

Shotgun for Home Protection (Long read warning)

I am the victim of a crime. When the suspect was arrested, he was found to be in possession of an illegal automatic AK-47, two handguns, and 600 rounds of ammunition. The AK was confiscated, but I'm not sure about the two handguns. Not only is he being charged for the crime against me, but also for possession of the illegal AK. Had he not been arrested for the crime against me, law enforcement would not have been aware of the illegal assault weapon.

The suspect made bail. There is a restraining order preventing him from coming within 100 yards of me. Despite my best efforts not to be...I'm pretty rattled at this point.

I am strongly considering buying a shotgun for home protection. For me - who isn't necessarily pro-gun - that's a big deal. And, yes, I've read a lot about the pros and cons of having a gun for home protection. That's not the purpose of this post.

Instead, I'm asking those of you who have firearms expertise to assume that I'm going to buy a gun, and give me recommendations for a shotgun for home protection.

Thanks very much.

Shotguns are best for home defense, and I would suggest you look at a Remington 870 or Mossberg, both in 12-gauge. On the other hand, for a lighter gun some women recommend a 10-gauge.

Here is a nice Mossberg offering:

<https://www.mossberg.com/category/series/youth-500-505-510/>. It is built for younger shooters, but that also makes it ideal for women who may not be comfortable handling heavier firearms.

The "choke" at the end of the barrel indicates whether and to what extent the barrel has been narrowed to a smaller diameter than the rest of the barrel.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choke_\(firearms\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Choke_(firearms)) I would not choke down a home defense weapon barrel.

On the other hand, I would not shoot heavy shot either (as much as the movies like to romanticize "double aught buckshot"). "00" buckshot is too heavy and might

punch a hole in your wall and hurt your neighbor. Go for bird shot that will get stuck in the nearest wall. If you get a nice number seven bird shot in the barrel you will be able to fire the weapon at any intruder 10 feet or fewer away with adequate stopping power. Even with such small shot, and no choke, you will still have a 1 to 1 1/2 foot spread of shot to knock someone down.

However, the best thing to do is to (1) read about this stuff as much as you can, and then (2) visit some gun stores and talk to salespeople about what you might need. Then, (3) go to a shooting range where you will usually be able to rent firearms to try out before considering an actual purchase. Then, if you buy a firearm, (4) take it shooting AT LEAST once a month, so you get used to shooting it, feel its weight in your hands, experience the kick, and learn to clean it and take care of it like a friend that may someday save your life - because that might happen.

The simpler the firearm the better for home defense, because your stress levels under those situations, including low lighting conditions, will narrow your field of vision and make more complex tools more difficult to handle.

Keep it simple and practice a lot. Remember, the most difficult thing about stopping an intruder is not whether the weapon will operate well, it is whether YOU will operate well.

Art Macomber, Idaho

No offense to ladies, but for ladies, do not buy anything larger than a 20-gauge shotgun. My wife keeps a 28-gauge loaded and by the bed. Just aim towards the door and pull the trigger. You can't miss. The recoil is simply too much on a 16 or 12 gauge for most ladies. For men, buy a 12 gauge. Remington makes a very nice affordable shotgun. You can buy at most Walmarts, shooting ranges and pawn shops, etc.

Robert "Robby" W. Hughes, Jr., Georgia

I agree. Even a .410 shotgun is good for a young person or woman.

Bobby Lott, Jr., Alabama

Robby,

Really? Are you suggesting that a guy -- even if not of a large stature -- is capable of handling a 12-gauge shotgun but a woman (regardless of her size) is not?

Btw, I'm a smaller/more on a petit-side woman and have two Remingtons 11-87, both 12-gauge -- shoot 7.5 for trap and slugs or 00 buckshots for hunting.

Ekaterina Schoenefeld, New Jersey

Ekaterina,

I agree with you. Recoil can be handled. It can be learned to be handled. Some guns seem to recoil more than others, some loads will recoil more than others, they do make low recoil defensive loads and you can always get a recoil absorbing butt cover. Recoil is intimidating to newbie but it can be handled with proper grip, shooting stance, etc. That is why you need to practice.

Ronald Jones, Florida

I think the studies also show that most burglars are stopped by the homeowner having a gun. The police cannot respond in 3 minutes to save you.

Robert "Robby" W. Hughes, Jr.

My daughter (a junior at Indiana U) accompanied me to the range one day. I hired an instructor to teach her how to use a rifle. He told her that he has been teaching for more than 10 years and that he has found women to be better students and better target shooters than men. I asked him why he thinks that's so. He said that his theory is that men tend to get the basic information and then think that they can figure everything out, which leads to bad habits developing and becoming ingrained. He said that he has found that women in general pay attention to instructions, read instruction

manuals, learn how to breathe properly when shooting, etc. My daughter shot about 50 rounds from a Ruger 10/22 and I shot the same number from a 9mm Ruger PC Carbine. Her accuracy was superb - far better than mine.

Jeffrey Bloom, New York

My wife makes fun of me for reading the instruction manual first, then trying to put the thing together.

But I do get a lot of satisfaction when she asks me to fix something she put together, and my first step is to read the instruction manual.

I need to tell her about this post!

