

10 Essential Tips on Clearing a House

What to Look for and How to Prepare



A publication of



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Introduction

There are few things more terrifying than waking in the middle of the night to an unknown threat inside your home, or coming home to find someone has been (or may still be) inside your house. A break-in can induce panic, even for those who are armed and prepared.

Your first priority should be your safety, and the safety of your family.



What should you do if you can't wait for law enforcement to arrive? What if the threat is more imminent, or more violent? Sometimes you have to take action to defend yourself and the ones you love. Here are 10 things to think about now, before there's a problem.

Guns for Home Defense

TIP 1

It is best to begin thinking about self-defense in the home before you need to defend yourself.

While more people are choosing to carry concealed handguns, even when they're home, most of us rely on larger firearms we keep at home for the purpose of self defense.

Handguns are immensely popular, especially for shooters who want one gun that will be versatile enough for concealed carry and potential use at home. The obvious benefit is that a handgun can be worn easily. They are the most maneuverable of firearms. Their small size and low recoil make them manageable. And they come in a vast array of sizes and calibers.





But their size also makes aiming more complicated.

Practice is crucial to gain proficiency and confidence. One step up from handguns are carbines, which are chambered in both rifle and handgun calibers. Their size makes them more maneuverable than a rifle. Consider carbines that are chambered for handgun calibers rather than traditional rifle calibers to reduce the danger of shooting through walls. Most pistol caliber carbines have larger magazines, which means higher capacity.

Carbines, though, require two hands to operate. This can make holding a flashlight more challenging. Others feel like the best option is a shotgun. Shorter barreled shotguns produce wide patterns of birdshot or buckshot. The sound of a pump-shotgun's slide in motion is distinctive and capable of sending a clear message. While the shells of a shotgun are larger than handgun rounds, their projectiles are less likely to shoot through walls (slugs being the obvious exception). The downside is the recoil. Many small-statured shooters have difficulty managing the kick.

TIP 2

Ammunition

Choosing a firearm is just the first consideration. Ammunition is the second.

The first step in being prepared is situational awareness. We typically know our homes fairly well. But there are other pressing concerns. If there is any possibility, however remote, that you might use a firearm inside of your home, you must know where the bullets might go.

Are there people behind the wall of your apartment? How close are the neighbors? Are there family members in the home who may be in the line of fire should a situation arise?



Hollow point ammunition is the most popular choice for handguns, as the bullets deform on impact making them less likely to travel through walls. Yet they will. If you are really concerned about over- penetration, consider frangible ammunition. Frangible projectiles break apart on impact and the small particles that remain lose their energy fast.



Buckshot is the go-to defensive load for shotguns, though many prefer slower birdshot loads to minimize over- penetration.

Regardless of what you choose, consider keeping an extra magazine with the gun, or extra shells with a shotgun. Just in case.

TIP 3

Keeping Guns Safe and Accessible

After you have selected a firearm, where will you keep it?



Gun safes are excellent choices for keeping guns safe. They're a must. Yet they're designed to prevent people from getting into them. Adrenaline can work against you in a heated situation, making a safe even harder to access.

Leaving firearms where they are easily accessible is a sound defensive strategy, but has obvious risks. Many safe companies now offer smaller safes and lock boxes that aren't designed to thwart thieves, or protect against fire. With biometric locks and smaller footprints, these safes are designed to secure a firearm (mainly from children) while allowing for easy access to those who should have access (by recognition of a thumb-print or a simple key-code).



Be aware.

Develop a strategy that works for your situation.

Keep a shotgun at home in a biometric safe.

Keep a concealed handgun with you when you're out, so if you return home and find someone inside, you won't be at a complete disadvantage. But be safe.

TIP 4

Lights

Depending on which firearm you choose, you should consider a weapon-mounted light.

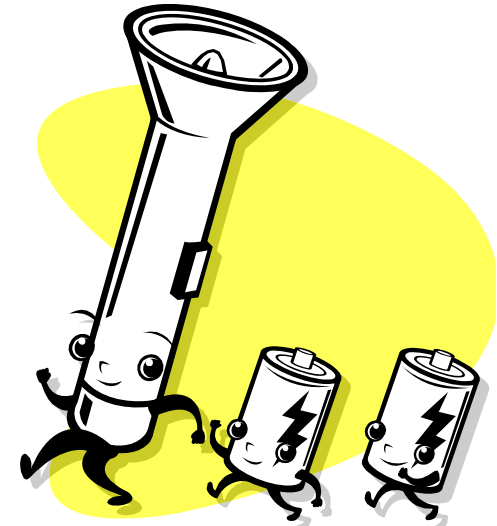
These allow for one hand to be free, or for both to remain on the gun. Some lights offer a momentary-on feature, and/or a strobe effect. These are good ideas, especially for a light mounted on a gun. The bright flash can disorient an attacker and provide a distinct tactical advantage.



