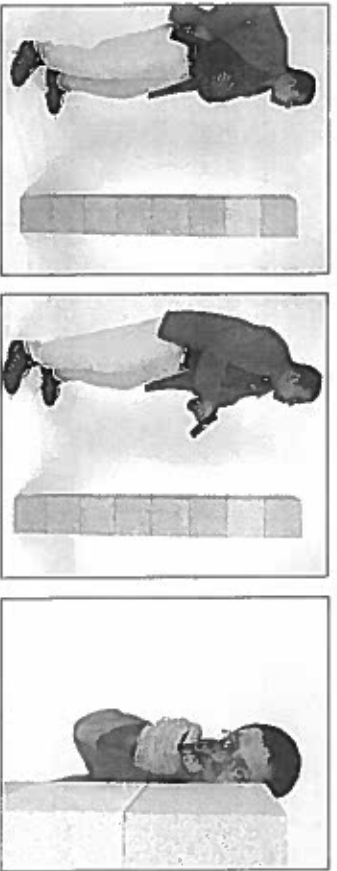
*Presentation from sitting to standing. Starting from a sitting position (A), the firing hand begins to access the gun as the body weight is shifted forward in preparation to stand. As the defender stands, the firing hand accesses the gun, but does not pull it from the concealment device until he is fully erect.*

To speed the presentation process somewhat, you may wish to access and grip the firearm with the shooting hand before standing. This will help stabilize the gun as the body rises. Do not, however, pull the gun from the holster until you are standing.

Practice this technique using dry-fire; few ranges have facilities for you to start from a sitting position. In your dry-fire area, position your chair in front of a table and practice standing and presenting your firearm.

## PRESENTATION FROM STANDING BEHIND COVER

In the street, the nearest cover may be immediately to your front or side—a brick wall, a door or door frame, a telephone pole or tree trunk, a car, and so forth. You must be able to quickly present your firearm while using the available cover to protect as much of your body as possible.



*Presentation from standing behind cover. The process is similar to simply presenting the gun from standing, except that the defender must begin presentation at a sufficient distance from the object providing cover to allow the gun to be rotated and extended toward the target. The defender should minimize his exposure past cover.*

When you present your gun from behind cover, you must allow enough distance—about an arm's length—to keep the gun or your hands from hitting it. With both dry- and live-fire, practice presenting the gun from both sides of a barricade. Use the lean-out technique to expose only the minimum amount of your body. Whichever side you elect to shoot from, you will normally extend the firearm forward only after you are leaning out sufficiently to prevent the gun from contacting the cover.

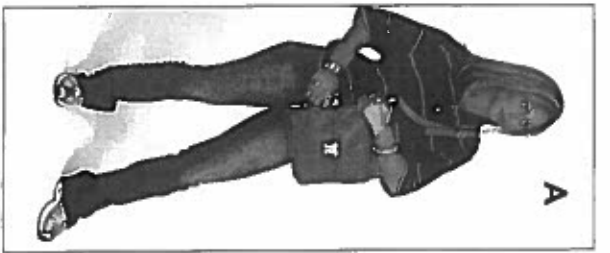
Avoid resting or touching the gun on the cover object; brace your hands against it instead, or don't contact it at all. When shooting a semiautomatic pistol, don't forget to cant its ejection port away from the cover object to prevent a spent case from bouncing back in the port and jamming the gun.

## PRESENTATION FROM STANDING TO PRONE

When there is only very low cover, such as a curb or fire hydrant, or no cover at all, a prone position may be the better choice to minimize your exposure. Either the rollover prone position, described in Chapter 16: Shooting Positions, or the standard prone position described here may be used.

As with many of the other techniques in this chapter, the proper technique is to complete much of the presentation before assuming the prone position. Specifically, the gun is accessed, gripped, pulled from the holster and rotated toward the target with the firing hand prior to beginning the descent to the prone position. The trigger finger is kept out of the trigger guard during the rotation of the gun toward the target, and contacts the trigger only after the full prone position is achieved, to prevent an inadvertent discharge should you be jarred as you descend to the ground.

To get into the prone position, the knees are bent and the support hand is extended forward to brace the body against the ground. At the same time, the firing hand holding the gun, pointed toward the threat, is also extended forward. When the knees are bent almost to a squatting position, the support hand touches the ground and the upper body weight



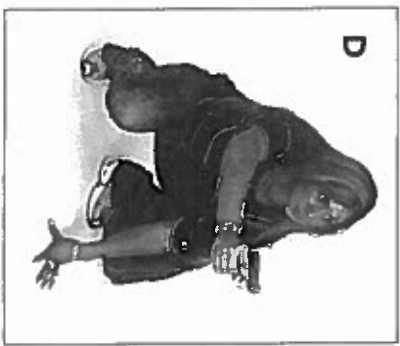
A



B



C



D



E



F

*Presentation from standing to prone. The gun is accessed (A) and rotated toward the target (B), and the knees are bent with the support hand extended forward (C). The body is lowered until the support hand touches the ground (D) and then the legs are extended rearward while the gun is extended forward (E). Both hands join to form a firing position with the elbows on the ground (F).*



*An alternative prone position is the rollover prone position, in which the body is rolled to put its weight on the firing side, with the support-side leg crossed over the firing-side leg. The rollover prone position allows a somewhat lower body position.*

is transferred to that hand. The legs are then extended rearward, the body comes to rest on the ground, the hands join together in a two-hand grip and the body assumes the final position of the prone position. During the entire process of lowering the body to the ground, it is critical to keep the gun extended out forward in the firing hand, rotated toward the threat. Also, the trigger finger is kept out of the trigger guard until the full prone position is achieved, to prevent unintentional firing if you are jarred as you lower to the ground.

Use knee pads or a padded mat during dry-fire or live-fire practice of this technique. Initially strive for precision and smoothness in the technique, not speed, and always be aware of the position of the gun in relation to the support hand and the rest of the body. Also, be extremely careful to maintain the trigger finger outside the trigger guard and alongside the frame until the prone position is assumed and you are ready to fire.

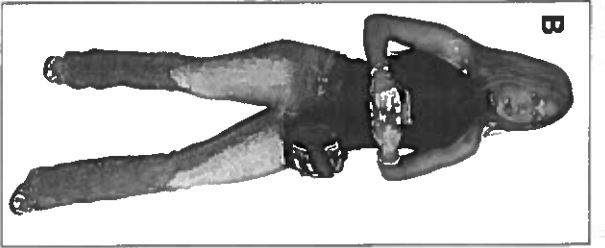
## **PRESENTATION FROM STANDING TO LYING ON BACK**

If you are violently attacked, there is a good chance that you will end up on the ground on your back, either as the result of a shove or trip by your attacker or because you lose your footing while retreating rearward. There may also be occasions when you would deliberately go to the ground, such as when your attacker is advancing so quickly toward you that you cannot back up quickly enough to escape, and there's not even enough time to draw your defensive firearm. In this situation, getting on the ground, on your back, creates distance between you and your attacker, and allows you to use your feet to kick him or ward off his assault. This action can also give you additional time to present your defensive firearm.

Whether you go to the ground accidentally or intentionally, your ability to deliver effective fire from a position in which you are lying on your back may be critical in surviving a violent assault.

When practicing or using this technique, the key is to remain in control as you go from a standing position to a position on your back. Rather than a falling movement, you should employ a controlled rearward roll. Begin the technique by accessing, gripping, and pulling the handgun from the holster in the standing position. Rotate the firearm forward toward the target, but do not join the support hand to the firing hand. Be sure to keep the trigger finger outside of the trigger guard and alongside the pistol frame. Bend the knees to lower the buttocks to the ground, and at the same time extend the support hand to the side and slightly behind you in anticipation of using it to feel for the ground. When your buttocks touch or nearly touch the ground, roll rearward onto your back. Keep your back curved





*Presentation from standing to lying on back. The gun is accessed (A), and withdrawn from the concealment device and rotated toward the target (B). The body assumes a squatting position with the support hand extended (C), the buttocks are lowered to the ground (D) and the upper body leans back while the legs extend forward with the knees apart to keep them out of the line of fire (E). Finally, the hands join and the gun is raised to point at the center of mass of the target (F).*

forward to produce more of a rolling movement and to prevent your back from hitting the ground all at one time. Use the support hand to help stabilize this roll. You should end up with your back on the ground, feet wide apart and knees slightly bent, your shoulders off the ground and your head up, and the gun gripped with both hands, pointing toward the target.

Be aware of the position of the gun's muzzle during every phase of this technique. Also, your knees, although slightly bent, should be kept as low to the ground as possible to prevent the gun from crossing them.

Practice the technique initially without a firearm to get accustomed to the body control required to execute the roll properly. Use a padded mat to prevent injury or discomfort. After the movement becomes smooth and natural, incorporate your unloaded gun or a training simulator into the movement. Maintain an awareness of the muzzle position in relation to your knees or other parts of your body; drop your knees if necessary to keep them from being crossed by the muzzle.

It may be difficult to find a range allowing you to practice this technique with live ammunition. Rigorous dry-fire practice, however, should prepare you to use this technique effectively should the need arise.

# CHAPTER 20

## Presentation, Movement and Fire From Different Positions

The previous two chapters covered specific techniques for integrating pistol presentation with different shooting positions. In each of these techniques, the shooter remains more or less stationary.

In real life, however, you may encounter many situations in which presentation must be coupled with movement. For example, as has been stated in other chapters, one of the first things you should do when faced with an actual threat in any environment is move to cover (assuming you cannot avoid or escape the threat). Cover may be in front of you, to your side or to your rear, and it may be high or low; you must be able to move to it quickly.

As was presented in Chapter 18: Utilizing Cover and Concealment Outside the Home, there are occasions when there is insufficient time to move to cover safely. For instance, in a close range confrontation with an assailant who has already produced a weapon, turning to run for distant cover may simply give your attacker the opportunity to shoot, club or stab you in the back. Under such conditions, you may be better off firing at the criminal before, or as, you move to cover.

Movement of another sort is required when you must quickly engage attackers from your side or rear. You must develop the ability to quickly turn, assume a stable firing position, and fire accurately if necessary.

### PRESENTATION AND MOVEMENT

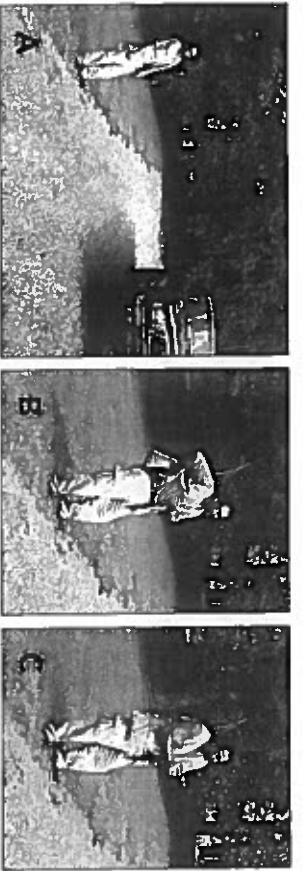
There are three basic techniques of presentation and movement that you should master: presentation and moving forward to cover (both high and low); presentation and moving laterally to cover (both high and low); and presentation and moving rearward.

### PRESENTATION AND MOVING FORWARD TO COVER

Although you should generally try to move away from a threat that is in front of you, there are times when the best cover—or the only cover—is located forward of your position.

When you move to cover, keep your knees bent and your hips lowered, increasing your stability and making you a smaller target. Keep your eyes facing forward, toward the attacker.

Whether you wear the gun in a holster, fanny pack or holster purse, the gun should be drawn as you initiate movement and held in a ready position as you move. This allows the gun to be extended forward and fired if necessary before cover has been reached. The



*Presentation and moving forward to cover. Starting some distance from cover (A), the handgun is presented (B, C), and the defender moves forward with the gun at the ready position (D, E). When approaching cover, the gun is extended, and may be fired if necessary (F, G). Finally (H), the defender uses the cover for support.*

gun may be held in two hands or in one hand, if the support hand is needed to keep your balance, fend for obstacles, or fend off an attack.

In darkness or reduced light, particularly in an unfamiliar site providing questionable footing, you should modify your movement technique to reduce the chance of tripping over obstacles. With most of your weight on your rear foot, advance your lead foot with the toes pointing forward and slightly down, feeling for obstacles. Carefully lower your lead foot, toes first, while feeling for any objects that would interfere with solid foot placement. Your toes will touch the ground first, followed by the rest of your foot. When your lead foot is firmly planted on the ground, your weight is shifted to that foot, and your

rear foot is lifted and brought forward in a straight line to become the new lead foot, and the process is repeated.

This technique allows you to move confidently on uncertain terrain, such as a gravel road, or a lawn, and additionally allows you to move in stealth and silence when necessary. With practice, you will be able to move with surprising speed, even in darkness.

## PRESENTATION AND MOVING LATERALLY TO COVER

When cover is located off to one side, rather than to the rear, when you find yourself backed up against a wall, or when there are multiple threats arrayed to your front and side, only lateral movement may be possible.



*Presentation and movement laterally to cover. Starting away from cover (A), the defender extends the lead foot laterally as the gun is drawn (B), and brings the trailing foot in, without crossing the lead foot (C). This is repeated until the defender is behind cover (D, E). During movement, the gun is extended and may be fired if necessary.*

To move laterally, first bend your knees and drop your hips (though not as much as when moving rearward). Then extend the lead foot to the side with the outside edge held



*When moving laterally, the lead foot is extended, the trailing foot is brought into the lead foot without crossing it (middle), and the process is repeated as necessary. The lead foot is extended with the edge of the foot down, to feel for obstacles (right).*

down in order to feel for obstacles. The inside edge of the lead foot plants in position first, and the foot rolls to the outside edge as the weight is shifted to the foot. Do not shift your weight to the lead foot until that foot is fully flat on the ground. In this way, if your foot encounters an obstacle or an uneven surface, you can move it to a different location that is clear of debris without causing a loss of balance.

Note that the feet do not cross during this lateral movement. Once the lead foot is planted, the trailing foot is brought inward only until it can be planted alongside the lead foot. The lead foot extends again, repeating the process. The trailing foot never crosses or passes the lead foot.

Again, whether you wear the gun in a holster, fanny pack or holster purse, the gun should be drawn as you initiate movement, and held in a ready position as you move.

This allows the gun to be extended forward and fired if necessary before cover has been reached. The gun may be held in two hands or in one hand, if the support hand is needed to keep your balance, feel for obstacles, or fend off an attack.

## PRESENTATION AND MOVING REARWARD

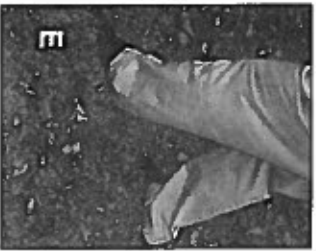
The movement used in moving rearward is similar to that used to move forward—an exaggerated walk with knees bent and the hips lowered. Your lead foot is extended rearward with your toe pointing down and just barely above the ground; in this way your foot can feel for obstacles or debris. The toe of your lead foot touches the ground first, and the rest of your foot rolls down to plant the sole flat on the ground. When your lead foot is



*Presentation and moving rearward to cover. Starting some distance from cover (A), the body is lowered as the gun is drawn, and the lead foot extended rearward, toe pointed down to feel for obstacles (B). The trailing foot is brought alongside the lead foot (C), and the process is repeated as necessary. During movement, the gun is extended toward the target and may be fired if required (D, E). Finally, a lateral step may be taken to place the body fully behind the object used for cover, and the gun may be fired (F).*



*When moving rearward, the body's weight shifts to one foot, and the lead foot is extended rearward with the toe down to feel for obstacles (A). The heel of the lead foot is placed on the ground (B). The body weight is then shifted to the lead foot, and the trailing foot becomes the new lead foot, sliding rearward with the toe down (C & D). The heel of the lead foot is placed on the ground (E), allowing the weight to be shifted and the process to be repeated.*



solidly on the ground, your weight shifts to that foot, the other foot becomes the lead foot and the whole process is repeated.

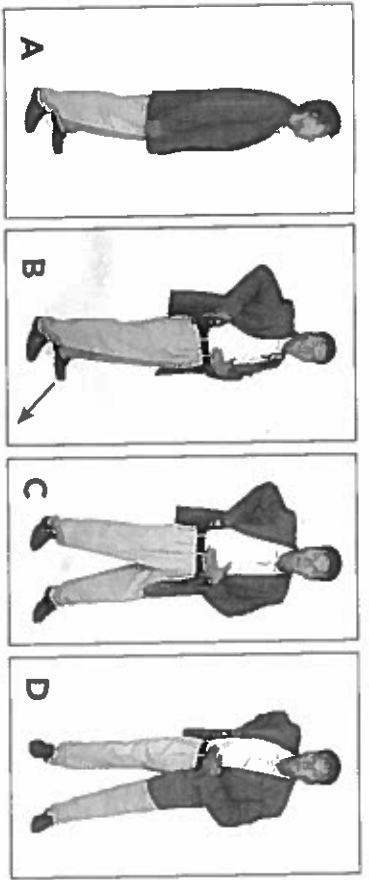
## **PRESENTATION AND TURNING**

Threats to your safety do not appear only from the front; they may also come from the side or the rear. You must develop the ability to swiftly engage threats from any direction.

### **PRESENTATION AND TURNING 90 DEGREES TO THE STRONG OR WEAK SIDE**

In all presentation techniques that involve turning, the first step is to acquire a grip on the gun in the holster, holster purse or fanny pack and bring the support hand to the chest before the turning movement begins. This is done to locate and stabilize the gun during body rotation.

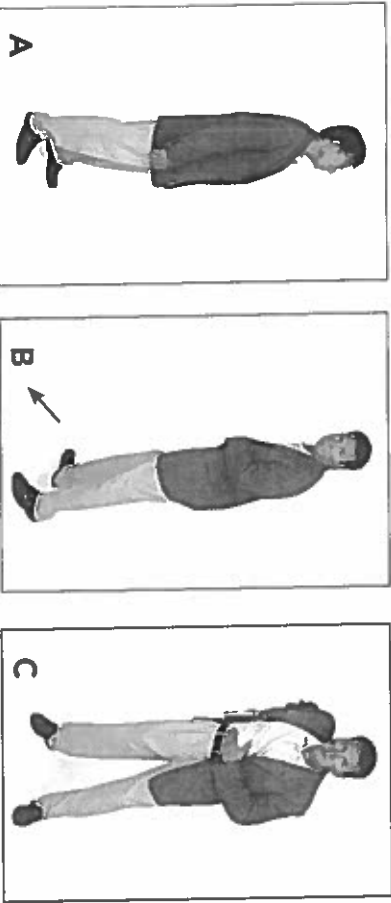
The turning motion must be completed, and the body facing the threat, before the gun is withdrawn from the holster; this prevents the gun from swinging in a wide arc. Whether you are turning toward the firing-hand or support-hand side, you can accomplish the turn in either of two ways. Toward the firing-hand side, you can rotate your body by pulling your firing-side leg rearward, or advancing your support-side leg forward. Turning toward the support-hand side is performed in the opposite fashion: the firing-side leg can be moved forward, or the support-side leg pulled rearward. As a general rule, because techniques in which you step forward give you greater visibility for stable foot placement, they are preferred to those in which you step backward.



*Presentation and turning 90 degrees to the firing side. From a starting position (A), the defender turns toward the threat and accesses the gun (B), slides the support-side foot forward (C), and faces the target to present the firearm in the normal manner (D).*

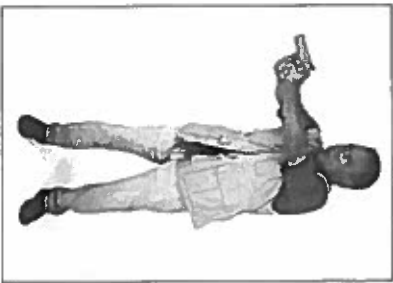
In a real-life encounter, you may be on unfamiliar or uneven ground, or a surface covered in debris. You may also be in dim light. Under these conditions, stepping either forward or rearward without looking may cause your foot to hit or stumble upon an unseen obstacle. To promote stable footing, keep your foot close to the ground as you move it, and feel for debris with your toe.

In some situations, it may not be practical or possible to move your feet to face a target. This may be the case when a threat must be engaged suddenly, or when the ground you are standing on does not allow you to move your feet without the risk of stumbling or falling. Under such circumstances, you can use a "turret turn" to quickly engage targets to either side. With this turn, your feet stay in place, and the shoulders and upper body are rotated as a turret to bring the gun into alignment with the target. For many people, an isosceles shooting position gives the greatest flexibility to turn in either direction.



*Presentation and turning 90 degrees to the support side. From a starting position (A), the defender turns toward the threat and accesses the gun (B), slides the firing hand-side foot around to face the target (C), and presents the firearm in the normal manner.*





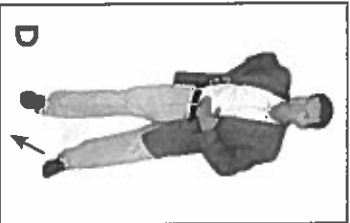
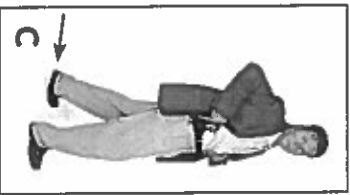
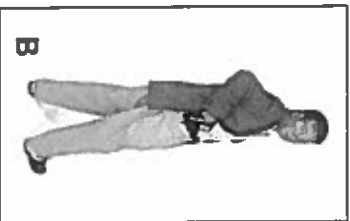
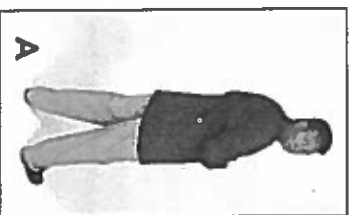
*When there is not time to execute a complete turn to the support or firing hand side, a turret turn may be used to address a threat to the side.*

## **PRESENTATION AND TURNING 180 DEGREES TO THE FIRING HAND OR SUPPORT SIDE**

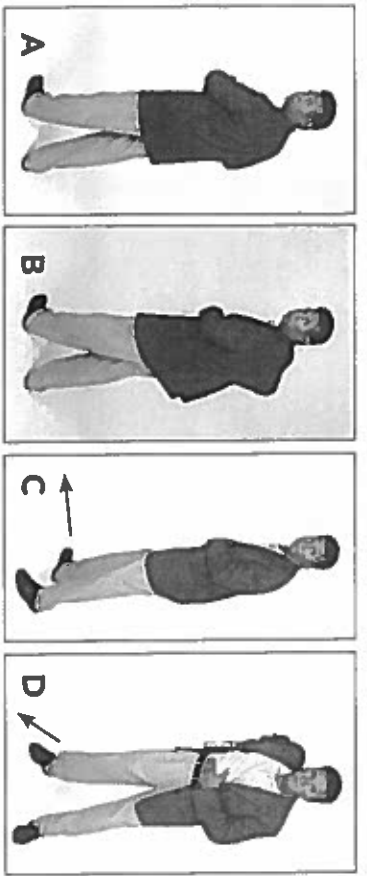
As when you are turning 90 degrees to the firing hand side or support side, you must first acquire a grip on the gun in the holster, holster purse or fanny pack before the turning movement begins. Also, your gun is not withdrawn until your turning motion is completed, and your body faces the target.

To turn 180 degrees to your left, you can either step forward and around with your right foot, pivoting on your left, or step rearward and around with your left foot, pivoting on your right, before rotating your body to the left. To rotate 180 degrees to the right, reverse the movement: step forward and around with your left foot or rearward and around with your right foot. As was pointed out earlier, techniques in which you step forward give you better visibility for stable foot placement, and are thus generally preferred to techniques in which you must step rearward.

The particular technique you choose will depend upon your immediate surroundings. For example, it is usually better to increase your distance from your attacker rather than



*Presentation and turning 180 degrees to the firing hand side. From a starting position (A), the defender looks over his shoulder toward the threat as he accesses the gun (B), slides the support-side foot forward in an arc (C), and pivots on the firing-side foot until he faces the target and can present the firearm (D).*



*Presentation and turning 180 degrees to the support side. From a starting position (A), the defender looks over his shoulder toward the threat as he accesses the gun (B), slides the firing hand-side foot forward in an arc (C), and pivots on the weak-side foot until he faces the target and is able to present the firearm (D).*

move toward him; thus it would seem that your turning movement should always begin by stepping forward with the foot opposite the direction of the turn. Stepping forward might not always be possible, however, so you must learn to complete the turn by stepping rearward as well.

When you are attacked from the rear at very close range, execute your 180 degree turn to leave the non-gun side of your body facing toward the attacker. For example, if you carry your gun in a shooting-side hip holster on the right side, at the first sign of an attack, put your firing hand on the gun, advance your right foot forward and around to the left, and then turn your body to the left. This will protect your gun from an arm's-length assailant and will allow you to fend off his attack with your support hand.

The exact shooting position you end up in depends upon your final foot position. In the example above, if your right foot swings around until it is on the same line, perpendicular to the target, as your left foot, you can employ an isosceles stance. Swinging the right foot only part of the way around will put you into more of a Weaver stance.

## **PRACTICING PRESENTATION, MOVEMENT AND TURNING**

Your goal in all your practice should be to simulate realistic situations as much as possible. Rather than simply repeat the same drills over and over, try to combine the various skills in new and challenging combinations. For example, try a drill in which you begin in a seated position, then rise to your feet, turn 180 degrees, fire two shots and then move to low cover in a kneeling position and fire two more shots. The number of such combinations is virtually infinite, and is limited only by your own imagination.

If your local range does not allow such drills, you can at least try them in your designated dry-fire area. Also, many practical shooting matches give you the opportunity to test your skills under the pressure of competition and tight time constraints. See Appendix C: Opportunities for Skills Enhancement for more information on this form of competition.

# CHAPTER 21

## Handgun Retention

If you carry a pistol on your person in public, you must make every effort to ensure that you retain control of that gun under any and all circumstances. During an encounter, of course, you must retain your pistol in order to use it for self-defense. However, you must retain possession of your gun at other times as well.

Three factors contribute to pistol retention: the design and use of your holster, holster purse or fanny pack; your ability to recognize and avoid situations in which pistol retention is threatened; and your mastery of pistol retention techniques.

