

compelled to give some general ideas and comments on the subject.

While we will give you some of our personal suggestions as well as the reasoning behind the suggestions, We want to make it abundantly clear that we are not endorsing any firearms or equipment in specific, we are simply telling you what we have generally found to be a reasonable answer to the above question.

A good friend once said “The best firearm and ammo is what you have on you.” The idea here is that the firearm you currently own will work wonders - if you know how to use it.

Having said that, some firearms work better than others. What we are going to suggest are simple, time tested, and reliable rules of thumb. Could you purchase a more expensive firearm or one that doesn't fall within our guidelines and still do well with it during a training course or to protect innocent life?

Absolutely.

The following is a simple guide, a way to hopefully help you take a new look at ideas and a few items that you may not have worked with before which can multiply your combat effectiveness. You need to take the information and make your own fully informed decision, and by all means, feel free to kick around the ideas and give us your feedback.

Basic Factors in Firearm Selection

Selecting a firearm can be daunting, and books have been written on the subject. So we are going to hit the relevant points that we believe are the most important for those who intend to win a fight for life instead of a competitive shooting match.

Please keep in mind, we are not professing to know your situation or what will ultimately work best for you, we are simply laying out some elementary guidelines with uncomplicated suggestions that we have found work for most people most of the time.

We are recommending a fitting for the average concealed carrier, you may not be “average” in where and how you work or travel will therefore likely require you to adapt equipment to your situation.

Keeping the above in mind, we would offer the following recommendations for your consideration:

Size - It matters. Not so much in caliber, as it does in relationship to the size of the handgun frame you will be attempting to conceal.

Caliber: You need nothing larger than a 9mm, it is a prolific caliber that is lethal in the hands of a fighter, and almost anyone can shoot it *comfortably*.

Remember, it's not the calibre or number of firearms that you own that make you a lethal force, it's your ability to decisively use it masterfully that will increase your odds of survival.

Why does shooting comfort matter?

Because if the caliber is too large or the frame too small the recoil can quickly intimidate a shooter. This in turn leads to bad habits that degrade your ability to shoot well. Likewise, this makes you less confident and therefore you will both be shooting less and the little shooting that you do fit into your training will be of a poorer quality. Shooting less and practicing with poor quality is not conducive to setting yourself up to win the fight of your life.

Also keep in mind that if you receive proper training on a good combative firing grip you will be able to manage greater recoil than you may currently believe yourself capable of, so don't necessarily turn down something that seems barely manageable, because with the correct grip a "barely manageable" recoil becomes a very manageable recoil.

Additionally, you need to be aware that a small calibre in a small frame can give an even more unpleasant recoil than a larger calibre in a larger handgun. This is because a sub-calibre handgun in a tiny frame can have a much more pronounced and sharper recoil than its slightly larger calibre cousin in a larger frame. The reason for this is simple, some small frames simply don't absorb recoil as well due to their diminutive size.

As a general rule of thumb, test fire multiple frames and caliber's before settling on something you will end up hating to shoot.

Your body size: If you are a person who is physically larger than the average person, you have more options than the smaller/slimmer person. If you are smaller and/or slimmer, you find that you may have some limitations on the size of firearm frame you will be able to hide if you are trying to carry concealed. If you choose too large of a sized frame handgun, it will become difficult to effectively conceal a larger handgun on your body. Too small of a handgun, and you will run into the problem listed under *ergonomics* (below).

Ergonomics - The firearm you are looking for needs to offer easy accessibility to any safety mechanisms that need to be deactivated without having to compromise your firing grip. That is to say you should be able to carry the handgun without having to compromise your firing hand to manipulate the safety, and your handgun should allow

you to disengage the safety without extraneous or overly unnatural movement during the draw.

With concealment handguns the firearm need to be small enough to conceal, yet large enough to fit your hands in a manner that allows for the manipulation of that handgun without having the firearm pinching your hands during manipulations such as reloads and malfunction clearances.

Weight - While an extra pound here and there doesn't seem like much - after wearing it for 12 or more hours - you will feel it. Can you learn to deal with it? Certainly, especially as you practice with it and carry it more. However, if it causes you to carry your firearm less and practice less, the added weight becomes a liability and you need to either buck up and carry more or trade it in for something you can deal with.

Balance - A few extra ounces balanced correctly will hardly be noticed, yet a few extra ounces poorly balanced can make a huge difference in handling and recoil management as well as physical fatigue over a few days of carrying or training.