Michael A. Blake, Connecticut

Before you buy a gun, talk to David Kaufman, who is an expert on self defense and security, personal protection, etc.... He is a list member. I wouldn't run off and get a gun without having it be part of a plan.

Jonathan Stein, California

My go to recommendation would be, in order of preference: Remington 870, a Mossberg 500, or a Winchester SXP with as short a barrel as you can get. Outside of a break-action shotgun, these are about as simple, reliable, and easy to use as a shotgun can get. While I've not shot one, a Keltec KSG would be another option; being a bullpup design, it does not have the classic lines of a standard shotgun, but it is far more compact and would be easier to use within the confines of a home. If you buy a used firearm have it checked out by a local gunsmith before shooting it; 99.999% of the time there will be nothing wrong with a used gun, but I like having a second pair of eyes look at it just in case - plus I learn a lot about my guns from my local gunsmith (better ways to clean it, better ways to field strip it, etc).

Be sure the gun will chamber and cycle 1.75" shells. At the ranges you'll be shooting, you won't need anything bigger and these short shells offer a significantly reduced recoil. Once you have the gun and shells head out to a range (if you don't know where a local range is, you can use wheretoshoot.org to find one) and practice, practice, practice (shotguns are not just point and spray). I would also recommend taking a class or two on tactical shooting and firearm safety.

If you happen to be in an area that has a gun store with an attached range, see if they have rental guns. Then take advantage of the rental guns to try out a few shotguns - get an idea of what fits you - before you commit to buying one.

Bruce Cameron, Minnesota

I'm not an expert in shotguns, my personal preference is for pistols, but I strongly second the recommendation to look for a gun store/range that offers rentals. Different guns handle differently and what suits Alice may not suit Bob (and vice-versa). So, if you're going to get something it's best to find the gun that you feel most comfortable with.

And I also definitely recommend taking as many classes as you can; especially on safety. My wife and I both feel more comfortable with guns in the house having taken classes in how to safely handle and store them.

DISCLAIMER: I've never been a lawyer at Microsoft or anywhere else.

Ben M. Schorr, Washington

I agree with Bruce and Ben. I have the Mossberg 500 with a short barrel and like it a lot. I have not had to use it for home defense, though, but am more comfortable knowing I have it just in case sh*t goes down.

I've shot the Remington 870 before and like it also. 870s used to be -- or maybe still are -- the shotgun most police cars carry. As best as I know, the Remington 870 and Remington 870 Express are two different models. The Express is, I think, more low-end so I'd avoid that one.

If you're not experienced with guns, please do try them out first. Rent one like Bruce and Ben suggest. You don't want to spend money on a shotgun only to realize you don't like it. I first fired a shotgun when I was teenager. Scared the crap out of me the first few times, but then I got used to it and it's fine now. Like with anything, practice is essential so do keep your skills up to date.

A shotgun doesn't have to be expensive. I got my 500 at Big 5 Sporting Goods, if I remember correctly. Maybe \$400? It's been a while, but I think it was about \$400.

I don't know what state you're in, but do also look up the laws in your state related to things like gun storage, especially if you have minor children in your home. California has a bunch of laws on that.

In case it helps, there's a Youtube channel called Demolition Ranch. A lot of the videos are for comedic purposes, but they have one where they test the accuracy of shotguns, how much the spread is at a given distance. I was surprised to see how far out a shotgun is accurate for.

Sorry this happened to you.

Andy I. Chen, California

I, me, myself, personally, would not use a bullpup. I understand the theoretical advantage, but, having owned one, it was counterintuitive to shoot. It was Maverick 88 with after market Bullpup outfit and looked cool as hell but tough to cycle. This may be because I am used to standard long arms and a newbie may take to it like a duck to water but I found it very difficult to use.

Ditto for "cruiser" shotguns, i.e. pistol grip setups, owned one, difficult to shoot, kicked like a mule and difficult to hit anything more than a few yard away. But that is just me.

Rem 870 is great, mossy 500 or that ilk (590 or maverick 88), that particular model of Winchester I can't speak to never having owned one, but Winchester makes good guns. On used market Mossy is probably going to be most widely available and

cheapest, Mossberg has been cranking these things out by the millions since 1960, nothing fancy but working man's gun and reliable and well made.

Remington makes several grades from their express model low cost to a Marine version, electroless nickel, but it is pricey. Winchester is likely to be a bit pricey.

Having said all that, good luck finding anything on new market and it is going to be tough in used market, the big guys are pretty much sold out, you may be better off checking smaller shops pawn shops etc., or maybe you will get lucky. Or private sale if you are in jdx that allows this and find someone to sell you one.

Yes, short barrel pump, 18.5-to-20-inch barrel, rifle sights are nice if you can get them, but not essential by any means.

As Bruce notes, a break action is even simpler, and personally I think for a newbie, easier and safer, but you are limited to 2 shots, max. Same deal, short barrel 18 to 20 inch, preferable 12 gauge.

If you happen to be in or around Central Florida email me offlist. I will be More than happy to have you come out to the ranch and I will let you try out all sorts of shotguns.