### DESIGN AND USE OF YOUR HOLSTER, HOLSTER PURSE OR FANNY PACK

The way a holster, holster purse or fanny pack is made and used has a large effect on the degree of pistol retention it provides. In general, better quality devices provide better retention. Top quality molded leather or synthetic holsters, for example, will usually better retain a handgun than lightly-constructed fabric holsters in which the gun fits loosely.

Holster purses and fanny packs, too, vary in their retention properties. Some purses and packs have retention straps, often fastened with Velcro®, inside the gun compartment; these will retain the gun even when the compartment's zipper or snap closure opens.

Better holsters, holster purses and fanny packs often incorporate features that promote retention. For example, retention is improved in double-stitched, snugly-molded holsters that only allow pistol withdrawal in a specific direction, and which resist an attacker's efforts to rip the gun out of the holster. There have been cases of attackers under the influence of drugs who have literally pulled a holster apart while pulling away the gun inside.

Note, too, that there are several types of holsters that simply, by their design, limit your ability to retain the gun. For instance, crossdraw holsters and many shoulder holsters hold the pistol with the grip frame toward the front—a poor location for retention. Small-of-the-back holsters, too, can present a retention problem.

Guns in holster purses, on the other hand, may be lost if the purse itself is stolen. Often a purse-snatcher will come up behind a woman carrying a purse on a shoulder strap, cut the



*Holster affording good retention by way of features such as safety strap, belt loops and gun-specific molded fit.*



*This holster purse has several features giving good retention, including a robust shoulder strap and secure gun compartment closure.*

*strap, and yank the purse away. To foil this, some high-security purses have straps reinforced with steel mesh that resist cutting.*

*The ability of even the best gun concealment device to retain your pistol can be compromised if you don't use the device properly.*

*Always use the correct holster for your gun, and if you use a hip holster, also select a sturdy belt of the proper width. With fanny packs, proper positioning in the front is also critical.*

## **RECOGNIZING AND AVOIDING SITUATIONS IN WHICH PISTOL RETENTION IS THREATENED**

The absolute best way to promote pistol retention is to recognize and avoid those situations in which retention is threatened. In general, this also means avoiding situations in which your life or limb could be threatened, for one threat to retention is that posed by assailants who want to take your gun.

In Chapter 4: Awareness you learned about the different levels of awareness. Always be conscious of what is going on in your environment. Being in an Aware condition may allow you to recognize many threats to retention, such as a pickpocket bumping into you in a crowd or in an elevator.

You must also recognize that there are areas and activities you should avoid altogether to ensure gun retention. In reality, when you are armed, you should take even greater care to avoid potential trouble when you're out in public. Think ahead. Suggestions for avoiding threatening situations are in Chapter 6: Avoiding Confrontations Outside the Home.



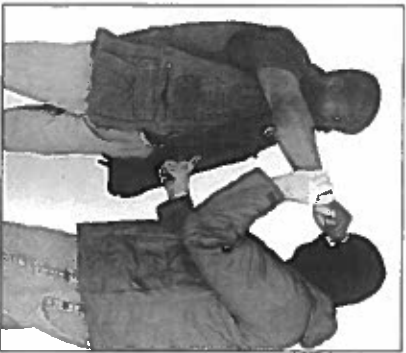
*Careless handling of your pistol, such as hanging your holster purse on your chair while visiting the restroom at a restaurant, can lead to loss of retention.*

## PISTOL RETENTION TECHNIQUES

Beyond secure concealment and avoiding risky situations, certain physical techniques may also help you retain your firearm.

Be aware that this book contains only a sample of the many available pistol retention techniques. You are urged to review materials that deal specifically with this subject, or to take advantage of courses on gun retention offered at many firearm training centers.

There are four basic methods to prevent an attacker from taking away your firearm: *be aware of any attempt to disarm you; block your attacker from touching your gun; block an attacker from withdrawing your gun from its concealment device; and control your gun by maintaining contact with it.*



*In an arm's-length physical confrontation, an assailant may easily grab a defender's holstered gun.*

### Be Aware of Any Attempt to Disarm You.

Always maintain an awareness of the location of strangers or potential threats in relation to you and your firearm. Be especially wary of persons exhibiting suspicious behavior, such as those who try to approach too close or who seem, by their body language, to be positioning themselves for a lunge or a grab. Be alert to the most subtle clues, such as a stranger's repeated glances at your holster purse or at the slight bulge caused by your hip holster.

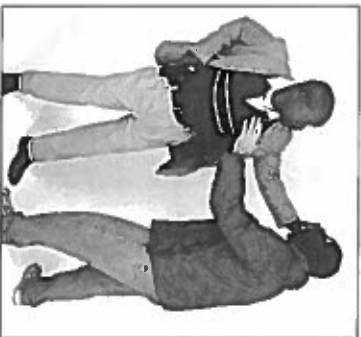
Also develop an awareness of any physical contact, no matter how slight or innocent, in the area of your gun. In a crowded corridor, you may mentally dismiss such a touch as incidental contact; but it actually may represent a criminal's effort to determine if you are wearing a gun or just a phone. Sometimes that slight contact will be all that you feel.

Train yourself to sense even the slightest contact with the clothes or body in the vicinity of your gun, and to regard it as suspicious.

**Block an Attacker from Touching Your Gun.** Anytime you sense a criminal's attempt to disarm you, you must instantly take steps to prevent him from touching your gun.

The exact response you make will depend upon the nature of the attempt your assailant makes. With an assailant coming at you from the front, you may be able to blade your body so that the gun in its concealment device is on the side of your body opposite from him. The attacker will find it more difficult to acquire your gun if he has to reach all the way across your body.

Any attempt to grab your gun should be blocked



*Armed citizen warding off assailant with support hand while retaining pistol with firing hand.*

or parted with the support hand, if possible. At the same time, access and grip your gun with your firing hand. With your hand on the gun your assailant will be unable to touch it (or touch enough of it to wrest it away from you). This position also allows you to quickly draw your gun if the circumstances dictate.

If you are carrying your gun in a hip holster or shoulder-strap holster purse, you may be able to block an assailant's grab by simply clamping the gun or holster purse to your body using your elbow. This move may work especially well when an attacker tries to get to your gun from behind. After securing the gun against the body, you may turn that side of your body sharply away from the assailant and get a grip on your gun with your firing hand.

**Block an Attacker from Withdrawing Your Gun from its Concealment Device.** If your attacker succeeds in getting a grip on your gun, you must keep him from withdrawing it from the concealment device at all costs. One method of preventing him from



*Defender blocking assailant's attempt to remove gun from hip holster by clamping gun with the firing-side elbow.*

acquiring your gun is to simply put your hand over his and apply pressure to prevent gun withdrawal. For example, if an assailant acquires a grip on your gun in your hip holster, simply grab his hand with your firing hand and push downward to prevent the gun from being withdrawn. Strike at his throat or eyes with your free hand, stomp on his instep, and kick at his knees and groin. This may distract, startle or incapacitate him, and his grip may weaken, allowing you to pull your gun away.

If your attacker is larger or stronger than you, or if your concealment device makes gun retention difficult, use both of your hands to keep him from acquiring your gun, and keep kicking at his knees, groin and shins.

Yell for help. Also, yell at your assailant: **LET GO OF MY GUN!** This has several effects. First, it may startle or distract him. Second, it will increase the power of your efforts, in the same way that a sharp yell gives a martial artist additional strength and power when breaking boards or executing a kick. And finally, it will draw attention to your attack, which may panic your attacker and cause him to flee.

**Control Your Gun by Retaining Your Grip.** Despite your efforts, your attacker may succeed in withdrawing your gun from its concealment device. Try to maintain your grip on his hand(s). Even against a larger, stronger attacker, you will often be able to control the direction of the muzzle. Avoid letting go at all costs. Use your feet to kick at vulnerable areas, such as his knees, groin, instep and shins.

At the same time, yell loudly: **LET GO! LET GO!** The more noise you make, the more likely a police officer or bystander will notice your predicament and come to your aid.

Keep in mind that the vast majority of criminals are not interested in getting into a prolonged struggle with a victim; they would prefer to complete their criminal activity quickly and quietly, without attracting attention. By maintaining control of your gun, you

are buying time for yourself. He will be afraid that your yells have attracted the attention of the police, or of someone who will call the police. Eventually he may get tired of your kicks bruising his legs and your screams hurting his eardrums, and he may simply give up and flee.

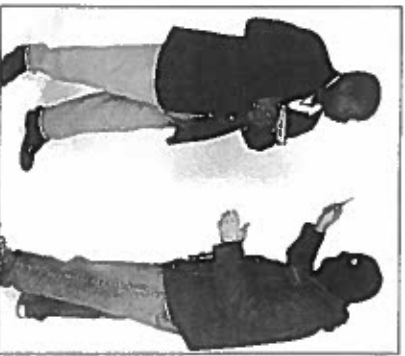
**Retaining Your Drawn Gun.** Occasionally, you will hear a person state that he or she is afraid to have a gun for self-defense because, in the event of an attack, "the criminal will probably just take it from me." In reality, that almost never happens. Studies by University of Florida criminologist Gary Kleck and University of Chicago economist John Lott show that guns are used for self-defense up to 2.5 million times a year—hardly an indicator that guns are being used against their law-abiding owners. If you are properly trained, and willing to use your gun to protect your life, that should virtually never happen.

Most criminals will simply flee when you present your defensive firearm. A criminal who does not must be regarded with special caution. He may be under the influence of drugs, and in his chemically distorted view of reality may believe himself to be invulnerable. He may think that you are unwilling to pull the trigger, and he may talk to you while working his way close enough to deflect and grab your gun: "You're not going to shoot me." He may also use this line of talk to distract you while his accomplice sneaks up behind you.

To prevent your gun from being taken away in such a situation, you should first maintain (and if possible, increase) your distance from your assailant. Pay no attention to his words; order him to STAY BACK! or GO AWAY! in a loud and determined voice. If he is very close, pull your gun back from your extended firing position to a retention position with both hands on the gun: this will put the gun a couple of feet further away from the attacker.

Also, be aware of other assailants. Your attacker's posturing may simply be a ruse to buy time for his partner in crime to approach you, unseen, from the rear. While keeping your gun on your attacker, turn your head slightly to the right and left to pick up movement to your side and rear in your peripheral vision, without losing visual contact with your primary attacker. If possible, back up to a wall or other solid object.

Finally, be ready and willing to shoot if necessary. Remember that an unarmed attacker who intends to take your gun away can be a deadly threat. You have retreated; you have warned him: if he persists with an effort to cause you serious bodily harm, you must shoot until he stops the attack, either by fleeing, giving up or becoming incapacitated by his injuries.



*Defender with gun pulled back to retention position using both hands.*



*Armed citizen holding onto gun with both hands while yelling and kicking at attacker.*

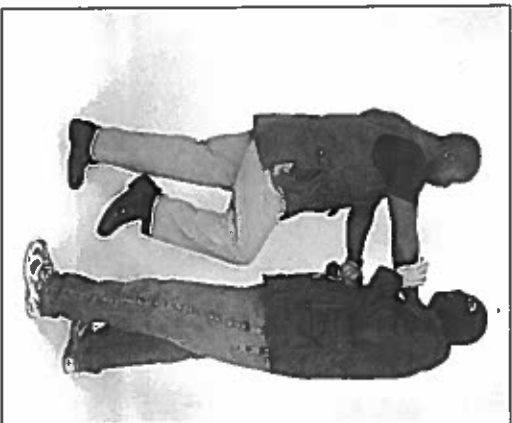
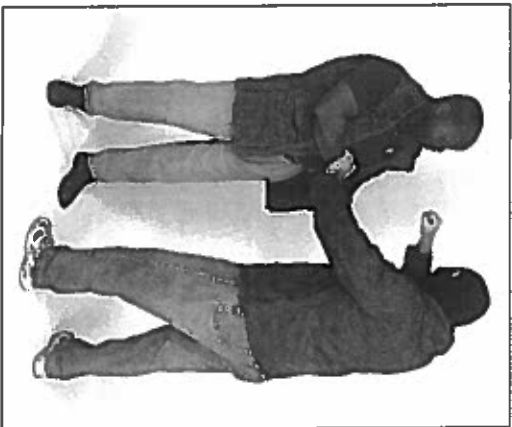
## TRAINING FOR PISTOL RETENTION

To improve your pistol retention skills, you will need a training partner and a training gun. Never use a real gun for pistol retention training. Several brands of non-firing plastic training guns are available, in versions that are identical in size and weight to most common pistols. These training guns should be used for all your retention activities.

Have your partner try to take your training gun from varied positions; experiment with different techniques for thwarting the takeover attempts to see what works best for you. Make your training realistic; your partner should make a serious effort to take your gun. Don't forget to yell, and don't give up.

Also, don't focus exclusively upon the physical techniques for blocking or resisting an assailant's attempt to take your gun. It is always easier to retain your gun by preventing an assailant from grabbing it. Simulate situations in which an attacker tries to acquire your drawn training gun; experiment to determine how far away he must be kept to prevent him from lunging and touching it. Remember that distance; in a real-life encounter, an attacker who comes closer than that poses a deadly threat.

In addition to the techniques described above, there are many pistol retention techniques based on the joint locking and joint manipulation techniques taught in martial arts such as aikido. These techniques can be used to promote gun retention at each stage of an attempt to take your gun. Though these techniques are beyond the scope of this book, when properly applied they can be extremely effective in both thwarting an assailant's attempt to obtain your gun and in disabling him. Consult a martial arts instructor conversant with street self-defense, or a training facility offering gun retention classes.



*Many martial arts contain techniques that can be used to promote gun retention; these can be mastered through diligent study at a martial arts studio.*



**PART VI**

**SPECIAL  
DEFENSIVE  
SHOOTING  
TECHNIQUES**



## CHAPTER 22

### Firing- and Support-Hand Presentation

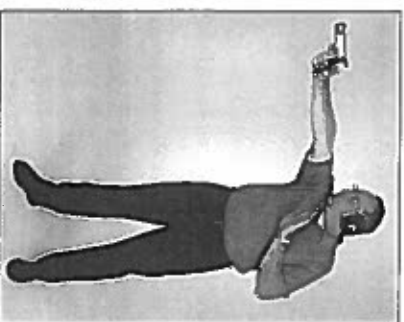
In a real-life defensive encounter, you may not always have the ability to use two hands to present and grip your gun. You may need one hand to hold a flashlight, support a child, use your cell phone to call for help, or maintain your balance in dark and unfamiliar surroundings. In all of these situations, you may have to use your handgun with one hand only.

#### PRESENTING THE PISTOL WITH THE FIRING HAND ONLY

The procedure for presenting your pistol from a concealment device using your firing hand only is basically the same as that for presenting the gun with two hands, except that the JOIN step is omitted. When practicing one-handed presentation, keep the support hand close to the middle of the chest. In an actual encounter, of course, the support hand may be used for a variety of purposes.

With some concealed carry devices, such as certain fanny packs and holster purses, two hands are desirable or even necessary to gain access to the gun. If you use such a device, experiment to determine if one-handed access is possible, as well as to formulate the proper technique for doing so. If you cannot under any circumstance acquire the gun with one hand only, you might consider replacing that firearm concealment device with one that does permit one-handed gun access.

Your selection of the Reverse Punch or Forward Punch one-handed shooting positions—or any other such shooting position—will be determined by the immediate circumstances. The appropriateness of any position will be judged on the basis of the extent to which the position is balanced, stable and safe.

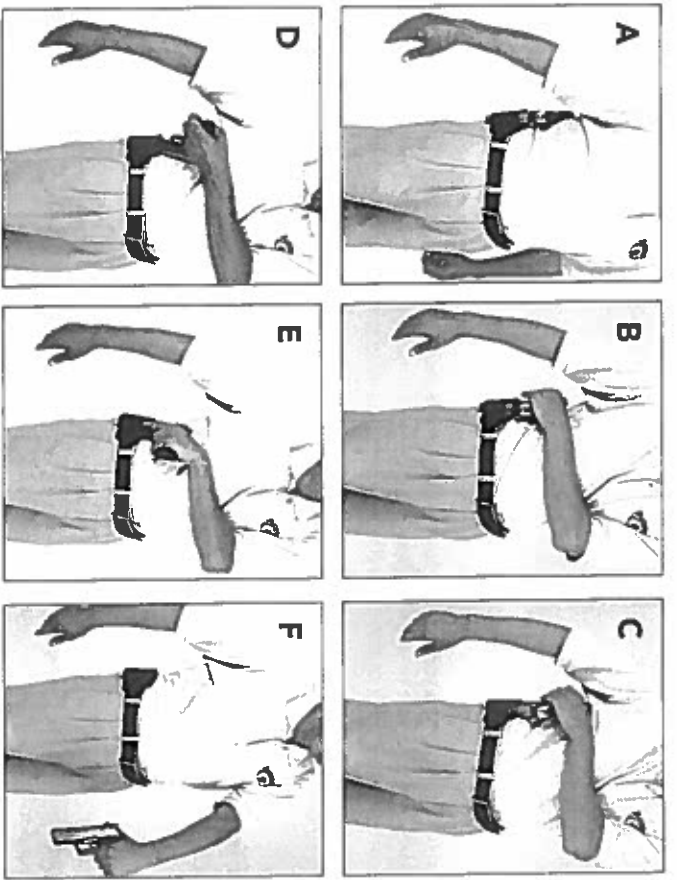


*Shooter demonstrating firing-hand only presentation technique.*

#### PRESENTING THE PISTOL WITH THE SUPPORT HAND

Support-hand presentation skills are potentially useful in the event of an incapacitating injury to your firing hand or arm. In this technique, the support hand, unaided by the firing hand, withdraws the gun from the holster, holster purse or fanny pack.

Most firearm concealment devices do not permit easy withdrawal of the firearm by the support hand. Many snug-fitting molded holsters only allow the gun to be pulled out in

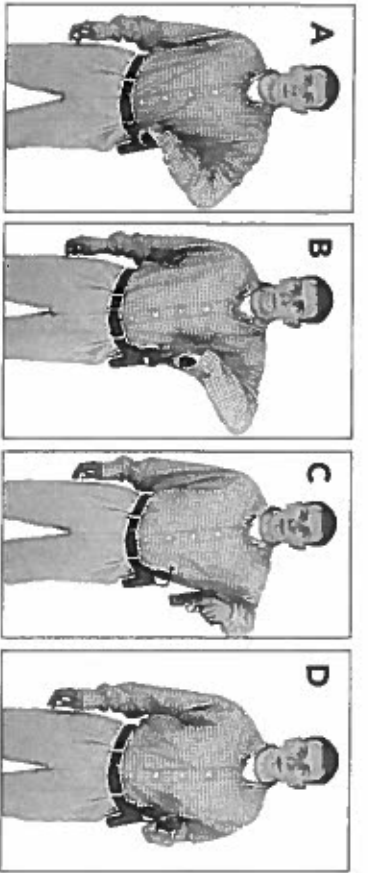


*Support hand only technique from a hip holster. (A) Gun in holster, (B) accessing the gun with the support hand, (C) pulling the gun partway out of the holster, (D) turning the gun with the muzzle still in the holster so that the butt is forward, (E) getting a final grip on the gun, and (F) removing the gun completely from the holster, muzzle down.*

one direction, and some designs by their very nature (such as small-of-the-back holsters) are virtually impossible for the support hand to use.

Other firearm concealment devices can, in theory, allow support hand only access. Crossdraw holsters, for example, place the gun with the grip frame conveniently positioned for support hand withdrawal. Some shoulder holsters, as well as certain holster purses and fanny packs, also permit support hand only presentation. Be aware, however, that such presentation requires careful execution. A person using his or her support hand alone to draw from a crossdraw holster or holster purse mounted on the support-side shoulder will have to be conscious of always keeping the gun pointed in a safe direction. In addition, the hand and wrist position required makes it awkward to access the gun. Experiment with your own firearm concealment device to determine if support-hand-only access is possible, and if so, what technique is best.

In addition to practicing firing- and support-hand-only presentation techniques, you should also familiarize yourself with one-handed techniques for reloading and clearing stoppages. Such advanced techniques are beyond the scope of the current work, but are taught at some shooting schools, and described in many works on defensive shooting (see Appendix D, Information and Training Resources). Such techniques should be practiced only with an empty gun, and with dummy ammunition.



*Presenting the gun from a crossdraw holster with the support hand only: (A) Accessing the gun, (B) pulling the gun from the holster (C & D) rotating the gun toward the target, being careful not to cross the body or sweep the muzzle laterally. At (D) the gun may be fired instinctively, or extended toward the target and fired using the sights.*

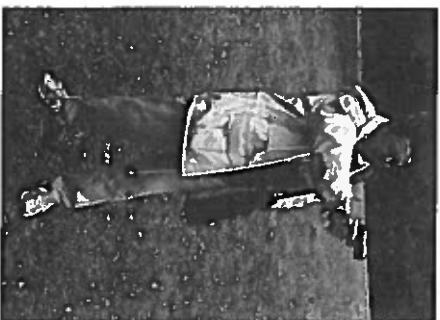


# CHAPTER 23

## Point Shooting

Much of this book is devoted to aimed-fire shooting techniques in which the sights are aligned to achieve a hit. Aimed fire is the best overall technique to use in most instances, as it is the surest way of making an accurate shot. Aimed fire is not the only defensive shooting technique you should know, however. An attack can occur so quickly and at such close range that you must shoot before sight alignment can be achieved. In such a situation, point shooting may be preferred.

Point shooting is a defensive shooting technique used at close range in which you extend the firearm forward below the level of the eyes, align the body with the target, and aim the gun using your body's own kinesthetic sense as well as the position of the gun in your peripheral vision. Your kinesthetic sense is your awareness of the position of every part of your body in relation to every other part. This sense enables you to point your finger accurately at an object even though you cannot see your hand, or to touch your fingertips to your nose with your eyes closed. With practice, your kinesthetic sense will allow you to point your firearm accurately at a target.



*Shooter demonstrating point shooting technique.*

Your peripheral vision also contributes to accurate point shooting. One of the major differences between aimed fire and point shooting is that, in the latter technique, your visual focus is on the target, not the sights. Nonetheless, your extended gun is visible in your peripheral vision, and you are thus aware of its alignment with the target.

## ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF POINT SHOOTING

The major advantage of the point shooting technique is speed of presentation. It takes precious time to raise the gun to your eye level, acquire the sights, align them with each other and then finally align them with the target. With a close-range attacker, you will not have that much time. Simply extending the gun forward and pointing it at the target is much faster. Remember that the gun is held below the level of your eyes when you're employing point shooting.

Point shooting's only major limitation is simply that it is a less accurate firing technique than aimed fire. This, in turn, restricts its use to close-range confrontations, usually of 15 feet or less.

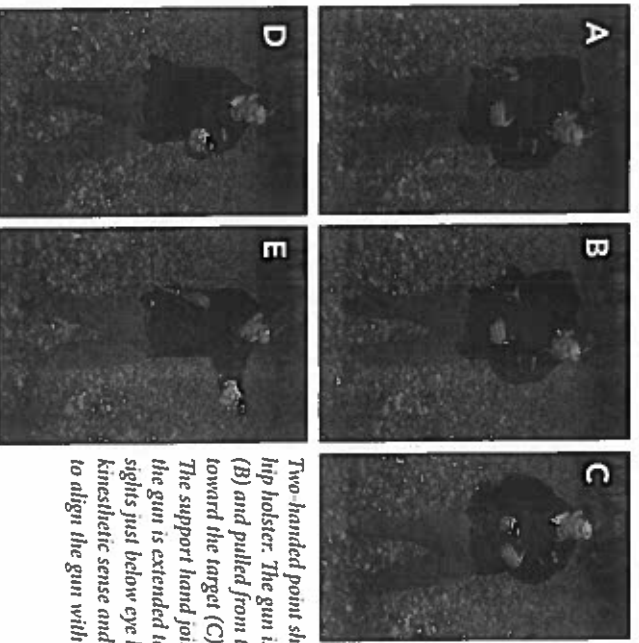
## THE POINT SHOOTING TECHNIQUE

Point shooting can be performed using a one-handed or two-handed grip; each technique has strengths and limitations. The one-handed point shooting technique is generally faster than the technique requiring a two hand hold. Furthermore, it allows the support hand to remain free to ward off a weapon wielded by an arm's length attacker, to employ a flashlight, or to steady your balance when you're on uncertain ground. In addition, the one-handed technique can be used with virtually any body position. The two-handed point shooting technique, on the other hand, has the advantages of greater recoil control, decreased arm fatigue when holding the gun for extended periods, and better handgun retention.

To perform the one-handed point shooting technique from the holster, start by facing the target with the feet approximately shoulder width apart. The knees are slightly bent and the feet are roughly on a line perpendicular to the direction of the target. The feet may be somewhat staggered, however, if this is more comfortable.

With the gun in the holster and the body facing the target, the firing hand first sweeps aside the covering clothing to access the gun, and achieves a proper grip on the grip frame. Simultaneously the support hand is brought to the chest.

The gun is next withdrawn from the holster, rotated toward the target, and extended forward. Ideally, the gun hand, wrist and arm should all be fairly straight and aligned with the target, and the gun should be situated roughly at the center of the body below eye level. Positioned at the center of the body, the gun is directly in front of the face, and its alignment with the target can be easily seen in the peripheral vision. The gun is fired as soon as you sense you are aligned with the target.



*Two-handed point shooting technique with a hip holster. The gun is accessed (A), gripped (B) and pulled from the holster and rotated toward the target (C) in the normal manner. The support hand joins the firing hand (D) and the gun is extended toward the target with the sights just below eye level (E). The shooter's kinesthetic sense and peripheral vision are used to align the gun with the target.*





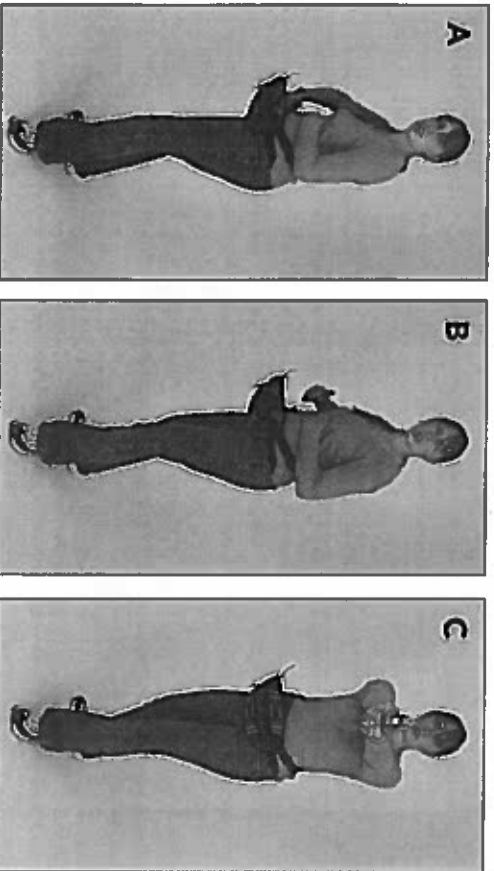
*View from front, showing how gun is below line of sight in point shooting technique.*

The two-handed point shooting technique from a holster is performed in much the same way as the one-handed techniques, with the exception that the support hand joins the firing hand before the gun is extended toward the target.