You should also have a second light, one that is hand-held. Many experts have developed strategies that use hand held lights held away from the body. If an assailant is going to return fire, they will likely shoot at the light (which will be the only thing they can see).

If a light is away from your body, you are less likely to be hit.

Still, opinions differ on the light debate. Having a light is better than not having a light, so be sure to keep up with battery changes and keep your lights accessible.



TIP 5

Practice Getting to Your Gun

Making basic preparations is easy. Clearing a house is not.



Let's assume for a moment that you've adequately prepared, but a break-in still occurs. What then? How long will it take you to get to your gun?

It is best to practice.

Not all breaks-ins occur at night, but some do.

How easy will it be to access a firearm in the dark?

Will there be enough ambient light for you to open a safe?

Will you need to use a flashlight?

Run drills just as you would for a fire.

The Old Fashioned Telephone

TIP 6

Immediately after you've armed yourself, call for help.

- ✓ **Keep a cell phone handy**
- ✓ **A land-line is better still**
- ✓ **Dial 911**



If you know confidently that talking won't put you in any greater danger (by giving away your position), tell the operator what's happening. If you feel like talking would be a bad idea, and it probably is, dial 911 and set the phone down without hanging it up.

This will signal the need for an immediate response, and the operator will at least be able to hear some of what might be happening.

TIP 7

Find a Safe Place to Hide

The next step is crucial.

If you are alone, find a safe and secure place to hide.

Look for some basic form of cover.



Lock yourself in a room and get away from the door.

It wouldn't hurt to plan ahead on this part, either.

Know where you can safely go inside your own home

It is best to stay where you are

rather than run the risk of encountering an intruder.

Hide and wait for police.

TIP 8

Secure Your Family

If you're not alone, if you are home with family or friends, than things get more complicated.

Find them.

Keep them calm.

Hide them, too, if possible.

This may mean leaving a safe place.



In doing so, you always run the risk of exposing your location or engaging a threat. You have to remain calm.

How will you tell a family member from an intruder?

Remember that you must always identify a target before you engage is. Be sure.

Clearing the House

“ *Don't go looking for trouble, if you don't have to* ”

But if you must move, think ahead. Move quietly and listen. Larger homes make this more challenging and dangerous. Move room by room. Keep as much of your body behind cover when looking through doors, or rounding corners. And only use your light when you have to. Leaving your light on gives away your position immediately.

TIP 9

If you're home with family, you have to ensure they stay hidden, and don't move (or that they follow along with you, if that is the only safe option). If you are in a secure location, and everyone is accounted for, you may choose to wait for the threat to come to you. Don't go looking for trouble, if you don't have to.

Clearing the House

All of this is important, but know that one of the most important skills is actual threat evaluation.

What if the sound you've mistaken for a burglary is actually a teenage son? It happens. Speak clearly and loudly to anyone you encounter in the dark.

Tell them your intentions. And trust in the advantage of your weapon.

If the person you encounter isn't armed, the fact that you are may be enough to gain complete control of the situation until the police arrive.



TIP 10

Engaging a Threat

If the threat you encounter is armed, then act decisively.

You may still choose to issue a verbal warning.

On the other hand, you may not have that time.

Rely on your training and engage the threat.

And don't let your guard down.

Even if you are forced to shoot an intruder, he or she may not be alone.

There may be others in the house.

There may be accomplices outside the house.

Don't become complacent until the authorities have relieved you.



Conclusions and additional resources

Do what's right to protect yourself and the ones you love.

Arming yourself is only part of the process. You need to train. While spending time at your local gun range will help with basic shooting skills, you should also find more specific training classes that cover tactics and strategies.

Look for opportunities to train in your areas. Many providers of force on force training will help you simulate real life scenarios, and can do more for mental preparation than simply shooting at stationary targets.

However you choose to approach your training and preparations, do it safely. But prepare. And hopefully you'll never have to test your abilities.

Look for training classes in your area.



To continue staying in contact with us and for additional tips, make sure you follow our blog, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube accounts, or visit our website.

To check out our complete line of firearms and accessories personally, visit a Beretta authorized dealer in your area.

