



CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PURCHASING A FIREARM



FIREARMS
LEGAL PROTECTION

A nice-looking firearm is good, but a functional firearm is even better. The best firearm is the one that fits your needs, whether that be sport shooting or home defense. Asking friends or worse—internet forums, for their opinion on the best firearm will give you infinitely many answers. Every opinion likely backed by a slightly different purpose, and a different body of evidence to support it. Fortunately, we are living in the golden age of firearms and gun accessories. There are many great models from which to choose. Before choosing your firearm, ask yourself, “Why do I need this?”, “How do I intended to use it?”, and “Does this fit my goals, budget, and constraints?”

When you ask yourself why you need a firearm, what’s your answer? There are countless options available when choosing a weapon, and below I will go over some of the most common reasons people purchase a firearm. These reasons relate to everyday carry, home defense, competition shooting, tactical capabilities, and hunting.

EVERYDAY CARRY HANDGUN



These are handguns that you’ll likely carry as your personal defense weapon when you travel or go to work. It’s important to consider the following characteristics when looking to purchase an everyday carry (EDC) firearm.

- **Size and weight constraints**
 - How and where are you carrying this firearm?
 - How often and how long do you plan to carry each day?
 - Do you know what kind of holster or carry system you will use?
- **Caliber**
 - Must be sufficient for personal defense

- **Budget**

- Reliability is critical when it comes to personal protection
- Reputable gun brands are typically more reliable, however it's important to do your research and practice using different guns before making your purchase. There are many models that market themselves as being “just as good as” something else... some of them are, some are riding the coattails of other brands and styles.

- **Aftermarket Accessories**

- Where are you most comfortable carrying your firearm? There's a variety of holsters available that will best suit your needs. The 5 main types of holsters are:
 - OWB (Outside the waistband)
 - IWB (Inside the waistband)
 - Pocket holsters
 - Shoulder holsters
 - Ankle holsters
- Aftermarket Gun Sights
 - You never know when you are going to need to protect yourself from possible harm. When you add night sights you have a better change of aiming properly in a low light scenario.

HOME DEFENSE HANDGUN

One of the most common weapons for home defense is going to be a 9mm round since it is powerful and has considerably less recoil and a larger capacity than higher caliber weapons, such as a .357 magnum. But which of these is a priority for your application? Below, we will list out some important factors to keep in mind when searching for your home defense gun.

- **Firearm storage and access**

- Bedside Mount
- Quickdraw- you can find great options on [Vulcan Arms](#)
- Easy access safe or drawer
- Fast box or Agile Cabinet

- **Accessory mounting systems**
 - Mounting a light or laser is very common on home defense handguns.
- **Reliability is an important factor to focus on when purchasing a home defense weapon.**
- **Size and weight constraints**
 - Home defense guns can typically be larger and heavier than an EDC because you are not having to carry the gun around constantly.
- **Caliber**
 - Sufficient for personal protection, but also easily available to replenish.

HOME DEFENSE SHOTGUN

All across the country, it is common to find shotguns tucked away in closets and behind doors. While shotguns are less commonly dedicated for home defense (compared to handguns), they are often found in this role due to their amazing versatility. A bird hunting gun can easily transition to a defensive weapon. Generally, a shotgun is less precise than a rifle or handgun. It is a spread that does make it easier to hit your target quickly, but be wary of the myth that you do not have to aim a shotgun. For a shotgun in a home defense role, here are some things to consider.

- **Barrel Length**
 - Keep in mind the purpose of your shotgun
 - The ATF has regulations for the barrel length and overall length of shotguns. (falling below these requirements makes it an NFA item)
 - A shorter barrel has increased maneuverability at the cost of accuracy. A longer barrel enables you to track a moving target more easily.
 - Defense shotguns often have barrels between 18 (the legal minimum) and 22 inches.
 - Sporting shotguns frequently have between 24, 26, 28, or even 30 inch barrel lengths.
 - If you are wanting a shotgun for as home defense weapon, you need to decide what's important to you, whether that is accuracy or maneuverability. Typically it is maneuverability, unless this firearm also has to fill another role.

HOME DEFENSE SHOTGUN CONTINUED...

- **Ammo considerations**
 - 00buck- Standard for law enforcement and military but can often be too powerful and over penetrate through walls.
 - No. 4 buck- May be a viable option for most. This option will be powerful enough to neutralize your target while not penetrating through your target and damaging property or even innocent people.
 - Birdshot – As the name implies, it is intended for birds and small, fragile targets. At close it can still pack quite a punch and be very lethal. At longer distances, it can turn into a non-lethal load, but please consider this carefully.
- **Accessory mounting to consider for your light attachments.**
- **Budget will range with the type of shotgun you choose to purchase.**
 - Pump shotguns are inexpensive and reliable. Choosing this type of gun will allow you to have flexibility when choosing your shotshells. The downside is the time and movement required to chamber each round.
 - Semi-automatic shotguns are often a little pricier but can also be a bit less reliable choice. A gas-operated gun designed for heavier loads may not cycle light loads reliably. Just make to test and practice with your defensive loads; don't assume they will just work.
 - Break action shotguns are another choice, though a downside might be having to reload it. The main advantage of this shotgun is the simplicity of loading it and the inherent reliability—as long as you only need two shots.
- **Storage**
 - Make sure your storage option is safe and appropriate. Your coat closet might not be the best option, but this also will depend on your household situation. Check out our post on [Firearm Storage](#) for more on this topic.



COMPETITION FIREARM

Competitive shooting is a very specific sport and a great option for all gun enthusiasts to dabble in. First, you'll need to identify the type of shooting you're interested in. There are more competitive shooting events to choose from than ever before. From USPSA, to Trap, PRS, to Three-Gun, there are many challenges to be had. You will also need to make sure you have the correct gear and supplies, then you need to make sure you train. The type of competition you enter will dictate the type of firearm to purchase.