The majority of the weight should balance towards towards the stock with the handguns tactical light attached. Having the balanced towards the rear makes for a more comfortable presentation, as well as facilitates a more rapid transition between multiple targets where a heavy barrel could cause the inertia to slow your presentation and cause a overshoot of your intended target.

This balance principle is often defeated the more gadgets we put on the forend, and sometimes this simply can't be helped, as some accessories will be necessary for a particular mission. However as a good friend of mine once said "Maximize your equipment, while minimizing your gear." This advice is not only good for your firearm, it's great for everything you carry.

Safety features - There is no real way to say this tactfully, safety features are overrated.

Why? because you, the end user, are the one safety feature that must be in place to be really safe. If you have poor safety habits the number of safeties on a firearm make no difference, you will still be a danger to both yourself and everyone around you. Conversely, if your safety habits are well ingrained you can confidently carry any unmodified firearm safely.

It's also important to consider the fact that most gunfights don't last very long at all, and are generally concluded in a matter of seconds. If you are busy unlocking your firearm or fiddling with safeties while the other guy is shooting, you are way behind the power curve.

Semi-auto or something else? - This is completely a matter of personal preference

and how much quality time you are willing to put into your training. I have seen plenty of handgun revolver shooters shoot much faster than their semi-auto counterparts.

Like everything else in life there is give and take and such skills come at the price of intensive and focused training when dealing with slightly more labor intensive firearms.

So while you may gain more reliability in function, it will require more practice because there are more moving parts to deal with.

This is not necessarily a drawback (especially once mastered), just be aware of the additional time and effort required to master your tool.

Rails - When talking about shooting to save lives, rails are a necessity, not a nicety.

Because a majority of real life fights for life happen at conversational distances, very rapidly, very violently, and in low light/no light conditions, you will want a dedicated weapon mounted flashlight, as you will need the light for target identification in low/no light situations, and to help you clear darker/deep shadow areas.

Summary:

The above will cover the basics and push you in the right direction. As most things in life, keeping the principles uncomplicated will give you what you need and simplify your decision making process and your life.

If you feel you need more information on firearms selection, just do a quick search on Google and get to it, as we said above, there are plenty of online resources available both at our blog and throughout cyberspace.

Finally, if you have never shot before (or shot very little), I would recommend once you have narrowed your potential candidates down, you schedule a half day at a local gun-shop that has an indoor range where you can both manipulate and test-fire different handguns under basic supervision.

During your manipulations you should be checking to see if the basic manipulations (loading, unloading, and reloading) meet the above requirements listed under ergonomics heading.

Many shops have this type of service available, and you should take full advantage of it.

Finally, don't let someone sell you anything you don't need or that you don't believe is right for you. Pick your firearms for reliability and functionality, not fashion or popularity.

Practical Handgun Recommendation: Glock 19 - third or fourth generation (manufactured with accessory rails).



Why the Glock? We recommend the Glock because they are a notoriously rugged and simple to use. All of us at Pulse O2DA have used Glocks in our careers, and most of us still carry them.

Must have accessories:

- Magazines (x 2-3 OEM)



- Quality holster and magazine pouches

We recommend Raven Concealment Systems and Kaluban Cloak we like both and they hold up well to everyday practical use.



Why the holster? Gunfights are typically a surprise, happening in close range, and require immediate access to your gun and weapon-mounted tactical light. Whether you are drawing surreptitiously or quickly, a quality holster is one of the most important pieces of equipment you can own.

Why the magazine pouch and extra magazine(s)? Because a spare magazine on the body is a necessity in case of multiple adversaries or malfunctions.

- Weapons mounted tactical flashlight, we recommend Surefire products, they provide ample illumination and are tough as nails.



- Box of 12 SureFire 123A Lithium Batteries
SF12-BB



- Trijicon “Bright and Tough” front and rear night sights



- Blackhawk Riggers Belt or other heavy duty carry belt that will securely hold your handgun and magazine pouch securely in place.



- Blackhawk non-locking carabiner used for training only



- Electronic hearing protection: Peltor Swat-Tac Earmuffs (w/o mic) used for training only



- Otis Elite Cleaning System with Optics and DVD (this will serve you throughout all your firearms truing, basic through advanced and beyond.



As we mentioned previously, the above will get you well on your way with the minimum amount of hassle for the average person, and will serve you well for your carry career.