The point shooting technique can be adapted for use with other carry modes as well. From a front-mounted fanny pack or a

shoulder purse hung over the support-side shoulder, the gun is withdrawn from the pack or purse in the usual way, and is extended forward and fired as soon as it is aligned with the target. Care must be taken during rotation to keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. The handgun will still be extended from the center of the body toward the target. A similar technique is used when the gun is worn in the crossdraw position, or in a shoulder holster.

Whether the gun is presented from a holster, purse or fanny pack, the one-handed point shooting technique has the additional advantage of allowing effective shooting even when the body and feet are not square to the target. Whether the firing hand side of the body is bladed either away from or toward the target, the technique is the same: the gun is extended with the firing hand toward the target, positioned below eye level and directly in front of the face. With this positioning, the head does not have to be tilted to see the gun clearly in the peripheral vision.



*Two-handed point shooting technique from a fanny pack. With the body strongly bladed away from the target, the gun is first accessed (A) and then pulled and rotated toward the target (B). The hands join and extend the gun toward the target with the sights below eye level (C).*

## DEVELOPING THE POINT SHOOTING TECHNIQUE

To learn point shooting, first start with an empty gun in the holster in your prescribed dry-fire practice area. As you practice presentation, start slowly to ensure your mastery of the proper sequence of events. As with all presentation techniques, always make sure that your trigger finger does not contact the trigger, and the gun's safety is on, until the gun is pointing at your target.

When practicing point shooting with live ammunition, safety must always be your first priority. Go slowly at first, making sure that each step is properly executed.

Even when you can execute a fast, smooth, safe draw from the holster to a point firing position, you may still have difficulty in hitting even a close-range target consistently. Trigger control is often the problem in such circumstances, so make sure you are not flinching, jerking the trigger or dipping the gun in anticipation of recoil. Also review the basics of a shooting stance and shooting position, focusing on aspects having the most relevance for point shooting, such as grip and body alignment. In practice, try point shooting without first drawing the gun. Start from a one-handed low ready position and quickly raise the gun to the proper position. With enough practice, your body and brain will learn the hand, wrist and arm position that produces hits when point shooting, and will coordinate that with the draw movement.

Also practice point shooting with the shooting side of the body turned both toward and away from the target. In a sudden close-range confrontation, the threat may come from any direction; you will not always have the time to align your feet and body so that they are square with the target. For most people, the most awkward position is with the shooting side turned away from the target and the gun brought across the chest to assume the proper position. Just as you can accurately point your finger at an object regardless of your body alignment, so, too, can you learn to point shoot accurately in different positions.

To build accuracy, start with the target at a distance of about six feet. When you can keep all your shots on an 8 1/2" X 11" sheet of typing paper at that distance, move the target back a bit. Your groups will open up; slow down until all your shots again are contained on the sheet of paper. Repeat this process until you can use the point shooting technique quickly and accurately.

The proper gun position for accurate point shooting can also be learned through the use of laser training and sighting devices. Some of these are cartridge-shaped devices that fit in the gun's chamber and emit a beam of laser light along the axis of the bore when they are struck by the gun's firing pin. Others are used for sighting the gun, and consist of a switchable laser that is mounted in the firearm's grip or guide rod, or in a unit that affixes to the trigger guard. Properly adjusted, all of these units will put a dot of laser light where the gun's bullet will strike, helping you to improve point shooting accuracy without expending live ammunition.

# CHAPTER 24

## Instinctive Shooting

Some violent confrontations take place so suddenly and at such close range that there is neither time nor space to use either the aimed fire or point shooting techniques. Under these conditions, the instinctive shooting technique is employed.

Instinctive shooting is a one-handed shooting technique that allows the fastest possible response to a threat at arms distance. Instinctive shooting is a technique specially geared to hip holster carry, though it can be adapted for use by those using holster purses, fanny packs, and even crossdraw and shoulder holsters.

### THE INSTINCTIVE SHOOTING TECHNIQUE

Unlike either aimed fire or point shooting, in instinctive shooting the gun is not extended in front of the body, and is not seen in the peripheral visual field. It is fired from a position alongside the hip, after the gun is rotated toward the target just after clearing the holster. With practice, it is possible to use instinctive shooting to hit a target roughly 8 1/2 by 11 inches at two to six feet.

The instinctive shooting technique involves most of the same basic steps as are used to perform other presentation techniques. (NOTE: The following detailed description is based on carry of the gun in a hip holster.

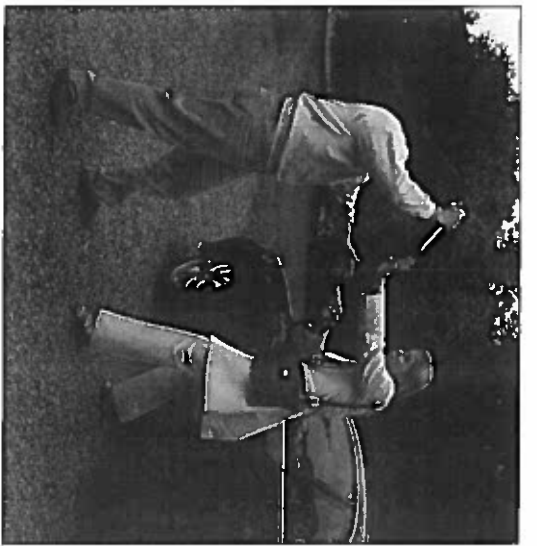
Modifications of the technique to accommodate other carry modes will be described later.) With the gun in the holster and the firing hand side bladed away from the assailant, the firing hand first sweeps aside the covering clothing to access the gun, and achieves a proper grip on the gun. Simultaneously, the support hand is brought to the chest. During an actual close-range defensive encounter, the support hand may be employed to block a knife or club.

The gun is next withdrawn from the holster, rotated toward the target, and fired just as soon as you feel that it is aligned with the target. This sequence of motions should take only a fraction of a second. The gun may be kept at the hip for immediate follow-up shots, or may be extended forward into a ready position or a shooting position suitable for aimed fire.

Special consideration must be taken when using the instinctive shooting technique with a semiautomatic pistol against a close-range attacker.



*Shooter demonstrating instinctive shooting technique.*



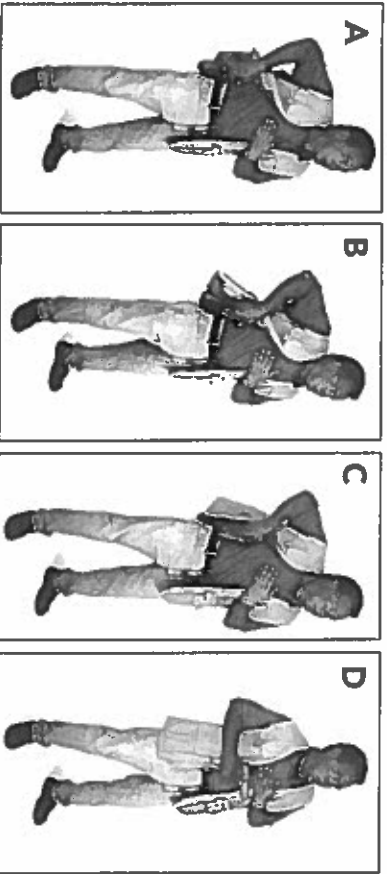
*Defender using instinctive shooting against arm's length assailant.*

If the pistol is held at the hip, it should be angled slightly outward to prevent the slide from contacting the body and causing a gun stoppage. Also, the muzzle of the gun should not contact the assailant's body; this may push the slide out of battery, preventing the gun from firing.

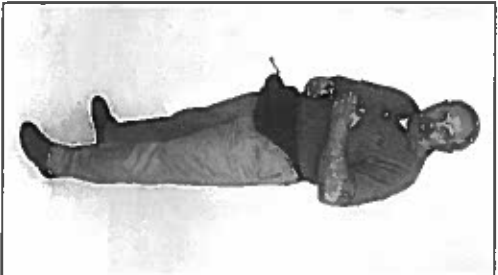
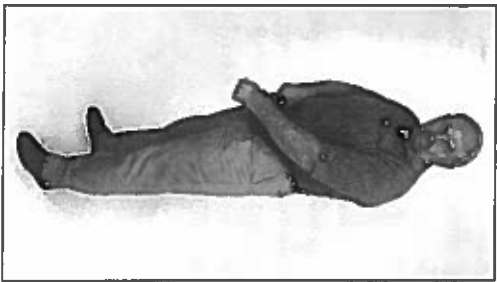
The instinctive shooting technique may be adapted for use with other carry modes as well. When the gun is drawn from a front-mounted fanny pack or a shoulder purse hung over the support-side shoulder, the gun is withdrawn from the pack or purse in the usual way, with the firing hand side sharply bladed away from the threat. Once the gun is withdrawn from the pack or purse, it is rotated forward and fired as soon as it is aligned with the target. This will usually place the gun in front of the abdomen instead of alongside the hip. With this firing position, special care must be taken during practice sessions to always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.

A similar technique is used when the gun is worn in the crossdraw position. The body should be turned almost 90 degrees away from the target; this puts the gun in a position in which it is almost pointing at the attacker as soon as it is drawn from the holster. As with the other variations on the instinctive shooting technique, the gun may be fired as soon as it is rotated into alignment with the target.

The instinctive shooting technique offers the advantage of a speedy first shot—important when your attacker may only be an arm's length away. Additionally, when you



*Instinctive presentation technique: A, accessing the gun, support hand on chest; B, pulling gun from holster; C, clearing the holster; and D, full rotation toward target, at which point the gun may be fired if necessary.*



*Left, defender bladed away from threat with fanny pack brought across body. Right, defender with gun withdrawn from holster purse and aimed at target.*

are shooting instinctively, the support hand is free to ward off a knife or club, hold a flashlight and so on.

Note that when the firing hand side of the body is sharply bladed away from the assailant, the gun may be presented from a fanny pack, holster purse or even a crossdraw holster so that it is pointing at the attacker almost as soon as it is drawn.

## DEVELOPING THE INSTINCTIVE SHOOTING TECHNIQUE

Use dry-firing to develop the basic instinctive shooting technique. Start with an unloaded gun in the holster in your prescribed dry-fire practice area. Go slowly initially to ensure your mastery of the proper sequence of events, then slowly increase your speed. As with all presentation techniques, always make sure that your trigger finger does not contact the trigger, and the gun's safety is on, until the gun is pointing in the direction of the target.

When practicing instinctive shooting with live ammunition, safety must always be your first priority, so you should again go very slowly initially. To promote accuracy, start by firing from the hip without first drawing the gun. With enough practice, your body and brain will learn the hand, wrist and arm position that produces hits when shooting from the hip.

Once you can reliably hit an 8 1/2" by 11" sheet of paper at three feet by shooting from the hip, you can then move to the next level: starting with the gun holstered. Again, you should seek to keep all your hits on an 8 1/2" by 11" target at three feet. When you achieve this, move the target back a bit. Your groups will open up; slow down until all your shots



*Defender with gun in instinctive shooting position, using support hand to ward off assailant.*



*When holding a semi-automatic pistol at the hip, cant the gun outward to prevent it from contacting the body and jamming the gun.*



*Dry-fire instinctive shooting practice.*

again are contained on the sheet of paper, then gradually increase the speed. Repeat this process until you can use the instinctive shooting technique quickly and accurately at three yards.

As with point shooting, laser training and sighting devices can help you to learn the proper gun position for accurate fire from the hip. See Chapter 23: Point Shooting for a more detailed description of these devices and how they can be used for pistol marksmanship training.

## CHAPTER 25

### Engaging Multiple Targets

Studies of contemporary patterns of criminal behavior have revealed an increasing trend for criminals to work in groups rather than alone. In some cases, this may be related to the growing prevalence of criminal street gangs. Whatever the reason, citizens should be prepared to deal with two or more assailants.

#### DEFENDING AGAINST MULTIPLE ATTACKERS

There are many scenarios in which you may be threatened by multiple attackers. The most clear-cut is when you are directly confronted by two or more persons. Unfortunately, criminals don't always operate in such a straightforward manner. For example, it is not uncommon for a pair of muggers to split up, one distracting you from the front while the other sneaks up on you from the rear to strong-arm you.

Often the way in which multiple assailants will choose to attack depends upon their criminal intent. As was just described, some muggers or purse-snatchers split up to better take advantage of stealth or surprise. On the other hand, a gang may confront you directly as a group. In any life-threatening situation, however, you need to be aware that there may be additional attackers outside your immediate field of view.

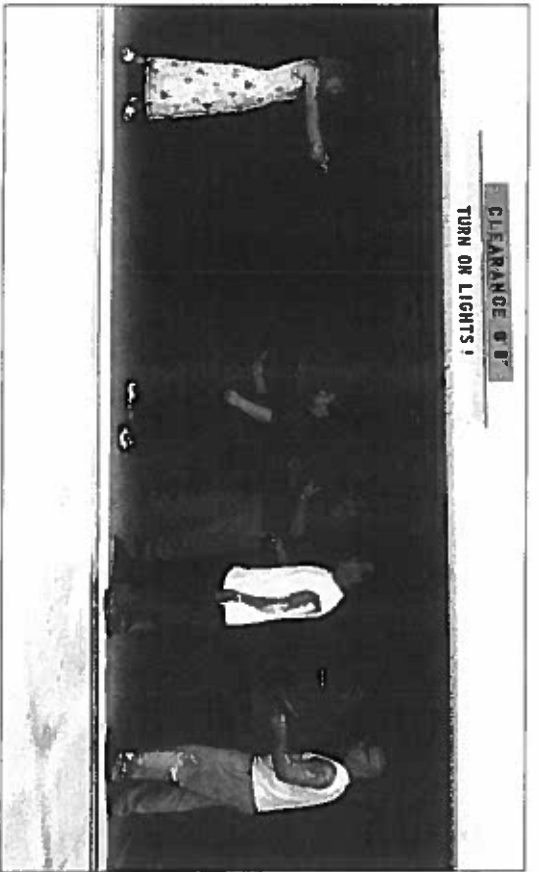
This reality re-emphasizes the importance of a high level of awareness outside your home. The greater your level of awareness, the more readily you will perceive real or potential threats to your safety. And the earlier such threats are identified, the more time you have to both plan an appropriate course of action and to scan the area for potential trouble.



*Multiple assailants.*

#### CONTROLLING THE ENCOUNTER

The importance of controlling an encounter is even more critical when dealing with multiple attackers. In situations in which a single assailant will be deterred by the presentation of a firearm and flee, multiple assailants may be encouraged by each other's presence or incited by peer pressure to attack even when they know you are armed.



*Armed defender attempting to keep multiple assailants at a distance.*

As with a single attacker, the best way to deal with a violent encounter with multiple attackers is to avoid it altogether by being aware of the threat far enough in advance to evade it or flee from it. When this is not possible, however, you can take steps to control an encounter with multiple assailants by employing several common-sense principles.

**Don't Let Your Attackers Get Too Close.** Keeping a threat at a distance is even more important when you're dealing with several attackers. The closer your assailants are, the more easily they can distract you and make it harder for you to defend yourself. Even when two or more individuals represent only a potential threat, as a group of young men loitering in a mall parking lot, you should compensate by extending your threshold distance for the Alert stage of awareness. For example, if you have established that a single stranger approaching you within 20 feet constitutes a potential threat, you should extend that range to 30 feet for a group of strangers.

**Don't Get Distracted By One Attacker.** One tactic used by two or more attackers is for one of them to distract you in some way while the other attacks from another direction.

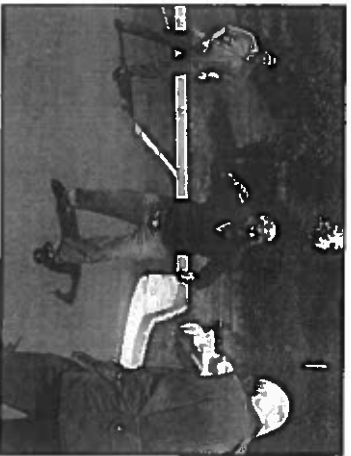
Avoid focusing exclusively on one member of any group that confronts you. Develop the habit of shifting your focus briefly from one member of the group to the next, and use your peripheral vision to remain alert to the position of each person in the group.

Once you have identified a group that constitutes a potential or real threat, keep track of the members of the group;



*Defender distracted by one assailant while a second approaches from the rear.*





*Defender keeping two attackers in line relative to his line of sight.*

relative to your line of sight. In this way, the aggressor in front will block the attack of the one behind him.

anyone who quietly disappears may be circling around behind you. If escape from the situation is not possible, back up against a wall, vehicle, etc. to prevent a rear attack.

**Keep Your Assaultants in a Line.** When two or more criminals are preparing to mount an attack, they will often approach you somewhat spread apart.

This spreads your visual focus over a wide arc, diluting it, and makes it easier for all your assaultants to attack at once. If possible, move so that two or more of the aggressors are in line with each other the aggressor in front will block the attack of the

## DETERMINING THE ORDER OF ENGAGEMENT

Successfully engaging multiple targets is not just a mechanical shooting skill: it also involves split-second decision-making. Remember that most attacks occur very quickly, and often with little or no warning. Thus, you may only have a heartbeat in which to decide which assaultant presents the greatest threat to you.



*Two assaultants at different distances and with different weapons--which to engage first?*

always be the assaultant who is armed with a gun. A criminal rapidly approaching you with a knife at a distance of 15 feet is more of a threat to you than one 30 feet away with a gun in his waistband, and a man at arm's length with an upraised baseball bat is more dangerous than either.

In most instances, the closest armed assaultant represents the greatest danger to your safety.

As with many other aspects of defensive firearm use, determining the proper order of engagement of multiple assaultants is a matter of subjective judgement. Each situation will be different. In some confrontations, all your assaultants may be armed; in others, only one may hold a weapon. Sometimes your attackers will be close together; at other times, they will be separated and at different distances.

In general, the assaultant who represents the greatest immediate threat to you should be engaged first. This may not

## ARMED AND UNARMED ASSAILANTS

Not every attack will involve armed assailants. You may encounter a group consisting of both armed and unarmed aggressors, or you may be confronted by two or more persons lacking weapons altogether. Whether or not you use deadly force in such situations will depend upon a realistic assessment of the threat that these persons represent.

It is often difficult to legally justify the use of a deadly weapon against an unarmed person; such a person is not usually considered a threat to life or limb. In the case of multiple assailants, however, the potential danger is greatly increased, particularly if the attackers are larger, younger or stronger than you. For example, a frail, elderly person could easily succumb to an assault by several unarmed young men. The legal standard is the "Reasonable Man" standard: if an imminent attack by unarmed persons is likely, in the eyes of a reasonable person, to result in death or serious injury, the intended victim may be justified in using deadly force in self-defense.

## NUMBER OF ROUNDS REQUIRED TO STOP THE THREAT

It has been stated previously in this book that you should engage an attacker with as many rounds as necessary to stop the threat. However, during an attack by multiple assailants, you do not have the luxury of waiting to see if one attacker is stopped before turning to the others.



*Defender with five-shot revolver facing five assailants--no margin for error!*

The number of shots you take at each target is a judgement call that depends upon many factors, including the caliber and capacity of your defensive firearm, your level of skill with your handgun, the number of attackers, and the distance to each.

Defensive shooting experts frequently recommend firing two quick shots (often called an "accelerated pair") at each target, on the theory that two hits are more likely to stop a threat than one. This is a particularly important consideration if your defensive firearm is chambered for a relatively low-powered cartridge, such as the .22 LR or .25 ACP, which is not likely to rapidly stop an aggressor with a single shot. More shots may also be required when the danger to life or limb is even more immediate and extreme, such as with an armed assailant at arms' length; two or more well-placed shots will usually stop such a threat faster than a single shot, regardless of caliber.

Accelerated-pair proponents point out that it takes virtually no longer to achieve two hits than one. With practice, just about any shooter can learn to hit the target twice at 21 feet with an interval of less than a quarter of a second between the two shots.

Firing a rapid pair at each assailant is not always advisable, however. With four

assaultants and a two-shot interval of .25 second, firing rapid pairs delays your engagement of the fourth target by .75 second. This may not sound like much time, but it is enough for an attacker standing 10 feet away to reach you with a knife blade, or to go from a ready position to a firing position with a gun.

Furthermore, accelerated pairs may be impractical with a low-capacity handgun. If you carry a five-shot revolver and you are assaulted by four criminals, an attempt to engage each with two shots will cause you to run out of ammunition before you engage all the targets.

It is impossible to come up with an absolute rule regarding the number of shots that should be fired at each of several assaultants. However, a general guideline might be to put a single hit on each target as quickly as possible, with those targets representing a greater, more immediate threat receiving two hits. Then quickly observe the targets and direct your fire at those targets that still constitute a deadly threat.

## ENGAGING MULTIPLE TARGETS

Probably the single most important factor in effectively engaging multiple targets is the ability to swiftly achieve a hit on each identified threat. Most criminals do not begin their attack from across the street; they will usually get as close to you as they can before exhibiting overt signs of aggression. Thus, you will have a very brief period of time in which to try to stop each of several deadly threats. You must be able to draw quickly to engage the aggressor posing the greatest immediate danger, and then immediately shift your fire to the remaining attackers.

When engaging multiple targets, you should generally try to align your natural aiming area (NAA) with a spot roughly midway between the left- and right-most targets. This allows you to engage the targets in either direction with the least possible disturbance of the NAA.



*When confronted with these attackers, it is easy to focus on the club-wielding assaultant on the right and ignore the gun-carrying criminal on the left.*

Reducing your target-to-target time will come only with practice. There are, however, a few techniques that can help you gain speed and accuracy more quickly.

First, visualize the order in which you will engage the targets. For example, if you are approached by three threatening, aggressive persons, determine the danger each one represents and mentally establish the sequence in which you would engage them.

Second, when you have fired your last shot at a target, immediately go to the next target. This may seem obvious, but many shooters will wait to see the sights settle back into alignment, or will look for bullet strikes, before switching to the next target. You are not likely to see bullet strikes in any event, so don't bother to look for them. Trust your own shooting ability.

Finally, don't go too fast. Remember to stop the gun at each target; it is next to impossible to hit anything with the gun's sights moving through the target area.

(The only exception to this is a situation in which the target is moving, and you must swing the gun laterally to track the target.)

One final thought: Sometimes your first shot will cause some or all of the attackers to turn and flee. You must develop the ability to recognize when an attacker is still a threat and when he has given up or is trying to run away, as well as the target discipline to hold your fire when deadly force is no longer warranted.

## PRACTICING TO ENGAGE MULTIPLE TARGETS

The first requirement for developing skill in engaging multiple targets is to have access to a shooting range where multiple target arrays can be set up. Ideally, you should be able to set up targets from around three feet to as much as 50-75 feet.

Vary the target setups to build real-world shooting scenarios. Don't just put out three targets of the same size at the same height and distance; your attackers probably won't space themselves out so evenly. Put one at 10 feet, one at 15 feet and one at 25 feet, at different heights. Use partial targets to represent assailants behind cover. Try mixing different types of targets—for example, using 10" paper plates, 6" red fluorescent dots, NRA Action Pistol (Bianchi Cup) targets, and IPSC targets—in the same array. This will add an element of visual confusion, and will improve both your shooting and your power of concentration.

Learn to use the firing technique that is most appropriate to the target size and distance. While aimed fire should be used for shots on partial or relatively distant targets, there are faster techniques for engaging close-range threats. For example, a full-size Bianchi Cup



*Target array for practicing the engagement of multiple targets.*

target at four feet can be engaged by instinctive shooting, while a similar target at six to 12 feet should be shot with a point shooting technique.

Don't establish set patterns of target engagement. For example, don't get in the habit of always engaging multiple targets in left-to-right or right-to-left order; vary the selection of the first target to be shot. Also, vary the number of rounds that you fire at each.

More realistic training can be achieved by incorporating an element of surprise in your practice. For this you will need a shooting partner; a shooting timer is a desirable but not essential tool. Use at least three NRA Action Pistol targets, each with its own stand. With your gun holstered and unloaded, face 180 degrees away from the target area while your partner moves the targets to different distances and positions. To add the element of decision-making to this type of practice, he or she can affix a life-size cutout of a knife or gun to one or more of the targets; this will indicate the level of threat that each target represents. After positioning the targets, your partner returns to a position behind the firing line. Load your gun and, on signal, turn 180 degrees and engage the targets. Just as in real life, you will face targets in a new and unfamiliar situation, and you will be forced to make decisions regarding the order of engagement, the shooting technique used, and the number of rounds you fire at each.



# CHAPTER 26

## Engaging Targets at Extended Range

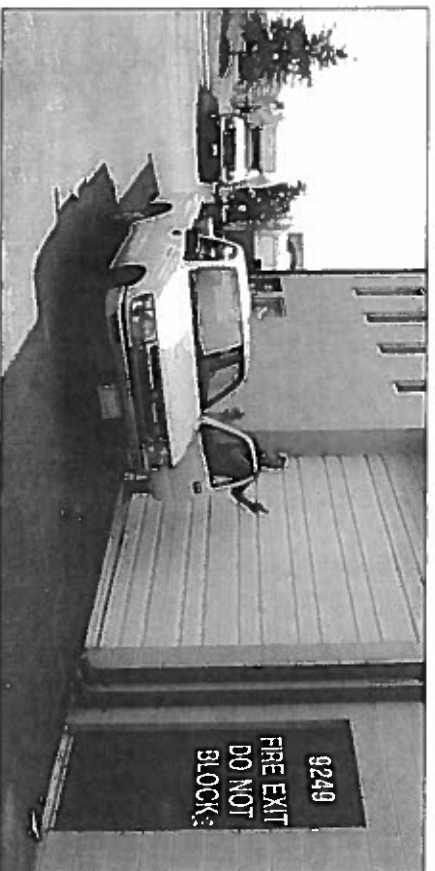
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### LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Under some conditions, using deadly force to defend yourself against a distant attacker can become a legal issue.

