

# SURVIVAL PAPER

#SP06-3

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## Self-Defense Pistol Basics



By Jim Jones

Before we can we can begin to consider the techniques of using deadly force in self-defense there are several issues that must be clearly understood.

1. Even under the most extreme and justified circumstances, the taking of a human life is to be avoided if at all possible. It is morally and legally wrong to seek out or create a deadly combat situation.
2. If you wound or kill someone in self-defense you will have to prove that you had no choice.
  - You had good reason to believe that yourself or others were in immediate danger of death or serious injury
  - You could not have avoided the situation
  - You could not escape or retreat safely
3. When you are faced with a kill or be killed situation, it's too late to face your moral dilemma! You can be sure that the criminal will not hesitate to pull the trigger. They don't care about your life or about the legal implications. You must be psychologically conditioned to do what you need to do without hesitation.

*Example: You are confronted in your living room by an armed stranger (not a police officer, not a family member, etc.) who is moving towards you with a weapon (gun, bat, knife) You have no way to escape as he raises his weapon. You have less than one second to pull the trigger or seal the fate of your family. KNOW THAT YOU WILL ACT FAST!*

4. Reading this article is absolutely no substitute for live-fire training. Unfortunately, in today's anti-gun, anti-freedom society it is increasingly difficult for responsible citizens to practice the skills they need to effectively defend themselves and their families.
5. There are dozens of different combat shooting techniques being taught and advocated by various organizations. The arguments about what type of handgun and what caliber is best for home defense goes on. The most important thing is to select one weapon and one set of techniques and learn them well.

## Training to Live

Criminals seldom have the intelligence or self-discipline required to train and practice. This is why they typically wave their guns around or shoot holding the gun sideways. This is also why they often miss their target and hit some innocent person a block or two away. This is also why running away from an armed kidnapper (see side bar) give you a much greater chance to survive than going with them.

Proper grip, hand and arm positions 



Hunting skills do not translate into combat skills. Shooting a tight group at the range will not necessarily mean fast center-of-mass hits in combat. Ducks and targets don't shoot back. Most defensive combat situations occur in a range of about 10 to 20 feet. All that matters is that you get one or two rounds into the opponent's torso before he (or she) shoots you. That may sound easy but it is not. In most room-range shooting incidents about half of the shots miss. A handgun is an inherently inaccurate device. Training is necessary! Defense combat shooting training will do three things for the responsible armed citizen

1. It eliminates the doubts and assures that you will be able to shoot when necessary without that fatal hesitation
2. It reduces the chances of panic shooting of an innocent family member or police officer
3. It facilitates accurate shooting of the threat/target without wild shots endangering innocent people.

If you run from a kidnapper or carjacker there is a;

- 50% Chance they won't shoot at all
- 50% Chance that if they do shoot they will miss you
- 50% Chance that if you are hit you will survive

If you go with them there is almost a 100% chance you will be killed

## Combat Shooting By The Numbers

This article is intended for the armed citizen who may have limited opportunity for other training. With this in mind, I have elected to break the combat shooting scenario into ten detailed steps. For this we will assume a right-handed defender.

1. **DRAW:** This is unless you have already taken the firearm from a drawer, etc. You must be able to do this without taking your attention off of the threat.
  - You draw the firearm from a holster (or drawer) with the right hand as the left hand comes over at the waist.
  - You disengage the safety (usually with the thumb) while keeping the trigger finger along side the slide/barrel.
2. **READY** (or Guard Position):
  - The fingers of the left hand now overlap the lower fingers of the right hand. The right arm pushes out with locked wrist and elbow while the left pulls in. This creates a firm mount for the firearm. The only movement is to pivot up and down at the shoulders
  - Keep the firearm pointed down at about 45 degrees until ready to engage a target.
3. **GRIP:** This is not really a separate step but something you must do right as you go through steps 1 and 2. Work on this! As your hand acquires the firearm it should seat into your hand evenly so that the barrel aligns vertically and horizontally with your forearm.
4. **STANCE:** You must maintain a solid balance or your accuracy will suffer greatly
  - Keep your feet slightly apart with the foot on the side holding the firearm slightly back of the other. Practice until it feels right for you.