Ronald Jones

Consider other things too, not just the weapon. I have an 870, but would likely reach for the Glock first. Consider the layout of your house. That's on my mind because we're building. Secure everything, but most likely they're coming through a door. Where do you plan on keeping this weapon? By the bed? In a closet? In a piece of furniture? Do you have kids or grandkids?

Eric C. Davis, Alabama

Ultimately, what you choose is up to you. There are a lot of advantages and disadvantages to shotguns, pistols, rifles, etc. However, there is a far more important consideration Are e you able to shoot another human being with the intent of killing them? There are many people who really are not able to do so. There is nothing

wrong with that, nor is there really anything wrong if you can. It is an important question though.

If you really do not think that you can shoot someone with the intent of killing them, or, conversely, if you are not 100% positive that you can, do not get a gun, any gun. It is far more likely to end up in someone else's hands than to do you any good whatsoever. Assuming that you survive, how would you feel if your weapon caused someone else harm.

That being said, I personally like the pistol grip shotguns in the smaller 410 caliber (like many others I think that the Mossberg's are fantastic). They are far easier on the recoil, than the heavier gauges and at the range that you are likely to utilize them (probably the biggest room of your house), a rifled slug will stop just about anything smaller than a small bear. This, assumes of course, that you practice enough to be able to hit something the size of a small bear. And, that takes a *lot* of practice, probably, at least initially, a minimum of a couple of hours a day every week. If you are not going to practice, do not bother getting anything, you will be more of a danger to yourself and everyone around you than you will be for your target. Shooting is not nearly as easy as it is portrayed on TV or in the movies. More especially shooting something like a pistol grip shotgun.

Oh, and I do recommend rifled slugs as opposed to pumpkin balls and bird shot. Bird shot may very well not incapacitate your target, merely enrage them. It is a great area effect weapon, but you had better be willing to get very, very close to ensure an incapacitating injury or death. Closer than you may want to be (definitely closer than *I* would want to be). Pumpkin balls are also fairly useful, but I tend to prefer a rifled slug, over the years I have found rifled slugs to be much more reliable.

Personally, I prefer a pistol, of at least a .38 caliber, and preferably a .45 caliber (.38s do not have the stopping power of a .45). A revolver, with a long barrel, is probably the best for someone who is fairly new to firearms. I have been using firearms for a little over 40 years. There was a point in my life where I was shooting a couple of hours every two to three days. I can tell you that hitting a standard pistol target at 50 feet is *not* any easy task. It takes a lot of muscle memory, particularly when you are scared or nervous. My personal preference is a Browning Hi-Power, which is a .9mm, but that is because I have had and been using mine since I have been 21. I know a lot of people like Glocks, but they do not do it for me. I have a wide variety of pistols and tend to like semi-automatics, but I also know how to quickly clear them when they do not fire, or jam. Revolvers very rarely jam and are very basic. Revolvers are the best for someone learning.

You are looking at the "standard cowboy" pistol.

Good luck and stay safe. If you are really worried, I would recommend spend some time with a friend or even a hotel/motel. Get out of and away from the house. If and when you do have to go to get something, take someone with you (who will stay outside and in touch with you via phone, so if someone is there the police can be called immediately).

Frank Kautz, Massachusetts

A friend who has been in law enforcement for many years, when I asked about people carrying guns to religious services, pointed his finger at me and said bang you are dead. I didn't react fast enough to the pointed gun. In other words, unless you are willing to shoot another human being, regardless of age, etc., owning a gun is not necessarily the best answer.

If you have never owned one, how comfortable will you be pulling the trigger.

You might want to look at other options and means of protection as well.

Fern Summer, New York

Because every situation can devolve into a quote from Blazing Saddles, here is an apropos quote when considering carrying a shotgun around in your pants.

'No, Thank You. Fifteen is My Limit on Schnitzengruben'

Robert "Robby" W. Hughes, Jr.

Art, I'm no expert on shotguns (it's been too many years), but when you refer to something lighter, did you mean a 16-gauge? I could be wrong, but I thought a 10-gauge was larger and heavier.

Brian H. Cole, California

I'm sorry to hear you are going through this. Hang in there!

I have no personal experience on this point, but I'll pass along something I heard long ago from a Texas Ranger. His suggestion for a home defense weapon was an old, rusty pump shotgun, cut down (with a hacksaw) so it is an inch or so longer than the statutory minimum for a "sawed off shotgun."

His theory was (a) in the small confines of a house, you want the shortest possible weapon you can get, as a full-length weapon will continually bump into walls, furniture, and other things, (b) cutting down the barrel increases the dispersion of the shot, which is useful at short distances, and (c) the sound of a pump shotgun (particularly one that is a little "loose" and rusty) is unmistakable. As he put it, when you jack a shell into the chamber, there is a high likelihood that the next sound you hear will be the intruder running straight through your plate glass window.

Having said that, I agree with what others have said about taking your chosen weapon to the range and shooting it enough that you are comfortable with it.

Brian H. Cole

I just bought my first firearm (I'm 60 years old) - after a former client was released from a forensic psychiatric facility and threatened to harm my family. I spoke with two officers and got all of the pros and cons. I purchased a Beretta 1301 Tactical. Its expensive, but it is extremely reliable, easy to use, and perfect for home defense. Since I bought the gun, I have taken two NRA courses on shotgun operation and home defense. I also bought a digital (fingerprint) gun safe.