In any court proceeding that may follow your use of deadly force in self-defense, it may be difficult to justify shooting a criminal who attacks you from a distance. Remember that you may use deadly force against an attacker only when two conditions are met: he must represent an imminent threat to life or limb, and he must be capable of causing death or serious injury. The more distant your attacker, the harder it can be to satisfy both these conditions in the eyes of a judge or jury.

For example, when a person at arm's length pulls a knife from his waistband and screams, "I'm going to kill you!," there is little doubt that the danger is immediate and real; your use of deadly force in self-defense is clearly justified. Move that same attacker 50 feet away, and the situation becomes much less clear-cut. A knife-wielding attacker that



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*Use of deadly force in self-defense at a distance may be justified when the assailant is armed with a rifle or shotgun.*

The first condition is fairly obvious and intuitive. An attacker firing at you with, say, a carbine at a distance of 50 yards constitutes a real and immediate threat that would likely justify your use of deadly force (if flight or seeking cover was not safely possible). The second condition applies only in certain specific situations; determining which situations apply requires a real-world understanding of how attacks unfold.

For example, an armed attacker some 30 feet away may not seem, at first look, to constitute an imminent threat. Some people might question your response if you engaged such an assailant with your gun. They may claim that you had plenty of time to flee, or that you should have waited until the assailant was closer before deciding to use deadly force. While these claims may seem reasonable, they do not hold up under scrutiny.



*A fit, determined attacker even 30 feet away may be able to reach his victim before a shot can be fired in self-defense.*

generally more physically fit than the rest of the population. Even with a 30-foot head start, it is unlikely you could outrun a young, fit, armed criminal who was truly intent upon inflicting harm. In that kind of situation, flight can actually increase your chances of injury or death.

distant, it could be argued, does not constitute an imminent threat, as you may be able to flee and avoid a confrontation altogether. Even when your assailant is armed with a gun, he likely will be seen as constituting less of an actual threat if he is distant than if he is close.

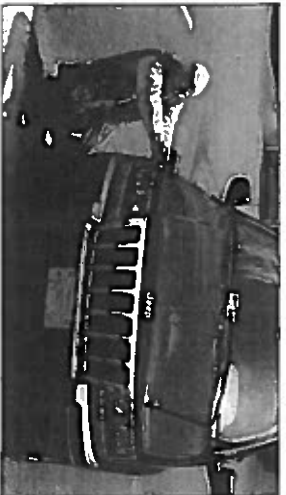
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A 30-foot distance between you and a person armed with a knife or club may indeed give you the opportunity to retreat in safety—but not always. If you are confronted by a person who is merely posturing with a weapon, your retreat may be interpreted as the gesture of fear or submission that he was seeking, and an attack will not ensue. On the other hand, if that person is actually intent upon harming you,

30 feet probably isn't enough space to guarantee a safe retreat. Keep in mind that most violent crimes are committed by young males, who as a group are



The assertion that you should wait until your assailant approaches before choosing to use deadly force is also unrealistic. Many people can easily cover 30 feet in two seconds or less, which is uncomfortably close to the time required for the average person to present a defensive firearm and fire a shot. Remember, too, that a single shot may not stop the threat.



*Defender utilizing cover.*

Deciding to employ deadly force against an attacker at extended range is thus a judgement call that is based upon the ability of your attacker, the type of weapon he is armed with, the distance between you, the likelihood of being able to retreat or flee in safety, your own shooting ability and many other factors.

## FIRING AT EXTENDED RANGE

Once you have determined that retreat is not an option, use aimed fire to engage a distant threat. The technique for firing at extended range does not differ significantly from any other aimed fire technique. There are, however, additional techniques to maximize your survival in an actual violent encounter.



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**Seek cover.** If you're dealing with a distant attacker who is armed with a firearm, you should take the time to seek cover, as was discussed in Chapter 18: Utilizing Cover and Concealment Outside the Home.

**Make yourself small.** Your attacker may also take more deliberate aim; don't make it easy for him to see you by presenting a large target. Protect as much of your body as possible with the available cover; don't leave arms, legs, or shoulders protruding.

**If cover is not available, use a prone position.** This will have two benefits: it will give you the smallest possible profile, and it will allow you to support your firing hand on the ground for greater accuracy.



*Armed defender making himself small behind low cover.*

**Use available support.** Whether or not you are able to seek cover, try to take advantage of all available support to steady your aim. Even objects that don't provide cover, such as a fence or car hood, can be used to provide support.

**Take your time.** This is the most important factor in shooting effectively at extended range. You must be more careful to observe the shooting fundamentals, particularly sight alignment, sight picture and trigger control. Concentrate on sight alignment and on trigger control.

Retreat to safety at the first opportunity. Fortunately, most encounters, both at close range and far, don't turn into gun battles. An attacker who comes under your return fire usually flees. If, upon being fired on, you take cover and carefully return fire, the attack will usually stop. You should always take any safe opportunity to flee yourself, either when you are first attacked or at any time thereafter.

## PRACTICE AT EXTENDED RANGE

The two most important skills you should practice to prepare for extended-range confrontations are slowing down to make good shots and utilizing cover and support.

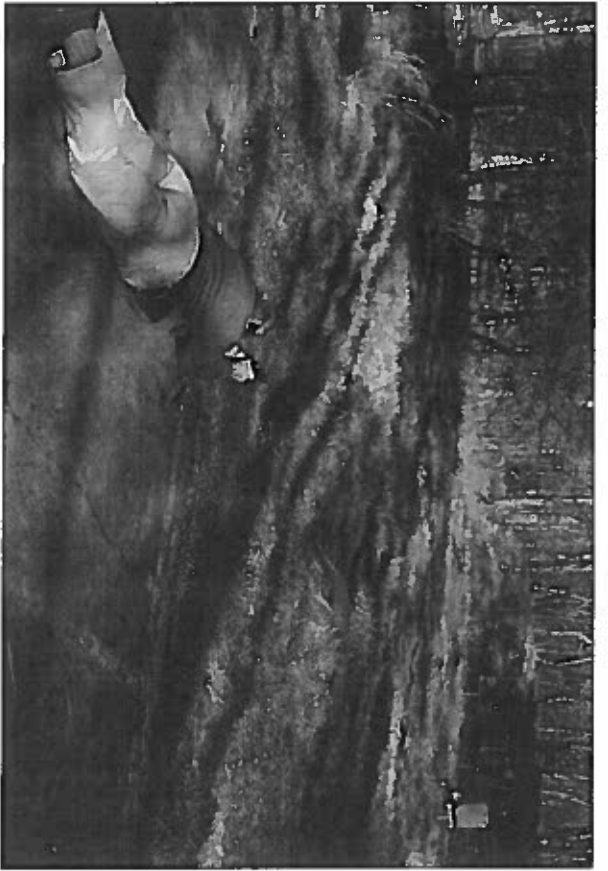
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*Shooter bracing support-hand arm against cover for support in extended-range shooting.*



*Prone shooting is a critical extended-range skill.*

can use the proper speed to get a single good hit on each target, fire accelerated pairs at both. Not only will you require more time to fire the first accurate shot at the distant target; you will also find that the interval between each shot of the pair will also lengthen.

Develop the habit of immediately seeking cover or support when you are shooting at a distant target. Employ the techniques presented in Chapter 19: Presentation and Fire from Different Positions, and Chapter 20: Presentation, Movement and Fire from Different Positions. Make use of objects of various types, such as a trash can or standing barricade, to simulate both high and low cover.

Don't forget to also do some drills with no cover available at all. In such drills, you should practice quickly assuming a prone firing position. Be sure to take advantage of the natural support that the ground provides.



## CHAPTER 27

### Engaging Targets in Low Light Conditions

As has been pointed out earlier, most criminal attacks occur in low light. Even during daylight hours, criminals prefer to practice their predations in dark areas such as unlit parking garages and shadowy walkways between buildings.

It is therefore likely that if you are involved in a violent attack, it will probably take place under conditions of reduced light. As a consequence, you need to be able to shoot accurately and effectively under such conditions.

#### PRESERVE YOUR NIGHT VISION

When your eyes are in no or low light for an extended period of time, your visual sense will accommodate to the absence of light. This accommodation is called night vision, and it allows you to detect objects you would be unable to see under ordinary conditions. You experience this kind of vision just about every night, when you go to bed and your lights go out. At first everything is dark and indistinct; but after a few moments you begin to pick out the shapes of objects.

If you face a defensive encounter under reduced-light conditions, especially at night, you must take steps to preserve your night vision. First and foremost, avoid looking at bright sources of light. Shield your eyes from car headlights, streetlights and so forth. Exposing your eyes to such light sources will reduce your night vision—and once it is gone, it takes several minutes to get it back.

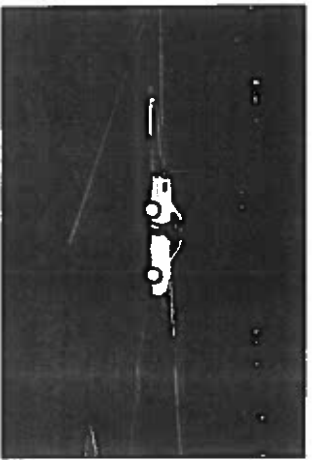
Among the bright sources of light you should avoid is the flash of your own ammunition. Exposure to bright muzzle flash is just as detrimental to preserving night vision as bright sunlight. Many manufacturer's produce defensive ammunition utilizing low-flash powders; your local gun shop should be able to recommend a variety of brands.



*At night, a bright muzzle flash can reduce your low-light accommodation, or night vision.*

#### AVOID LOW-LIGHT SITUATIONS

One of the best ways of avoiding the problems associated with low-light shooting is to simply keep to well-lit areas, whether walking or driving. Avoid low-light situations whenever possible. Stay out of dark alleys and streets; at night, park your car under, or near to,



*Attacks are much more likely to occur under low-light conditions, such as this empty parking lot at night.*

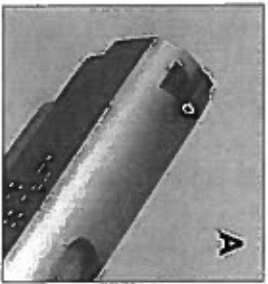
*a streetlamp; and avoid taking shortcuts through poorly-lit areas. Not only will you escape being faced with a low-light situation; you will also be more likely to avoid an attack altogether.*

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Several types of pistol sights are available to improve sight visibility in low light. The simplest type incorporates high-visibility white, yellow or red painted dots, bars or sight outlines. Many shooters apply these colors to their sights themselves, using commonly available paint (often paint used for model airplanes). These improvements tend to work best in normal or only slightly reduced light.

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The most effective type of sight for low light is the "night sight," which incorporates small capsules of luminous tritium (a substance that emits a low level of harmless radiation) into the front blade and rear sighting plane, typically in three-dot, straight eight or bar-dot patterns. Night sights are usually available in light green and amber colors; the front dot in a three-dot pattern is often given a different color to allow quicker centering between the rear dots. Tritium has a half-life of about 12 years, so tritium sights will typically need to be replaced about once a decade, or whenever the loss of luminosity becomes noticeable.



*The visibility of the sights in low-light conditions can be improved with tritium night sights (A), fluorescent orange paint (B), or a white dot on the front sight and a white outline around the rear notch (C).*

Unlike other types of high-visibility sights, night sights are visible in total darkness.

Thus, in addition to aiding low-light aiming, tritium sights can also be used to locate the gun on a nightstand or in a drawer in conditions of total darkness.

## FLASHLIGHTS

Flashlights are not utilized as sights, but are extremely useful in reduced-light situations in at least four ways. First, the illumination of a flashlight can be used to improve your low-light target identification. Before you consider using your firearm, you must determine whether an indistinct shape in the darkness is a potential attacker or merely an innocent bystander. Second, when moving at night, or even in poorly-lit areas in the daytime, a flashlight can help you discern obstacles and other hazards in your path. Third, the sudden burst of light from a powerful flashlight can disorient or even temporarily blind an assailant, and will neutralize his low-light visual accommodation. And finally, if you must shoot, a flashlight will give you a better view of both the target and your sights.

There is currently a wide variety of flashlights that can be used in conjunction with a gun. Some are expressly designed for that purpose. Models vary in size and power. Older designs powered by alkaline batteries generally have the lowest light output, with lights using rechargeable nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) batteries being somewhat brighter. The highest light output in small lights is usually provided by modern models with lithium batteries.

As important as beam intensity is beam uniformity. The best flashlights create a circle of light that is even and uniformly bright, with no dark spots. Some models allow for beam focus.



*Defensive flashlights come in a variety of styles and sizes.*

Light output is measured in lumens. As a broad generalization, lights that are to be used with your defensive handgun should generate at least 50 lumens. Some new designs generate as much as 500 lumens, a level of light intensity that can be effective in visually disabling an assailant.

Flashlight bodies are usually made of aluminum or a tough polymer, allowing them to be employed as a weapon in a close-range emergency situation. Defensive flashlights have pushbutton on-off switches on the side or end of the body, to accommodate the various



*Defensive flashlights are generally activated by pushbutton switches on either the side (left) or end of the light body.*

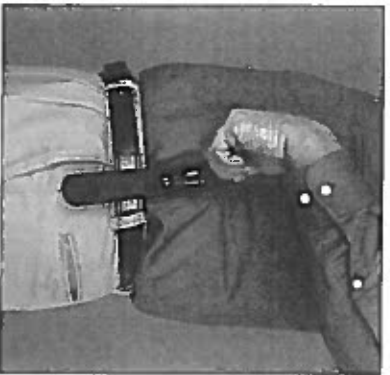
methods of holding these lights when used in a shooting grip. Often these switches can be turned on momentarily by only partially depressing the button, producing a quick burst of light. This feature is important in a situation in which a prolonged beam may allow an assailant to easily target the armed citizen holding the light.

Defensive flashlights can be carried in a pocket or, for better and more consistent access, in a holder that attaches to the belt on the support side.

Any flashlight shares two of the disadvantages of laser lights: it depends upon batteries, and in total darkness, it can give away a defender's location and provide an aiming point for an armed assailant. Flashlights also have a single unique drawback, in that the additional complexity of carrying and using them in conjunction with a firearm is often simply not practical for many people, including knowledgeable and dedicated carriers. Even a small flashlight creates additional concealment issues, and in the stress of a high-speed attack, it may simply be unrealistic to expect the average armed citizen to present his or her concealed firearm with one hand while acquiring a flashlight with the other, and then assume an effective firing stance utilizing both tools together.

This is not to say that a flashlight cannot be useful, even essential. When the armed citizen negotiates unfamiliar terrain at night, scans for threats after an attack has been stopped, or has advance warning of an attack, a flashlight can often be produced and used in a timely and effective manner.

There are several widely-taught methods of incorporating a small flashlight into a one-handed or two-handed shooting stance, including the Ayoob, FBI, Harries and Rogers/Surefire methods. While the Harries and Rogers/Surefire are probably the most widely used, all have advantages under certain conditions. The choice of technique depends upon a number of factors, including the size and type of light, the situation in which it is used, and the type of shooting stance with which the armed citizen is most comfortable. For example, the Rogers/Surefire technique generally works only with a small light having an end-mounted pushbutton



*A flashlight to be used in defensive situations can be carried in a pocket or in a belt-mounted holster. The latter allows easier and more consistent access.*





Some of the best-known techniques for using a flashlight with a defensive firearm. The FBI method (A) places the flashlight out to the side, minimizing an assailant's opportunity to injure the defender by firing at the light. In the Harriss method (B), the back of the support hand pushes against the back of the shooting hand, stabilizing the gun. A light with a switch mounted on its end works best with this technique. The Ayoub technique (C) places the shooting and support hands side by side, with the thumbs in alignment; a light with a side-mounted switch is preferred. The Rogers/Surefire technique (D) places the light between the first and second fingers of the support hand, with its end-mounted button operated by squeezing the light against the palm. The support hand joins the shooting hand in a conventional two-hand hold. This technique was originally designed to be used with a Surefire flashlight, but can be used with any small light with an end-mounted pushbutton switch.



To perform the Rogers/Surefire technique, access the light and gun simultaneously (A). Draw the gun (B) and rotate it toward the target while withdrawing the light and grasping it between the first and second fingers (C). Keep the light-carrying hand close to the chest. As the shooting hand extends toward the target (D), it is joined by the support hand (E) and extension is completed (F).



switch, while the Ayooob technique can be employed with both small and large flashlights having a side-mounted switch.

Whatever type of light, concealment method and firing stance you use, proper training and frequent practice are both critical, especially to prevent crossing the weak (flashlight) hand in front of the muzzle during presentation. The proper techniques of employing defensive flashlights are taught at many shooting schools.

## TRAINING TO SHOOT ACCURATELY IN LOW LIGHT

The best way to learn to shoot in low light is simply to practice in low light. In some areas it may be possible to darken an indoor range for that purpose, or to shoot at an outdoor range past sundown.

Often, neither of these options is practical. It is possible to reasonably simulate low-light conditions by shooting while wearing sunglasses or, for a deeper darkness, welder's goggles.

Don't focus all your low-light training on simply shooting; also practice reloading and clearing stoppages. Since most defensive situation will take place under reduced-light conditions, most gun problems will, too.

When practicing low-light shooting, be especially conscious of gun safety. While wearing sunglasses or welder's goggles, or shooting in a darkened range, it can be easy to miss visual cues that would be seen otherwise.



*Welder's glasses may be used to safely simulate low-light conditions during practice.*



**PART VII**

**CONCEALED CARRY,  
SELF-DEFENSE  
AND THE LAW**



## CHAPTER 26

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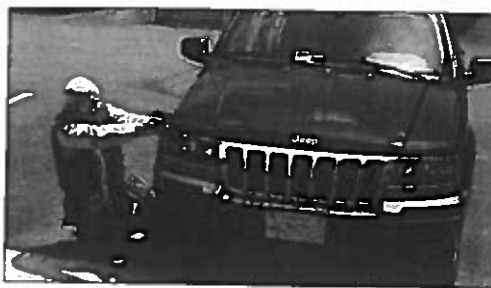
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Among the bright sources of light you should avoid is the flash of your own ammunition. Exposure to bright muzzle flash is just as detrimental to preserving night vision as bright sunlight. Many manufacturers produce defensive ammunition utilizing low-flash powders; your local gun shop should be able to recommend a variety of brands.



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a streetlamp; and avoid taking shortcuts through poorly-lit areas. Not only will you escape being faced with a low-light situation; you will also be more likely to avoid an attack altogether.

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Unlike other types of high-visibility sights, night sights are visible in total darkness. Thus, in addition to aiding low-light aiming, tritium sights can also be used to locate the gun on a nightstand or in a drawer in conditions of total darkness.

When shooting in extreme darkness, it is usually impossible to use anything but tritium night sights. Sometimes it is possible, however, to pick up the outline of both front and rear sights during the instantaneous light of the muzzle flash. This will allow you to check the alignment of even plain iron sights in total darkness. Note that none of the sights described in this section will help with target illumination or target identification.

## LASER SIGHTS

Lasers (an acronym from Light Amplification through Stimulated Emission of Radiation) generate a beam of coherent light (usually red) that can be focused into a thin, non-diverging beam. Sights employing laser light are commonly mounted on guns in one of three ways: contained in a special pair of grips, incorporated into a full-length guide rod, or mounted in a separate unit that attaches to the frame or trigger guard. Grip-mounted lasers are available for just about all semi-automatic pistols or revolvers, can be focused to align the beam with the iron sights, and are usually turned on using a pressure switch that is integral with the grip. Lasers mounted in a guide rod are probably the least obtrusive, but are limited to semi-automatic pistols only. Least practical for the concealed carrier are "add-on" units that attach to some part of the gun, as such sights are bulky, easily knocked or nudged out of alignment, and prevent the gun from being carried in most standard concealment holsters. Such sights do have the benefit of low cost, however.



*Grip-mounted laser sight on an M1911-type pistol. Laser is activated by a pressure switch (arrow) embedded on either side of the grip.*

Laser lights allow the visual focus to be on the target, and, when properly aligned with the gun's sights, provide an accurate visible reference for where the gun is aimed. Thus, lasers can be especially effective when non-sighted shooting techniques (such as point and instinctive shooting) are employed. Additionally, some defensive shooting authorities claim that the distinctive glowing red dot from a laser beam, when seen by an assailant on his person, can act to stop or deter an attack.

Laser sights have potential disadvantages, however. When they are on, they can help an attacker pinpoint the location of the gun and the person holding it; thus, laser sights can provide aiming assistance to both an armed citizen and a gun-wielding assailant. Also, some laser units may become misaligned or damaged if the gun is dropped, or disabled by exposure to moisture or solvents; and laser sights of all types are useless when the batteries are exhausted.

As noted in Chapter 24, Instinctive Shooting, laser sights can also be used as a dry-fire training aid to improve the accuracy of the kinesthetic feel used to achieve hits in the instinctive shooting technique.

## FLASHLIGHTS

Flashlights are not utilized as sights, but are extremely useful in reduced-light situations in at least four ways. First, the illumination of a flashlight can be used to improve your low-light target identification. Before you consider using your firearm, you must determine whether an indistinct shape in the darkness is a potential attacker or merely an innocent bystander. Second, when moving at night, or even in poorly-lit areas in the daytime, a flashlight can help you discern obstacles and other hazards in your path. Third, the sudden burst of light from a powerful flashlight can disorient or even temporarily blind an assailant, and will neutralize his low-light visual accommodation. And finally, if you must shoot, a flashlight will give you a better view of both the target and your sights.

There is currently a wide variety of flashlights that can be used in conjunction with a gun. Some are expressly designed for that purpose. Models vary in size and power. Older designs powered by alkaline batteries generally have the lowest light output, with lights using rechargeable nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd) batteries being somewhat brighter. The highest light output in small lights is usually provided by modern models with lithium batteries.

As important as beam intensity is beam uniformity. The best flashlights create a circle of light that is even and uniformly bright, with no dark spots. Some models allow for beam focus.



*Defensive flashlights come in a variety of styles and sizes.*

Light output is measured in lumens. As a broad generalization, lights that are to be used with your defensive handgun should generate at least 50 lumens. Some new designs generate as much as 500 lumens, a level of light intensity that can be effective in visually disabling an assailant.

Flashlight bodies are usually made of aluminum or a tough polymer, allowing them to be employed as a weapon in a close-range emergency situation. Defensive flashlights have pushbutton on-off switches on the side or end of the body, to accommodate the various





*Defensive flashlights are generally activated by pushbutton switches on either the side (left) or end of the light body.*

methods of holding these lights when used in a shooting grip. Often these switches can be turned on momentarily by only partially depressing the button, producing a quick burst of light. This feature is important in a situation in which a prolonged beam may allow an assailant to easily target the armed citizen holding the light.

Defensive flashlights can be carried in a pocket or, for better and more consistent access, in a holder that attaches to the belt on the support side.

Any flashlight shares two of the disadvantages of laser lights: it depends upon batteries, and in total darkness, it can give away a defender's location and provide an aiming point for an armed assailant. Flashlights also have a single unique drawback, in that the additional complexity of carrying and using them in conjunction with a firearm is often simply not practical for many people, including knowledgeable and dedicated concealed carriers. Even a small flashlight creates additional concealment issues, and in the stress of a high-speed attack, it may simply be unrealistic to expect the average armed citizen to present his or her concealed firearm with one hand while acquiring a flashlight with the other, and then assume an effective firing stance utilizing both tools together.

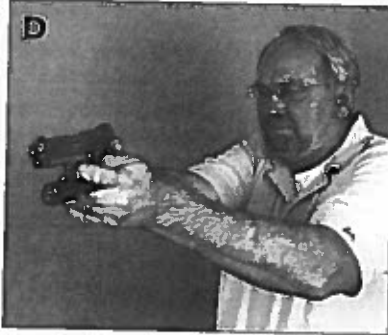
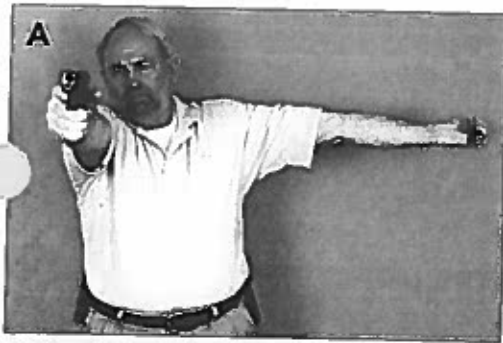
This is not to say that a flashlight cannot be useful, even essential. When the armed citizen negotiates unfamiliar terrain at night, scans for threats after an attack has been stopped, or has advance warning of an attack, a flashlight can often be produced and used in a timely and effective manner.

There are several widely-taught methods of incorporating a small flashlight into a one-handed or two-handed shooting stance, including the Ayooob, FBI, Harries and Rogers/Surefire methods. While the Harries and Rogers/Surefire are probably the most widely used, all have advantages under certain conditions. The choice of technique depends upon a number of factors, including the size and type of light, the situation in which it is used, and the type of shooting stance with which the armed citizen is most comfortable. For example, the Rogers/Surefire technique generally works only with a small light having an end-mounted pushbutton



*A flashlight to be used in defensive situations can be carried in a pocket or in a belt-mounted holster. The latter allows easier and more consistent access.*





Some of the best-known techniques for using a flashlight with a defensive firearm. The FBI method (A) places the flashlight out to the side, minimizing an assailant's opportunity to injure the defender by firing at the light. In the Harries method (B), the back of the support hand pushes against the back of the shooting hand, stabilizing the gun. A light with a switch mounted on its end works best with this technique. The Ayoob technique (C) places the shooting and support hands side by side, with the thumbs in alignment; a light with a side-mounted switch is preferred. The Rogers/Surefire technique (D) places the light between the first and second fingers of the support hand, with its end-mounted button operated by squeezing the light against the palm. The support hand joins the shooting hand in a conventional two-hand hold. This technique was originally designed to be used with a Surefire flashlight, but can be used with any small light with an end-mounted pushbutton switch.



