

Personal and Home Security

There are many kinds of handguns and so I'd like to share what I have found about their good and bad aspects as you consider personal or home defense weapons. Since no handgun has the power of a shotgun to stop a fight, it's critical that you pick one with the right combination of power, safety and handling. **First, power.** Though in a pinch any gun is better than no gun at all, please do not even consider the .22 or .22 magnum in your plans. Ignore also, the little .25 automatic. The .32 auto, the .380 auto, and the 9mm Markarov are all marginal but can be enhanced with good ammunition ("JHP": jacketed hollow point ammunition in Cor-Bon, Winchester Golden Saber, etc). Still, these guns typically disable an adult criminal with a single shot to the body only about 50% of the time (based upon records of thousands of actual shootings). The .38 special is effective only about 60% of the time and guns that handle hot loads like +P+ ammunition only gets it up to about 70%. With JHP ammunition, the 9mm Luger (Parabellum) can drop an attacker about 75% of the time. The .45 auto, .40 auto and the 10mm auto JHP can stop a fight with a single body hit about 80-85% of the time. The .357 magnum is among the best with a stopping rate of over 90%. The new .357 SIG so far has performed just as well as a hotly-loaded .357 magnum and so is being adopted by several police departments in the U.S. Anything bigger than these, like the .44 magnum or the .41 magnum and the big .50 caliber pistols are too big to handle easily, waste energy by punching right through a criminal and then can hit innocents down range.

Now for safety and handling. Nifty gun safes that hold one or two handguns and can be bolted to anything immovable or just put onto a night stand now cost about \$70.00-80.00. No real need to attach separate gun locks on the gun. You can get in very quickly by pressing your particular combination on a series of buttons on the top, stopping little kids. Many safes even sound an alarm when disturbed. The buttons are arranged so you can press the combination in the blind. The front door just shoots open and you grab. So unlike shotguns and rifles, handguns can be kept

loaded and ready right where you want them, but still safe from little hands or anyone else not authorized. Once the gun is out of the safe, however, you need to consider its particular safety features. Because handguns are so short, it is much easier to get on target quickly and it is harder to slap or take them away if you have both hands on the piece. But this also means that if you are not careful you can more easily point the muzzle in an unsafe direction. So, you must be even more careful in handling a handgun than you are with a rifle or shotgun. **Let's consider revolvers.** Many revolvers have a cross-bolt device preventing accidental discharge when dropped, but not all do. Few revolvers have any other safety device and so if the piece is loaded it fires if you pull the trigger. Scary, but this also makes revolvers very simple to operate. Just point and squeeze. When you're faced with death, your heart is in your boots and you can't even feel your hands any more, having something this easy to use might make the difference between life and death. Properly chambered quality revolvers like modern Colt, Ruger, and Smith and Wesson can handle hot loads even in .357 magnum. For home defense, snubbed nosed revolvers lose too much energy, most have only 5 rounds, and many can't handle powerful loads. Go with a substantial revolver with a 5 inch barrel. Single-action (cowboy type) revolvers are less safe, too hard to fire and slow to reload. A good new double-action revolver will run about \$500.00, though you can get a used one for less. **Semi-automatics** like Colt, Glock, and Smith and Wesson fire all of the most effective calibers even including the .50 caliber elephant loads. These weapons differ so many ways, I'll just pick one good one with the features you should look for. **The new Glock model 32** is chambered for .357 SIG ammunition. Its 125 grain JHP ammunition performs identical to the .357 magnum and it has 14 rounds instead of only 5 or 6! It is as dependable and as easy to shoot as any revolver, a good thing in a deadly fight. It is "double-action only" so you can carry or store it in your gun safe fairly safely loaded and chambered. Just grab, point, and pull the trigger. The trigger pull is easy and the sights are good too. Small and light enough

to even use as a concealed weapon, it still has lots of punch. As with all semi-automatics, to chamber a round you must pull back the slide. Since some have too little hand strength to do this easily, handle one of these before buying it. Brand new, these run about \$500.00. In a few years some good used ones will be hitting the market.

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