I also took the NRA handgun course, and it is my intention to get a handgun as well. It takes upwards of one year to get a permit in NY.

Jeffrey Bloom

That Beretta is nice. Semi auto, so you aren't screwing around trying to rack the pump. Pricey, but nice.

Ronald Jones

Fern makes some great points. I carry concealed to/from the office everyday due to specific and non-specific threats. I practice criminal defense. Whatever you get, you have to shoot it a lot. I have a real good number of law enforcement friends that made recommendations and I have a friend, who allowed me to shoot most of his handguns before I chose. I have two handguns a .45 and a 9 mm. I know exactly how I shoot each. I may carry concealed and I never want to have to pull it. I've never needed to, but if I do what's required.

Eric C. Davis

I really don't think the model of gun is that important. I would suggest you consider a 20g instead of 12g. For a number of reasons, a pump instead of semi auto.

My thoughts/opinion, YMMV

Randy Birth, Utah

Not to sidetrack the conversation, but perhaps cameras, especially those that record, might be worth considering.

Ashley Tribulato

I have cameras also. They are not expensive. I use Nest cameras, which I have placed around my home - inside and out. If I hear a sound downstairs at night, I can just look at my phone and see exactly what is going on (they let you rewind as well).

If, God forbid, you ever had to use a gun to stop an intruder, having everything recorded is obviously of great value. The cameras record automatically.

I am a vegan and I see life in all of its forms as having value, and not being mine to take. But if someone is coming inside of my home in order to harm me or my family, all bets are off. I will not stand by and allow myself and/or my family to come to harm.

Jeffrey Bloom

Several points:

I tend to agree the exact model of shotgun is not critical; nonetheless there are certain considerations. Ideally, you want something currently in production with availability of spare parts and that gunsmiths are familiar with; you don't want a long out of production model or some obscure model with no availability of parts; like an old Howa made Smith and Wesson or some old High Standard made

Sears Roebuck. The Mossberg has TONS of parts available; as well as all sorts of aftermarket accessories (stocks, spare barrels, and other goodies). Likewise, I'm assuming the original poster is right-handed; if they are left handed then most of your pump shotguns may present an issue; a left hander is going to have the ejected shells eject past their face; this may or may not be an issue, I've known left handers who say it doesn't matter. But the point is, in that case, you may be better off looking at a bottom ejector; the Browning BPS Stalker comes to mind, and the Ithaca 37 (out of production, though, last time I checked). And there are a number of other good shotguns not currently in production, Winchester made a ton of pump shotguns over the years, but once again, parts availability may be an issue.

Auto vs. Pump; as a general rule I would suggest a pump; they tend to be more reliable; some autos can be unreliable; having said that, the various current "tactical auto's" such as from Beretta are supposedly quite reliable. The only disadvantage to a pump is, if you 'short stroke' it it may jam. And under pressure or if you are rushed you may short stroke it. If you do go with a pump get a box of 100 of the cheap 7 1/2 shot value pack and practice the heck out of working that pump; newbies tend to be a bit too gentle, slowly, gently trying to cycle the action; you need to get used to firmly and quickly pulling it back and pushing it forward (you're not looking to yank the

forearm off but it should be a definite pull back, push forward). Auto avoids that problem. And if you do get a gun you should practice with it, no doubt.

12 vs. 20: While it is true that for a given model of gun, a 20 gauge is likely to be a bit lighter and smaller than the equivalent 12, and 20 gauge has less recoil, from a practical viewpoint even though the gun has less actual recoil because the gun is a bit lighter, the felt or "perceived" recoil is likely to be about the same.

But, the real issue with a 20 is; availability of ammunition or lack of it. The 20 is smaller than the 12, it holds fewer pellets of a given size; which limits the loadings. The fact is, there are only a handful of loadings for buckshot in a 20 gauge; 18 #2 pellets in 2.75 inch; and #3 and #4. And actual, real world availability is limited; most gun stores sell 20 or 30 boxes of 12 gauge to every 1 20 gauge; I went looking for a couple of boxes of 20-gauge buckshot a few years ago, and Walmart, Camping world, Rural King, the big retailers, no, nothing in stock.

Whereas there are TONS of loadings for 12-gauge buck; 2 3/4, 3-inch, standard, magnum, reduced recoil for home defense such as
<https://www.midwayusa.com/product/1019749778/>

And you are likely to be able to find some of it in store or online, at least in normal times (ammo is in short supply right now all over)..

I'd really suggest a 12 over a 20.

Last point, someone thought the 870 express was different from the 870; it is different; but the differences are in the type of wood used for the stock (express uses birch or synthetic stock) a better finish in the 870 (express is typically matte finish, Wingmaster is deep blue) and how polished the action in; in a nutshell the high end 870 is 'smoother' and more polished internally; but the parts are interchangeable. The express is no less reliable than the more expensive 870.

See, for instance:

<https://www.thehighroad.org/index.php?threads/remington-870-express-vs-wingmaster-whats-the-difference.445236/>

Ronald Jones

Lots of great details about the choice of firearm and why. My general advice would be to go out and try the different options. See what is comfortable to use, etc. Many of the models have different variants related to barrel length, grip type, etc. These can also be state law dependent.