To perform the Rogers/Surefire technique, access the light and gun simultaneously (A). Draw the gun (B) and rotate it toward the target while withdrawing the light and grasping it between the first and second fingers (C). Keep the light-carrying hand close to the chest. As the shooting hand extends toward the target (D), it is joined by the support hand (E) and extension is completed (F).



switch, while the Ayooob technique can be employed with both small and large flashlights having a side-mounted switch.

Whatever type of light, concealment method and firing stance you use, proper training and frequent practice are both critical, especially to prevent crossing the weak (flashlight) hand in front of the muzzle during presentation. The proper techniques of employing defensive flashlights are taught at many shooting schools.

## TRAINING TO SHOOT ACCURATELY IN LOW LIGHT

The best way to learn to shoot in low light is simply to practice in low light. In some areas it may be possible to darken an indoor range for that purpose, or to shoot at an outdoor range past sundown.

Often, neither of these options is practical. It is possible to reasonably simulate low-light conditions by shooting while wearing sunglasses or, for a deeper darkness, welder's goggles.

Don't focus all your low-light training on simply shooting; also practice reloading and clearing stoppages. Since most defensive situation will take place under reduced-light conditions, most gun problems will, too.

When practicing low-light shooting, be especially conscious of gun safety. While wearing sunglasses or welder's goggles, or shooting in a darkened range, it can be easy to miss visual cues that would be seen otherwise.



*Welder's glasses may be used to safely simulate low-light conditions during practice.*



**PART VII**

**CONCEALED CARRY,  
SELF-DEFENSE  
AND THE LAW**



## CHAPTER 28

### Firearms, Self-Defense and the Law

We live in a society of laws—laws that impact on most areas of our lives. Gun ownership is one of the most heavily regulated of those areas. It is critical for the defensive gun owner to have at least a working knowledge of the local, state, and federal laws that govern the purchase, possession, transportation and transfer of firearms, as well as their use in defensive situations. Also essential is an understanding of the basic legal principles surrounding the use of deadly force in self-defense.

#### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING THE PURCHASE AND OWNERSHIP OF HANDGUNS

Nationwide, there are more than 20,000 federal, state and local laws regulating gun purchase and ownership. Many of these apply specifically to pistols. Outlined below are some of the provisions of the major gun laws currently in effect. It is the gun owner's responsibility to know, understand and obey all laws relating to firearm ownership and use that are in force in his or her jurisdiction.

**Gun Control Act of 1968.** This law, passed partially in response to the tragic assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., eliminated the mail order purchase of modern firearms (those made after 1898) and established a variety of classes of persons prohibited from owning or possessing a firearm. These prohibited persons include felons, those who use illegal drugs, those who have been committed to a mental institution, those who are not U.S. citizens and those who have renounced their U.S. citizenship.

**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) Form 4473.** All persons purchasing a firearm—whether it is a rifle, shotgun or pistol—from a federally licensed gun dealer must complete a BATFE Form 4473. This form contains information on the buyer, the serial number and description of the firearm or firearms purchased, and the name and address of the Federal Firearms License holder. Additionally, the Form 4473 has a section in which the prospective purchaser attests to whether he or she falls into any of the classes of persons prohibited from owning a firearm. Giving a false answer to any item on Form 4473 is a felony punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

**Brady Law.** This 1994 law was named for gun-control advocates James and Sarah Brady, who were instrumental in its adoption. In its initial form the law mandated a number of provisions for gun buyers, several of which have since expired. As of this writing, the Brady Law now requires a national computerized instant background check of all persons purchasing a firearm from a Federal Firearms License holder.

**Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act.** This law, also known as the 1994 Crime Bill, prohibited the sale, transfer or possession of magazines for semi-automatic firearms having a capacity of more than 10 rounds. The law also contained a list of banned semi-automatic firearms (erroneously labeled as “assault weapons”), and established

certain combinations of features (including, among others, pistol grips, flash suppressors and folding stocks) that may also make other firearms fall into the “assault weapon” category.

With the expiration of the 1994 Crime Bill in 2005, the abovementioned federal prohibitions against “assault weapons” and high-capacity magazines are no longer in effect. Nonetheless, some of the Crime Bill’s provisions have been incorporated into the laws of several states, but there are still many other federal laws in effect such as those that govern the assembly of semiautomatic firearms from imported parts.

**Lautenberg Amendment.** This law, named for New Jersey Senator Ed Lautenberg, expands the list of persons prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition to include anyone who has been found guilty of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence. The prohibition also applies to persons under certain restraining orders. This far-reaching law is retroactive—that is, anyone who has ever been found guilty of, or who has pleaded guilty to such a crime, is subject to firearm forfeiture. The law also makes it a felony for anyone in the prohibited category to possess any firearms or ammunition.

**State and Local Laws.** In addition to federal laws, further restrictions are imposed by numerous state and local laws. For example, in some states a permit to purchase must first be obtained before a firearm can be bought. Successful completion of the permit process may result in the issuance of a gun owner identification card.

Many states and municipalities also have enacted laws that prohibit or restrict certain classes of firearms based on type (such as semi-automatic pistols or so-called Saturday Night Specials), magazine capacity or other characteristics, sometimes resulting in a list of state-approved guns. Waiting periods and background checks prior to purchase, and registration of guns owned, are also required by law in some jurisdictions. And, of course, there are almost always fees accompanying the permits, background checks and registration applications. Specific legal requirements will vary for each different state, and also may vary among the counties and municipalities within a state.

**Intrastate and Interstate Acquisition and Transfer.** Generally speaking, there are two ways to acquire a firearm: from a federally licensed dealer, or from a private individual. Federally licensed dealers include gun shops, professional gunsmiths, and other businesses, such as hardware stores and pawn shops. Whenever you purchase a firearm through a federally-licensed dealer, you must meet the requirements of BATFE Form 4473, plus any additional restrictions imposed by state or local law.

In many states, the transfer of a firearm by a resident of that state to a resident of that state—whether as the result of sale, gift, loan, or bequest—is considered a simple property transaction between two private individuals, and need not go through a federally licensed dealer. In other states, some or all firearms transfers between individuals must go through a federally licensed dealer. Note that even in those states in which transfers between private citizens do not go through FFL holders, the seller still may not transfer a gun to an individual falling into any of the classes of persons prohibited by law from possessing a firearm.

Note also that, for legal purposes, transfer does not necessarily mean selling. Anytime you allow a person to possess one of your firearms—that is, have it under their physical or constructive control—you have, for that period of time, transferred the firearm to that

person. Thus, depending upon your state's laws, allowing a person in a prohibited class to simply hold one of your guns in his or her hands (whether the gun is loaded or not) may constitute a transfer of possession, and thus may be illegal.

Interstate transfers of pistols and revolvers always must go through federally licensed gun dealers, whether the transfer is between an individual and a gun shop, or between two individuals, in different states. If the transfer is between two individuals, the one transferring the gun may send it directly to the FFL holder in the recipient's state of residence, who will transfer it to the recipient. Alternatively, the person transferring the handgun may take it to an FFL holder in his or her state of residence, who will arrange to ship the gun to the FFL holder in the recipient's state of residence. In either case, the recipient will have to observe all the legal requirements, such as Form 4473 and Brady Law instant check provisions, that apply to a pistol or revolver sale.

Various jurisdictions may have additional laws regarding firearms sales and non-sale firearms transfers, such as gifts or bequests, as well as transfers to certain classes of people, such as minors.

**Pistol Possession and Transportation.** Legally, possession is defined as the holding or occupancy of a thing such that physical control can be exerted over it. Legal ownership, or title, is not a requirement for possession. Many different federal, state and local laws relate to firearm possession under various circumstances.

At the present time, federal law imposes few if any restrictions on possession in one's home, business or vehicle, or in public places. However, federal law does prohibit possession of a firearm in federal government offices or buildings, such as post offices, IRS offices and the like. Possession may also be prohibited or restricted in other areas, including (but not limited to) military bases, some federal lands (such as national parks), and school zones. Note that a state or local carry permit does not abrogate federal restrictions on gun possession on federal property.

Virtually all states and local jurisdictions have laws regulating firearm possession. The restrictions imposed by these laws vary considerably from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and situation from situation. Your

rights and obligations likely will vary depending upon whether you possess the firearm in your home, a temporary residence (such as a hotel or campground), or a vehicle. Even in your home or business, your specific rights may be contingent upon whether you are physically inside the structure, or outside on your own lawn or grounds. Moreover, your rights regarding possession on your person in public places will vary. Some states allow you to carry your gun openly, without a permit; many others have a permit process if you wish to carry a concealed firearm, and other jurisdictions permit you to have your firearm on your person only if it is unloaded and locked in a case.



*Gun owner putting cased handgun into trunk of car to transport it.*



Many states, counties and municipalities also have laws prohibiting the possession of firearms in schools or government offices or buildings, similar to the federal laws previously mentioned.

Transporting a firearm within a jurisdiction is generally subject to that jurisdiction's laws regarding possession in public. If you hold a state concealed-carry permit, for example, you can usually carry a firearm in the passenger compartment of a vehicle without having to lock it up or otherwise make it inaccessible. Some states have specific laws regarding the transportation of hunting firearms to and from a game area. In other jurisdictions, you may legally transport your firearm in your vehicle only if it is unloaded, locked in a case and secured in a locked trunk or other inaccessible part of your vehicle, with ammunition in a separate inaccessible locked container. This is also the recommended method for carrying firearms in your vehicle on interstate (federal) highways.

Some states and other jurisdictions require the registration of any firearm located within their boundaries, even temporarily, or totally prohibit the possession of certain types of guns. The 1986 McClure-Volkmer Gun Owner's Protection Act exempts firearm owners who are transporting their arms interstate from the laws of such jurisdictions (as long as the gun owner is merely passing through the jurisdiction). The firearm should be locked in an inaccessible part of the vehicle as described above. Although the federal Gun Owner's Protection Act overrides state and local law, in practice a gun owner may still be harassed or arrested by overzealous local law enforcement officials who don't know about the federal law.

Transporting a firearm on public transportation—a bus, train, subway or aircraft—is regulated both by applicable local, state and federal law, as well as any specific requirements of the transportation company or authority. If you are transporting the firearm within the boundaries of a state and have a state-issued concealed carry permit, you may be able to carry your gun on any mode of public transportation. The most notable exception to this is an airline flight. Only sky marshals and certain other types of law enforcement or security officers are allowed to carry firearms on their persons aboard commercial aircraft.

When transporting a firearm across state lines via public transportation, the firearm usually must be unloaded and locked in an approved case, and you must give the carrier written notice that a firearm or ammunition is being transported. This is also the procedure for transporting a firearm aboard any commercial airline. Other restrictions and procedures (such as a special check-in procedure) may also apply.

## THE USE OF DEADLY FORCE IN SELF-DEFENSE

There are many legal definitions, theories and principles surrounding the use of deadly force for self-protection. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss these in detail; only a brief outline of the major concepts can be presented. You are strongly advised to consult an attorney for a more thorough explanation of your rights and responsibilities in relation to armed self-defense in your jurisdiction.

**The "Reasonable Man" Standard.** In judging the legality of a person's conduct, it is often necessary to determine whether a party acted in a way that was appropriate or

reasonable. This determination is often made by judging whether a hypothetical “reasonable man” would act in a similar way under the same conditions. By such a “reasonable man” standard, for example, shooting an intruder who approached you with a weapon despite your verbal warnings likely would be deemed justifiable, because the reasonable man would consider the intruder’s actions to be immediately life-threatening.

Be aware that a judge or jury, in applying the “reasonable man” standard to an action, is making a judgment about a chain of events that occurred under stress and over the course of a few seconds or less. What may seem reasonable to you or to most people under the conditions of an immediate violent attack might be unreasonable to a jury sitting in the comfort and safety of a courtroom.

**Use of Reasonable Force.** The degree or amount of force you can use in defending yourself must be reasonable—that is, proportional to the level of threat presented. In rough terms, you can’t use a gun to defend yourself from a slap in the face. A 300-pound, 30-year-old professional football player attacked by an unarmed 135-pound, 70-year-old man would not be justified in using deadly force to defend himself, due to the relatively low level of threat the smaller, older man represented to him. On the other hand, if the 70-year-old attacker was armed with a knife or gun, the football player might then be justified in using deadly force to defend himself (if certain other conditions are also met).

By law, you can sometimes use force in other circumstances—to protect your property from theft or vandalism, for example, or to remove a trespasser from your property. The amount of force you may legally use, however, must be only that which is required to obtain the desired result.

**Use of Deadly Force.** The justifiable use of deadly force is limited only to situations in which certain requirements are met. Although those requirements may vary somewhat in different jurisdictions, there are some fairly universal guidelines. Deadly force can only be used by an innocent victim of an attack, and only when that attack represents a threat of serious bodily harm or death; it cannot be used to defend property rights. This threat of serious bodily harm or death must be imminent (about to happen immediately) and within the ability of the attacker. In addition, in some situations, the victim of an attacker must first retreat (or attempt to do so if safely possible) before being able to utilize deadly force in self-defense.

**Ability of an Attacker.** An attacker is considered to represent a threat to life or limb only if they are actually capable of causing death or serious injury. In the sample situation presented earlier, a small, elderly, unarmed man generally would not be considered to have the ability to threaten the life or limb of a large, young, muscular man. Even if the elderly man demonstrated the intent to kill the younger man (as by screaming, “I’ll kill you!”), deadly force would generally not be justified in repelling his attack, as the hypothetical “reasonable man” would not consider him capable of following through on that intent.

**Presence of an Imminent Threat.** Another requirement for the use of deadly defensive force is that the threat of death or serious bodily harm must be imminent—that is, about to occur immediately. A future threat to your life and limb does not generally justify the present use of deadly force. For example, if a person threatens, “Someday soon I’m going to catch you alone and blow you away,” you cannot respond by immediately using deadly force against him—even if he is, say, a paroled murderer whom you know is fully capable of making good on his threat. You will be legally able to defend yourself with a deadly

weapon only at the point that his threat becomes real and imminent.

**Innocent Victim of Attack.** For you to claim justifiable self-defense in your use of deadly force, you must not yourself have caused or incited your assailant's attack. For example, you cannot provoke a person into attacking you and then shoot him or her in self-defense. Nor can you respond to an attacker in a way that further incites or inflames him or her. For example, if you were to innocently step on another person's shoes, he might react by shoving you. You are not entitled to escalate the situation to the level of deadly force by using your firearm.



*This distant threat does not represent an imminent threat, and the use of deadly force is not justified.*

**Duty to Retreat.** In many self-defense situations, you have a duty to retreat from a confrontation before you can legally use deadly force to defend yourself. Duty to retreat simply means that you must attempt to physically escape or evade a confrontation if you can do so safely. You are not obligated to retreat if doing so will expose you to greater danger.

Most states require you to retreat from confrontations occurring in public. In many jurisdictions, however, you may not be obligated to retreat from an attacker in your own home or on your own property. Consult an attorney for the laws applicable in your area.

**Brandishing.** In many if not most jurisdictions, brandishing, or displaying your firearm in a threatening or aggressive manner, is illegal and may undermine your claim of legitimate self-defense. As a practical matter, if you brandish your firearm to deter an attacker, it may be unclear to both witnesses and law enforcement authorities exactly who is the aggressor and who is the victim.



*In most jurisdictions, an armed citizen is required to retreat from an attack, if this can be done safely, before deadly force may be used. When facing a potential threat, you should be aware of available pathways to retreat (arrow).*



*When a threat or an attack has ceased (left), you are no longer permitted to use deadly force in self-defense. Deadly force may continue to be used, however, against an assailant who, though down, continues his attack (right).*

**Cessation of Threat.** You are entitled to use deadly force against an attacker only as long as he presents a threat. Once the threat has ceased—as by their flight, surrender, or inability to continue the attack—so must your use of lethal force.

**Castle Doctrine.** This doctrine, derived from English common law and expressed in the familiar saying, “A man’s home is his castle,” gives you special rights in your own home that you may enjoy nowhere else. For example, in many jurisdictions you have no duty to retreat from an attacker in your own home. Also, in some jurisdictions, the very presence of an intruder in your home may allow you to treat him as a threat. Some jurisdictions also allow you to extend the Castle Doctrine beyond your home to include any place you might be domiciled for the night, such as a friend’s house, hotel room, campground and so on. Other rights may also derive from the Castle Doctrine, depending upon the laws in your jurisdiction.

The above material is merely a partial overview of some of the many complex legal issues concerning firearm ownership, firearm use, and the employment of deadly force in self-defense. Every gun owner should seek additional information from an attorney familiar with the firearm and self-defense laws in his or her jurisdiction.



## CHAPTER 29

### Legal Aspects of Concealed Carry

In addition to the information presented in Chapter 29: Firearms, Self-Defense and the Law, you should also be familiar with certain other legal aspects relating to concealed firearm carry. Note that the information presented in this chapter is not meant to take the place of competent legal advice from an attorney familiar with the laws in your jurisdiction. You should consult such an attorney to learn the specific legal obligations that apply in your area.

**Concealed Carry Permits.** In almost all states allowing any type of concealed firearm carry, a carry permit is required. At the time of this writing, only Vermont allows its residents to legally carry a concealed firearm without first obtaining a permit to do so.

Concealed carry permits can be divided into two types: discretionary permits and shall-issue permits. Discretionary permits are so called because they are issued to certain persons at the individual discretion of a judge, police chief or other high public official.

State shall-issue concealed carry permits are required by state law to be issued to any resident meeting certain objective criteria (hence the name "shall-issue permits"). Although the specific criteria vary from state to state, shall-issue permits are typically issued to persons at least 21 years of age who have no criminal or mental health record. Often, applicants are also required to show evidence of firearm training and/or experience, such as a record of military service, a hunting license, or a certificate of completion from certain NRA firearm courses. It is also common in many but not all states to require fingerprints and/or a photograph from the applicant. A nominal fee must be submitted with the application, and several weeks normally elapse before the permit is issued.

**Restrictions on Concealed Carry.** A concealed carry permit does not give you an absolute right to carry a firearm anywhere and anytime you please. The concealed carry laws of almost all states contain restrictions on concealed carry. Again, the exact limitations vary among the states, but some generalizations can be made. Typically, concealed firearms are not allowed in churches; schools and school zones; police stations; post offices; local, state or federal government buildings, or buildings containing government offices; or establishments in which alcohol is served, such as bars, taverns, restaurants and the like. Carrying a firearm in violation of these restrictions is, at the very least, grounds for revocation of your carry permit, and may also cause criminal charges to be imposed against you.

Not only are there places in which you cannot carry a gun; there are also conditions under which you must not carry, such as when you have consumed alcoholic beverages.

Your right to carry will also be voided if you are indicted for a felony, subjected to certain court orders, or are convicted of a felony or certain misdemeanors.

In addition, be aware that many states have adopted a very tough prosecutorial stance regarding crimes in which a gun is even remotely involved. For example, if you should lose your temper in an argument and strike another person with your fist while you are

carrying your defensive firearm, you may be charged with a more serious crime than you would have been if you had not been carrying a gun. The fact that you did not use your gun in the confrontation does not matter; you were armed.

**Brandishing.** Brandishing was briefly described in Chapter 28: Firearms, Self-Defense and the Law, but it deserves an expanded mention here. Brandishing was earlier defined as “displaying a firearm in a threatening or aggressive manner.” Waving your firearm at a person with whom you are arguing—even in your own home—would obviously be brandishing. In most jurisdictions, brandishing is a crime punishable by a fine and/or a jail sentence.



*Armed citizen showing gun to deter potential attackers.*

If you display a firearm to deter an intruder—armed or not—in your own home, police, prosecutors and judges in most jurisdictions are unlikely to regard your actions as brandishing. Outside the home, however, you have much less leeway.

On the other hand, there is evidence that displaying a firearm under some circumstances may actually reduce your likelihood of being attacked. Research by University of Florida criminologist Gary Kleck, Ph.D., suggests that most of the annual 600,000 to 2.5 million defensive firearm uses do not involve the firing of a single shot. That is, in the vast majority of cases, the simple display of a firearm is sufficient to stop an attack or deter an attacker.

The decision to display a firearm to stop or deter an attack is a judgement call. You should not show your firearm to deter a person who simply might attack you, or who you merely find threatening; that may result in being charged with brandishing. You are justified in displaying a firearm only in those situations in which firing your gun would also be justified—situations in which there is a real and imminent threat to your life or the lives of your family or other innocent persons.

You should understand, however, that even when you successfully stop an actual attack displaying your firearm, you may still be charged with brandishing. Consult a lawyer who is familiar with the concealed carry laws in your jurisdiction for more information on brandishing.



*Citizen retreating before a threat.*

**Duty to Retreat.** As discussed in the previous chapter, you will generally have a duty to retreat from a confrontation outside your home, if you can do so in safety. This duty is not always absolute, however; some states recognize exceptions to the duty to retreat. In other states, you may have a duty to retreat even in your own home. A lawyer who is familiar with the concealed carry laws in your jurisdiction can tell you more about your specific legal obligations.

*Chapter 29: Legal Aspects of Concealed Carry*

As has been stated many times in this book, deadly force should be used only as a last resort, when other options, such as deterrence, avoidance or flight, are no longer available. If you use your defensive firearm against an attacker, one of the issues the investigating officers will want to resolve is whether you could have avoided using deadly force by retreating. The same issue will be explored by a judge and/or a jury if criminal charges are filed against you, using the “Reasonable Man” (“Reasonable Person”) standard. The judge or jury will try to determine whether a reasonable person, in the same circumstances, would have been able to safely retreat from the threat, or would have felt that there was no other choice but to use force for self-protection.

As you can see, the decision to retreat is a judgement call you may have to make in a fraction of a second, under conditions of great stress, and with incomplete information. An assailant who confronts you with his hand in his pants pocket may well have a gun—and may shoot you in the back if you attempt to flee. On the other hand, if he is unarmed, you might well run away in complete safety.

Be aware that no judge or jury will be able to relive your experience of a deadly encounter. Thus, any judgement you make during the heat of a confrontation may be second-guessed later by persons sitting in the calm safety of a courtroom. This is another reason why it is always better to safely retreat if at all possible—and why it is critical to remain aware of your environment and to mentally prepare for the unexpected. In many cases, armed citizens who are involved in deadly shootings could have avoided those confrontations had they used more foresight in identifying escape routes, visualizing responses to potential threats, and avoiding unsafe places and situations.

**Warning Shots.** In television and motion pictures it is not uncommon to see a character fire a warning shot to deter or stop an assailant. The firing of warning shots has been prohibited by the vast majority of police departments, and should also be avoided by armed civilians, for both legal and practical reasons.

Legally, the firing of a warning shot could actually undermine your claim that you were facing a life-threatening confrontation. You can use deadly force only as a last resort against an imminent threat to your life or limb. If imminent danger did exist, you would have fired at the assailant, not have wasted a shot fired as a warning. The fact that you had the time to fire a warning shot could suggest that the danger was more potential than immediate, and your gun should never have been drawn at all.

Furthermore, don't forget that you are legally responsible for each and every round you fire, even when you are firing under the stress of a life-threatening confrontation. Finally, firing a warning shot wastes time. As has been stated, most deadly attacks occur very quickly. The time you take to fire and recover from a warning shot is time your assailant can use to launch his attack.

**Power of Arrest.** Some persons who have concealed carry permits may feel that having the power to effect an arrest gives them additional authority to do so. It does not. An armed citizen has no more legal authority to make an arrest than an unarmed citizen.

Note, too, that any person making an arrest may subsequently be vulnerable to criminal sanctions or a civil lawsuit. Police officers are trained to effect an arrest efficiently and safely while minimizing danger to themselves, the general public and the arrested person. Most citizens are not so trained.



In practical terms, it is always preferable, from both a legal and safety viewpoint, to call the police and let them handle a situation. The only exception to this might be when not interceding would result in an innocent person losing life or limb (as when you witness a serious attack on such a person).

**Looking for Criminal Activity.** A concealed carry permit gives you the right to carry a gun on your person for the purpose of defending yourself from an attack you may innocently encounter, not to seek out and confront criminals. Care must be taken to always avoid any behavior or utterance that has the appearance of vigilante behavior; it may backfire in any legal proceeding that follows the legitimate use of that gun in self-defense.

**Dealing With Law Enforcement Officers When You Are Carrying a Concealed Firearm.** On occasion, you may interact with a law enforcement officer while you are carrying a concealed gun. For example, you may be stopped for a broken headlight or a minor traffic offense while you have a gun on your person or in the passenger compartment. More seriously, an officer may spot your gun, or may only see a suspicious-looking bulge that he or she thinks deserves investigation. Knowing how to deal with the police while you are armed is critical to prevent a misunderstanding.

If you are pulled over in your car by a police officer, you should generally sit with your hands on the steering wheel while the officer approaches. Sitting with your hands visible will lessen his or her anxiety about dealing with a potentially armed person.

When the officer comes to your window, wait for him or her to ask you for your information before removing your hands from the steering wheel. Retrieve your license, registration, insurance card or other required documents using deliberate movements. When the officer returns to the patrol car, keep your hands in sight, on the steering wheel.



*Pulled-over driver with ID ready, hands on steering wheel, as officer approaches.*

If you are in a state in which a concealed carry permit holder is required to disclose a concealed firearm to law enforcement, do so at this time. If there is no such requirement, you are not obligated to disclose that you have a firearm on your person. As a practical matter, however, the officer will soon learn that you have a carry permit when your information is verified on the computer in the patrol car. If you did not disclose that fact, it may raise questions or even suspicions that may affect the way in which he or she interacts with you. The decision to disclose or not to disclose a concealed firearm, in a non-disclosure state, is a judgment call the armed citizen must make at the time.

Some police officers, once they know you are carrying a pistol, may want to temporarily take possession of your firearm while they are dealing with you. This is usually a decision made by the officer to ensure safety. In all circumstances, obey the commands of the police without hesitation or argument.

Another situation in which you may interact with the police will be in the event that an officer spots your concealed firearm (something that should not happen if you follow the proper concealment techniques). In such a situation, the officer will not know that you have a permit; he or she will only see a person with a gun, who may be a violent criminal. The officer will likely want to take possession of your firearm, and perhaps even handcuff you. Again, do not argue, complain, hesitate or resist. Also, do not make any sudden moves, as to retrieve your wallet or to show the police where your concealed firearm is located. Such a move might be misinterpreted, with unfortunate results. The more compliant you are, the lower the officer's adrenaline level will be, and the more quickly and easily he or she will be convinced that you are a law-abiding citizen exercising a legal right.