- Never twist to shoot! Pivot to face the threat as your firearm comes up. Maintain your balanced stance. Think of this like a tank gun on a turning turret.
5. **POINT** (Engage): You have identified a true threat and engaging with the intention of firing (unless they immediately run or surrender and disarm) in self-defense.
- Move your finger to the trigger as you raise the firearm to eye level while maintaining stance and locked arms
6. **SIGHT**: This is the first time your firearm comes into your view. All the previous steps are done automatically while you focus in the threat source, movement, safety, tactics, etc.
- As the firearm comes into view between your eyes and the threat/target's torso you change focus to the front sight.
  - You should see just the front and back sight. NOT any part of the sides or top of the firearm. That's all you need.
  - **CAUTION**: This view should come automatically. You do not have time to analyze a "sight picture"!
7. **FIRE**:
- Pull the trigger (don't jerk it) two times. Two shoots have much greater chances of hitting and stopping an opponent than just one.
  - **NOTE**: Steps 1 through 7 can all be done as one continuous motion in one or two seconds.
8. **FOLLOW THROUGH**:
- Even if the threat/target is down keep your firearm aimed at him/her while maintaining your ready position. Is he/she still a threat?
  - If the threat continues to try to aim their weapon or does not go down following your first two shoots, follow with an aimed head-shot or two.
  - Hold on the threat/target while kicking away and removing his/her weapons.
9. **SCENE EVALUATION**: It's not over yet.
- Having neutralized the primary threat/target, consider the possibility of other threats. Continue to search, clear and secure rooms, and areas.
  - Always identify friend-or-foe before engaging

- Who needs help? Who may be injured?

10. **ESTABLISH SAFETY:** Before you relax.

- Don't get shot by or shoot at a family member or responding police officer!  
IDENTIFY YOURSELF.
- Safety and secure your firearm. DO NOT have it in your hand when the police arrive.
- Avoid the combat (crime) scene as much as possible. Do not move anything or disturb any evidence.

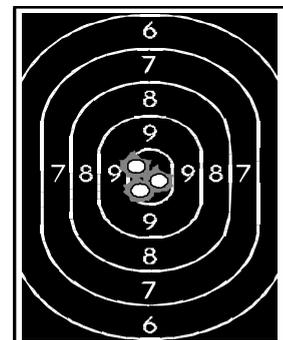
## Putting It Together

In actuality there are two sets of actions going on simultaneously. There are the conscious events and decisions and then there are what should be the unconscious actions that come from your training and preparations. The table below illustrates these parallel steps

	<b>Conscious Actions &amp; Events</b>	<b>Automatic Actions &amp; Events</b>
<b>1</b>	Alarm! Hear, see, and sense threat. Think!!!	Acquire or draw firearm, safety off
<b>2</b>	Analyze! What could it be? Where are the family members? Can I just escape? What are my options?	Grip, Guard, Stance, movement to find threat or escape if possible
<b>3</b>	Identify! Threat viewed and confirmed as dangerous	Point, Sight, Fire two shots
<b>4</b>	Target neutralized?	Maintain guard. Head shot if necessary
<b>5</b>	Disarm threat, Look around for more threats	Maintain guard.
<b>6</b>	No more threats. Family safe Help is called	Safety weapon, Secure crime scene I D yourself to police

## Practice, Practice, Practice

Repetition of the ten steps will assure swift and effective action under the stress of real combat The best option is live-fire training in a safe combat range. The next best thing would be going through the steps in paint-ball or soft-air combat games. If these options are not available you can go through the actions at home using dry-fire with your real firearm or a soft-air replica. **BE SURE ITS NOT LOADED!!**



## Weapon Selection

The selection of a handgun for home defense is the subject of considerable debate. Revolvers are simple and reliable. Automatics are a bit more complicated and require a bit more care but provide more rounds. Larger calibers such as 9mm, 45-cal, and 357-magnum have much greater stopping power but require more training to get hits. Smaller calibers such as the 22-long rifle, 38-special, or 380 cal. Are easier to get two shots into the center-of-mass for the untrained citizen defender. For the average person, 38-caliber revolver or a 380 auto-pistol could be a good choice. Don't rule-out the 22-LR. Almost anyone can put 2 rounds (or the whole magazine) into a 12 x 12 target at 10 or 20 feet with a 22. The 22 round tends to bounce around in the target (criminal) and do a lot of damage without going through to hit other people.