While looking to buy and consider where you will be taking it to practice. Owning a firearm is not about just buying it and having it ready for when needed. You need to practice. Practice loading, unloading, use, etc.

Also, do not undervalue the emotional tole and mental preparation needed to actually use it. You have to be ready and prepared to use it if the time ever comes. If you were to "freeze" up when the moment comes it can be a more tragic result, or if you are premature in its use, there can also be a tragic result.

Phil A. Taylor, Massachusetts

Go and try firing guns at your local gun range that has rentals.

Personally, I have 9mms (S&W M&P Shields) in the home. My desk drawer safe gun is a .38-wheel gun (Ruger LCR). When I have to go into crappy parts of Richmond, Virginia, I take my .380 Ruger LCP, which is so small that it can sit in my pocket and no one would notice. You can pick up the LCP at Cabela's on sale sometimes for around \$200.

As others have said, take classes! You can even watch plenty of videos on YouTube about gun reviews.

Ryan Young, Virginia

I forgot to mention... You have an equal (if not more) chance your attacker will come at you when you are out and about (grocery store parking lot, etc.). It wouldn't be practicable to lug a shotgun everywhere. It might look weird in your pants. ;)

Ryan Young

First, I am sorry that you were a victim of crime. It can place one off-balance.

Second, I would recommend you speak with someone at a gun club or shooting range. All guns are different, some have serious recoil and you may not be able to handle the power and you would be able to speak with a professional, try out models and discuss the reason you want to purchase a gun. Arizona has two that I use: Scottsdale Gun Club and C2 Tactical.

On a personal note: when I decided to purchase a gun, my brother, an expert marksman and former military and gun owner said whoa!! No way. Before you purchase a gun, you need to learn its mechanics, take shooting lessons and be extremely comfortable with a gun, which takes years of practice. Studies show most gun owners are harmed by their own guns. Please seek the advice of professionals (not just gun sellers) before you make any purchase.

Jay Calhoun, Arizona

Also, there are far too many people buying guns that are unprepared for the responsibility. Make sure you also learn about safe care/storage of your weapon!

Ryan Young

See this chart.

https://www.chuckhawks.com/shotgun_recoil_table.htm

Note that a 20 with 1 oz shot (which is heavy for a 20) is going to have 21 lbs recoil. 1 oz in 12 will have 17 lbs. recoil, mainly because 12 is heavier gun.

Now, you start getting up into an ounce and a half, or an ounce and seven eighths of shot in a 12, yeah, it is going to kick, like 45 to more than 50 lbs. of recoil, but the point is, for defensive use, 1 oz should be more than adequate.

Ronald Jones

Ronald,

It's a great article/reference material, which reminded me of another point -- while a lighter, youth-size shotgun might seem less intimidating and more appealing, a regular size shotgun - while heavier to hold -- will absorb some shock and will help with recoil. Also, correctly holding the shotgun makes a huge difference.

Ekaterina Schoenefeld

Good point. Plus, it depends on what you are using the gun for. I don't hunt (except coyotes) but I have Browning BPS stalker, nice gun, built like a tank, steel receiver, and 8.5 lbs. that's not a stalker,

that is a drag it along. if I were going hunting and having to

trudge for miles, it would get real heavy real quick. I also have Ithaca 37 Featherweight with aluminum receiver. 5 lbs. even. If I were trudging for miles hunting, that's the gun I would trudge with.

But I have to say, it kicks. A lot. If I am only shooting one or two shots, I can live, with the kick. If on the other hand I am driving to the range and walking a couple of hundred yard and shooting several dozen rounds in trap or skeet, you know what? I want a heavier gun, lighter loads. Home defense, you are unlikely to be carrying it for long periods, though shortened barrel is likely to mean less weight but I would still go with heavier gun, maybe milled steel receiver, to reduce recoil.

Ronald Jones

Shotguns are great for short-range targets or if you're not the best shot.

If you're confident enough to get a number of shots center of mass in an emergency situation, great. Someone mentioned having a plan, which I think is an excellent point. For example, if all rooms are upstairs in your suburban home and you are more concerned about burglary, your choice of alarm/monitoring and firearm should be different from someone in a higher-level apartment in the city that is more concerned about traffic in and out during the evening.

A monitored alarm system, emergency plan, and some form of personal protection are musts... To me, personal protection means stopping power (whether it's multiple small rounds or buck shots).

Alex Salmu, Michigan

I keep track of studies in this area. I am unaware of a reputable study that shows most gun owners are harmed by their own guns. I know this shows up a lot in rhetoric, but the position is untenable.

Darrell G. Stewart, Texas

Small petite ladies or men with training are not limited by gauge of a shotgun. There are world class diminutive shooters.

It is true that those of us who are larger may handle recoil easier, but I wince when I hear someone go down this road. Training and technique with firearms can overcome a lot.

Darrell G. Stewart

I do not suggest purchase of a home-modified shotgun unless you have a lot of training on modification. Self-defense shotguns are a readily available purchase, where they come with a shorter barrel than one you would use for birds or deer hunting.