Finally, there may be an occasion when you are forced to draw your handgun to stop an attack, and your assailant flees without you having to fire a shot. Although you are not obligated to report such an incident to law enforcement, under some circumstances it could be to your advantage to do so. It may be good to have your version of the incident on record in the event that your attacker goes to the police and claims that you were actually the aggressor.



## CHAPTER 30

### The Legal Aftermath of a Defensive Shooting Outside the Home

**NOTE:** This chapter is not intended to take the place of consultation with a qualified attorney, nor should it be construed as providing general or specific legal advice. The information contained herein is intended to provide broad general guidelines regarding the legal ramifications that might stem from a self-defense shooting in some jurisdictions. For more specific information, consult an attorney familiar with the laws relating to firearms, concealed carry and self-defense in your jurisdiction.

Whether it involves the acquisition and mastery of shooting skills or the development of a defensive mindset, preparedness is the key to prevailing in a violent attack. Preparedness of a different type is also essential to survive the potential legal aftermath of a defensive shooting. The prudent gun owner must become thoroughly familiar with the potential legal ramifications of defensive gun use in his or her jurisdiction.

It is important for the defense-oriented gun owner to secure legal representation before he or she is involved in a defensive shooting situation. Selecting a lawyer out of the telephone book at the police station is not likely to provide you with the kind of representation you will need. Any attorney you select should be thoroughly familiar with all applicable federal, state and local laws regarding firearm ownership, concealed carry and self-defense. The attorney should also be apprised of any particulars of your own situation that would be relevant to any police investigation that would follow defensive firearm use.

Contact your state bar association for a list of attorneys in your area, along with their specialties. Members of your gun club may be able to recommend attorneys with experience in Second Amendment and self-defense cases. Also, firearms-friendly attorneys may post their cards at gun shops or on gun club bulletin boards. As a service to its members, the NRA also offers a referral service that matches attorneys with those needing legal representation.

The following describes some of the possible legal outcomes that may be faced by a survivor of a self-defense shooting outside the home.

#### ARREST

In all jurisdictions, a defensive shooting will entail an investigation. It may be sufficiently clear from the circumstances of the incident that your actions were completely in legitimate self-defense; in such cases, depending upon the discretion allowed the police and prosecutor's office, you may only have to face questioning by the police. Be aware, however, that such discretion is more commonly extended in cases of self-defense in the home; outside the home, situations are often not that clear-cut.

Under other circumstances—for example, if you knew and had previously quarreled

with the person you defended yourself against, or if testimony from other witnesses suggests that you are the aggressor—the police and prosecutor may consider your actions to be illegal. In such circumstances, you likely will be arrested. You may well spend a few hours in jail, and possibly several days.

## FIFTH AMENDMENT PROTECTIONS

The Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution provides you with certain rights and protections, chief among them being that you have no obligation to talk to the police until you have consulted with your attorney. The Fifth Amendment also gives you the right to have your attorney present during all questioning.

When the police arrive, you can refuse to answer their questions until your attorney is present. Of course, you should exercise some common sense in this; you may not need a lawyer to respond to such questions as “What’s your name?” Also, you may want to provide police with information that they need to ensure the immediate safety of the area, such as “Which way did the assailant flee?” However, most attorneys advise that you politely but firmly refuse to discuss the actual incident until you have consulted with legal counsel. Under the stress and emotions that follow involvement in a life-threatening situation, you may not think or communicate clearly, and may utter something that could be used against you in a subsequent legal proceeding.

Even before you become involved in a defensive shooting, it is highly advisable to discuss with your attorney exactly what you may and may not say to police should you be forced to use a firearm in self-defense. Just as you prepare mentally and physically to survive a violent encounter, this legal preparation may help you better negotiate the criminal justice system.

## GUN CONFISCATION

When you are arrested by the police, they will take your carry gun and, sometimes, any other arms you have at your home. After all, from their point of view, you may be a suspect in a felony. The problem often lies in getting them back. In some areas you may have to go to court to secure the return of your guns.

Furthermore, police departments usually mark items taken as evidence. If you are lucky, they may put their mark—a number or letters scratched or stamped into the metal—in an unobtrusive location. Also, the police may or may not treat your guns with the same care as you would. In a “worst-case” situation, you may receive your guns back with dings and scratches from careless handling, evidence marks on external surfaces, and bore corrosion from having been fired and not cleaned. (If a department suspects that any of your firearms may have been used in a crime, technicians may fire them to obtain reference bullet specimens.)

## SEARCH OF YOUR HOME

A full discussion of the rules governing permissible police searches is well beyond the scope of this text. Generally, to conduct a search in your home, police need a warrant for that location specifying what is being sought. There are several exceptions to this requirement, however; consult your attorney for more information.

Any normal law-abiding person may have objects, records, and so forth that are not at all illegal, but may be of a private nature. Such objects may become public knowledge as a result of a search. Of perhaps greater concern, during a search the police will almost certainly observe and make note of (mentally, at least) any books, magazines or other items that may cast doubt on the justifiability of your defensive shooting. For example, the fact that you are a history buff and possess material relating to military firearms or operations may work against you in a court of law should you face criminal or civil charges as the result of your defensive gun use.

## SUSPENSION OF CONCEALED CARRY OR GUN OWNERSHIP PERMITS

Your state carry permit likely will be suspended or revoked following your arrest for shooting your assailant, particularly if the criminal charges against you are not dropped but are pursued by prosecutors. You may have to reapply for that permit once you are cleared of all criminal charges.

## CRIMINAL TRIAL

In some cases, the criminal charges against you may be pursued instead of dropped. This may occur whenever the police or the prosecutor has questions regarding your claim of legitimate self-defense. This might be the case, for example, if you had had a previous disagreement with the assailant you shot, or if the witness testimony or physical evidence is contradictory or ambiguous.

Various areas of the country differ in their support of the right of concealed carry and armed self-defense. In some large cities, for example, in which both citizens and public officials may have little sympathy for these rights, you may be more likely to be put on trial for using a firearm to protect yourself than in rural areas or small towns.

## CIVIL SUIT

Even if you are cleared of all criminal charges, you still may have to face a civil suit brought by your assailant or the assailant's family or estate. There are differences between a criminal and civil trial. Criminal charges can only be brought by the government, and can result in incarceration, fines, property seizure and certain other sanctions. A civil suit can

be brought by anyone, and results only in the awarding of money or other non-incarceration relief, such as an order restricting your interaction with the plaintiff.

Another important difference between a criminal and civil suit lies in the standard used to determine the outcome of a trial. In a criminal case, the jury (or judge) must be convinced by the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt. In a civil case, however, judgment is made for the plaintiff or defendant based upon a preponderance of the evidence. The standard is much higher in a criminal case than a civil case because the potential sanctions of a criminal conviction, such as lengthy incarceration or even the death penalty, are much more severe than the mere money award that is typical in a civil case.

If you use your firearm in self-defense and are later tried and found not guilty of any criminal charge, you should understand that such a verdict does not preclude a civil proceeding against you. Regardless of the outcome of a criminal trial, you may be subject to liability in a civil action.

## LEGAL FEES

Even in the best of outcomes, in which no criminal charges are pressed and no civil suit is filed against you, you will usually still owe your attorney at least several hundred dollars, just to represent you at a bail hearing or during police interrogation. If you are forced to defend yourself against criminal charges in a full-scale trial—or if the assailant or the assailant's family sue you in civil court—your legal bills will amount to thousands, quite possibly tens of thousands of dollars.

Even when you prevail in a violent confrontation, you will still have to go through the criminal justice system. It is not enough to prepare yourself only to thwart an attack; you must also be ready for the legal aftermath that is sure to follow your use of deadly force.



# APPENDIXES





# APPENDIX A

## Gun Handling

Most defensive-oriented gun owners recognize the importance of mastering the fundamentals of shooting and the various shooting positions. Often neglected, however, are those skills collectively known as *gun handling skills*. These include reloading techniques and procedures for quickly clearing stoppages and resolving other gun malfunctions.

### RELOADING

*Reloading* means refilling an empty gun with cartridges as quickly as possible. There are specific methods for reloading both revolvers and semi-automatic pistols, for both right- and left-handed shooters.

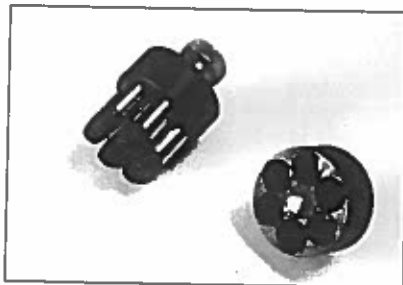
As was stated earlier, in situations in which you must use your gun to defend yourself, it will be rare for you to exhaust its capacity. However, there may be times when firing multiple shots neither stops a life-threatening attack, nor allows you to flee from it. When this happens, your ability to quickly reload an empty gun may be critical.

Whenever possible, reload while you are behind cover. Reloading while out in the open exposes you to your attacker when you cannot defend yourself. Also, during reloading you must momentarily take your eyes off the target or target area. It is generally safer to do this behind cover.

In some situations you may use reloading techniques to reload a gun that is only partially empty. For example, in a situation in which you fire five rounds from a six-shot revolver and then retreat to cover, use the breathing space that cover affords to bring your revolver back to full capacity. Do not be concerned with the single live round you dump out on the ground with the five empty cases.

### RELOADING THE REVOLVER WITH SPEEDLOADERS

The fastest way to reload a revolver is through the use of a *speedloader*, a mechanical device that holds a number of cartridges in a pattern that aligns them with the chambers of the revolver. The speed loader (pictured at right) allows the cartridges to be inserted simultaneously into the cylinder chambers, at which point they are released and the revolver is completely reloaded.

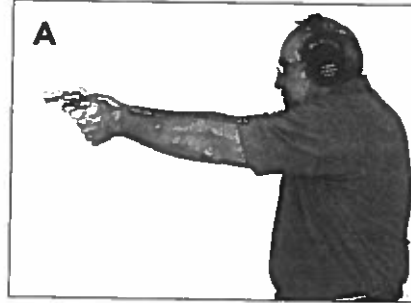


*Revolver speedloaders.*

Revolver owners not having speedloaders must reload using loose rounds from a pocket. Right-handed shooters should put their loose rounds in a right-side pocket, while left-handed shooters should put them in a left-side pocket. Any pocket that contains extra ammunition, whether in the form of loose rounds or speed loaders, should not have anything else in it. This prevents fumbling for ammunition or inadvertently attempting to load the revolver with coins, chewing gum, lip balm, lipstick or anything else that may be in the pocket.

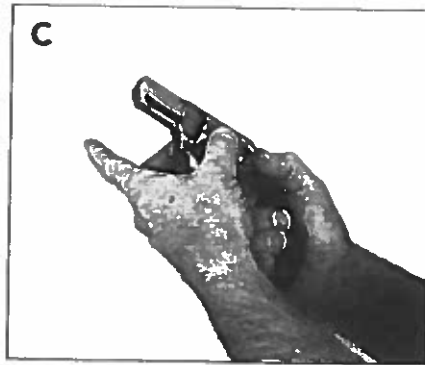
## RELOADING THE REVOLVER (RIGHT-HANDED TECHNIQUE)

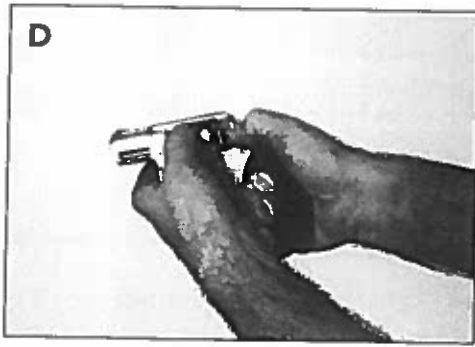
Beginning with the revolver held in a two-hand firing grip in the right hand, pointed in a safe direction and the finger off the trigger (A), bend the elbows to bring the revolver back close to the body at about chest height and slightly to the right of the centerline of the torso (B). Keep your eyes on the target area throughout the procedure except when you are actually inserting cartridges into the chambers.



As the gun is being brought back (just as the elbow of the firing arm begins to bend), cup the left hand underneath the trigger guard area of the frame of the revolver. Grasp the cylinder between the two middle fingers and the thumb of the left hand (C). Viewed from the rear, the thumb contacts the cylinder at the 9 o'clock position, while the two middle fingers make contact at the 3 o'clock position. The bottom of the trigger guard is over the palm of the left hand. Care must be taken, particularly with short-barreled revolvers, to keep the left index finger clear of the muzzle.

With the cylinder thus firmly grasped by the left hand, the right thumb engages the cylinder release (D). Twist the right wrist to rotate the frame 90 degrees clockwise. The two middle fingers of the left hand pass through the frame; the grip is maintained on the cylinder by the thumb and two middle fingers of the left hand. It is important to rotate the frame away from the cylinder rather than simply push the cylinder out of the frame. The cylinder is held stationary by the left hand while the right hand rotates the frame away from the cylinder.





As the revolver frame is rotated away from the cylinder, roll your left wrist slightly toward you to direct the muzzle almost straight upward. Be sure to keep the muzzle angled away from you. Let go of the revolver with the right hand and maintain your hold of the cylinder with the fingers and thumb of the left hand still in the 3 and 9 o'clock positions (E). The left elbow should now be close to or touching the abdomen and the revolver should still be positioned to the right of the centerline of the body, just below the armpit.

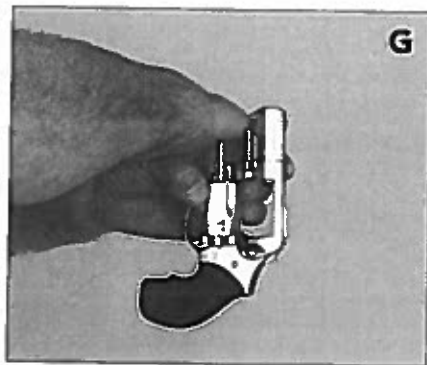
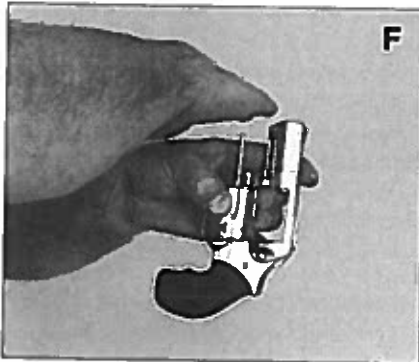


With the inside of the palm of the right hand, strike the ejector rod with a straight, sharp downward blow (F, G). The rod should contact the palm at a point midway along an imaginary line between the base of the pinky finger and the center of the wrist joint.

**CAUTION:** Strike the ejector hard enough to throw the empty cases well clear of the cylinder with the first blow, but not so hard as to injure your hand or bend the ejector rod. In guns with dirty or scored cylinders, or when higher-pressure loads are used, the first sharp blow to the ejector rod may push the cases only part way out of their chambers in the cylinder. A second or third sharp blow may be required for full, forceful ejection.

Allow the empty cases to fall free of the cylinder to the ground. Do not attempt to retrieve the cases (or any live rounds you may also eject from the cylinder).

As your right hand reaches for a speedloader, or loose cartridges in your pocket, bring the revolver in front of you at about chest height, rotating the muzzle downward and away from you (H). Retrieve a speedloader or one or two loose cartridges from your pocket with your right hand and bring that hand to the revolver just above the cylinder.

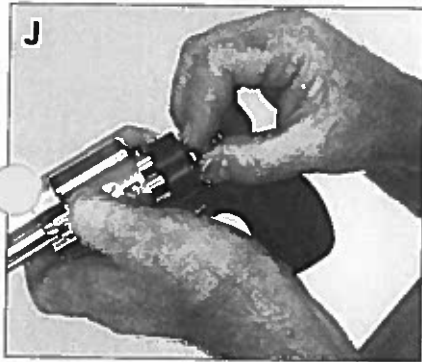




If you are using a speedloader, look down briefly as you align the cartridges with the cylinder's chambers (I). A momentary glance to ensure that the cylinder is indeed empty, and that the nose of each bullet has entered the chamber properly (J) is sufficient. Then release the cartridges into the chambers and drop the speedloader to the ground.



If you are loading loose cartridges, grasp them at the rim using your thumb and forefinger. Seat them with the thumb as they enter the chamber. With practice, you can load two cartridges at a time by grasping them at their rims using the thumb and first two fingers and inserting them simultaneously into adjacent chambers. When loading loose cartridges it is more efficient to remove only one or two at a time from the pocket, load them and then go back to the pocket for one or two more, rather than grabbing five or six cartridges at one time.

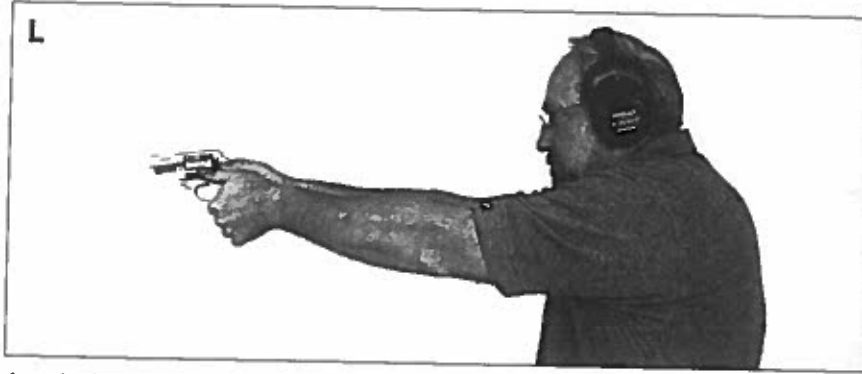


When reloading with either a speed loader or loose cartridges, dirty cylinder walls or a cartridge that is slightly oversize or out of round may cause you to feel some resistance while chambering one or more cartridges. It is important for all cartridges to be fully seated in the cylinder. Cartridges that protrude from their chambers can keep the cylinder from closing or rotating.



Once the cartridges are seated in their chambers in the cylinder, grasp the grip portion of the frame in a firing grip with the right hand. Remember to keep the trigger finger along the side of the frame, out of the trigger guard. As you start to raise the revolver (still keeping the muzzle in a downward direction to keep the cartridges from falling out of their chambers), rotate the frame counter-clockwise with the right wrist while simultaneously pushing the cylinder home with the left thumb (K). You will hear a click as the cylinder latch catches. As the cylinder clicks shut, rotate the cylinder with the thumb and middle fingers until it locks into place with a cartridge directly under the firing pin. If you fail to properly index





the cylinder with a chamber under the firing pin, the gun may not fire when the trigger is pulled.

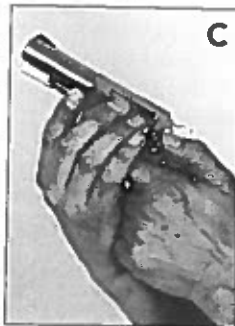
Once the cylinder is securely shut and indexed to put a cartridge under the firing pin, raise the muzzle into alignment with the target. The left hand slides back over the right into its supporting grip position and the firing position is once again assumed, and you assess the target area (L).

## RELOADING THE REVOLVER (LEFT-HANDED TECHNIQUE)

Beginning with the revolver held in a two-hand firing grip in the left hand, pointed in a safe direction and the finger off the trigger (A), bend the elbows to bring the revolver back close to the body at about chest height and to the left of the centerline of the torso (B). Keep your eyes on the target area except when you are inserting cartridges into the chambers.



As the gun is being brought back (just as the elbow of the firing arm begins to bend), cup the right hand underneath the frame of the revolver in the area of the trigger guard.



Grasp the cylinder between the two middle fingers and the thumb of the right hand (C). Viewed from the rear, the thumb contacts the cylinder at the 3 o'clock position, while the two middle fingers make contact at the 9 o'clock position. The bottom of the trigger guard is over the bottom of the right hand. Care must be taken, particularly

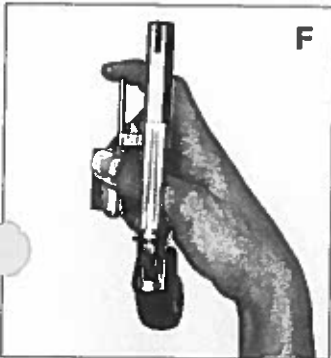


**D** with short-barreled revolvers, to keep the right index finger clear of the muzzle.

While maintaining a firm grip with the three fingers of the left hand, bring the left thumb around to the left side of the frame and engage the cylinder release (D). Twist the left wrist to rotate the frame 90 degrees clockwise. The thumb of the right hand passes through the frame; the grip is maintained on the cylinder by the thumb and two middle fingers of the right hand. It is important to rotate the frame away from the cylinder rather than simply push the cylinder out of the frame. The cylinder is held stationary by the right hand while the left hand rotates the frame away from the cylinder (E).



**E** As the revolver frame is rotated away from the cylinder, roll your right wrist slightly toward you to direct the muzzle almost straight upward. Be sure to keep the muzzle angled away from you. Let go of the revolver with the left hand and maintain your hold of the cylinder with the fingers and thumb of the right hand still in the 3 and 9 o'clock positions. The right elbow should now be close to or touching the abdomen and the revolver should still be positioned to the left of the centerline of the body.



**F** There are two methods for actuating the ejector rod. Push the ejector rod firmly with the index finger of the right hand (F), or strike it with a straight, sharp blow with the inside of the palm of the left hand (G). The rod should contact the left palm directly below the base of the index finger. The latter method is more likely to eject cases from the cylinder.

**CAUTION:** Strike the ejector hard enough to throw the empty cases well clear of the cylinder with the first blow, but not so hard as to injure your hand or bend the ejector rod. In guns with dirty or scored cylinders, or when higher-pressure loads are used, the first sharp blow to the ejector rod may push the cases only part way out of their chambers in the cylinder. A second or third sharp blow may be required for full ejection.



Allow the empty cases to fall free of the cylinder and hit the ground. Do not attempt to retrieve the cases (or any live rounds you may also eject from the cylinder).

As your left hand reaches for a speedloader or loose



cartridges in your pocket, bring the revolver in front of you at about chest height, simultaneously rotating the muzzle downward and away from you (H). Retrieve a speed loader or one or two loose cartridges from your pocket with your left hand and bring that hand to the revolver just above the cylinder.

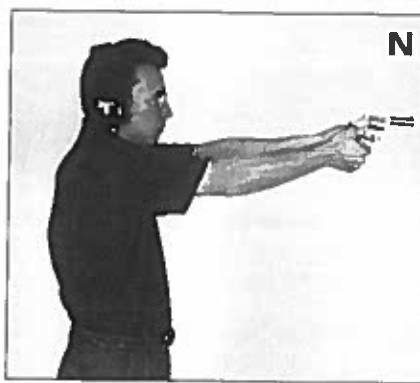
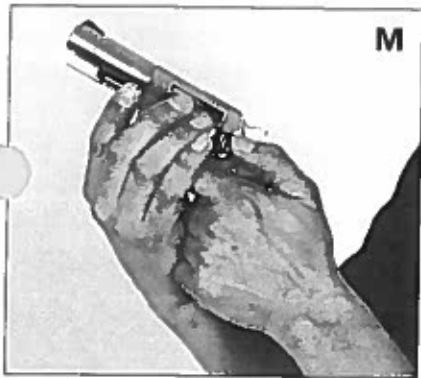
If you are using a speed loader, look down briefly as you align the cartridges with the cylinder's chambers (I). A momentary glance to ensure that the nose of each bullet has entered the chamber (J) is sufficient. Then release the cartridges into the chambers (K) and drop the speed loader to the ground.

If you are loading loose cartridges, grasp them at the rim using your thumb and forefinger. Seat them with the thumb as they enter the chamber. With practice, you can load two cartridges at a time by grasping them at their rims using the thumb and first two fingers and inserting them simultaneously into adjacent chambers. When loading loose cartridges it is more efficient to remove only one or two at a time from the pocket, load them and then go back to the pocket for one or two more, rather than grabbing many cartridges at one time (L).

When reloading with either a speed loader or loose cartridges, dirty cylinder walls or a cartridge that is slightly oversize or out of round may cause you to feel some resistance while chambering one or more cartridges. It is important to ensure that all cartridges are fully seated in their chambers in the cylinder. Cartridges that protrude from their chambers can keep the cylinder from closing or rotating.





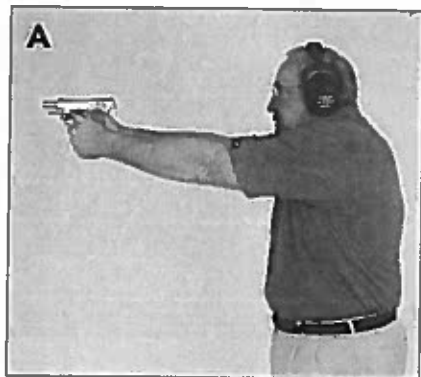


Once the cartridges are seated in their chambers in the cylinder, grasp the grip portion of the frame in a firing grip with the left hand. Remember to keep the trigger finger along the side of the frame, out of the trigger guard. As you start to raise the revolver (still keeping the muzzle in a downward direction to keep the cartridges from falling out of their chambers), rotate the frame counter-clockwise with the left wrist while simultaneously pushing the cylinder home with the right fingers (M). You will hear a click as the cylinder latch catches. As the cylinder clicks shut, rotate the cylinder with the thumb and middle fingers until it locks into place with a cartridge directly under the firing pin. If you fail to properly index the cylinder with a chamber under the firing pin, the gun may not fire when the trigger is pulled.

Once the cylinder is securely shut and indexed to put a cartridge under the firing pin, raise the muzzle into alignment with the target. The right hand slides back over the left into its supporting grip position and the firing position is once again assumed, and you assess the target area (N).