- Aftermarket support is important to consider because rarely do competitors leave weapons as a stock model.
- Some competitions do have a "Production class" where a stock model is required.
- Gun features like, grip, sights, and holsters are modifications that are common to do.
- **Budget**
 - There are good budget guns out there, but in this category, performance is typically going to supersede price.
- **Size and weight constraints**
 - Competitive shooting has their own restrictions when it comes to what you can use.
 - Magazine capacity, barrel length, and caliber are just some of the restrictions that competitors must obey

TACTICAL CARBINE

Often misnamed as an “assault rifle”, tactical carbines are typically small rifles that fire intermediate cartridges from detachable magazines. Being maneuverable, compact, powerful, and accurate, tactical carbines are incredibly common for personal defense and are growing in popularity for sport shooting and hunting.

- **AR15 - This is the leading choice in the United States**
 - AR-15s are available in rifle or carbine configurations. A carbine has a shorter barrel (usually around the 16 inch minimum) and often a collapsible stock. There are nearly infinite customizations for this platform.
- **PCC (Pistol Caliber Carbine)**
 - There are several different styles, but all fire a smaller pistol round from a detachable magazine.
- **AK47**
 - This rifle was designed for easier use and repair. Its simple firing mechanism means the gun will jam rarely. This carbine is rugged, powerful, and often fed with affordable ammo.
- **Lever Action**
 - The “guns that won the west” may be the original tactical carbines. Lever actions are reliable, accurate, and can host a wide range of calibers and magazine capacities. Unlike a semi-auto, you do have to manipulate the action after each shot. This is a great option where semi-automatics are prohibited.
- **Sights or Optics**
 - If this is intended for self-defense then you will need iron sights, and red dot, or possibly a Low-Power Variable Optic (LPVO). Higher magnification optics are harder to use quickly and at short range.
- **Ammo Considerations**
 - Widely available military rounds are effective and easy to source, but other bullet designs may be better for home defense.



HUNTING RIFLE

Features like reliability, balance, stock design, trigger quality will all contribute to what makes a good hunting rifle and a great one. The first question you need to ask yourself is, what kind of game do you intend to hunt? This will help determine what rifle you choose and what kind of bullets you use. Everything from that point on can be determined on personal preference.

- **Caliber**

- Make sure this is adequate and ethical for the game you are hunting. A 22LR is perfect for rabbits, and a 300 winchest magnum may be great for moose, but there is a wide range in between.

- **Size and weight constraints**

- A larger heavier gun (within a given caliber) will have less recoil and can be more stable, however a carrying a heavy precision rifle can be miserable in the mountains.
- A lightweight gun kicks hard and may not be as enjoyable to shoot but you will appreciate carrying around a lighter gun.
- Balance the trade-offs of size and weight with your intended purpose.

- **Optics**

- Shooting at longer distances will be common when hunting. Identifying your target and shooting at longer distances means that optics are extremely important to choose from.
- A good scope could frequently cost as much as the rifle. So, it is important to leave a good budget for your optics.

SUBCATEGORY OVERVIEW

There are a lot of factors to consider when purchasing your firearm, whether this is your first time or 20th, you still need to do your research. The different categories of firearms are a great place to start when choosing the firearm you want to purchase.

When purchasing your firearm, find out which parameters are most important to you. If your most important factor is type of bullet, establish your caliber of choice. Consider factors like the availability of ammo and cost. If your most important factor is accessories, finding a tactical weapon with an accessory rail will be important. We will be digging into some of the other subcategories below.

Guns from the factory are not going to have preinstalled accessories on them. But some guns come with preinstalled sights if you are purchasing them from a gun store. So, depending on where you are purchasing your gun, you might not have to purchase sights to install after you get the gun.

The ergonomics of your gun is important to keep in mind because this will vary person to person. Make sure to test out the grip size and texture, especially if you have not handled the gun before. Some people prefer rough textured because it is easier to hold, but this might be uncomfortable for someone who's carrying daily. It is important that your gun fits your hand well, but it is even more important that you can shoot it well. The trigger weight and consistency are important to test out as well because this will be different per gun. Competitive shooters may prefer a lighter trigger weight, whereas concealed carriers may choose an intermediate trigger weight. The heavier the trigger pull the more force it will take to fire the gun, which will also affect the accuracy of your shot due to the increase movement.

If you are completely fine with the gun that comes out of the box when you receive it then you won't have to worry about upgrades and aftermarket support. If you are one of those people that loves customizing your firearm, then make sure you have a place that you trust for these upgrades. When people choose to upgrade parts to their

firearm, some of the most common accessories are sights and holsters.

A good mounting system is going to be important to add to your list of things to buy because this will help keep your weapon in good condition.... If you are wanting to mount accessories you need to figure out which system is going to be right for you. M-Lok, Keymod, and Picatinny are all great systems to choose from. After many tests done on different mount brands, M-Lok has demonstrated superiority over other styles.

Is the gun you are about to purchase reliable and trustworthy, or is it known for having lots of problems? The gun community is great at sharing their experiences with their weapons. What is more important to you? Would you want a gun that is more reliable? This might add onto the ticket price, but it is worth it in the end. Or are you wanting a gun that has a great deal? If you know the type of gun and caliber you want, then the next question a salesman would ask would be your budget. Unlike most industries, most gun salesmen want to help you find something within your budget. So, don't mistake this question as someone wanting you to spend loads of money, they truly will want to find you something that is the best option within your budget. A concern that may arise when figuring out your budget will be that people always want the best deal but then they might not receive something that will adequately address their key handgun characteristics.

Gun case



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