I fully support those urging training and practice. The more you learn, the better.

Darrell G. Stewart

For home defense purposes, where one is concerned about over-penetration (like going through the wall), many go to a #4 shot (you can easily google the size differences on shot shells). You need to be aware of what is behind the target when you shoot, as part of the consideration of whether to shoot.

Darrell G. Stewart

Fyi:

There's a lot of YouTube stuff out there but this guy has some good credentials.

Enjoy:

<https://youtu.be/p8SASAy7puQ>

Renteria Law Firm

I have worked my way back to the original request making comments. A record-breaking number of people are buying firearms this year and an estimated 40% of them are new gun owners according to publications I read (I think it is an NSSF estimate). We were past 3.7 million NCIC searches (which is used as a barometer) by Thanksgiving.

Go to a reliable local dealer for a new or used defensive shotgun. Remington 870s, Mossberg 500s, and many others are reliable. One can get down in the weeds on specifics. However, the issue may well be finding any suitable self-defense shotgun locally. Check for a good gun store locally, or reach out to someone in the local shooting community where you are located.

As others point out, you have other options you could purchase, but you limited your request to this category. Regulation and purchase restrictions vary heavily among the states. Fortunately, I live in Texas. Among a lot of the South Texas population, someone with 50 or so firearms is still a lightweight.

If you want to reach out to me directly, I would be happy to share what I know. I don't claim to know more than other commentators here, but I have spent quite a bit of time on the issues over the past four decades.

Others have also pointed out that you need a personal security plan. Kaufman used to have those on his personal website but I have not looked recently. Basically, a personal security plan is getting a good handle on pre-planned responses to the issues you may face, at home, on the street, in the office, and in your vehicle. Avoiding a confrontation is much better than having one. Surviving a violent confrontation beats not, and doing so in such a way that you minimize police interaction post event is better than not.

Darrell G. Stewart

The video guy recommends a Sig MPX 9mm. Seems to make sense. He shows why shotguns may not be as good for home defense. It's worth watching the video.

David A. Rubin, Missouri

Not a gun person, but I was impressed.

Mitchell Goldstein, Virginia

Thanks for all the mentions group! I'm pleased to report that the Member needing advice and plans contacted me and we are working on it. I also note (with considerable pleasure I might add) that the advice and comments above are pretty darn good although I do differ on a couple of points about shotgun loads under different circumstances.

If others want/need advice and help, please feel free to reach out. This is part of my pro bono contribution to the well-being of our profession.

David Kaufman, Florida

I have seen a lot of debate on this issue. You have to construct a scenario to determine what is best. There is no standalone best. The best firearm is the one you have ready and available when the crisis arises. Hopefully you are prepared, but you “win” by surviving the encounter and minimizing collateral damage.

Eventually the police will arrive to do forensics and write a report. When seconds count, they are hopefully only minutes away.

Darrell G. Stewart

I have gone to "Front Sight" a number of times over the years. It is a good boot camp/training for firearms. In furtherance of the idea that training is essential, they have a saying "any gun will do if you will"

Randy Birch

Long Arms (Shotgun/Rifle) vs Handgun (Pistol/Revolver)

I'm starting new thread because the old one was getting up near 500 lines

David Rubin

Long Gun meaning rifle or shotgun versus a handgun for home defense and in general.

Ok, this is ongoing debate but I will summarize the pros and cons of shotgun or rifle versus a pistol or revolver.

First, up front, Legality. Depending on your jurisdiction, the fact of the matter is acquiring a rifle or shotgun MAY be a lot easier and faster than acquiring a handgun.

Some jurisdictions are pretty liberal about who can buy a long arm; but have severe restrictions on who can get a pistol. There may also be restrictions on what type of long arms are available. One poster from NY noted that he got a shotgun for defense and is applying for a pistol permit but that it will take up to a year to get a pistol. If you're not in one of these jurisdictions then this isn't a consideration; if you are, however, you may be better off with a shotgun or rifle than a handgun.

More generally; advantages to shotgun or rifle:

Nearly any shotgun or rifle other than a 22 is going to be more powerful, more stopping power than almost any handgun, there are a few exceptions but unless you're talking like a 480 or 500 caliber handgun or particularly wimpy rifle, long arms beat pistols in power. Down side is. more penetration; if I shoot a 308 inside the house, it's going thru the bad guy, thru several layers of drywall thru the door and I don't know what else

Long arm is usually going to have longer range than a pistol. This may not be a consideration, if you are using this for defense there is an upper limit to how far away you can shoot a bad guy and still claim self-defense, if it's a few yards, you're fine; if you're taking a shot at some guy 75 yards away you better have a really good reason why you feared for your life from a threat more than 200 feet away.

Ease of use/ability to learn to use the gun. I'm generalizing but most people can learn to competently shoot a rifle or shotgun with relatively little practice, at least the basics. Handguns, are more difficult to shoot and learn to shoot; at least for some people. It can take a lot more practice and depending on the handgun, (heavier calibers particularly) a LOT more practice to be competent.