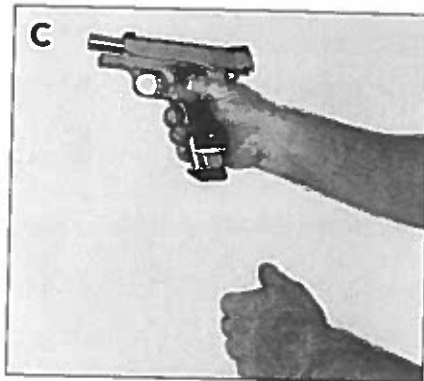
## RELOADING THE SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL (RIGHT-HANDED TECHNIQUE)

Beginning with the pistol held in a firing grip, trigger finger alongside the frame, and the muzzle pointed in a safe direction (A), bend the elbows to bring the pistol close to the body (B). The elbow of the shooting arm should be close to or in contact with the torso. The muzzle should point upward and away from you (or, if upward is not a safe direction, toward the target).



As you bring the pistol in close to your body, place the tip of the thumb of the right hand on the magazine release button (assuming the button is located in the usual position on the left side of the frame just to the rear of the trigger guard). It may be necessary to shift the right hand grip to





allow the thumb to reach the release button. Press the magazine release button straight into the frame and hold it in while the magazine drops free of the frame (C). You should be able to glimpse the falling magazine in your peripheral vision. Do not attempt to retrieve the ejected magazine.

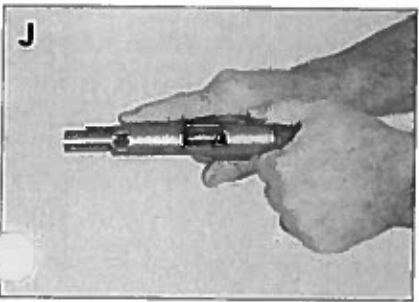
If the magazine does not fall free of the frame of its own weight, swiftly strip it from the pistol with the left hand and drop it on the ground.

At the same time, the left (support) hand reaches for a loaded magazine. Grasp the magazine between the thumb and middle finger, with the floorplate (base) of the magazine in the palm of the hand and the index finger running up the front of the magazine body, resting on or just below the tip of the bullet of the top cartridge (D).



As the firing hand continues to bring the pistol in toward the torso, rotate the right hand wrist 90 degrees so that the left side of the frame faces you and the pistol is just below eye level (E). At the same time, the left hand brings the magazine close to the magazine well of the pistol. Keep visual focus on the target area during these steps.





Glance down briefly at the magazine well, both to ensure that it is clear of an empty magazine and to locate it visually to facilitate magazine insertion (F). Using the left-hand index finger on the magazine to "point" toward the magazine well opening in the grip, insert the top of the magazine into the magazine well in the frame (G). Seat the magazine fully by pushing it all the way in with the palm of your hand, being sure to keep the trigger finger outside the trigger guard (H). You will usually hear or feel a click as the magazine seats and is caught by the magazine catch. Once the magazine has been lined up with the magazine well and is being seated, return your visual focus to the target area.

If the pistol has been shot empty and the slide is locked back, release the slide forward by either disengaging the slide lock (I) or pulling the slide slightly to the rear and releasing it (J). If the gun being reloaded is not completely empty, there will be a round remaining in the chamber and no slide manipulation will be required. Note that a few semi-automatic pistols do not lock the slide back when shot empty. With such pistols, after a fresh magazine has been

seated it will be necessary to fully retract the slide and release it to load a cartridge into the chamber and enable the pistol to fire.

After seating the magazine and releasing the slide forward, if necessary, the left hand slides back into its supporting position and the firing position is resumed (K).

During reloading, the eyes should remain continuously on the target or area of expected threat except for the brief moment when the magazine is being aligned with the frame. If the threat has fled or is otherwise gone when visual focus is returned to the target area, engage the safety and lower the pistol to a ready position.

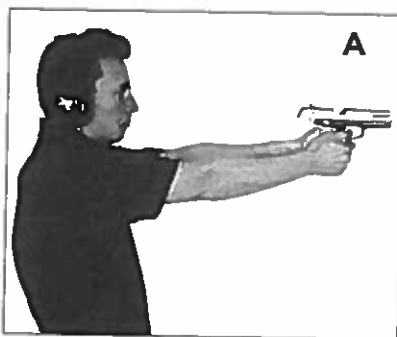
## RELOADING THE SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL (LEFT-HANDED TECHNIQUE)

Beginning with the pistol held in a firing grip, trigger finger alongside the frame, and the muzzle pointed in a safe direction (A), bend the elbows to bring the pistol close to the body (B). The elbow of the shooting arm should be close to or in contact with the torso. The muzzle should point upward and away from you (or, if upward is not a safe direction, toward the target).

As you bring the pistol in close to the body, place the tip of the trigger finger on the magazine release button (assuming the button is located in the usual position on the left side of the frame just to the rear of the trigger guard). For some shooters, it may be necessary to use the stronger middle finger instead.

Press the magazine release button straight into the frame and hold it in while the magazine drops free of the frame (C). You should be able to glimpse the falling magazine in your peripheral vision. Do not attempt to retrieve the ejected magazine.

If your pistol has ambidextrous controls, it may be possible to release the magazine by pressing the release button with your left-hand thumb (D).





If the magazine does not fall free of the frame of its own weight, swiftly strip it from the pistol with the right hand and drop it on the ground.

At the same time as the spent magazine falls to the ground, the right (support) hand reaches for a fresh magazine (E). Grasp the magazine between the thumb and middle finger, with the floorplate (base) of the magazine in the palm of



the hand and the index finger running up the front of the magazine body, resting on or just below the tip of the bullet of the top cartridge (F).

As the firing hand continues to bring the pistol in toward the torso, rotate the left hand wrist 90 degrees so that the right side of the frame faces you and the pistol is just below eye level (G). At the same time the right hand brings the magazine close to the magazine well of the pistol. Keep visual focus on the target area during these steps.

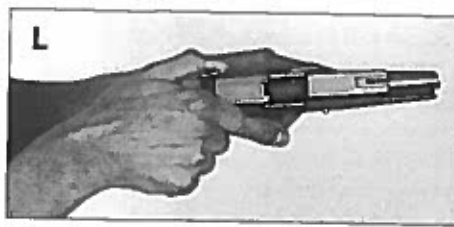


Glance down at the magazine well, both to ensure that it is clear of an empty magazine and to locate it visually to facilitate magazine insertion (H). Using the right-hand index finger on the magazine to "point" toward the magazine well opening in the grip, insert the top of the magazine into the magazine well (I). Seat the magazine by pushing it all the way in with the palm of your hand, being sure to keep your finger outside the trigger guard (J). You will usually hear or feel a click as the magazine seats and is caught by the magazine catch. Once the magazine is aligned with the magazine well and is being seated, return your visual focus to the target area.



If the pistol has been shot empty and the slide is locked back, release the slide forward, by either disengaging the slide lock (K) or pulling the slide slightly to the rear and releasing it (L). You can operate the slide lock with the index finger of the right hand, which will be close to the lock as





the right-hand palm seats the magazine (I).

If the gun being reloaded is not completely empty, there will be a round remaining in the chamber and no slide manipulation will be required. Note that a few semi-automatic pistols do not lock the slide back when shot empty. With such pistols, after a fresh magazine has been seated it will be necessary to fully retract the slide and release it to load a cartridge into the chamber.



After seating the magazine and releasing the slide forward, if necessary, the right hand slides back into its supporting position, and the firing position is resumed (M).

During the reloading process, the eyes should remain continuously on the target or the area of expected threat except for the brief moment when the magazine is being lined up with the frame. If the threat has fled or is otherwise gone when visual focus is returned to the target area, engage the safety and lower the pistol to a ready position.

## CLEARING STOPPAGES

Your gun is a tool of last resort, a tool you will avoid using unless you have no other options to safely stop an attack. However, when you must use your gun, it must work reliably. The responsible gun owner will ensure that his or her firearm functions perfectly with the defensive ammunition selected.

No matter how much ammunition testing or gunsmith tuning is done, however, there still may be rare occasions when your gun does not fire or otherwise fails to operate properly. Gun stoppages are somewhat more common with semi-automatic pistols, but can occur with revolvers, too. A gun stoppage that occurs during a violent encounter could render you helpless to stop an assailant's attack. For this reason it is important that you learn the immediate action drills for quickly clearing stoppages, and practice these drills until they are performed in an instantaneous, almost reflexive manner whenever a gun problem occurs.

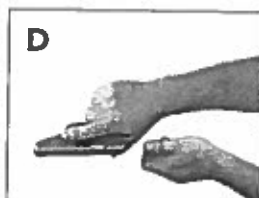
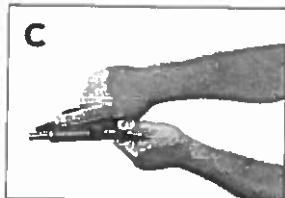
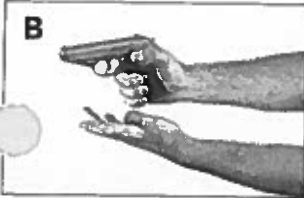
## CLEARING STOPPAGES IN OPEN-TOP SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOLS

Many semi-automatic pistols have large, open-top ejection ports. Such pistols can be cleared of all three common stoppages—failure to go into battery, failure to fire, and failure to eject—using a single immediate action drill. From the point of view of the defensive shooter, being able to clear almost all stoppages with only one immediate action drill saves the time of having to analyze the malfunction, identify its cause and then decide which drill will remedy it. Having only one immediate action drill to learn and master also reduces training time and complexity, and enables you to be able to respond instantaneously anytime a stoppage occurs. The four steps of the drill are referred to as tap, invert, rack, assess.

When a stoppage occurs, your trigger finger should be removed from the trigger (A). Next, tap the base of the magazine with the palm of the support hand to ensure it is fully seated in the pistol (B). Then, invert the pistol by rotating toward the thumb of the shooting hand. Rack the slide vigorously one time by pulling it all the way to the rear (C) and releasing it to go forward (D) under spring tension. Inverting the pistol before racking the slide and shaking the gun while the slide is momentarily held all the way back will dislodge all but the most stubborn empty case or jammed cartridge. Finally, assess the target to determine if it still constitutes a deadly threat.



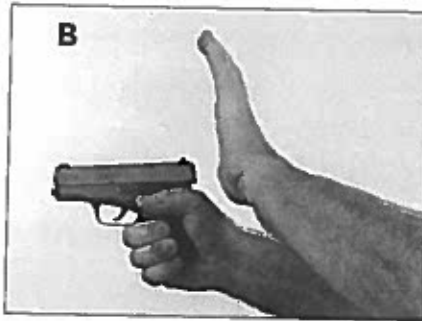
Note that the tap, invert, rack, assess drill will not work with all semi-automatic pistols. Experiment with the various specific immediate action drills (described below), using dummy ammunition or fired cases, to determine what works best with your gun (see Chapter 12: Opportunities for Skills Enhancement).



## CLEARING SPECIFIC SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL STOPPAGES

There are several types of functional problems that may occur with semi-automatic pistols. The following stoppages are the ones most commonly experienced, and each may be resolved in one or two seconds with the appropriate immediate action drill.

**Failure to Go into Battery.** This stoppage occurs when the slide does not return all the way forward and the cartridge is not fully seated in the chamber. Most commonly this stoppage is caused by a round that gets jammed on the feed ramp leading into the chamber, an oversize or over-length cartridge, or an excessively dirty chamber.



If the slide of your pistol fails to go into battery (A, arrow), remove your finger from the trigger and hit the rear of the slide sharply with the heel of the hand (B). If this fails to resolve the problem, with your finger still off the trigger, retract the slide forcefully to clear the jammed cartridge. If the problem results from an oversized cartridge, any attempt to drive the slide forward forcefully may wedge the cartridge firmly in the chamber, making it extremely difficult to rack the slide or otherwise clear the stoppage.

**Failure to Fire.** Failure to fire can be the result of a cartridge defect, such as an improperly seated or defective primer, or a magazine that is not seated fully in the frame, which will prevent the slide from stripping and chambering the top cartridge.

The immediate action drill to resolve a failure to fire is known as tap, rack, assess. First, remove your finger from the trigger (A), tap the magazine base with the palm of the support (non-firing) hand to ensure that it is fully seated (B), rack the slide by pulling it all the way back (C) and releasing it (D), and assess the threat (E) to determine whether you need to return your finger to the trigger.







**Failure to Eject.** In this condition, the fired case is extracted at least partially from the chamber, but is not completely ejected from the pistol. The fired case may remain inside the slide, possibly becoming jammed into the chamber, or it may be partially protruding out of the ejection port. This latter condition is known as a stovepipe stoppage (A).



Clearing a stovepipe is accomplished by first removing the finger from the trigger, then reaching over the top of the pistol with the support hand and forcibly sweeping that hand rearward along the top of the slide from a point halfway down the barrel back toward the body (B). The support hand contacts the protruding case at the knuckle of the forefinger and rips the case out of the ejection port and to the rear (C). (While clearing a stovepipe, be careful to keep the support hand from sweeping in front of the muzzle, and keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.) At the same time, the shooting hand also thrusts the pistol forward. As the case is stripped, the support hand returns to its position

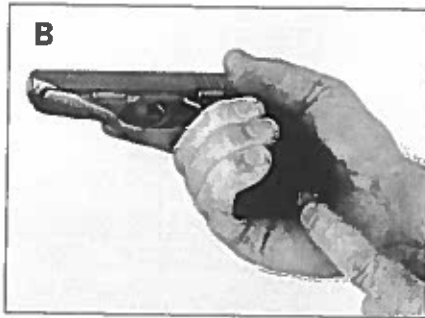
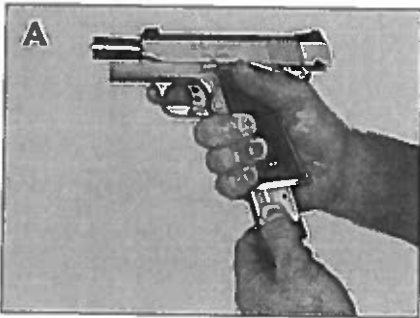


encircling the firing hand, and you assess the assailant to determine whether he is still a threat before returning the finger to the trigger.

Racking the slide after sweeping the case normally is not necessary. In fact, doing so may cause a double feed, a situation in which two cartridges attempt to enter the chamber. Clearing a double feed requires time-consuming remedial action.

If a cartridge fails to be fed into the chamber after a stovepipe stoppage is cleared, perform the immediate action drill (tap, rack, assess) for a failure-to-fire stoppage (see above).

**Failure to Drop Magazine.** Defensive-oriented pistols generally are designed to drop



their magazines freely when the magazine release is actuated. This promotes more rapid reloading, which may help save your life. The failure to drop a magazine may have several causes. Most often a defective magazine (such as one that has a defective follower or is deformed so that it wedges inside the magazine well) is the culprit.

If this problem is observed during practice sessions with several magazines of good quality, it may result from a gun problem requiring a gunsmith's attention.

An empty magazine that does not drop free of the gun during the course of a defensive shooting situation must be immediately removed. The immediate action drill is to engage the protruding tongue of the magazine floorplate with the fingers of the non-shooting hand and, with the magazine release button depressed, sharply pull the magazine out of the gun (A). Allow the magazine to drop to the ground.

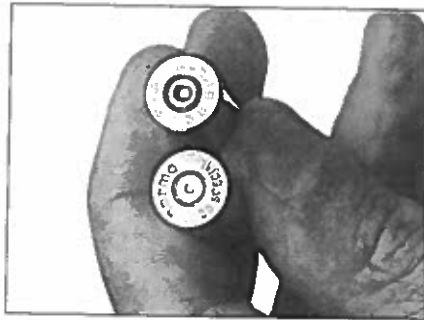
Note that some semi-automatic pistols feature magazine catches in locations other than the usual position just behind the trigger guard. The most common of these alternative locations is at the bottom of the pistol's butt (B). Such magazine catches require two hands for the release of a magazine, and consequently change the procedure for magazine reloading detailed earlier.

## CLEARING SPECIFIC REVOLVER MALFUNCTIONS

There are two main types of functional problems that may occur with revolvers. Each requires a specific immediate action drill to resolve the problem.

**Failure to Fire.** A failure to fire with a revolver occurs whenever the hammer falls on a loaded chamber (or what is thought to be a loaded chamber) and the gun does not fire. The most likely cause for a failure to fire in a stressful situation is that all the rounds in the cylinder have been fired. Another cause for a failure to fire is that the hammer has fallen on a chamber that does not contain a cartridge.

On occasion the hammer may fall on a live round and fail to fire it. If this occurs with ammunition that has previously proved reliable, this failure to fire is most commonly the result of a dud cartridge, a hangfire or misfire. If this occurs at a range while practicing, you should wait 30 to 60 seconds with the muzzle pointed downrange, in the event that the condition you are experiencing is a hangfire. On the other hand, if you are using your gun in a defensive situation, you will not have the time to hold your fire for that period of time. The proper immediate action drill is to pull the trigger again, bringing a fresh (and hopefully functioning) cartridge in line with the firing pin.



*A faint firing pin indentation (lower case) can result in a failure to fire, and may be a sign of a problem requiring a gunsmith's attention.*

If the firearm fails to fire a second or third fresh round, open the cylinder and look at the

primers of the cartridges that failed to ignite. A faint firing pin indentation, or no indentation at all on an unfired primer, is an indication of a firearm problem (such as a broken firing pin) that requires the intervention of a gunsmith.

**Failure to Eject Cases from the Cylinder.** Difficulty in ejecting fired cases from a revolver cylinder may result from oversized or high-pressure cartridges, dirt in the chambers or roughly machined chambers. If this problem is encountered during practice sessions, a gunsmith's assistance should be sought to eliminate it.

A failure to eject cases that occurs during a violent encounter can prevent you from reloading your revolver, with dire consequences. If your first strike of the ejector rod fails to forcibly eject all cases from the cylinder, strike it again with greater force. Be careful to strike in a straight line with the rod to prevent bending it with an off-axis strike. If repeated strikes do not dislodge the cases, release the rod and use your fingers to pull the fired, partially-protruding cartridge cases from their chambers, one at a time.



*If your first strike of the ejector rod fails to eject all the cases from the cylinder, strike it again with greater force. Strike in a straight line to prevent bending it.*

## AFTER CLEARING A STOPPAGE

After clearing a stoppage in a semi-automatic pistol or a revolver, you must reassess the situation to determine whether there is still a deadly threat. In the brief moment it takes to conduct an immediate action drill, an assailant may surrender or flee. Conversely, while you are clearing a stoppage, an attacker may take the opportunity to advance on you. Avoid becoming so focused on your immediate action drill that you lose awareness of your attacker's actions. Furthermore, if your efforts to clear a stoppage become time-consuming, be sure to glance at the target area every second or two to maintain awareness of threat.

An alternative to reloading or clearing a stoppage during an ongoing attack is to carry a backup firearm. It can be less time consuming and more effective to simply jettison the empty or disabled gun and draw the backup gun than to attempt to perform a multi-step procedure under stress.

## APPENDIX B

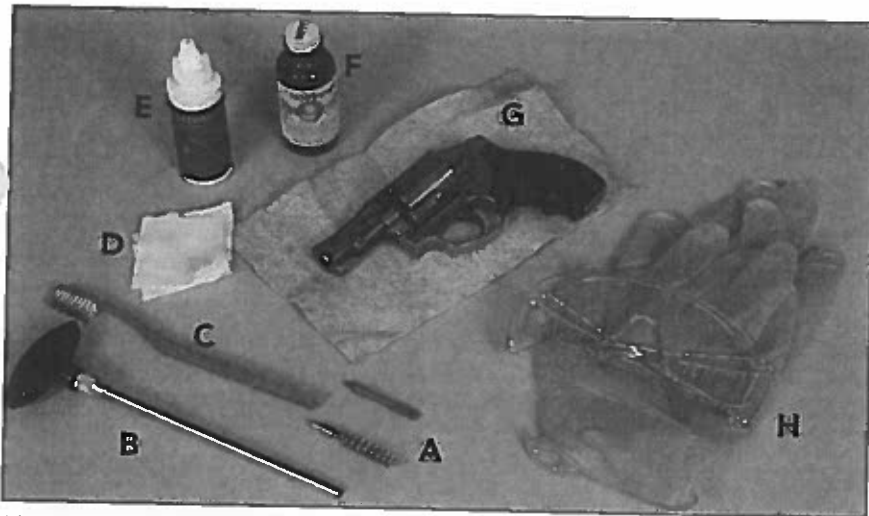
### Firearm Maintenance

Virtually all gun owners recognize the value of frequent firearm cleaning, inspection, and lubrication. A gun that is properly maintained at regular intervals will function more reliably, shoot more accurately and last longer than one whose care is neglected. While a well-maintained firearm is desirable for the complete enjoyment of such activities as plinking, hunting and and competitive shooting, it is absolutely essential in a self-defense situation, in which a single stoppage can have fatal consequences.

The critical role of a self-defense firearm demands a more rigorous schedule of maintenance than might be observed with a gun used only to plink at tin cans on weekends. This schedule includes regular cleaning, inspection and lubrication, as well as a periodic gunsmith check-up.

### CLEANING YOUR FIREARM

A gun that is shot on a regular basis accumulates dirt, powder residue and other foreign matter, all of which can make a gun more prone to stoppage, wear and corrosion. Even a firearm that is left untouched on a shelf or in a drawer can accumulate sufficient dust and dirt to affect proper functioning. Removing such harmful material is critical to ensure gun reliability and readiness.



The components of a basic gun cleaning kit include (A) a bore brush and slotted tip for holding cleaning patches, (B) a cleaning rod, (C) a small brush, (D) cotton cleaning patches, (E) gun oil, (F) gun cleaning solvent, (G) a soft cloth, and (H) eye protection. Also shown are thin rubber gloves, which may help protect the skin from dirt, oil and solvent.

Every gun owner should have a gun cleaning kit consisting of the following items:

- cloth patches;
- a cleaning rod and cleaning rod attachments, including a bore brush and tips to hold patches;
- a small brush (for cleaning gun crevices) ;
- gun solvent (bore cleaner);
- gun oil; and
- a soft cloth.

Kits containing all or most of these items are commercially available at any gun shop and many hardware, sporting goods and large discount stores. Make sure that any kit or individual cleaning rod, jag (a tip designed specifically to hold a cleaning patch) or bore brush is intended for a gun in the caliber of your pistol or revolver. Also, select patches of the proper size for your bore.

In addition to the above items, you also need safety glasses to protect your eyes from cleaning solvents and spring-loaded parts that you may inadvertently dislodge from your gun. Also recommended are thin rubber gloves to protect your skin from exposure to solvents, lubricants, firing residues and lead particles. Be sure that your gun-cleaning area has good ventilation, and do not eat, drink or smoke while performing firearm maintenance.

The first step in cleaning your firearm is to ensure that it is unloaded (A). There should be no live ammunition in the cleaning area.

Next, disassemble your firearm according to the instructions in the owner's manual for the gun. If you do not have an owner's manual for your firearm, you can usually obtain one from the firearm's manufacturer. Alternatively, a professional gunsmith may be able to show you how to disassemble your gun.

With a revolver, recommended disassembly may involve nothing more than swinging out the cylinder and removing the stocks (B). Disassembling a semi-automatic pistol usually involves the separation of the slide from the frame, which also may allow the removal of the barrel and recoil spring assembly (C). On many semi-autos, caution must

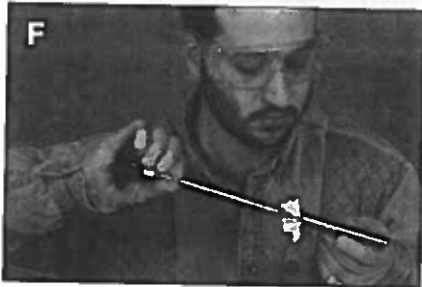




be exercised to prevent a compressed recoil spring from flying free when the slide and frame are disassembled. Generally, no further disassembly is needed for normal cleaning (nor is usually recommended in the owner's manual).

Actual cleaning starts with the bore. Attach a tip to the cleaning rod (D), put a clean patch onto the jag and wet the patch with gun cleaning solvent. Push the patch slowly through the bore to saturate the bore surface and loosen powder residue, lead or copper fouling, or other unwanted material. If you are cleaning a revolver, or a semi-automatic pistol whose barrel was not removed, you will probably have to push the patch through from the muzzle end (E). When cleaning from the muzzle end of the barrel, avoid rubbing the cleaning rod against the bore to prevent accuracy-robbing wear on the rifling. If you are cleaning a semi-automatic pistol whose barrel was removed as part of disassembly, push the patch through from the chamber (rear) end (F).

Next, attach the bore brush to the cleaning rod and moisten it with gun cleaning solvent (G). If possible, use a dropper to put solvent onto the brush; avoid dipping the brush in the solvent, as this contaminates the clean solvent with dirt and grit on the brush. Push the brush all the way through the bore, then pull it back through the bore (H). Do not try





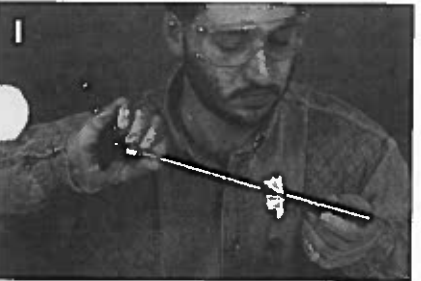
to reverse direction with the brush still in the bore. Run the brush through the bore about 15-20 times, adding solvent to it as necessary.



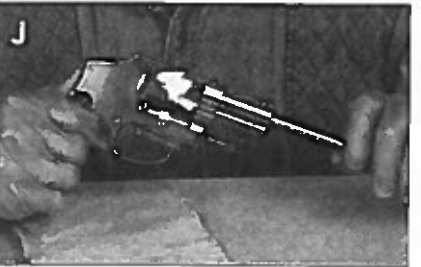
Re-attach the jag to the cleaning rod and push a clean, dry patch through the bore (I). This patch will come out quite dirty with the material that was loosened by the solvent and the bore brush. Run more dry patches through the bore; they should come out progressively cleaner, until virtually no fouling is visible (J). If the patches keep coming out somewhat dirty, repeat the cleaning process as outlined in the previous paragraphs. Also, visually check the surface of the bore for any remaining fouling, lead, or powder residue.



In cleaning a revolver, the cylinders are cleaned using much the same technique as is employed in cleaning the bore (K).



Once the bore is clean, residue must be removed from other gun surfaces. Use a solvent-soaked patch, cotton swab or toothbrush, as appropriate, to loosen and remove powder residue and other matter from working surfaces. On a semi-automatic pistol, such surfaces include the interior of the slide, the slide and frame rails, and the exterior barrel surface. On a revolver, such surfaces include the crane, frame, and any action parts that are made accessible by the removal of the stocks (L).