## Combat Tips and Tactics

This subject can and does take up whole books but here are a few points.

1. Know that most interior furniture, walls and doors provide only "concealment" they can keep you (or your enemy) out of sight but they are not "cover" that will stop a bullet from reaching you. Brick walls, heavy furniture, machinery, etc. should be sought for a defensive position if possible
2. Be aware of your shadow. Lights and windows behind you can give away your presents and silhouette you as a target. Avoid doing this but consider positions that force your opponent to do it.
3. Move slowly while maintaining your guard position. Move and stop, look, listen the move again.
4. Never extend your firearm around a corner or through a door ahead of you until you are sure no one is there. They can grab your weapon.
5. As you approach an open door be ready to sight and fire. Look into the room over your sights as you slowly move along the wall opposite to the doorway. You move in an arc starting on the wall near your side of the doorway but back from the edge. You see the opposite inside of the doorway and room As you move away and out from the doorway step-by-step you see more wedges of the room. You end up on the other side near wall. This is called "cutting the pie" and allows you to maintain readiness to fire while observing the room. Obviously there is furniture and closets, etc. so you may still need to enter the room to be sure its clear.
6. If a door is closed you can push it open while staying clear to the doorknob side. Then jump back and cut the pie.
7. If a door opens in towards you, you can just wedge or block it closed
8. Never leave an un-cleared door or stairway behind you if you can avoid it.

9. Approach corners are like doorways. Keep your sights on them as you move closer well away from the blind corner until you can see completely around the corner
10. Obviously this is all very dangerous even for trained professionals. The best tactic is to avoid and escape an armed combat situation. The next best thing is to assume a defensive position to protect yourself and your family.

## Conclusion and Comments

Home invasions, kidnapping, rape and other forms of violent crime will be a continuing threat to the life and property of every citizen. The court and police try to catch and punish criminals but they seldom actually stop these crimes in progress. In general the crime rates are higher where firearm possession and self-protection are the most restricted. The right to defend ones, life, liberty and property are recognized as primary human rights. It follows that you have the right to have and use the means to defend-yourself. When the good citizens are known to be unarmed the streets and homes belong to the gangs and thugs. Millions of crimes are prevented each year by the actions or potential actions of armed citizens. Firearms can be kept and used for home defense safely if you take the time to train and you handle and store them responsibly. Defend your rights to be armed and to defend yourself. It's up to you. You can be a subject and victim or you can be a prepared and free citizen.

## Recommended Study Sources

There is a great number of books and video tapes on defensive combat shooting. I can highly recommend the following two books, one newsletter and two videotapes to anyone.

- **The Tactical Advantage**, by Gabriel Suarez, 216 pages, illustrated., paperback, ISBN 0-87364-975-3. Available from: Paladin Press, Gunbarrel Tech Center, 7077 Winchester Circle, Boulder, CO 80301-3505, [www.paladin-press.com](http://www.paladin-press.com), 1-800-392-2400, for \$22.00 + S&H
- **In The Gravest Extreme**, by Massad F. Ayoob, 130 pages, paperback, illustrated, ISBN 0-936297-00-1, Available from: Police Bookshelf, P.O. Box 122, Concord , NH 03301, for \$11.95 + S&H.
- **Weapons and Tactics** monthly newsletter. Personal Defense Group, Inc., 5160 Valley View, Suite 106, Las Vegas, NV 89118, 702-739-6552, for \$49.00 per year.
- **Gunsite Tactical Pistol vides** 1 and 2, run 40 to 50 min each with step by step training and dry-fire exercises. \$30.00 each + S&H from: Paladin Press, Gunbarrel Tech Center, 7077 Winchester Circle, Boulder, CO 80301-3505, [www.paladin-press.com](http://www.paladin-press.com), 1-800-392-2400

A Publication of:  
**Live Free, USA, P.O. Box 375,  
Dolton, IL 60419-9998,  
[www.live-free.org](http://www.live-free.org), lfinow@aol.com**



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