Now, as an aside, I keep two guns in my bedroom. I keep an over/under 12 gauge, with shells in the chamber, but broken open, in other words in safe condition, near my door. That particular gun is primarily for coyotes; if I see a coyote in the field I can and do grab the gun, close it and I'm good to go to try to get outside and shoot the coyote. I have done this numerous times. But it is not primarily a defense gun but could be used for that.

I also keep a Glock 21, a .40 cal. auto, with a stream light combination flashlight/laser sight. That normally would be my "go to" gun in the event someone was in/trying to break in to the house for reasons I discuss below.

Disadvantages of long arm

They're big. And long. Minimum legal length of a long arm in this country is 26 or 26 1/2 inches, and most run more like 36 inches or more.

And, as a result, they are neither all that portable nor concealable.

Won't fit in glove compartment, can't put them in your pocket; neither of which are normally an issue with home defense but it might be; if I had to I could stick a handgun temporarily behind my waistband while I go to the front door; and see who is there. Can't hide a shotgun behind my back while I approach someone.

More relevantly; they are long and unwieldy. Which leads to three issues for home defense.

First, if you are going thru the house, you pretty much have to lead with the gun; going around corners, going thru tight spaces, it's may be tough to maneuver. And it may take you a bit to swing the gun to bring it on target.

Second, long gun gives advantage of leverage to someone who grabs it and tries to take it off of you. Longer the gun, the more leverage they have, they may be able to wrench it from you.

Third, you need 2 hands to operate it; if you have one hand or arm injured, you can't operate it, not realistically. You can't hold a flashlight, or a phone in the other; you can't turn a door knob while holding it; if you manage to get the bad guy on the ground you are going to have to release the gun to call the police or whatever.

FYI, this is why the US military typically issues revolvers instead of autos to some specialized units; technically you should have 2 hands to operate an automatic; one to hold the gun one to work the slide; thus, individuals who may need the other hand (dog handlers, security/prison guards or police who may need either a flashlight or use handcuffs, the old Tunnel rats during Vietnam who needed one had for a gun the other for a flashlight) were issued revolvers because that is one handed gun.

Pistol/handgun; advantages, portable and concealable, can be used with one hand, a lot 'handier' when going around corners and in tight spaces and usually faster to bring on target and less likely to be taken away from you.; disadvantages are usually less powerful and not useable at as great a distance. Plus, it takes more skill and practice to learn to use a handgun, I don't care what they show in the movies, a guy who has never shot a gun before isn't going to pick a handgun off the floor and hit a moving

target 25 yards away. It takes a lot of practice. But if you are proficient, I would rather have a handgun for home defense under most circumstances.

As far as specific recommendations; I won't get into the weeds but the gun you are proficient with and know how to use is the gun you want. Not everyone is willing to take time and effort to become expert gun marksman. It depends on the gun. Some guns take a lot of work to learn; a 357 magnum is really an expert's gun, with heavy recoil; it can be learned but it takes time and work and a goodly amount of practice. Likewise, there's lots of automatics out there, some of them are easier to learn to shoot than others.

As an example, I gave my mother a gun. It is a Smith and Wesson model

30, a 32 caliber six shot revolver. Which is decidedly a bit on the weak side. However, she has learned to shoot it and shoot it well; low recoil. absolutely reliable, mechanically simple, small to fit her hands, six shots, I have told her if she has to shoot someone keep shooting until the guy runs away or falls down or until she runs out of shots. It has CTC laser sights as an aid but she is actually pretty handy with it. She is comfortable with the size and recoil; shoots it pretty accurately, can use it one handed, she simply is not willing to take time and effort to learn, say, a 357 or a 45 or what have you. She has shot a shotgun and really dislikes it. Fine.

She's comfortable with the 32, it certainly isn't a powerhouse but I do load it with Buffalo Bore ammo, which pushes out at about 900 FPS, it beats all heck out of throwing a rock and she's got 6 shots.

Point is, that's the gun she has and can shoot well.

Ronald Jones

Not a bad summary. But I take issue with the comments about holding on to the weapon: in my experience, a 1 handed grip on a handgun can too easily result in a dropped or taken away handgun. OTOH, using 2 hands to hold a shotgun (or a handgun) is much more secure.

David Kaufman

I don't know, personally, David, never having had someone try to take a gun away from me, all I know is what I've read and I have read that criticism; it also may depend on the length of the gun (it's be easier for someone to get leverage if I had an 8-inch revolver than a snubby) strength of the people involved, the exact grips, etc. I can see where 2 handed grip might be more secure on a long arm than one hand on handgun.

Ronald Jones

Yeah, Ron. Been there, saw the movie, bought the T shirt, ate the popcorn.

David Kaufman

The video guy recommends a Sig MPX 9mm. Seems to make sense. He shows why shotguns may not be as good for home defense. It's worth watching the video.

David A. Rubin

Apropos of Fern's comment, and for all firearms owners, I would strongly suggest you contact and get to know a good criminal lawyer in your jurisdiction. The old adage still applies: don't say anything or explain anything to anybody, simply give them your name and your identification, including a copy of your concealed weapons permit if the circumstances apply. Your one phone call should be to your criminal attorney, who should also counsel you to say absolutely nothing until you have had counsel regarding facts in your case.