Maintenance of semi-automatic pistol magazines is critical for proper pistol functioning. Most magazines are designed to be disassembled; instructions should be in your owner's manual. Once the magazine is disassembled, push patches through the





magazine body to clean out loose dirt, powder residue and other matter (M).



In most cases, the owner's manual will present only those disassembly instructions required to perform basic cleaning and maintenance; more complete disassembly of the firearm is usually discouraged. However, dirt and powder residue can also collect in interior action areas that can be accessed only by complete disassembly. A partial cleaning of these inaccessible areas may be achieved by flushing the action with gun cleaner or a solvent that leaves no residue, such as brake cleaner. The solvent is sprayed into the action in such a way as to allow the excess to drain freely (such as with the stocks removed), dissolving and flushing away loosened dirt and residue.

## INSPECTING YOUR FIREARM

The ideal time for giving your firearm a thorough visual inspection is when it is disassembled after cleaning. Defects are easiest to spot on parts that are free of dirt, residue and oil. Look for cracks, burred, pitted or indented areas, broken parts and so forth. Also be aware of screws or pins that have worked loose, sights that have drifted from recoil forces, or parts that seem to have shifted from their normal positions.

Additionally, every time you pick up your firearm, whether to practice at the range, dry-fire in your basement, or clean it in your workroom, you should give it a cursory inspection (after, of course, making sure it is unloaded). Look for the buildup of firing residues; grips screws or other parts that have become loose; excessive oil leaking out of the joints between parts; and any other condition that may affect the function of the gun. Getting in the habit of making this kind of inspection will help you determine when cleaning or lubrication is necessary, or if there are any conditions that may make your gun unsafe or unreliable.



## LUBRICATING YOUR FIREARM

Cleaning powder residues and other foreign material from the gun usually removes necessary lubrication from working surfaces. Thus, it is essential to re-lubricate the firearm after it has been cleaned.

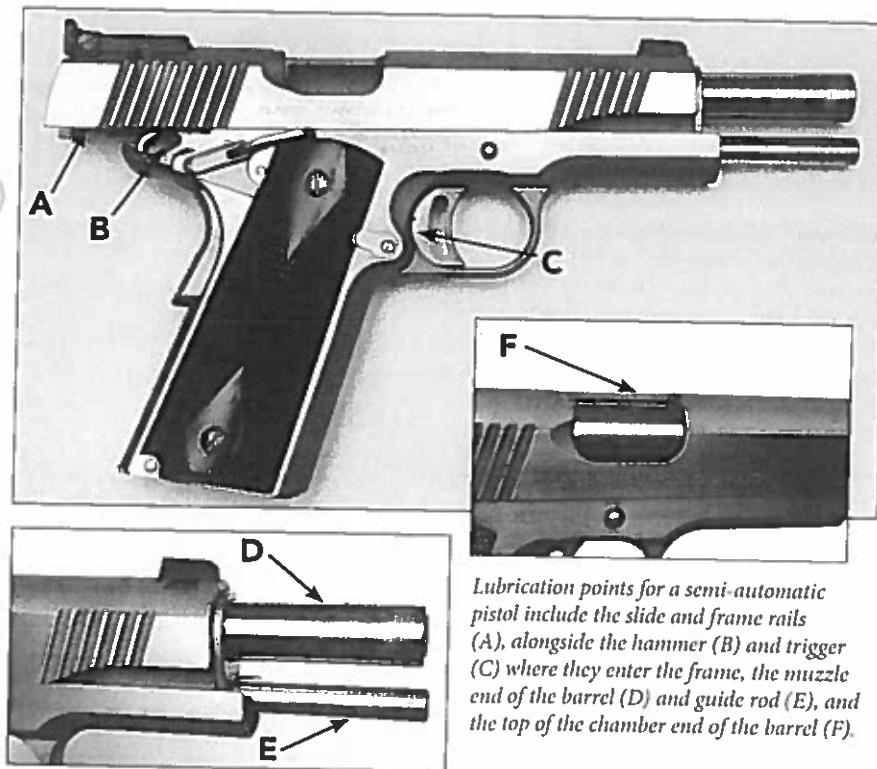
The owner's manual for your gun likely contains detailed instructions on the proper method of lubrication. In general, lubricate revolvers in the areas of the crane, ejector rod, and cylinder latch, and around the sides of the hammer and trigger. With the stocks removed, you may also squirt oil into action areas to smooth the trigger pull.

Semi-automatic pistols should be lubricated on the slide and frame rails, at the muzzle (where the barrel articulates with the slide), and in the barrel locking area. Also apply a small amount of oil to the sides of the trigger and hammer where they enter the frame, to smooth their movement. Additionally, drip a small amount of lubricant into action areas, particularly around the trigger and hammer pins. If you desire, you may put a very light film of oil on the exterior surface of the magazines to prevent rust and to help insertion and removal from the pistol. It is critical not to allow oil to be transferred to the cartridges carried within the magazine. Oil on cartridge cases can penetrate to the primer, making its ignition less reliable, and may have other deleterious effects on gun functioning as well.

It is important to use only those lubricants designed expressly for use in firearms. Over time, improper lubricants may become gummy, impairing proper gun functioning, or may be too thin or runny to provide lasting protection. Also, firearms that are used in climates that are extremely hot, cold, wet or dusty often have very special lubrication needs, as do firearms that will be stored for extended periods. Consult with a gun shop or gunsmith to determine the proper lubricants to be used with your firearm.



*Lubrication points for a revolver include the cylinder latch (A), the junction of the trigger and the frame (B), the crane (C), the ejector rod (D), and alongside the hammer where it meets the frame (E). With the hammer back, a few drops of oil may also be dripped into the action to lubricate internal action parts. Internal parts may also be accessed for lubrication by removing the stocks.*



*Lubrication points for a semi-automatic pistol include the slide and frame rails (A), alongside the hammer (B) and trigger (C) where they enter the frame, the muzzle end of the barrel (D) and guide rod (E), and the top of the chamber end of the barrel (F).*

It is also important to avoid over-lubricating your gun, or leaving oil in certain areas. For example, while a thin film of oil should coat the bore of a firearm that is to be stored, all oil must be removed from the bore before the gun is fired. Also, excess lubricant can penetrate wood stocks and cause them to deteriorate, and too much oil left inside the magazine of a semi-automatic pistol or the chambers of a revolver cylinder can contaminate cartridge primers and lead to misfires.

## FUNCTION CHECKING YOUR FIREARM

After cleaning, inspecting and lubricating the firearm, the final stage is reassembly and function checking. The inspection process alluded to previously should continue during reassembly. Be aware of parts that do not go together as they should, a sudden increase in the play or looseness of pins and other components, and so forth.

When the firearm is reassembled, make sure that it is unloaded and then dry-fire it a few times to see if there are any changes in the feel of the trigger or the functioning of the controls. With a revolver, swing the cylinder out and test the action of the extractor rod. Rack the slide of a semiautomatic and ensure that its various safety controls are functioning. Don't just look with your eyes; listen with your ears. Sometimes the sound of the gun as it is cycled or dry-fired can reveal a functional problem.

Similarly, when firing live ammunition at the range, be aware of any changes in the gun's function or feel. A sudden tendency of the gun to misfire, jam, or change the tightness or location of its groups may be a sign of a mechanical problem.

Changes in gun function are sometimes the result of a buildup of dirt, powder residue, congealed lubricant and so forth. This is especially true of jams or sluggishness in cycling that occur gradually when many rounds have been fired without maintenance. In such cases, proper functioning is often restored by a thorough cleaning and lubrication.

On the other hand, problems in functioning that appear suddenly or are not rectified by cleaning may indicate a broken part or other serious condition. In such cases, consult a gunsmith.



*Always function check a firearm without ammunition after it has been disassembled for cleaning or repair. Here a shooter works the slide of a semi-automatic pistol.*

## OTHER MAINTENANCE

Firearm maintenance involves more than just cleaning, inspection, lubrication and function testing. Both semi-automatic pistols and revolvers are powered by springs, which can, over time, fatigue and impair functioning. The springs that power revolver hammers generally last for many years before they weaken enough to cause problems; however, revolvers having a tendency to produce light hits on the primer may be suffering from weak springs. A gunsmith can help diagnose and remedy this problem.



*Performing regular maintenance, such as the replacement of fatigued recoil springs (above), is a part of responsible firearm ownership.*

Recoil springs on semi-automatic pistols should be replaced at regular intervals, usually every several thousand rounds. Your owner's manual should have specific recommendations regarding recoil spring replacement, as well as directions for installing new springs. A gunsmith can also assist you in replacing recoil springs.

The weak link of the semi-automatic pistol is its magazine. While most magazine springs are designed to retain their stiffness for long periods, even when left compressed, some magazine springs will fatigue over time. Some feeding problems may result from improper magazine spring tension; a gunsmith can diagnose this condition.



## GUNSMITH CHECK-UP

In addition to the normal maintenance you can perform, it is important to periodically have a gunsmith completely disassemble, clean inspect and lubricate your firearm. This is also an opportunity for an experienced eye to look for wear, breakage or other conditions that may affect your gun's ability to defend you or your loved ones.

The frequency of this kind of gunsmith examination depends upon your shooting habits. In general, if you practice regularly with your firearm, an annual check-up is indicated.



# APPENDIX C

## Opportunities for Skill Enhancement

The NRA Personal Protection Outside the Home course should not be regarded as the endpoint of the training experience, but rather as the first step in the development of skills and abilities that will contribute to the personal safety of you and your family. There are many ways in which the knowledge, skills and attitude you have acquired in the Personal Protection Outside the Home Course can be enhanced, from individual practice to formal training and official competition. The selection of the appropriate activity is based on your needs, resources and time schedule.

### DRY-FIRE PRACTICE

Dry-fire practice is an inexpensive, safe and time-efficient way to enhance shooting fundamentals, improve coordination and speed of presentation, and practice the various shooting positions. Dry-firing involves practicing every phase of the firing process using an *unloaded* firearm.

All dry-fire practice must be performed in accordance with the following safety rules:

- The firearm must be completely unloaded
- All dry-firing is done in a dedicated dry-fire area having a safe backstop at which the gun is pointed
- No live ammunition is allowed in the dedicated dry-fire area
- Reloading drills are performed only with dummy ammunition
- Eye protection must always be worn

Of course, even though the firearm is unloaded, it is important to still observe the first rule of Safe Gun Handling—**ALWAYS** keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.

Dry-firing can be used to practice a variety of skills:

- Drawing from a holster, with or without concealment
- Reloading a revolver or semi-automatic pistol;
- Clearing stoppages (using dummy ammunition)
- Assuming various shooting positions (kneeling, squatting, prone, etc.) after drawing the pistol

- Mastering the shooting fundamentals (aiming, breath control, hold control, trigger control and follow-through) as well as grip, position and NAA (Natural Aiming Area)

- Practicing movement and the use of cover

The ways that dry-firing can be used to enhance your defensive shooting skills are limited only by your imagination. For example, you could set up several targets in a basement area providing a good backstop, and practice engaging the targets as you draw from a standing position to positions of cover. Maintaining a focus on the handgun's sights enables you to verify proper sight alignment and sight picture.

A variation on traditional dry-fire techniques has been afforded by laser technology. Several firms currently market target systems allowing a standard unmodified firearm to "fire" a beam of laser light at a target sensor, which emits a visual or audio signal when hit. These systems normally involve the insertion into the gun's chamber of a cartridge-shaped laser emitting unit that is activated by the strike of the firing pin.



*Dry-fire practice in the home, using concrete wall as backstop.*

## LIVE-FIRE PRACTICE

Although dry-fire practice, as well as the review of books, videos and other materials, can add considerably to your knowledge and ability, there is no substitute for live-fire practice in improving defensive shooting skills.

Initially, the novice shooter should concentrate upon mastering the shooting drills presented in this course. Later, as both speed and accuracy improve, more challenging drills may be attempted. It is imperative that you always observe the three main rules of Safe Gun Handling—**ALWAYS** keep the gun pointed in a safe direction; **ALWAYS** keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot; and **ALWAYS** keep the gun unloaded until ready to use—during all live-fire exercises.



*Live-fire practice with a shooting partner.*

Safety is never sacrificed or compromised for the sake of speed or for any other reason. This is especially true when your practice involves drawing from the holster.

If multiple target arrays are used, they must be positioned so as to allow all rounds fired to hit a suitable backstop.

It is often useful to have a shooting partner during live-fire exercises. Not only does this give you an additional incentive to practice; a shooting partner can help you better assess your progress. For example, a partner can time your exercises with a stopwatch or an electronic shooting timer. The latter device is an especially useful tool. Typically, when the "start" button of a shooting timer is pressed, an audible signal is emitted after a random two- to three-second delay. Each shot fired after this start signal is sensed and timed by the device. After the particular string of shots is completed, you can review your times for each shot. Although a shooting timer is ideal for use with a shooting partner, you can also use it alone.

During a live-fire practice session, a shooting partner can also observe and give you feedback on your draw, stance, grip, and shooting fundamentals. For a detailed, objective record of your practice session, have your partner videotape you while you shoot. (Always ensure that the video camera is behind the firing line, and that the camera operator is not exposed to danger from other shooters.) Videotape, especially when played back in slow motion, allows you to identify areas for improvement in your draw technique and shooting form that the naked eye might miss.

## SELF-DEFENSE SCENARIOS

In addition to assisting you during live-fire practice at the range, a shooting partner can also help you role-play various confrontational scenarios outside your home. Typically, one person takes the role of the defender while the other is the attacker. While you can perform such role-play in the home with a non-firing firearm simulator made for training use, do not use such simulators outside the home. They may be mistaken for real guns by passersby, and in any event, many people may be made uncomfortable by the sight of people practicing such scenarios with anything that resembles a firearm.



*Armed citizen and partner practicing self-defense scenarios outside the home.*

Even without firearm simulators, there are many aspects of street self-defense that you can still practice, including maintaining proper awareness of your surroundings, identifying escape routes, and planning and executing unarmed responses to potentially threatening situations. Interestingly, the experience of persons doing such role play is that, even though they know it is only a pretend situation involving friends or family members, they will experience an elevated level of stress. Learning how to perform under such conditions will help better prepare you for the stress of a real encounter.

## NRA QUALIFICATION PROGRAM

You can develop your skills and gain recognition for your level of proficiency in the NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program. The NRA Marksmanship Qualification



Program is a self-paced recreational shooting activity that provides shooters of all skill levels with both fun and a sense of accomplishment. The Program consists of seven different skill ratings which are earned by attaining the required scores on a series of increasingly challenging courses of fire. Shooting is done with two hands and within specific time limits to help build shooting skills having real-world applicability. For more information on the NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program, see Appendix D: Information and Training Resources.

## COMPETITION

Pistol competition is an excellent way to sharpen shooting skills, and the NRA offers matches open to beginner and expert alike. NRA Bullseye competition provides an opportunity to refine the shooting fundamentals—aiming, breath control, hold control, trigger control and follow-through. For competition that hones many shooting skills relevant to concealed carry and self-defense, try NRA Action Pistol. In this sport, varied target arrays are presented that must be shot within relatively quick time limits, drawing the gun from the holster. In most Action Pistol events, a large light-color target is used, with imprinted scoring rings in its center that are virtually invisible to the shooter. This helps the shooter develop the ability to accurately place shots in the center of target mass.



*Practical shooting competition.*

Practical pistol competition, such as that sponsored by USPSA/IPSC (United States Practical Shooting Association/ International Practical Shooting Confederation), IDPA (International Defensive Pistol Association) and others, is another fun and exciting way to improve shooting and gun handling skills. In these sports, the shooter is presented with a usually unlimited number of shooting challenges, and all firing is done against the clock; most stages start with the gun in the holster. Most stages incorporate speed, movement and decision-making, thus giving the shooter practice in shooting accurately and quickly under stress.

For information on NRA-sanctioned matches, as well as other forms of competition, see Appendix D: Information and Training Resources.

## ADDITIONAL TRAINING

The NRA Personal Protection Outside the Home course provides a thorough grounding in the fundamentals of defensive shooting and concealed firearm carry. Extensive practice and rigorous application of the techniques introduced in this course will make the shooter interested in self-defense more capable of defending his or her life and family. The high



number of rounds fired, and the diversity of skills taught, make this NRA course comparable to courses offered at elite shooting schools.

Some people, however, may wish to obtain additional training to learn new shooting techniques or increase their proficiency in the techniques already learned. These individuals can avail themselves of the training available at numerous facilities throughout the country. Note that the instruction provided at such facilities may vary in terms of length, quality, type and cost.

Shooters contemplating enrolling at such a facility to enhance their skills should consider at least the following factors:

- Reputation of facility
- Geographic location
- Cost
- Credentials of instructors
- Student-teacher ratio
- Safety record of institution
- Types of courses offered
- Availability of nearby lodging (for multi-day courses)

## EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

In recent years there has been a great increase in the amount of educational materials related to defensive shooting. You choose from among hundreds of pamphlets, books and videos to gain information on virtually every aspect of gun ownership and use, from maintenance and disassembly to advanced firing techniques for self-defense and safe gun storage methods for the home. Appendix D: Information and Training Resources contains a sample of the available materials.

Note that the NRA does not necessarily approve or endorse the information contained in any of the materials listed in Appendix D. While much of the content of those materials is in agreement with official NRA training guidelines and policy, some content may differ from what is taught in NRA courses. You are urged to glean as much information as possible from a wide variety of sources, but always with a critical eye toward the effectiveness and safety of the techniques being taught.



# APPENDIX D

## Information and Training Resources

The following is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the books, magazines, videos and training opportunities available to today's gun owners. Instead, it is only a representative sampling of these resources. Inclusion of a resource in the list below does not imply NRA endorsement of its contents. Consult an NRA Certified Instructor for further information on additional resources that may be available to you.

### BOOKS

*Armed and Considered Dangerous: A Survey of Felons and Their Firearms*, by James D. Wright and Peter H. Rossi. Aldine de Gruyter, Hawthorne, NY, 1994. ISBN 0-202-30542-2

*Armed and Female*, by Paxton Quigley. E.P. Dutton & Co., New York, NY, 1989. ISBN 0-225-24742-4

*Armed Response: A Comprehensive Guide to Using Firearms for Self-Defence*, by David Kenik. Merril Press, 2005. ISBN 0-936783-45-1

*NRA Guide to The Basics of Pistol Shooting*. National Rifle Association of America, Fairfax, VA, 2009. ISBN 978-0-935998-05-4

*Best Defense: True Stories of Intended Victims Who Defended Themselves with a Firearm*, by Robert Waters. Cumberland House Publishing, Nashville, TN, 1998. ISBN 1-888952-97-0

*Concealed Handgun Manual*, by Chris Bird. Privateer Publishing, San Antonio, TX, 2000. ISBN 0-9656784-6-6

*Defensive Shotgun*, by Louis Awerbuck. Desert Publishing, El Dorado, AR, 1989. ISBN 0-87947-412-2

*Defensive Shooting for Real-Life Encounters*, by Ralph Mroz. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 2000. ISBN 1-58160-094-1

*Effective Defense—The Woman, The Plan, The Gun*, by Gila May Hayes. FAS Books, Onalaska, WA, 1994. ISBN 1-885036-01-9

*Fight at Night*, by Andy Stanford. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1999. ISBN 1-58160-026-7.

*The Freedmen, The Fourteenth Amendment and the Right to Bear Arms, 1866-1876*, by Stephen P. Halbrook. Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, CT, 1998. ISBN 0-275-96331-4

*Gun Control and the Constitution: Sources and Explorations on the Second Amendment*, ed. by Robert Cottrol. Garland Publishing, Inc., Hamden, CT. ISBN 0-8153-1666-6

*Guns, Bullets and Gunfights*, by Jim Cirillo. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1996.  
ISBN 0-87364-877-3

*Guns, Crime and Freedom*, by Wayne Lapierre. Regnery Publishing, Washington, DC,  
1994. ISBN 0-89526-477-3

*Hidden in Plain Sight*, by Trey Bloodworth and Mike Raley. Professional Press,  
Chapel Hill, NC, 1995. ISBN 1-57087-168-X.

*Home Firearm Safety*. National Rifle Association of America, Fairfax, VA, 1996.

*Kill or Get Killed*, by Rex Applegate. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1976.  
ISBN 0-87364-084-5

*More Guns, Less Crime*, by John Lott. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1998.  
ISBN 0-226-49363-6

*NRA Firearm Sourcebook: Your Ultimate Guide to Guns, Ballistics and Shooting*.  
National Rifle Association, Fairfax, VA, 2006. ISBN 0-935998-26-8

*NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program* (booklet). National Rifle Association,  
Fairfax, VA.

*Origins and Development of the Second Amendment*, by David Hardy. Blacksmith Corp.,  
North Hampton, OH, 1986. ISBN 0-941540-13-8

*Principles of Personal Defense*, by Jeff Cooper. Paladin Press, Boulder CO, 1988.  
ISBN 0-87364-497-2

*Smart & Safe: Handling Your Firearm* (booklet). National Rifle Association of America,  
Fairfax, VA.

*The Street Smart Gun Book*, by John Farnam. Police Bookshelf, Concord, NH, 1990.  
ISBN 0-936279-06-0.

*Get Smarts, Firearms and Personal Security*, by Jim Grover. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO,  
1990. ISBN 1-58160-067-4.

*Stressfire*, by Massad Ayoob. Police Bookshelf, Concord, NH, 1986.  
ISBN 0-936279-03-6

*Tactical Advantage*, by Gabriel Suarez. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1998.  
ISBN 0-87364-975-3

*Tactical Pistol*, by Gabriel Suarez. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1996. ISBN 0-87364-864-1

*Tactical Reality*, by Louis Awerbuck. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1999.  
ISBN 0-58160-051-8

*That Every Man Be Armed: The Evolution of a Constitutional Right*, by Stephen P.  
Halbrook. Independent Institute, Oakland, CA, 1994. ISBN 0-945999-38-0

*The Truth About Handguns*, by Duane Thomas. Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1997.  
ISBN 0-87364-953-2

*Up To Speed*, by John Mattera. Zediker Publishing, Oxford, MS, 1998.  
ISBN 0-9626925-8-1

## MAGAZINES

All titles below published monthly by the National Rifle Association of America, Fairfax, VA.

*American Rifleman*

*America's 1st Freedom*

*American Hunter*

*InSights* (no longer published)

*Shooting Illustrated*

*Shooting Sports USA*

## VIDEOS

*Fundamentals of Gun Safety: The Basic Rules of Safe Firearm Ownership*. National Rifle Association of America, Fairfax, VA, 1991.

*Basics of Pistol Shooting*. National Rifle Association of America, Fairfax, VA, 2010.

*A Woman's Guide to Firearms*. Lyon House Productions, Hollywood, CA, 1987.

*Personal Protection in the Home*. National Rifle Association of America, Fairfax, VA, 2001.

*Personal Protection Outside the Home*. National Rifle Association of America, Fairfax, VA, 2010.

## TRAINING

Consult an NRA Certified Instructor for information on further training opportunities to enhance your knowledge, skills and attitude. [nrainstructors.org](http://nrainstructors.org)

## COMPETITION

The following competitive activities (listed with their sanctioning organizations) are among those that will develop shooting and gun handling skills that are relevant to defensive shooting.

**.RA Action Pistol:** Competitive Shooting Division, National Rifle Association of America, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030, (703) 267-1486.

**IDPA (International Defensive Pistol Association):** 2232 CR 719, Berryville, AK 72616, (870) 545-3886.

**USPSA/IPSC (United States Practical Shooting Association/International Practical Shooting Confederation):** P.O. Box 811, 702A Metcalf St., Sedro Wooley, WA 98284, (360) 855-2245.

## APPENDIX E

### Facts About the NRA



# NRA

Established in 1871, the National Rifle Association of America (NRA) is a non-profit organization supported entirely by membership fees and by donations from public-spirited citizens.

The NRA does not receive any appropriations from Congress, nor is it a trade organization. It is not affiliated with any gun or ammunition manufacturers, or with any businesses which deal in guns or ammunition.

The membership roster of the NRA has included seven U.S. Presidents, two U.S. Supreme Court chief justices, and many of America's outstanding diplomats, military leaders, members of Congress, and other public officials.

Originally formed to promote marksmanship training, the NRA has since reached out to establish a wide variety of activities, ranging from gun safety programs for children and adults to gun collecting and gunsmithing.

Law enforcement personnel throughout the country have also received training from NRA Certified Law Enforcement Instructors in the firearm skills needed to protect themselves and the public.

In addition, clubs that are enrolled or affiliated with the NRA exist in communities across the nation, teaching youths and adults gun safety, marksmanship, and responsibility while also providing recreational activities.

The NRA cooperates with federal agencies, all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, and state and local governments that are interested in training and safety programs.

The basic goals of the NRA are to:

- Protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, especially in regard to the Second Amendment-protected right of the individual citizen to keep and bear arms.
- Promote public safety, law and order, and the national defense.
- Train citizens and members of law enforcement agencies and the armed forces in the safe handling and efficient use of firearms.
- Foster and promote the shooting sports at local, state regional, national, and international levels.
- Promote hunter safety and proper wildlife management.

For additional information about the NRA, including programs, publications and membership, contact: National Rifle Association of America, 11250 Waples Mill Road, Fairfax, VA 22030, (800) NRA-3888, [www.nra.org](http://www.nra.org).





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The National Rifle Association is the world's leader in firearm education, safety and training. Created on that premise in 1871, NRA training courses develop safe, ethical, responsible shooters through a network of certified instructors, training more people annually in the safe use of firearms than any other organization in the world. Whether you're a new or prospective gun owner or hunter, whatever your age or level of expertise, whichever firearm you're interested in, NRA's instructors and training materials have you covered.

The NRA Guide to the Basics of Personal Protection Outside The Home is a comprehensive handbook that can help reduce the risk of becoming a victim of violent crime. Subjects covered include concealed carry techniques, presentation of a firearm from concealment, defensive shooting techniques, firearm and ammunition selection, clearing gun stoppages, legal aspects of gun ownership and self-defense, and the aftermath of a defensive shooting. The guide also provides best practices for identifying and avoiding potential threats and enhancing personal security, benefiting gun owners and non-gun owners alike.

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