Police are human, and where firearms are involved it is best not to try to explain how it was self-defense, or anything else, until you have spoken with your attorney.

Art Macomber

U.S. Law Shield (<https://www.uslawshield.com/>) is not that expensive and provides free consults and legal defense to all weapon-related charges as well as legal advice on gun laws (buying, storing, transporting, etc.) in all states -- as long as the member has not committed a crime/was a lawful firearm owner. They also hold free seminars on gun laws (low cost to non-members).

Ekaterina Schoenefeld

Didn't New York sue the NRA (among other reasons) for providing that type of insurance coverage?

Oscar Acuna

<https://nypost.com/2020/08/06/nra-files-countersuit-against-new-york-ag-letitia-james/>

The New York AG has been following its political attacks. It is hostile to the 2nd amendment and the National Rifle Association.

The affinity (using its name) insurance group had an insurance program that used the NRA. There are other organizations who offer insurance products. One insured firearms, which are limited in home insurance claims. Another was also presented in provided attorneys in cases where firearms were used in stopping a burglar.

Law Shield is not one I see value in, other than the attorneys who put it together. There are some programs that may be helpful for criminal defense and injury claims by criminals.

Darrell G. Stewart

Respectfully, Darrell, I think there is a difference between being hostile to the 2nd Amendment and the NRA, and disagreeing on the issues.

I have not followed this matter closely, but the article you included implies (if not states) that the NY AG's office has no business reviewing the finances of the NRA, including the salaries and perks paid to the executives—but I understand that is a pretty bog-standard issue for the NY AG to consider, especially with organizations that are incorporated in New York. I don't know whether the NY AG or the NRA will prevail (nor do I really care), but I think it goes a bit far to assert that Ms. James is hostile to the NRA because she has brought a suit alleging "that top execs including CEO and Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre improperly used NRA funds to live lavish lifestyles <<https://nypost.com/2020/08/06/some-of-the-nras-alleged-financial-abuses-in-new-york-lawsuit/>>."

Brian H. Cole

I am, personally, a ". . . program[s] that may be helpful for criminal defense". I had a Murder-1 case a while back (in PA, a homicide charge includes all lesser included offenses).

The prosecution had the guy - slam dunk. TWO surveillance video tapes, good lighting, he left in his own car and was stopped a mile away with the gun, 6+ eyewitnesses who knew my client AND the victim, etc. Only thing missing was a confession, but he did say, repeatedly, that he ". . . didn't mean to kill him . . .". Of course, PA has all the jury instructions that the jury may infer intent to kill by using deadly force, etc. Plea offer was Murder-1 with LWOP. All we had was a weak intent issue.

After THOROUGHLY speaking with my client, he decided to go to trial. The prosecution only took a day, primarily because I asked almost zero questions on cross (the Judge even asked me about that at sidebar, like he was afraid I went catatonic). The second day, I put my client on the stand, asked him if he meant to kill the victim, he said "No!" and I stopped.

The DA jumped right in: Q: You shot and killed Jim, didn't you? A: Yeah, but I didn't mean to kill him. That's why I shot him in the ass. Q: Why did you think shooting Jim there wouldn't kill him?

A: Because I got shot in the ass before. (Here, he dropped trou and showed the DA, the Jury and the Judge a truly impressive scar on his left cheek where he had been shot 5 or so years prior)

I think my closing was pretty good. I harped on the difference between possible assumptions and uncontradicted facts. Verdict - Involuntary Manslaughter. I think he got 18 to 36 months in the county jail.

As for the NRA, it's a non-profit, subject to the same oversight as any non-profit. If the officers are using the organization to enrich themselves, then shame on them.

Russ Carmichael, Pennsylvania

Linking to an article I found quickly to attempt to explain is not an attempt to adopt statements in an article. The NY state government, including both AG Letitia James and Governor Cuomo, have attacked the NRA on diverse fronts. AG James campaigned on the issue prior to her election. The salaries and perks issue had been addressed by the organization and had been disclosed prior to AG James coming into office. The affinity insurance program run by Lockton consisted of two components, one of which was firearm casualty insurance and another of which reimbursed someone if they proved out (meaning at the end) to have lawfully used their firearm in self-defense, was attacked as insuring against criminal activity. Threatening financial institutions and insurers who did business with the NRA, including yanking their charter and not authorizing them to do business in New York, is another leg of the dispute, which drew in the ACLU on the NRA's side.

I don't live in New York and would not, but overbearing government is something I am sensitive to in general. An arm of my practice deals with firearms law, and I have set up five or six dozen nonprofits as well, so I tend to track filings and occurrences that overlap. I do have an opinion on the issues, but try to stay on the law side versus politics (although the law/politics line is hard to see sometimes). I know that Brewer, who represents the NRA in these disputes, has made a lot of money off the litigation in the past few years, and it has been a substantial burden on the organization. I don't represent anyone involved, and I have an opinion. I have read a ton of info on it, including pleadings in the various cases, which have shaped my view.

For anyone that thinks this is an elephant versus donkey issue here, give me a call about what I really think about the Texas Attorney General right now. I probably will be less restrained verbally and might articulate some things that would be difficult to restrain in a post.

Darrell G. Stewart
